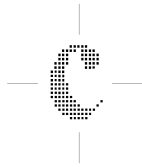


**Reintegration in Burundi:
between happy cows and lost investments**
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Edited by Leontine Specker

The attached case study on Burundi has been carried out under a larger research project on the R-phase of DDR processes (see: *The R-phase of DDR processes: an overview of key lessons learned and practical experiences* by Leontine Specker, published in September 2008). The case study is based on field work in Burundi carried out in October 2008.

A case study on reintegration of ex-combatants in Burundi, carried out for the Conflict Research Unit (CRU) of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 'Clingendael'

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Abbreviations

AGR	<i>Activités Génératrices de Revenus</i> (Income-earning activities)
CEDAC	<i>Centre d'Encadrement et de Développement des ex-combattants</i>
CNDD-FDD	<i>Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Forces de la Défense de la Démocratie</i>
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
ES	Executive Secretariat of the NCDDR
EU	European Union
FAB	<i>Forces Armées Burundaises</i> (Burundian Armed Forces)
FB	<i>Francs Burundais</i> (Burundian Francs)
FDN	<i>Forces de Défense Nationale</i> (National Defence Forces)
FNL	<i>Front de Libération Nationale</i> (National Liberation Front)
GoB	Government of Burundi
HIMO	<i>Haute Intensité de Main d'Œuvre</i> (High Intensity Labour Projects)
ITS	<i>Indemnités Transitoires de Subsistance</i> (Transitory Subsistence Allowances)
MASP	Burundi Multi-annual Strategic Planning
MDRP	Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme
MFA	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCDDR	National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
ODA	Official Development Assistance
R-phase	Reintegration phase
SSR	Security sector reform

Executive summary¹

The reintegration of ex-combatants was started in Burundi from the end of 2004 onwards, largely financed by the Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (MDRP). The MDRP was supervised by the World Bank on behalf of the contributing donor countries. In Burundi a National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR) was established, presided over by President Nkurunziza. Under the guidance of the National Commission an executive secretariat (ES) was established. The ES to date has been directed by General Silas Ntigurirwa and is divided into a demobilization unit and a reintegration unit. The ES is responsible for implementation of the national Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme.

1. The reintegration programme

a) Main results and shortcomings

In Burundi under the MDRP programme 26,000 soldiers and ex-rebels were eventually demobilized. During the first phase of the reintegration programme some 16,000 soldiers and rebels went through the process. However, during the second phase political issues (caused by the transition of political power between Hutu parties) hampered the process and as a result a number of police officers and soldiers still have to be demobilized. The ethnic balance within the army remained a sensitive issue throughout the demobilization process. Although the army has become a factor of post-conflict stability in Burundi, the ongoing negotiations with Front de la Libération Nationale (FNL) to eventually integrate a number of their troops may threaten stability. A large number of members of the former Forces Armées Burundaises (FAB, the old

¹ This case study on Burundi is based on field research which took place from 21 September to 5 October 2008. As the MDRP programme in Burundi ended in December 2008, some important developments have taken place since the finalization of this report. The Conflict Research Unit (CRU) of the Clingendael Institute has planned a follow-up research project. The main aim of this follow-up project will be to carry out a more extensive socio-economic context analysis in Burundi, in order to identify socio-economic programmes that contribute to stability and peace dividend. Reintegration programmes for ex-combatants, as part of wider socio-economic reconstruction activities, will be central to this follow-up project.

Tutsi-dominated army), which should have been demobilized already, are still dragging their feet.

The national implementing mechanism responsible for the reintegration trajectory is the Department of Integration within the ES of the NCDDR. At a lower level the ES has set up regional offices. A regional coordinator assisted by a programme officer heads the NCDDR regional offices. At field level these offices work with volunteers, known as focal points, which receive a stipend and merely monitor what is going on at field level. The programme of reintegration started after a 15-month delay. Of the US\$41.8 million earmarked for Burundi in the MDRP programme, only some US\$20 million has actually been disbursed. The main focus of the reintegration programme was the individual ex-combatant, not involving the host community. Owing to the acute necessity of demobilizing thousands of ex-rebels and national army soldiers, the Government of Burundi (GoB) preferred an individual approach, earmarking 600,000 Burundian Francs (FB) per person (around US\$600) for reintegration purposes. The GoB was obliged to honour the provisions of the Arusha Peace Agreement, i.e. establishing an ethnic balance (50%Tutsi-50% Hutu) in the armed forces.

Reintegration was divided into two parts: a transitory period of about 18 months, during which ex-combatants were billeted in cantonment sites and received their salaries; and a reintegration trajectory, during which they had to choose a reintegration package. They had five options: 1) return to their former employment situation (re-employment); 2) go back to formal education at school; 3) engage in vocational training; 4) receive entrepreneurial support; or 5) receive Income-Generating Activities support (Activités Génératrices de Revenus – AGR). The vast majority of the 25,000 ex-combatants reintegrated to date have opted for AGR. However, there was generally an interval of more than one year between demobilization and reintegration, owing to the lengthy procedures followed by the organizations involved (CNDDR and donors).

The reintegration trajectory was not put in place until September 2006, by which time the bulk of ex-combatants had already been waiting for about one year. Initially, civilian organizations had been reluctant to become involved, as the entire DDR issue remained highly politicized.

During the first phase, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) PADCO and Africare, as well as a Burundian NGO, Tuitezimbere, were selected to implement the reintegration programme. The CNDDR provided a list with the badge numbers of the ex-combatants involved so that the implementing agencies could more easily trace them.

A typical reintegration trajectory for AGR was for ex-combatants to be invited to come up with a project proposal, which was subsequently passed on to the regional offices of the NCDDR for processing and approval. The NGO involved would then give the ex-combatants a short training in basic skills: accounting, stock-keeping, writing receipts, dealing with clients and so on. After approval by the regional NCDDR coordinator, the implementing NGO would acquire the materials required for the option that the beneficiary had indicated, such as food items for a grocery stall. However, many ex-combatants resented the fact that they were not given money instead of the start-up kit materials.

Collaboration between the implementing agencies and the national mechanism was problematic. The national mechanism was intended to ensure local ownership of the project, but in fact turned out to be an institution which in many cases worked against the very implementers it had selected and actually denigrated them to mask the fact that it was itself incapable of running the programme properly.

b) Reintegration in the urban areas

In the urban context, reintegration largely failed because the target groups lacked basic skills to be able to successfully reintegrate. Ex-rebels basically had dropped out of school at a young age. Another group consisted of the ex-FAB, who had developed a dependency mindset as they had been institutionalized in the army, which used to provide all services. Also, since most of them had come back from the war to a totally destroyed environment, they had to rebuild their lives, rebuild their family homes and reunite their families returned from exile. Most of them therefore sold their reintegration package to the very businessmen from whom an implementing partner in the reintegration programme had purchased the goods.

They used the reintegration money as post-war reconstruction support at the household level. Those among the ex-combatants who managed to engage in AGR were unable to compete with existing small traders, as they lacked access to wholesale traders and, more critically, to credit facilities. Reintegration became a one-off injection of resources in a context of overall post-conflict deprivation.

c) Reintegration in the rural areas

In the rural context reintegration was slightly more successful, notably for those who were able to return to their former livelihood and to their family land. This group was able to purchase cattle and sometimes an additional piece of land, which resulted in a boost to their income. Other groups, however, especially those who had been in exile for over 25 years and had lost their family land and property, were forced to start from scratch. Finally, others who opted for AGR in the rural areas faced similar problems as their counterparts in the suburbs of Bujumbura, although the cost of living is significantly lower in the countryside. They could therefore subsist longer on their reintegration package before becoming destitute again.

d) The role of the private sector

In Burundi there are at present very few opportunities within the formal private sector to play a role in the reintegration of ex-combatants. Private security firms seem to be one of the few types of business to have recruited ex-combatants, but this concerns mostly ex-FAB soldiers who retired at a young age. In the informal sector a small number of ex-combatants have become motor taxi drivers. However, in general it is difficult to employ ex-combatants as many are illiterate and their behaviour can be problematic. Furthermore, the Burundian economy is not capable of absorbing 30,000 ex-combatants and the overall socio-economic context is not amenable to job creation. At the level of the GoB there is a lack of planning capacity and strategic insight into what is required to help reintegrate ex-combatants. Furthermore, there should be clear incentives for private entrepreneurs to participate in job-creation programmes for specific target groups.

2. Recommendations

Create a new national mechanism fully integrated into line ministries through functional technical units. At present there is a window of opportunity to help build a new national mechanism with line ministries structurally involved in reintegration programmes. Also, strategic partners should be identified which can assist the GoB with much-needed institutional and logistical capacity to help implement these programmes.

Design a follow-up DDR programme that allows for security sector reform (SSR). Any plans for future security sector reform will have to take into account the possible consequences of (temporarily) inflating numbers of police officers and soldiers as a result of ongoing negotiations with the only remaining opposition group: the FNL. Any rise in numbers will have consequences for subsequent DDR programmes and also for SSR initiatives in the near future. The army has become an instrument to retain people and to provide secure livelihoods as in the civilian world there are no viable alternatives.

Map high-risk groups and make an inventory of economic opportunities. First, a thorough analysis of the socio-economic context of Burundi is required to determine what economic possibilities there are for ex-combatants. Second, it is necessary to engage in the profiling of specific target groups within the expected caseload of ex-combatants to be reintegrated. Third, a realistic risk analysis should identify specific geographical areas and be used to identify priority groups within such areas. The expected outcome of this exercise is a map of economic opportunities for specific target groups in geographical areas, which allows interested parties to actively intervene to help enhance stability in Burundi.

Develop a long-term macro-economic perspective for Burundi. A long-term development strategy that aims to reintegrate not only ex-combatants, but also a large caseload of returnees from exile, will have to focus on structural solutions. In fact, more should be invested in the basic economic sectors, such as the agricultural sector and the construction sector (roads, bridges, houses etc.). But looking beyond the limited confines of the weak Burundian economy, solutions can be found within the broader region, possibly through the free movement of labour mechanism operating under the East African Community agreement.

Donors could give incentives to recipient societies, such as Tanzania, so they are more likely to accept Burundian labour.

3. Specific recommendations for a future DDR programme in Burundi

- 1) Design and apply appropriate screening methods to be able to distinguish between genuine fighters and opportunistic recruits.
- 2) Identify and train soldiers before demobilization.
- 3) Develop community-based reintegration programmes centred on transitional justice and focused on local demand.
- 4) Develop an appropriate vocational training structure in Burundi.
- 5) Include appropriate monitoring and supervision structures in DDR programmes.

Introduction

This study constitutes Phase II of a broader study looking into the reintegration phase of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and was commissioned by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Phase I of this broader project provided an overview of key lessons learned and practical experiences based on existing evaluations and on a review of relevant documents.² Phase I served as input for two forthcoming policy frameworks developed by the MFA on DDR and on socio-economic post-conflict recovery. It addressed issues related to DDR processes as a whole as well as the R-phase in particular. The Burundi case study focuses on the R-phase and the socio-economic context in which reintegration takes place (for an overview of research questions, composition of the research team and limitations of the present study, see Annex A).

The current case study on Burundi offers an overview of the reintegration process in the contemporary setting of a poor, land-locked, post-conflict country. Burundi has little in the way of natural resources, which makes the country almost completely dependent on foreign

² L. Specker, *The R-phase of DDR processes: an overview of key lessons learned and practical experiences*, Conflict Research Unit, Clingendael Institute, The Hague, September 2008.

assistance (primarily Official Development Aid – ODA). Burundi has witnessed a long period of civil war characterized by a process of militarization of the state, controlled by a minority group, and armed opposition from various rebel groups operating from the rural outback. None of the protagonist forces was able to win a decisive military victory. A protracted negotiation process, under the guidance of Tanzania, eventually led to a peace agreement in 2000 between a limited number of actors involved. However, it took another three years before the most important rebel group, the Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Forces de la Défense de la Démocratie (CNDD-FDD), endorsed the Arusha Peace Agreement, although it had not directly participated in its realization. Importantly, they managed to negotiate a power-sharing formula within the armed forces between the Tutsi minority and the Hutu majority. At present, FNL is the only remaining armed actor, which has yet to fully reintegrate the peace process. Negotiations are taking place at both the military (numbers to be reintegrated into the security forces) and the political level (representation of FNL leadership in Burundian political institutions).

Burundi eventually benefited from the Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (MDRP), set up with a trust fund under World Bank coordination to assist a number of countries in the Great Lakes Region to implement DDR programmes. The logic of the donor choice of a regional approach stemmed from the fact that the war in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) had been truly regional in extent, drawing in almost all neighbouring states. It was felt that peace in the region remained rather fragile and that the presence of various armed groups, notably in the Great Lakes Region, destabilized the entire region, and that a carefully planned regional DDR approach might make a difference. Isolated DDR processes would probably fail as they would be unable to adequately address inter-regional migration of fighters from one war theatre to another. More generally, even where DDR programmes had been implemented in the region, they had not been sufficiently integrated into the larger post-conflict reconstruction effort. In many cases rather isolated attempts at partial security system reform had materialized and the existence of large outstanding case-loads of refugees and internally displaced people remained problematic, largely because of continued political infighting between powerful elite groups.

The MDRP programme was meant to initiate a different approach as it was designed to provide multi-year and multi-donor aid to DDR in the entire sub-region. At the core of the MDRP, a trust fund was set up to which individual donors donated funds. The World Bank was designated to coordinate the trust fund and to oversee the procedures governing resource allocation, project proposal selection, tendering procedures and (timely) disbursement. Local ownership therefore was strongly emphasized as a prerequisite for national DDR programmes falling under the regional MDRP scheme. As a result, the financial coordination was handled by the MDRP secretariat of the World Bank, whereas the planning and operational capacity was relegated to national entities. UN organizations could come in to help implement parts of these national programmes, together with bilateral implementing agencies, NGOs and INGOs. Conceptually, the MDRP was never considered a substitute for the more encompassing peace processes in the various countries, but merely a complementary initiative, one that actively contributed to these larger processes.

From 2004 until 2008, the DDR process in Burundi was implemented through the MDRP. The national programme was based on the provisions of the Arusha Peace Agreement and the design of the DDR programme was, in turn, based on the Regional Strategy for the MDRP. The core goal for the MDRP programme in Burundi was a contribution to a peaceful democratic transition through a substantial reduction in the number of armed fighters. With the passing of the (extended) deadline for demobilization on 31 March 2008, the MDRP-funded national programme focused on reintegration of those ex-combatants already in the programme. This programme closed in December 2008. The MDRP has set out a framework for a new DDR programme based on a single-country trust fund. Provided the Burundian authorities welcome it, it is hoped it can be operationalised by the beginning of 2009.

At the end of the lifespan of Burundi's national DDR programme, the conclusion is that the DDR process has not been completed. In broad terms, two areas still exist where further DDR is necessary. The first one is the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of fighters from the last rebel group, FNL. Before this can be done, a final peace agreement between the FNL and the government of Burundi is necessary, in which the size and composition of the Burundian army is decided upon. The second area pertains to the reduction of the army and

the police, in order for these organizations to fit into the strategic vision of the government for the future security of the country.

This case study aims to provide a succinct overview of the reintegration component of the MDRP programme in Burundi to date, noting the major successes and shortcomings. Furthermore, the authors present a number of suggestions about how in the near future a prospective reintegration process could be initiated. First, a description is given of the main outcomes of the DDR process in Burundi, before turning to the reintegration component. The institutional set-up of the reintegration programme and a number of important conceptual issues will be discussed, followed by a description of the urban and a rural dimension of reintegration. The following sections deal successively with associations of ex-combatants and self-help groups, the issue of vocational training, the role of the private sector and alternative approaches to reintegration. The review of the past reintegration programmes is rounded off with a paragraph on successes and failures, and this is followed by a section setting out a number of major conclusions.

The case study continues with an identification of options for a follow-up phase for reintegration. Different perspectives are highlighted: the security sector perspective, the peace and stability perspective and a broader developmental perspective on reintegration. The last section also contains some ideas for concrete follow-up measures and for a possible implementation structure now that the MDRP has come to an end.

1. DDR in Burundi

Under the umbrella of the MDRP, a number of Central African countries have implemented DDR programmes. At the individual country level, every country has been responsible for the establishment of national mechanisms for the supervision and implementation of the reintegration programmes. Therefore, crucially, individual African countries themselves are responsible for the streamlining and coordination of the national programmes. MDRP is a uniform programme financed by the International Development Association (IDA), the World

Bank and bilateral donors, which have pledged funds for a trust fund. The World Bank coordinates the Trust Fund.

In Burundi a national commission for DDR was established, presided over by President Nkurunziza. It included a number of cabinet ministers (representing the Ministries of the Interior, of Finance, of Defence, of National Security and of Solidarity) and also, latterly, a special presidential representative. This National Commission met every two to three months to take crucial guiding policy decisions. Under the guidance of the National Commission an executive secretariat (ES) was established, divided into a demobilisation unit and a reintegration unit. It was based in the building known as the Peace House in Bujumbura and was headed by General Silas Ntigurirwa. The ES was responsible for implementation of the national DDR programme.

In Burundi, 26,000 soldiers and ex-rebels were eventually demobilized under the MDRP programme. Importantly, some 20,000 para-military combatants linked to the *Forces Armées du Burundi* (FAB), so-called Custodians of the Peace and another 10,000 so-called ‘militant combatants’, linked to the *Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Forces de la Défense de la Démocratie* (CNDD-FDD) were also demobilized, making 56,000 ex-combatants in total.

The MDRP started in 2004, and during Phase I some 14,000 ex-combatants, mostly ex-rebels from various factions, were demobilized. Phase II was meant to demobilize soldiers from the regular army and police officers. In total some 12,000 ex-combatants were demobilized. During the course of 2006 political problems materialized within the regular forces, because it became hard to persuade people to voluntarily leave the army for an insecure future as a demobilized ex-combatant. Also, during this period, army salaries had been increased, which was clearly no incentive to demobilize. In addition, recruitment of new soldiers was ongoing. Moreover, owing to the power transition between the established Hutu parties and newcomer CNDD-FDD, the ethnic balance within the army remained a sensitive issue throughout the demobilization process. These issues have slowed down Phase II significantly. Consequently, the process became deadlocked and hence an outstanding caseload of soldiers and police

officers scheduled to be demobilized still remains. The army at present has around 27,000 soldiers, but should be scaled down to 25,000; the national police force numbers 18,000, but is scheduled to be downsized to about 15,000 officers. Even if the negotiated target figures are realized, Burundi is a small country and military insiders think that whether it should maintain an army of 25,000 soldiers is open to question.³ An army of that size is probably too high a burden for the national budget, so future downsizing can be expected, implying that more people need to be demobilized and reintegrated into society.

By and large, the integration of CNDD-FDD into the national army and the national police force is regarded as a relative success story. Notably, the army has become a factor of post-conflict stability in Burundi despite a deteriorating political context characterized by ongoing political infighting between the incumbent government majority party and other political parties, continuing economic stagnation and increasing curbs on the media. Not all Hutu protagonist forces agree with the prevailing power-sharing formula in the army. At present, Palipehutu-FNL challenges the constitutional arrangements resulting from the Arusha Peace Agreement, claiming that the incumbent ruling party CNDD-FDD has squandered Hutu majority interests. Neither FNL nor CNDD-FDD has signed Arusha, but the latter has endorsed the Agreement's application by joining the political process and accepting the constitutional arrangements deriving from it. FNL argues that the self-proclaimed defenders of the Hutu cause have repeatedly failed to ensure perceived Hutu entitlements, i.e. a majority share in all state institutions (Frodebu during the Arusha Peace Agreement in 2000 and CNDD-FDD during the transitional period). A prime example of this can be found in the 'top brass' of the security sector, as representatives of the Tutsi minority still control crucial posts in the army.

In view of the precarious balance within the army, the negotiations with FNL to eventually integrate a number of its troops may threaten stability. So far, a balance between Hutu and Tutsi in the new army, the Forces de Défense Nationale (FDN), has not been fully achieved. There is mistrust between the actors involved with regard to ranks and numbers of soldiers on

³ Interviews with high-ranking military officers in Bujumbura, September to early October 2008.

both sides. A large number of members of the former Forces Armées Burundaises (FAB, the old army), who should have been demobilized already, are still dragging their feet. This continues to fuel tensions within the army. Whereas Tutsi continue to dominate the army, the presidency circumvents the Tutsi-dominated high command when it comes to decision-making concerning the management and reform of the armed forces. Bringing the FNL into this highly polarized context would complicate matters even further. It is widely assumed that the Tutsi leadership will want to secure high-ranking army posts also in the near future in exchange for some degree of compromise regarding the influx of FNL fighters into the army. Therefore the insertion of an FNL contingent will require management of these latent conflicts.

Finally, by and large, it has become clear that DDR in Burundi is an ongoing process, as the FNL negotiations are likely to yield another caseload to be disarmed, demobilized and reintegrated in the near future. Simultaneously, it is important to take into account also those within the FDN (notably ex-FAB) who are dragging their feet, when trying to determine the size of future caseloads. Reintegration packages will have to be attractive, because otherwise people will be hesitant to demobilize.

2. Reintegration in Burundi

The programme of reintegration started after a 15-month delay. Of the US\$41.8 million earmarked for Burundi in the MDRP programme, only some US\$20 million has actually been disbursed. The IDA provided additional funds to what was available through the World Bank MDRP programme. The total actually spent must have been around US\$42 million for the reinsertion and reintegration packages of the 25,000 ex-combatants involved.

The national mechanism responsible for implementing the reintegration trajectory is the Department of Integration within the ES of the NCDDR. At a lower level the ES has set up regional offices. Each of these regional offices covers a number of provinces; for example, the Central regional office based in Gitega covers Gitega and Karuzi provinces and the Eastern regional office based in Ruyigi covers Ruyigi, Cankuzo and Rutana provinces. The NCDDR

regional offices are headed by a regional coordinator assisted by a programme officer; both are salaried employees working full-time for the NCDDR. At field level these offices work with so-called focal points, which represent the ex-combatants at the level of rural communes. The focal points have caseloads that vary widely in size; some cover around 30 ex-combatants whereas the Gitega town focal point allegedly covers nearly 500. They have been elected by the ex-combatants in their respective communes for a term of one year. They receive a stipend to cover logistical and communication costs as well as a bicycle.⁴ Their mandate is to deliver key evaluation data on all ex-combatants in their commune. However, they have not been trained to handle reintegration bottlenecks or how to deal with problematic cases. This implies that they merely monitor what is going on at field level and report this back to the regional office. Although most focal points are deeply committed, it is clear that they have not been enabled to carry out any work beyond monitoring and that their mandate does not extend beyond this task.

The Burundian reintegration programme was informed by a Burundian committee, which had been set up during the Arusha negotiations to draw up plans for socio-economic reintegration. This committee identified a number of sectors and activities in which the ex-combatants could be reintegrated: crafts sector, income-generating activities, specific trades, agriculture and cattle breeding. However, neither the Burundian committee nor the international experts involved considered carrying out a thorough economic context analysis in order to assess the absorption capacity of the Burundian economy or tried to determine the specific qualifications for which there would be sufficient demand in the post-conflict setting of the country.

The main focus of the reintegration programme was the individual ex-combatant, not the host community. This approach had far-reaching consequences for the prospects for real reintegration, because ex-combatants remained a separate social category regarded by other war-affected groups as privileged, and this forced them to cling on to their identity as war veterans, thus hindering acceptance by host communities. However, at an early stage the Burundian reintegration committee adopted an associative concept for reintegration with the

⁴ Initially this stipend was 50,000 Burundian Francs (francs burundais – FB) a month, but this has been raised to 80,000 FB, plus a bicycle to enable them to move around their respective communes.

aim of helping to organize ex-combatants in associations and collectives. Also, the MDRP initially aimed to benefit ex-combatants and host communities simultaneously. After renewed negotiations between the international community and the GoB this approach changed to one which concentrated on the individual. The sum of 600,000 Burundian francs (around US\$600) per person was earmarked for reintegration purposes. According to some experts, reintegration implemented on an individual basis rather than collectively⁵ was necessary in order to break the chain of command within the armed factions. Retaining group structures of ex-combatants in villages would have been tricky, as they could have easily been remobilized by their former commanders. More importantly, at that time the desire to demobilize ex-rebels and ex-FAB was the main factor driving the GoB to engage in individual programmes and it would never have succeeded without any real incentive for individual ex-combatants. In exchange for concrete material incentives they supposedly were ready to leave the army and the police and to reintegrate into civilian life voluntarily.

Although some professionals resent the adoption of an individual approach under the MDRP, others indicate that it was a shared decision between the Burundians involved and the World Bank representatives.⁶ Furthermore, generally speaking, the communal approach is not deep-rooted in the Burundian way of life. “You cannot force people to associate with one another if they do not want to.”⁷

The reintegration trajectory can be split into two parts. During the first part those combatants who were to demobilize and reintegrate into civilian life were assembled in cantonment sites where they stayed on average for a period of around 18 months. During these 18 months the combatants awaiting demobilization continued to receive their pay, financed by the World Bank and the IDA, which classified these payments as Indemnités Transitoires de Subsistance (ITS – transitory subsistence allowances). The ex-combatants received the ITS in four installments, one for the first nine months, followed by three disbursements at three-monthly

⁵ Interview with Colonel Mbaye Faye, Director SSR-SA, BINUB, Bujumbura, 29 September 2008.

⁶ Interview with Pierre Claver Sinzinkayo, Directeur de l'Intégration, ES, NCDDR, Bujumbura, 29 September 2008.

⁷ Quoted from an interview with Madjior Solness Dingamadji, Senior Social Development Specialist, MDRP Secretariat, World Bank, Bujumbura, 23 September 2008.

intervals. The amounts disbursed varied according to the rank of the individuals concerned. The ITS were mostly disbursed by small credit banks, *Coopération d'Épargne et de Crédit* (COPECs), in the rural areas, which avoided problems of mass groupings of ex-combatants and related security issues.

There was an enormous time lag between disbursement of the ITS money and distribution of the reintegration packages. The interval between demobilization and reintegration was long – more than a year – owing to the lengthy procedures of the organizations involved (NCDDR and the donors).⁸ Allegedly, it took the World Bank team over a year to secure approval for the strategic programme that had been tabled by the ES at the end of 2004.⁹ Also, the new government was besieged by all types of post-war priorities (such as food shortages and even famine in some parts of Burundi, the issue of resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and returnees, a proliferation of disputes over title deeds and land issues, constitutional issues and the application of the terms contained in the Arusha agreement), which did not facilitate the smooth implementation of the reintegration programme. Additionally, and for a variety of reasons, the ES proceeded very slowly from the start, hampering the efficient execution of the programme.

The time lag between the ITS and the reintegration funding for most ex-combatants resulted in an agonizing forced transition period, which condemned most ex-combatants to accumulate debts and to remain involuntarily idle. Feelings of frustration among the rank and file of ex-combatants ran high, to the point that implementing agencies and their staff were frequently harassed.¹⁰ Currently, groups of ex-combatants still picket the gate of the NCDDR's ES and sporadically there are confrontations between the protesters and the police. Of the 25,000 ex-combatants who have been reintegrated to date the vast majority have chosen to engage in AGR.

⁸ Joseph Bigirumwami, technical expert PADCO, Bujumbura, 22 September 2008.

⁹ Pierre Claver Sinzinkayo, Directeur de l'Intégration, ES, NCDDR, partly wrote this proposal after he joined in March 2004. Interview, Bujumbura, 29 September 2008.

¹⁰ Interview with NGO PADCO staff, Bujumbura, 1 October 2008.

3. Implementation of the NCDDR reintegration programme

In late 2005 the NCDDR issued a call for proposals for reintegration projects, but at that time DDR had become highly politicized and a limited group of NGOs only reluctantly decided to participate. At the end of 2005 CNDD had just been elected, and control of the NCDDR had shifted from FRODEBU to CNDD. CNDD strongman General Silas Ntugurirwa was appointed head of mission of the Executive Secretariat. Although the participating NGOs had been urged to speed up their proposals their contracts were not approved until September 2006, by which time the bulk of ex-combatants had already been waiting one year for the reintegration trajectory. Meanwhile, many promises had been made to the ex-combatants by government representatives, but unfortunately, contradictory messages regarding the size and form of reintegration support were circulating. As a consequence, many ex-combatants expected to be paid reintegration bonuses in cash, whereas in reality they were to receive support in kind.

INGOs PADCO and Africare, together with a Burundian NGO, Tuitezimbere, were selected to implement the reintegration programme. During the first phase of reintegration these three NGOs covered the entire country. After this phase, at the end of 2007 the NCDDR invited additional implementing agencies to tender for contracts related to reintegration work.

Typically, the NGOs retained by the NCDDR were fully responsible for implementing the reintegration activities and had to recruit staff, organize logistical support and ensure provision of all additional services required. The NCDDR provided a list with the badge numbers of the ex-combatants involved so NGOs could more easily trace them. In principle, the ex-combatants had five choices: 1) return to their former employment situation (re-employment); 2) back to formal education at school; 3) engage in vocational training; 4) receive entrepreneurial support; or 5) receive AGR support.

Implementing NGOs were to invite ex-combatants to come up with a project proposal which was subsequently passed on to the regional offices of the NCDDR for processing and approval. The regional coordinator was mandated to approve individual project proposals from ex-combatants, which are required for disbursement. NGOs gave ex-combatants a four-day training course in basic skills: accounting, stock-keeping, writing receipts, dealing with clients and so on. After approval by the regional NCDDR coordinator, NGOs were to go and acquire the materials for the option that the beneficiary had indicated; e.g., engine parts for a mechanic's retail shop, food items for a grocery stall and so on. After this, the goods would be taken to the beneficiary's house in order to make sure that the beneficiary had a place of their own and that they would use the start-up kit appropriately. Many ex-combatants resented the fact that they were not given money instead of the start-up kit materials. In the aftermath of the civil war, many ex-combatants simply wanted to move on with their lives and therefore they were only interested in 'quick fix' solutions that could help them start up their lives again.¹¹

In general, collaboration between the national mechanism and NGO implementers has been unsatisfactory. For some agencies, being an implementing partner was very frustrating, because they had to abide by the rules laid down by the ES. Frequently, agency representatives accused NGOs of obfuscating the programme or sometimes simply changing the very rules the ES had imposed earlier.¹² It usually took months to get the relevant paperwork done and this represented Kafkaesque bureaucratic hassles for the ex-combatants. In turn, the ex-fighters, eager to get on with their lives, took it out on implementing agencies, such as the NGO partners of the NCDDR (PADCO, Africare and others). It seemed that the national mechanism, which was intended to ensure local ownership of the project, in fact turned out to be an institution working against the very implementers it had selected. Its representatives actually denigrated these organizations to mask the fact that they themselves were incapable of

¹¹ This is a general observation shared by most professionals involved in reintegration, including Burundian nationals and government officials.

¹² The Executive Secretary of the NCDDR, General Silas, stated on public radio that the progressive installments scheme initially used had been imposed by PADCO, one of the implementers of the programme supposedly coordinated by the Executive Secretariat.

running the programme properly, meanwhile using part of the programme funding for personal gain.¹³

4. Urban and rural reintegration

a) Urban reintegration

In the urban areas, mostly comprising Bujumbura and its immediate suburbs, the reintegration programme dealt with fairly homogeneous groups of ex-combatants. The majority of the urban target groups concerned ex-CNDD-FDD and ex-FAB members. The war had resulted in the ethnic cleansing of specific suburbs, controlled by either Hutus or by Tutsis. In the Hutu-controlled suburbs most ex-combatants had served in various rebel movements. Owing to the intense fighting close to the capital, many found their houses had been destroyed and their families were affected, some having been killed, while others dispersed and had become refugees. In the immediate aftermath of the war most ex-rebels returned to an almost entirely destroyed post-conflict setting. Their relatives expected them to rebuild the family home and reunite the remaining family members. Some simply had no place to return to and were forced to buy small plots of land or to rent houses from other community members.

Another group comprised people who used to live in the countryside, but who had come to the capital after the war in search of a job and a new existence. The ITS money was massively used to purchase land or materials for rebuilding houses. Unfortunately, the amount disbursed generally did not suffice to cover the costs of building materials. Hence ex-combatants were eager to sell their reintegration package once it materialized. A situation therefore emerged in which ex-combatants used whatever resources were available to re-establish themselves and their families in the suburban context in which they had grown up or – in the case of newcomers – in which they aspired to live.

¹³ Report on misappropriation of funds within the Executive Secretariat of the NCDDR, following the general inspection, Bujumbura, September 2008.

The reintegration programme offered a number of options under guise of AGR, such as petty trade, sale of soft drinks, starting up a bar, selling cloth, trading in staple food and so on. The AGR turned out to represent the main pathway into socio-economic reintegration for the bulk of the ex-combatants. They generally did not care which reintegration project they opted for as long as the package they eventually received could be sold with a minimum loss. It is quite common to meet people who sold their packages to the very businessmen from whom an implementing partner in the reintegration programme had purchased the goods, and this had happened almost immediately after receipt of the package.¹⁴ In the Burundian context loan sharks proliferate, lending out money at exorbitant interest rates. Once the ex-combatants had left their cantonment sites with the remaining ITS money they were virtually left to their own devices, without adequate follow-up support from implementing agencies. It can be safely asserted that the majority of these ex-combatants gradually ended up in a situation of chronic indebtedness, partly due to their inability to properly manage resources.

The ex-FAB is another vulnerable group, as they were previously taken care of by an army system which looked after nearly all aspects of everyday life (housing, health care, food distribution, schooling of children, pension fund and so on). It is hardly surprising that ex-FAB members were reluctant to leave the army. At present, those who have been demobilized continue living as if nothing had changed, including the daily consumption patterns to which they had become accustomed. The ex-FAB are ill prepared to face the constraints of everyday civilian life. The MDRP-funded reintegration programme has not taken their background into consideration; the approach was standardized and did not allow for individual tailor-made approaches. Hence, the ex-FAB constitutes a group of relatively well-trained and professional soldiers and officers who have been relegated to the status of unsalaried civilians. This has fuelled resentment and it is widely rumoured that some ex-FAB members joined the ranks of dissident General Nkunda in neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Furthermore, the prevailing reintegration approach has resulted in the multiplication of small businesses in an impoverished post-conflict suburban setting. Consequently, the supply side by

¹⁴ Interviews with male and female ex-combatants in Bujumbura, throughout the fieldwork period, 21 September to 5 October.

far exceeds local demand. The impact on the local economy is negligible as the newcomers are unable to establish themselves in a hugely competitive market. Most of the ex-combatants who did engage in AGR, have been unable to compete with existing small traders, as they lack access to wholesale traders and, more critically, to credit facilities. Due to an extremely low level of sales, this new group of petty traders eats into its own meager start-up reserves and within six months to one year they have consumed their own capital. In the suburban context of Bujumbura this has led to the creation of a potentially violent 'lumpen' group consisting of ex-combatants, and there are indications that individuals are being recruited for harassment and even as hit-men for powerful members of the elite.¹⁵

b) Rural reintegration

In the rural hinterland of Burundi another reintegration scenario unfolded. Burundi is predominantly a rural country, with some 95 per cent of its people involved in some way or other in subsistence agriculture. Land ownership continues to be the most important variable determining the relative wealth of rural dwellers. The average land holding per family in Burundi is around half a hectare, which at present is regarded as insufficient for a sustainable livelihood.

Many ex-combatants who joined CNDD-FDD used to live on one of the hilltops, characteristic of the landscape of rural Burundi. Many had fled military campaigns carried out by the regular army, which used a kind of scorched earth strategy to flush out rebel forces from a specific area. In some cases, people had fled earlier waves of violence during the country's recent history of conflict (1972/1993 and 1994/1999). The time of displacement from their family plot and recruitment into the rebel forces is an important indicator for the reintegration option of an individual ex-combatant in the countryside. If individuals and their families were uprooted long ago, their lands are likely to have been taken over by others. Therefore, these demobilized ex-rebels did not have the option of returning to their own family plot and, as was the case in the suburbs of Bujumbura, they tried to purchase plots of land with their ITS money. They also used part of it to reunite their families, who mostly were

¹⁵ Interview with ex-combatants in Kamenge suburb, Bujumbura, 23 September 2008.

living in refugee camps in Tanzania. For some among this group of ex-combatants, the ITS money could buy them half a hectare of land, depending on the price and availability, whereas others were less fortunate.

Other ex-fighters of more recent vintage, however, were able to return to their own family holdings and could start rebuilding a family house. The reintegration programme in the countryside not only offered the same options typical of an urban environment i.e. petty trade, but also agricultural support programmes, such as the purchase of a few cows or goats as a reintegration package.

Generally, those who opted for livestock and were able to secure their land holdings reintegrated into their former livelihood system, where these additional resources constituted a significant additional input. From the interviews held in some of the rural areas of Ruyigi and Karuzi provinces, it becomes clear that this particular group of ex-combatants has successfully reintegrated. Moreover, they also engage in commercial activities as a secondary activity and are well placed in the centre of Burundi to engage in contraband activities, which is proliferating throughout the country.¹⁶

In the rural towns and smaller urban service centres another reintegration scenario emerged, more or less identical to that which unfolded in the suburbs of Bujumbura. Here, as in Bujumbura, many ex-combatants opted for some form of trade to eke out a living. Typically, in such rural service centres, fairly large groups of small traders are engaged in providing identical services and goods. In a stagnant economy this leads, as in the case of the suburban context, to traders having to gradually eat into their own stock, because turnover is too slow to create a profit margin large enough to sustain a family. In this particular scenario people slowly consume their reintegration package to the point of stock depletion. Consequently, many end up as they had started, jobless and without resources.

¹⁶ Interview with Pierre Claver Sinzinkayo, Directeur de l'Intégration, Executive Secretariat, NCDDR, Bujumbura, 29 September 2008.

It can be concluded that almost all ex-combatants who opted for AGR ended up as they had started; poor, deprived and without any prospect of genuine socio-economic reintegration. The reintegration programme largely failed to identify activities that could have made a difference in the post-conflict setting of Burundi. Thus many ex-combatants were doomed to fail as they had been ill prepared to face the constraints of trading, lacking skills and also lacking the networks necessary for survival in a marginal economic setting.

5. Associations and self-help groups

a) Associations and cooperatives

Although the MDRP targeted individual ex-combatants, a number of associations have been established. The NCDDR's ES lists some 132 associations involving ex-combatants. These associations are organized around concrete activities and with a precise aim. In Kamenge a collective bakery was set up, but most associations centred on agricultural activities or trade.

Tentatively, from the few associations visited by the research team, it can be inferred that the associative approach does work, despite the fact that most are still at an embryonic stage. Important parameters for success seem to be the quality of leadership, availability and access to capital and the ability to reconcile civilian and ex-combatants within the association itself. Importantly, ex-combatants have organized associations and invited civilians to join, thereby initiating local processes of reconciliation. The total number of ex-combatants involved in associations is estimated between a low estimate of 1,500 and a high estimate of about 3,000, constituting between 6 and 12 per cent of all demobilized people to date.

b) Self-help groups

There are also some self-help associations of ex-combatants organized through the Centre d'Encadrement et de Développement des ex-Combattants (CEDAC). This is an association of ex-combatants, which claims to have 14,000 members. Its aim is to unite ex-combatants from all walks of life and to develop a common vision. Every member has to pay an entry fee of 1,000 Burundian francs for the funding of the CEDAC office. CEDAC does not have a

structure on the ground but many of its members are NCDDR focal points, and are able to provide updates on the situation in the provinces, obtained via the formal system.

The self-help groups may well provide many ex-combatants with a social back-up network, as most of them continue to be stigmatized as a group. The most important impact of a women's network that was visited in a suburb of Bujumbura, seems to be the informal training among women. Self-help groups may also provide a starting point for trauma healing and socialization of ex-fighters, and hence may be a useful entry point for assistance.

6. Vocational training

Very few ex-combatants chose to become craftsmen, although there were enough local providers eager to take on apprentices. There was little interest among the ex-combatants in vocational training and only a few of them opted for this (an estimated 5 per cent of the total caseload). Former child soldiers, however, showed more interest in skills training. Of the 3,016 child soldiers reintegrated to date, some 700 opted for vocational training (23 per cent), about 1,800 (60 per cent) opted for income-generating activities, and the remainder (500) returned to formal education.¹⁷ Typically, the ex-combatants or ex-child soldiers would be transported to Bujumbura, where training institutes were contracted to provide skills training courses. The ex-combatants had to rent a house, buy food and pay for transport, which gobbled up a fair share of the reintegration package. On average a training course lasted three to six months.

It seems, therefore, that the vocational training projects reached only a small target group. Moreover, the set-up was too centralistic, being based only in the Bujumbura area, and most applicants ended up consuming their reintegration money for training and living costs. The result was that in many cases ex-combatants, once they had finished their courses and were considered to be qualified, were sent off without any proper equipment to enable them to put their skills to use on returning to their places of origin.

¹⁷ Interview with Pierre Claver Sinzinkayo, Directeur de l'Intégration, NCDDR Executive Secretariat, Bujumbura, 29 September 2008.

7. The role of the private sector in reintegration

The Burundian economy is not capable of absorbing 30,000 ex-combatants. Generally, the overall socio-economic context is not amenable to job creation. Everybody fears the upcoming elections and there is no trust among potential investors. There is a wait-and-see approach. There are very few possibilities of employment for ex-combatants in the private sector.

To some entrepreneurs job creation for ex-combatants is first and foremost the responsibility of the state as it has trained and recruited the ex-combatants itself (through either the former FAB or the incumbent majority government party which used to be a rebel movement). The state should identify economic sectors into which the ex-combatants might find work. The state should also work with the donors and try to establish programmes in which ex-combatants' salaries are subsidized, partly as an incentive for private entrepreneurs to take them on board and help train them.

A security company such as Protection Surveillance et Gardiennage (PSG) could, for instance, take on a number of ex-combatants for a short training course. However, to date not a single civil servant or higher-ranking official has contacted private companies such as PSG to discuss these issues. There is a lack of planning capacity and strategic insight into what is required to help reintegrate ex-combatants.¹⁸ Nevertheless, at higher policy-making levels within the GoB there is a growing awareness that the private sector should be mobilized to help reintegrate ex-combatants. The government realizes it has to create some means of helping them back into the world of work. "We should identify those businessmen who are willing to employ ex-combatants and guarantee to keep them at least for a given period, and in return receive from the donors a sum covering the cost of two years' pay."¹⁹

¹⁸ Interview with Bonaventure Ntaramenyekana, Director PSG, Bujumbura, 23 September 2008.

¹⁹ Quoted from an interview with General Evarist Ndayishimiye, chief military cabinet and military adviser to the President, Bujumbura, 1 October 2008.

Ex-combatants come to companies like PSG to find work. However, it is difficult for companies to employ them as many are illiterate and their behaviour may be problematic. Also, employing ex-combatants in security enterprises seems risky to some, as most ex-combatants are badly paid and for this reason are the cause of much insecurity, theft and banditry.²⁰

If the formal private sector is to play a role there needs to be a credible interface that allows communication with the relevant players. As the chamber of commerce in Burundi ceased being functional long ago, every enterprise in Burundi is on its own and struggling to survive. Contacts between actors in the private sector are random and the result of independent initiatives. There is no organized private sector lobby that could engage with the state and the donor community to initiate strategies to deal with socio-economic issues, such as the development of viable reintegration trajectories for ex-combatants.

In the informal economy there are a few examples of activities in which ex-combatants tend to be represented. The motor taxi sector, a relatively new phenomenon in Burundi, is one example. In Kamenge, a suburb of Bujumbura, a group of motor taxi drivers has recently started an association which to date has about one hundred members, including a small number of ex-combatants. The association does not want to stigmatize people and hence it does not take into consideration people's background when they apply for membership.²¹

At present there are few possibilities for initiating programmes for ex-combatants with specific private sector entrepreneurs in Burundi, and it seems that, by and large, the wish to involve the private sector remains externally motivated. However, some groups can more easily be integrated, as demonstrated by the case of ex-FAB members working in the security firms. The post-war economic context in Burundi remains rather unstable mainly owing to domestic political factors, i.e. political infighting and power struggles between various factions and the inability to arrive at equitable power-sharing formulas. Local entrepreneurs are reluctant to invest because the political stability in Burundi remains compromised, as exemplified by the

²⁰ Interview with Isaie Nibizi, security and defence adviser to the First Vice-President, Bujumbura, 29 September 2008.

²¹ Interview with Jack, an ex-combatant, who supervises the bike parking lot where the association is based, Bujumbura, 1 October 2008.

unrest related to the forthcoming elections. Also, the incumbent government is reluctant to invest in job creation directly, as this may quickly become a budgetary quagmire. Hence the idea to subsidize entrepreneurs who are willing to take on caseloads of ex-combatants with the help of external donor money. It remains to be seen how sustainable such a proposal will be in the current Burundian economic context. Some donors, such as the European Union, have started programmes in which a fairly large number of ex-combatants have been employed as manual labourers, but these projects have a short time span and do not create new jobs for the medium to long term.

8. Success and failure of reintegration

Overall, the provisional conclusion on reintegration is one of dismal failure. A large majority of ex-combatants benefited only temporarily from a stipend in cash or in kind, but were unable to organize a successful return to civilian life. Furthermore, the institutional structures and operational procedures were not appropriate to deal with a socio-economic reintegration programme of this magnitude.

Although a small proportion of the ex-combatants opted for vocational training, the majority preferred taking a short cut to earning an income (AGR). The macro-socio-economic context of Burundi is not conducive to a smooth reintegration process. Many ex-combatants have opted for income-generating activities (AGR) but there is simply not enough money circulating and hence demand is low while supply has increased. There are too many small peddlers, boutiques and food traders and turnover is slow. Many ex-combatants end up using their stock to survive and after a while they go bankrupt.

The success rate of the AGR reintegration programmes is estimated at around 40 per cent.²² This relates to a category of people who have higher incomes than the majority of the population, i.e. than the majority of subsistence farmers. A further 30 per cent are living at

²² Interview with Leonidas Nijimbere, Directeur de la démobilisation, Secrétariat Exécutif DDR, Bujumbura, 22 September 2008.

subsistence level and the remaining group can be considered 'lost' (drug addicts, bandits, vagabonds, social misfits and drop-outs). The NCDDR's focal points generally determine whether ex-combatants are successful. They judge the rate of success by looking at the size of their plots, the fertility of their land, their houses, their personal belongings, their livestock (cows and goats) and the size of their banana plantations.²³

Reintegration has been most successful in Gitega and Karusi provinces. The ex-combatants in those areas did not want to go to the towns and opted to receive livestock i.e. cows and goats, as a reintegration package. In general, ex-combatants returning to their (sub)urban origins faced an uphill struggle to reintegrate. Most of them barely managed to resettle with the funds that they received (both the ITS money and the reintegration package).

Those who wanted to go to the towns to escape rural misery have failed because there are no jobs available to them in the urban environment, and also they lack sufficient qualifications. Another group that has failed are the ex-FAB, who have never been accustomed to catering for themselves because they used to be taken care of by the army, receiving free housing, food and clothes. Moreover, they were used to relatively lavish life-styles, spending a significant part of their income on leisure activities. Those who were recruited at the last moment to swell the ranks of splinter factions, notably CNDD-Nyangoma, have also largely failed as a group to reintegrate into civilian life. In addition, those who underwent vocational training generally were trained in skills for which realistically there was little or no demand in their places of origin.

Female ex-combatants, although fairly small in number (500), have generally been more successful at integration. However, specific sub-groups such as child mothers and war widows have encountered problems when returning to their communities (expulsion, social rejection, denial of inheritance rights).

²³ Interview with focal point Gaspard Ntawuyamara, Gitaramuka commune, Karuzi province, 26 September 2008.

When looking at the institutional make-up of the reintegration mechanism in Burundi and the way in which operations were organized, a number of systemic flaws can be identified. The NCDDR from the outset was heavily politicized and gradually became the ‘bank account’ of the ruling party.²⁴ Crucial positions were given to CNDD-FDD appointees. The national mechanism operated extremely slowly and various government actors used funds fraudulently. The doors were left wide open to all kinds of corruption and despite widely circulating rumours, no concrete information was available until recently, when the government ordered an internal audit, which identified specific cases and people involved.²⁵ The international community was lenient in its attitude to rebel movements turned government overnight and although aware of abuse, failed to challenge ongoing practices adequately.

The procedures imposed by the World Bank were not appropriate to deal with DDR, as they were designed to cover large-scale projects such as infrastructure, e.g. road construction. In fact, DDR consists of a myriad of micro-projects and hence an appropriate system should have been put in place. Also, in the post-conflict setting of Burundi ex-combatants generally wanted to cash in as soon as possible and get on with their lives. They considered the reintegration trajectory and the provision of packages as a cumbersome, externally imposed procedure designed to profit those involved in its implementation. Another important issue is the fact that the MDRP programme has not yielded concrete reintegration options that are sustainable and attractive for the majority of ex-combatants in Burundi.

The entire NCDDR reintegration structure was too lightweight to be able to implement and, notably, to be able to supervise and assist ex-combatants properly. The top tier was too large, bureaucratic, politicized and centralized in Bujumbura. The middle tier, i.e., regional offices, had few staff and the field staff comprised the ex-combatant volunteers known as focal points,

²⁴ This observation was corroborated by many respondents during the fieldwork, including Burundian experts and even some government officials.

²⁵ Report of interviews carried out at the Executive Secretariat, NCDDR, during the general inspection of the state and the civil service, Bujumbura, September 2008.

who received a stipend to monitor fairly large groups of ex-combatants.²⁶ Consequently, reintegration has largely failed and there has been very little impact at grass-roots level.

9. Recommendations for a possible follow-up reintegration program: Phase III

a) The security sector perspective

Recommendation: design and apply appropriate screening methods

The army has become an instrument to retain people and to provide secure livelihoods because in the civilian world there are no viable alternatives. In 2002 around 50 per cent of the entire national budget was spent on the military and therefore it was absolutely necessary to find ways to lure people into demobilization. The large numbers of people staying in the army and the national police are a source of destabilisation and they weigh too heavily on the national budget. This is a time bomb because at present there is no real strategy on reintegration.

However, if today the remaining Hutus in the army had a free choice, some 30 per cent of them would choose to demobilize. The army is not what they expected as it is much tougher than they had thought.²⁷ This group of soldiers consists largely of late conscripts, who were recruited by CNDD-FDD and other factions during the interval when they were negotiating a peace agreement with the other political actors. The increase in the numbers of fighters was a deliberate strategy employed to increase leverage at the negotiation table. At the same time, FNL was also using that strategy. However, ultimately the legacy of this strategy will weigh heavily on the security forces of the state, as a certain percentage of these people have managed to enter the army and the police. Consequently, there is a percentage of pseudo-

²⁶ During fieldwork in Gitega, Ruyigi and Karusi provinces the team came across some focal points covering small groups of around 50 ex-combatants but in Gitega town one focal point was supposed to deal with 500.

²⁷ Interview with General Godefroid Niyombare, Vice Chief of Staff of the FDN, Bujumbura, 2 October 2008.

soldiers and policemen among the rank and file of the security forces. These 'false' combatants are those who cause problems in the army.²⁸

Recommendation: identify and train soldiers before demobilization

A sound approach to the reduction of army and police numbers could be to try to economize on the current defence budget. This could be done through the recycling of soldiers and police officers, especially those who have studied and have qualifications (*les licenciés*). It is relatively simple to transform a military health worker into a civilian health worker, and so on. In fact the army/ministry of defence/government should start educating and training soldiers immediately after war has ended in order to prepare them for future reintegration.²⁹ Involving the private sector in this reverse process seems an interesting option, but may be restricted by the private sector's current absorption capacity. On the other hand, a remaining problem with regard to government employment is the limited amount of government revenues available.

Recommendation: design DDR that takes account of future security sector reform

The current negotiations between the incumbent GoB and the FNL about the number of FNL combatants to be integrated into the FDN should be viewed within the perspective of downsizing the army in the near future. Even a relatively modest number reintegrated will have budgetary consequences, as an equal number of Tutsis will have to be recruited in order to respect the constitutional arrangements agreed in the Arusha accord (a 50/50 balance between Hutus and Tutsis in the armed forces). The GoB, already highly indebted, apparently assumes that some donors will pick up that particular bill. Furthermore, realistically speaking, the initiation of security sector reform (SSR) will materialize only after the elections in 2010. Consequently, an exercise to convert the FDN will take years before numbers can effectively start to be reduced. The outcome of the FNL negotiations therefore has consequences for an SSR exercise at a later stage. Finally, a larger army will also require additional demobilization and reintegration efforts at a later stage, thus increasing the expected caseload.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Interview with Leonidas Nijimbere, Directeur de la démobilisation, Secrétariat Exécutif DDR, Bujumbura, 22 September 2008.

b) The peace and stability perspective

Recommendation: draw up a profile of high-risk groups

The proliferation of small arms is the most important security issue.³⁰ Although the armed actors have been demobilized, many individuals have taken their weapons with them. A certain proportion of ex-fighters did not go through DDR or were left out of the process and took their weapons with them and in some cases are now renting them out to others for burglaries or acts of banditry.³¹ This is a source of continuing insecurity and is precisely one of the main reasons why many civilians still have weapons. Furthermore, at present the security structures of the state do not function properly. This is the second most important security issue: the weakness of the state security organizations, notably the national police force. The police are underpaid, lacking in motivation, badly organized, ill disciplined and in fact totally dysfunctional.³²

If a reintegration programme is to take peace and stability as a starting point, it will be necessary to begin profiling high-risk groups as a first step. At present, semi-illiterate young men, mostly ex-CNDD-FDD members living in suburban areas are the most high-risk group. The contemporary conflict history of Burundi demonstrates that conflicts have started mainly as an expression of internal elite rivalry within the Tutsi minority and between specific Tutsi elite groups and other contending groups, including Hutu opposition movements. The expression of this competition has time and again surfaced in violent outbursts in specific suburbs of Bujumbura, but not exclusively there.

The ex-combatants must be considered as a special and vulnerable category of people; they have many mental, physical and material problems. The rest of the population envied the ex-

³⁰ Statement confirmed in interviews with high-ranking Burundian security advisers, Isaie Nibizi and General Major Evariste Ndayishimiye.

³¹ Interview with General Evarist Ndayishimiye, chief military cabinet and military adviser to the President, Bujumbura, 1 October 2008.

³² This opinion was corroborated in interviews with various international and national experts throughout the fieldwork period.

combatants because the MDRP support and excluded them from other regular assistance, which has forced them to retain their identity as ex-combatants.

Throughout the fieldwork a number of professionals involved in the reintegration programme asserted that there was a risk that the former commanders for political reasons might mobilize some of the ex-combatants again. The general elections scheduled for 2010 already cast a shadow on the longer-term stability in Burundi, as the ruling party is poised to win whatever the price. Many ex-combatants are convinced they have been cheated and that they should have received more peace benefits; the ruling party promised many things, which have never been materialized. For some professionals it is clear that if feelings of frustration can be manipulated and channeled towards political polarization, the development of a Zimbabwe or a Kenya scenario is not unlikely.³³ When explicitly asked which percentage would be likely to take up arms again in their respective constituencies, focal points in Karuzi province feared that between 35 and 50 percent of the ex-combatants would do so and rejoin the fighting factions.³⁴

Finally, and contrary to widespread allegations, security problems are not solely related to ex-combatants, but also in many cases to the children of people returned from exile. Burundians in exile had many children and after repatriation they find it hard to maintain such large families. Their children are engaged in petty theft and other criminal acts.³⁵ Therefore a first step forward in the development of an appropriate reintegration strategy should be to undertake a socio-economic baseline analysis of the Burundian context together with a security analysis focusing on specific risk groups and areas.

Recommendation: carry out a socio-economic baseline analysis of the Burundian context

First, a thorough analysis of the socio-economic context of Burundi is required to determine what economic possibilities exist and where there are opportunities for the absorption of ex-

³³ Interview with Gilbert Tsemberako, programme officer, regional NCDDR office, Gitega, 26 September 2008.

³⁴ Interview with focal points in Karuzi province, 26 September 2008.

³⁵ Interview with programme coordinator Libere Bukobero, NGO SOPRAD, Ruyigi, 25 September 2008.

combatants.³⁶ Such a study should be carried out with three dimensions in mind: Bujumbura, the provincial towns and rural service centres, and the rural areas.

Second, in order to identify risk groups it is necessary to profile specific target groups within the expected caseload of ex-combatants to be reintegrated, so as to identify average levels of skills and problems. Post-demobilization screening is needed: what is the ex-combatant's past history, has he or she recently been recruited to help swell the ranks of a rebel faction, are they a long-term fighter, supporter, service provider, spy, 'bush wife' and so on.

Third, a realistic risk analysis based on the profiling exercise should be prepared with the aim of identifying specific geographical areas and using it as a starting point to identify priority groups within such areas. The expected outcome of this exercise is a map of economic opportunities for specific target groups in geographical areas, which would allow interested parties to actively intervene in conflict-prone areas and among specific groups with targeted initiatives as a support strategy to help enhance stability in Burundi.

c) Strategy for a new reintegration programme

New initiatives are rare in Burundi. Generally, the GoB is hesitant to engage in job-creation directly, as this can raise unrealistic expectations of future employment prospects. The mentality of the ex-combatant, moreover, may not be conducive to longer-term career planning. However, ex-combatants have to realize that in civilian life you either work for yourself or for someone else, and that in either case you need to have appropriate qualifications.³⁷

In the opinion of most external agencies, the GoB now has to show what ideas it has for the near future. There seems to be no planning and the Executive Secretariat is not functional.

³⁶ The INGO Transitions International has developed a methodology for preparing a map of economic opportunities, which has been applied in a number of countries and has been of benefit to subsequent reintegration programmes, e.g., in Indonesia and in Liberia.

³⁷ Interview with Madjior Solness Dingamadji, senior social development specialist, MDRP Secretariat, World Bank, Bujumbura, 23 September 2008.

There seems to be some kind of myopia among the main military and political actors, who behave as if they were entitled to benefits without qualifications or effort (widely referred to as a ‘Mugabe complex’).³⁸ Even high-ranking GoB officials did not hesitate to criticize relevant government institutions for their inability to prepare timely and proper planning documents. “The Phase III document (elaborated by the Executive Secretariat) is just a programme of consumption. This document does not reveal a strategic programme on how to organize this process. There should be a short- and a long-term strategy. To date the NCDDR has simply consumed the funds that were given to it.”³⁹ The GoB should be more closely involved, i.e. existing ministries such as the Ministry of Defence, through the ex-combatants department, should be involved.

The GoB has plans to decentralize and integrate the ex-combatants in their respective communes with the help of a new fund it has set up. It is intended that this Fonds National Communal d’Investissement will receive 15 per cent of the national development budget but it has not yet become operational. At the highest policy-making levels within the government, ideas for future development revolve around themes such as the development of tourism and national parks, yet there are already plenty of these in the region as a whole, and Burundi itself does not seem to have any particular assets or strategic advantages in this sphere.

At the level of concrete reintegration interventions and programmes the NCDDR’s Executive Secretariat is proposing a mix of ideas. On the one hand it focuses on the development of appropriate small-scale transformation units for which, however, no preparatory studies have been executed. On the other hand it suggests enforcing vocational training for each and every ex-combatant, which in view of past failures does not seem promising either. Unfortunately, the Phase III document does not reflect lessons learned and it contains no proposals as to how to improve implementation at field level. For example, there should be a better system of monitoring and supervision to assist the ex-combatants, and the national mechanism should make better use of existing government structures and those of the Catholic Church, for

³⁸ An observation that resurfaced repeatedly in conversations with external experts and civil society representatives in Bujumbura.

³⁹ Quoted from an interview with General Godefroid Niyombare, Vice-Chief of Staff, FDN, Bujumbura, 2 October 2008.

instance. Also, at present, the NCDDR has not been able to work closely with the target group, nor with the existing NGO partners operating at field level.

d) A new national mechanism

Recommendation: help design a new national mechanism, fully integrated with line ministries through functional technical units

It seems crucial to consider whether or not to retain the national mechanism. For some it would be enough to replace a few dysfunctional people at the top and help to streamline operations. This seems the easy way forward and probably would be readily acceptable to the GoB. However, in view of the fact that at present there are no functional linkages with line ministries and that the national mechanism has been open to abuse and corruption,⁴⁰ it seems appropriate to consider developing an alternative structure.

With the formal end of the MDRP there is a window of opportunity to start a new national reintegration programme and to create a new structure. In concrete terms, a pilot commission could be established, with a new executive committee coordinating the national reintegration programme Phase III. Crucially, the new executive committee would include high-profile technicians representing the various line ministries to be involved. The President and some ministers could still form the National Commission but it seems important that technicians from the line ministries are involved in Phase III to help prepare meetings. This might result in some reshuffling of positions within the existing Commission. The pilot executive committee should be mandated by the GoB to implement the new Phase III and should be an *ad hoc*, small structure with a permanent secretary, but without needing a large headquarters building such as the Peace House used by the NCDDR's ES.

In order for this to happen, the international community must try to convince high-level policy-makers within the GoB that DDR is mainly a technical exercise. The National

⁴⁰ Report on misappropriation of funds within the Executive Secretariat of the NCDDR, following the general inspection of the state and the civil service, Bujumbura, September 2008.

Commission should discuss only general parameters with the donors and then delegate the process to the proposed technical pilot committee, and mandate it to implement the programme.

Within the ministries involved, small technical units should be set up to ensure development of appropriate government sector specific planning and implementation capacity. For each of these units a budget should be drawn up that allows them to function independently of the respective ministry's budget, while answering to and reporting back to their superiors within its ministry, so as to avoid the creation of 'small states within states'.

Instead of using small craftsmen and NGOs, the GoB should consider bringing in strategic partners with the capacity to pre-finance and sufficient institutional and logistical capacity to deal with large-scale programmes. This approach has been adopted in neighbouring DRC. However, it is important to view longer chains critically and to make sure their potential specific drawbacks (large overheads, longer implementation trajectories) are recognized and taken into account in reintegration project design.⁴¹

The Phase III programme implementation budget should be subject to an open tendering procedure inviting potential strategic partners to submit their ideas. The pilot committee should then select the winning bids and forward its findings and recommendations to the National Commission for sanction and approval. The strategic partners could then undertake reintegration programmes in collaboration with the proposed technical units, in order to ensure functional ownership by the GoB.

In the Burundian context it is unlikely that a ruling party will concede control over vital ministries such as the Ministry of the Interior, and in particular the Ministry of Communal

⁴¹ In principle, longer implementation chains do not have to be problematic, as long as there is a balance between the quality of the work done by the organizations and the costs incurred. However, in the DRC, the relatively large NGO Caritas Bukavu, for instance, was eventually subcontracted by the International Labour Office (ILO – which again had an agreement with Conader) to implement the reintegration phase. The ILO received some 35 per cent of the budget for unspecified overheads, whereas it did not maintain a field office in Bukavu, and nor did it employ any staff. See Pyt Douma and Stefan van Laar (2008), *DDR in the DRC; the role of NGOs in DDR processes*, The Hague: Cordaid.

Development. The Ministry of the Interior nominates governors, administrators and even local councilors at commune level. To be able to bring the programme structure closer to the partners on the ground, it will be necessary to decentralize and use local government structures.

The advantage of the above structure is that functional relations between the national programme and government institutions are ensured and that having strategic partners in charge of managing most of the budget will limit the potential for waste and corruption.

e) Programmes for future reintegration

Recommendation: Develop community-based reintegration programmes centred on transitional justice and focused on local demand

For the near future it would be better to have a community-based reintegration approach in which *Haute Intensité de Main d'Oeuvre* (HIMO), centred on community facilities, can be adopted as a useful starting point. It is important not to separate ex-combatants from the host communities as this may hinder integration in the long term. Such an approach might also serve as an incentive to eventually give up small arms which, as stated earlier, still circulate widely among civilians and ex-combatants alike. Such an approach in fact would mean reintegration before disarmament, and hence represents a partial reversal of the linear DDR implementation strategy.

The NGO PADCO applied this approach earlier, notably in the USAID-funded reintegration programme it carried out. However, ultimately it is crucial that population groups concerned should be consulted prior to the introduction of such an approach and projects identified which are really perceived as important by the target groups. Also, a local analysis of the impact of war crimes committed and of the perpetrators concerned might identify potential stumbling blocks for a community approach. In such cases some kind of transitional justice approach seems appropriate in order to help ensure real reintegration and help enhance local stability.

Recommendation: develop an appropriate vocational training structure in Burundi

For a reintegration programme to succeed it is vital to further develop the vocational training infrastructure in Burundi. As a first step an inventory of the capacity of existing national vocational training centres is needed. Furthermore, this information should be analysed in the light of relevant sections of the economic opportunities study referred to earlier. This study relates to the informal sector and identifies existing crafts as well as business prospects, looking at probable future demand.

Recommendation: include appropriate monitoring and supervision structures in DDR programmes

One of the key areas that needs spelling out in great detail for future contractors in the Terms of Reference produced for reintegration work tenders is supervision and follow-up monitoring of ex-combatants. Better supervision is needed in which professionals are employed who will properly supervise ex-combatants and civilians.

To conclude, although specific activities can be identified and highlighted in this section, thorough preparation and fact-based knowledge of local economies are a necessary precondition. New initiatives could include the introduction of brick making and preservation and processing of agricultural products, provided such initiatives fit in the local context and are likely to help generate an income for the impoverished, war-affected population of Burundi.

f) Longer-term macro-economic strategy

Recommendation: help design long-term development strategies for Burundi, taking into account the regional and macro-economic setting and opportunities

The overall socio-economic context of Burundi is very fragile. Structural solutions are needed, not stop-gap, short-term programmes. The productive sectors have been neglected and it seems unlikely that there are other prospects for development in Burundi. In fact, more should be invested in the major basic economic sectors such as agriculture and construction (roads, bridges, houses).

Agriculture should be prioritized. It is hard to accept that Burundi at present is incapable of producing enough food to sustain its population. Agriculture accounts for a mere 3 per cent of the national budget. One of the long-term consequences of the war has been the development of a dependency mentality; for too long the World Food Programme and other UN organizations have pampered people. Refugees have been sustained for years in camps in Tanzania where they did not have to work and now that they are repatriated they have to cater again for their own needs. This year 68,000 refugees have come back and there are about 180,000 still to return; this also is a socio-economic time-bomb. The donor community has not been very coherent in its efforts to help reintegration. People have been reintegrated into a virtually defunct agricultural system, which has not received adequate funding.

But looking beyond the Burundian economy, it is better to try to find solutions within the broader region, possibly through the free movement of labour mechanism operating under the East African Community agreement. That larger economic space might be able to absorb some of the Burundian workforce. Burundian refugees should be encouraged and facilitated to stay in Tanzania and donors could give incentives to recipient societies, such as in Tanzania, so they are more likely to accept a mutually agreed caseload of Burundians, even if on a seasonal basis.

Annex A

1. Main research objectives

The Burundi case study may provide input for the forthcoming Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Burundi and to the Burundi Multi-annual Strategic Planning (MASP). It also aims to offer policy recommendations on an operational level in order to support the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Bujumbura in the development or adjustment of reintegration programmes. Furthermore, the study pays specific attention to the sequencing aspect of DDR processes in the context of Burundi and considers the desirability and possibilities of not implementing DDR processes in linear order.

2. The main research questions in the Burundi case study:

- What are the main characteristics of the local economy of Burundi? Which factors, including socio-economic factors, hinder the successful reintegration of ex-combatants?
- What has been the impact of the specific reintegration programmes for ex-combatants on the local socio-economic context and to what extent did these programmes contribute to increased stability, in view of the fact that other war-affected groups such as returnees and IDPs also needed to be resettled and reintegrated?
- Is it possible to reverse the order of the different DDR phases in Burundi and to start up Reintegration phase activities before finalization of the Disarmament and Demobilization phases? If so, which options can be identified?
- Which Reintegration activities and programmes can be recommended for Burundi, in both rural and urban areas? How can such programmes be integrated into wider socio-economic recovery programmes that are being implemented in parallel with DDR processes?
- How can the local private sector contribute to reintegration processes and broader socio-economic recovery programmes in Burundi?

3. Composition of the fieldwork team

This case study is a reflection of two weeks of fieldwork conducted from 21 September to 5 October 2008. Pyt Douma, an independent consultant, together with Jean Marie Gasana, a resident Burundian researcher, carried out the fieldwork. Leontine Specker from the Conflict Research Unit of the Clingendael Institute joined the team for the second week of the fieldwork period.

4. Limitations of the paper

Time as usual has been a limiting factor. The research team spent four days in the countryside of Burundi, during which short visits to three provinces were organized (Gitega, Karuzi and Ruyigi). Only a limited number of ex-combatants were interviewed (24) and this sample is too small to be representative of the entire caseload. However, the individuals approached were deliberately selected on the basis of sex, urban/rural and the degree of success in terms of reintegration (above average, average and below average). Much time was again spent in the capital, Bujumbura. Here, important key players were interviewed within the government of Burundi, among international and bilateral actors, NGO workers involved in reintegration, and Burundian and foreign experts. It proved difficult to realize a full socio-economic context analysis for Burundi, given the limited time and the scarcity of relevant documentation available. Finally, it turned out to be extremely difficult to find private sector representatives who had any professional dealings with ex-combatants. In most cases ex-combatants were viewed as a difficult group who do not constitute a priority recruitment labour pool for entrepreneurs. Also, within the context of an ailing, nearly ruined formal sector and a stagnant economy, it is hardly surprising that there were very few opportunities open to ex-combatants.