

Getting it Right, Doing it Right: Gender and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration





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UNIFEM

UNIFEM is the women's fund at the United Nations. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies that promote women's human rights, political participation and economic security. UNIFEM works in partnership with UN organisations, governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and networks to promote gender equality. It links women's issues and concerns to national, regional and global agendas by fostering collaboration and providing technical expertise on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment strategies.

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Preface

Implementing Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security will require long-term political commitment, as well as human and financial resources. Each operational paragraph relates to a sector of the international peace and security agenda of the Security Council and implies the need for change in how the International Community and the UN do business. The resolution is groundbreaking because of its breadth of coverage - including peace negotiations, decision-making, refugee camps, mine-clearance and sanctions, in addition to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). The resolution is also groundbreaking because of the depth of change—in procedure, assessment, delivery, attitudes and habits—that will be necessary for its implementation.



By passing resolution 1325 in October 2000, the Security Council acknowledged that women and men ex-combatants and their dependents have different needs in the DDR process. Successful and inclusive DDR offers a rare opportunity to transform a war-torn community where combatants can become citizens and civilians can begin to rebuild shattered lives under the protection of the rule of law. To leave women and girls behind in such a crucial moment is not only to violate their right to participate but also to undermine the very objectives of DDR, namely sustainable and equitable development.

By and large, international assistance operations still effectively neglect the specific needs of women and girls in armed movements as part of the DDR process. I have seen these gaps with painful clarity. Women combatants, supporters and dependents have not equally benefited from services, cash incentives, health care, training, travel remittance, small business grants or housing support that flow to their male counterparts—males with guns—as part of DDR packages. The plea of a child combatant carrying her child in the demobilization camp in Liberia remains with me: “Don’t forget me, I want to go to school. The terrible irony is that women and girls are not invisible to armed groups, who see them as essential, accessible—and often expendable—military assets. Yet having survived the devastating experiences of war as combatants, sexual captives or military “wives” and slave or willing labourers in the conflict period, these women and girls often become invisible when DDR planning begins.

This handbook is UNIFEM’s contribution to those planning and executing DDR. It contains reflections and lessons learned, case studies and practical guidance in the form of a model standard operating procedure. If these are used, policy makers and practitioners will live up to the standard set by the Security Council in resolution 1325, and the expectations of women that have risen since its adoption in 2000. This is our first step in not forgetting.

1. Introduction: Building on Security Council resolution 1325

Defining DDR

Disarmament is the collection of small arms and light and heavy weapons within a conflict zone. It frequently entails the assembly and cantonment of combatants; it should also comprise the development of arms management programmes, including the safe storage and final disposition of weapons, which may entail their destruction. De-mining may also be part of this process.

Demobilization refers to the process by which parties to a conflict begin to disband their military structures and combatants begin the transformation into civilian life. It generally entails registration of former combatants; some kind of assistance to enable them to meet their immediate basic needs; discharge; and transportation to their home communities. It may be followed by recruitment into a new, unified military force.

Reintegration refers to the process which allows ex-combatants and their families to adapt, economically and socially, to productive civilian life. It generally entails the provision of a package of cash or in-kind compensation, training and job- and income-generating projects. These measures frequently depend for their effectiveness upon other, broader undertakings, such as assistance to returning refugees and internally displaced persons; economic development at the community and national level; infrastructure rehabilitation; truth and reconciliation efforts; and institutional reform. Enhancement of local capacity is often crucial for the long-term success of reintegration.²

During the post-conflict period, prevention of new violence depends on the willingness of armed groups to lay down their arms, disband military structures and return to civilian life. When armed groups or warlords do not put down their weapons or disband their structures, peace is not possible. Therefore, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) marks the beginning of long-term transformation processes, demilitarizing economies, communities and lives. DDR provides perhaps the first opportunity for armed groups, political parties and men and women to renegotiate their identities and their relationships. Due to the security imperative of disarming belligerents, DDR efforts have often commenced hastily, or without adequate planning and resources. In the process, they have often sacrificed gender perspectives and community ownership, thus undermining both security and sustainability.

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on “women and peace and security” specifically addressed these issues and reaffirmed the relevance of gender issues to DDR processes. In paragraph 13, the Security Council “encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependents.” Security Council resolution 1325 recognizes that whether they are combatants, citizens, educators or agents of change, women are an asset to the peace and DDR process and must be afforded their right to participate fully.

UNIFEM offers the findings, recommendations and model Standard Operating Procedures contained in this publication towards the goal of implementing the resolution and towards better integrating women’s needs and perspectives in the planning and execution of DDR programmes. These materials are informed by broad consultation, field visits, case studies on DDR in Liberia and Bougainville, and a desk review of the UN’s involvement in DDR. The practical objective is to learn lessons from past processes so that the knowledge gleaned can inform future efforts, as well as those currently under-

way. A broader objective is to ask how commitment to the inclusion of women and women's perspectives in DDR processes can help the UN develop and re-centre its founding goals of conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction—all stages of conflict pertinent to DDR, which take on quite a new meaning if viewed from a gender perspective.

Each conflict is unique and, accordingly, DDR processes are designed slightly differently each time. Unfortunately almost universally, human and financial resources have been inadequately committed to DDR. That such a crucial transition between war and peace is often funded through voluntary trust funds and not the assessed budgets of peacekeeping and peace-building missions simply prolongs and worsens the problems that occur when weapons are not collected and when armed groups are not disbanded. Various actors already struggling with post-conflict reconstruction are left to solve these problems. This task has proven difficult and, in some places, impossible to carry out when weapons have not been collected and post-conflict reintegration, rehabilitation and reconciliation phases have been poorly planned and do not enjoy the support and ownership of locals, or build upon their capacities.

In the face of a paucity of resources, pragmatic decision-makers have focused DDR efforts on the perceived “real” problem the DDR programmes aim to address; namely, disarming men with guns. This approach fails to address the fact that women can also be armed combatants. Nor does it grapple with the fact that women play essential roles in maintaining and enabling armed groups, in both forced and voluntary capacities. While the narrow definition of who qualifies as a “combatant” has generally been made due to budgetary constraints, leaving women out of the process underestimates the extent to which peace requires women to participate equally in the transformation from a violent society to a peaceful one.

Four years after the passage of resolution 1325, very few would dispute that there is a gender deficit in DDR planning and delivery. The Secretary-General has stated the problem clearly in thematic and country reports to the Security Council. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is revising manuals on gender and DDR in partnership with UNIFEM. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) is more systematically including women in weapons collection and development packages. UNICEF is more deliberately reaching out to girl soldiers and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) is increasingly invited into demobilization camps to provide health services, including psychosocial trauma counselling for women ex-combatants. Recognition of the gender-deficit and willingness to address it is the window of opportunity to replace *ad hoc* measures and one-off projects with routine consideration of the different needs and capacities of women and men. If followed, the guidance and insights offered in this publication will make disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes more inclusive and more successful. Successful and inclusive DDR will make peace more likely.

2. Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Lesson Learned on Frameworks and Definitions

Practitioners and policy makers in the field of DDR often understand “the combatant” in quite narrow and traditional ways as armed men (with or without dependents). As a result, women and girls are less likely to be identified as beneficiaries of DDR because overall they are less likely to own a weapon, or fit the profile of an armed combatant who is stereotypically young but over 18, male and mentally and physically healthy. The traditional profile of “the combatant” fails to recognize that armed groups are constituted of men, women and children, in both forced and voluntary capacities. Whatever role they played, women and girls are often classed as “vulnerable groups associated with armed movements,” which fails to recognize that women undertake a variety of conflict-related tasks, including providing essential services to fighters and the ongoing maintenance of armed groups.

Recommendations

1. Gender experts and expertise should be deployed in the planning, assessment and concept of operation phases of every DDR process in order to develop better intelligence- and data-gathering to more accurately reflect on the demographics of combat groups.
2. Gender-disaggregated data must be gathered in order to develop a more accurate picture of what women ex-fighters and dependents know, and what they did during the conflict. Data gathering would be greatly facilitated through routine interviewing of women and girls associated with armed groups. Women interviewers and interpreters, from the military and civil society, must be trained to administer these interviews, and must receive training to help them work with severely traumatized women and girls.
3. A policy guidance note should be issued by the Secretary-General to provide Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs), the DPKO and UN agencies with optimal sample language for the negotiation of gender issues into DDR packages and processes. The base-line policy guidance note would be adapted for each specific situation, but would include: an operational definition of the criteria for eligibility for DDR programmes broad enough to ensure that all women and girls associated with fighting forces are included regardless of weapons possession; criteria for eligibility that do not hinge on handing in a weapon; and a broader and more accurate conceptualization of the composition of modern armed groups.

Lesson Learned on Participation and DDR Decision-Making

The utility and relevance of women’s analysis, information and insight on peace and security issues in general, and on DDR in particular, are underestimated. Therefore, women do not participate in sufficient numbers, or in sufficiently influential positions, at forums where the terms of DDR processes are decided. Because women’s presence, opinions and experiences are routinely overlooked, vital opportunities to develop more accurate gender- and age-disaggregated pictures of conflict and post-conflict zones have been lost.

Resolution 1325 makes an explicit recommendation that all actors in negotiations to end armed conflict should not only recognize the “special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction,” but also involve them in the processes that accompany DDR. In its very first point, resolution 1325 “Urges member states to

ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict.”

Recommendations

1. The participation of women leaders must be facilitated when peace negotiations begin. International and regional organizations and all participating parties involved in peace processes should advocate for gender parity, maintaining a 30 per cent representation of women in peace negotiations, and ensure that women’s needs in the DDR process are taken into consideration and specifically addressed in all such agreements. In addition, women should be appointed to the National DDR Commissions when they are formed.
2. The security sector and DDR planners should recognize and utilize women’s expertise and vital information on topics such as arms caches, raids and war criminals. Input from women should be deliberately solicited and incorporated into all reintegration, rehabilitation, reconciliation and other peace-building planning from the outset.
3. Public information, training and awareness efforts should be extended to women leaders, organizations and advocates on the technical and procedural aspects of the DDR process to ensure that women participate in decision-making and understand their entitlements, and that existing human skills and cultural resources are not overlooked. This will facilitate the inclusive development of community-wide and -run weapons amnesties and collections.

Lesson Learned on Resources

The human and financial resources committed to both gender issues and DDR are inadequate. Because both DDR and gender issues are under-funded, the intersection between them is even less likely to receive adequate attention or resources. That such a crucial transition between war and peace is mostly funded through voluntary trust funds and not the assessed budgets of peacekeeping and peace-building missions prolongs and worsens problems that occur when weapons are not collected and when armed groups are not disbanded or properly reintegrated. Resources should be dedicated to collecting accurate data on the nature of the role women play in armed conflict in order to properly estimate the number, age and gender of combatants to be demobilized.

Recommendations

1. When the Security Council establishes a peacekeeping operation with mandated DDR functions, the DDR and gender components must be adequately financed through the assessed budget of UN peacekeeping operations and not through voluntary contributions alone. From the outset, funds must be allocated for gender experts and expertise to inform the planning and implementation of dedicated programmes serving the needs of women ex-combatants and dependents.
2. In situations where governments are primarily responsible for disarmament, the United Nations should facilitate financial support of gender and DDR components. The World Bank should ensure that gender is mainstreamed throughout all demobilization and reintegration efforts that it leads or supports, encouraging all partners, such as client countries, donors and other stakeholders, to dedicate human and economic resources towards gender mainstreaming throughout all phases of DDR.
3. Funds should be made available to provide gender and DDR training to peacekeepers on the national level and through “training of trainers” programmes routinely given in the context of multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations.

Lesson Learned on Participation in DDR Execution

If female peacekeepers and police are present at the DDR identification and cantonment sites, women are more likely to come forward to participate in programmes and access services. There are too few women peacekeepers, civilian police and experts engaged in DDR processes. The lack of trained women is most stark. Even though evidence from the field suggests that the presence of women makes a substantial difference to the internal workings and the public perception of peacekeeping operations,³ only a tiny percentage of UN Peacekeepers are women (five per cent of civilian police and one per cent of military personnel) and few of this small number are experts on DDR.⁴ However, it should not necessarily fall to these few women to concentrate on gender or gender and DDR tasks alone.

The UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) acknowledges that a key constraint in undertaking successful DDR lies in a lack of human capacity:

[S]uccessful DDR is, ultimately, all about operational capacity. No amount of good programme design can assure a successful intervention if the team who runs the operation does not have the required skills to handle the very special type of “client” that are the ex-combatants—while a good operations team can, and usually does, compensate for initial design flaws. However, there are an extremely limited number of experienced and capable DDR operations people in the world (some tens of them). This means that a crucial factor in helping to improve the quality of DDR interventions worldwide will have to be a concerted effort to effectively track and redeploy these operations specialists, and to train new people in this increasingly important field.⁵

Recommendations

1. Donors should support the establishment of a regionally balanced group of readily deployable women and gender DDR experts, comprising military and civil society representatives, to assist in planning and implementing DDR processes to inform planning and execution.
2. Efforts should be made to increase the familiarity and use of gender analysis by those in leadership positions and its application to all aspects of peace support activities, including DDR. UN and donor countries should commit themselves to including women and gender issues in all training exercises and policy guidance provided to troops, technical experts and all high-level appointments, particularly Special Representatives of the Secretary-General. Accountability measures must be developed and applied to ensure that all staff is committed to gender equity.
3. Troop contributing countries should be encouraged and supported to fast-track women for deployment in peacekeeping operations and DDR processes. Enhanced employment opportunities and training must be given to women in troop-contributing countries.

Lesson Learned on Weapons Collection and Disarmament

The disarmament phase is the first step in the process of turning combatants back into civilians. However, the prevalence of portable weapons has made it imperative that this phase be recognized as a symbolic prelude to a much longer and broader series of initiatives designed to convince a post-conflict society to disarm. When weapons remain in circulation, they combine with trauma, poverty and lawlessness to turn women’s neighbourhoods and homes into war zones, heightening the lethality of crime and of domestic and political violence. Distrustful communities commonly wait and see whether some kind of security will indeed be put into place. This insecurity felt by women

and men is reflected in their reluctance to hand in all or the best weapons or reveal the existence of arms caches.

Recommendations

1. Policies of exchanging weapons for cash must be reviewed, due to a very poor track record. Other incentives can be given over a longer period that replace the prestige and power of owning a weapon, and social pressure can be applied when communities have a sense of involvement in weapons collections processes.
2. Women most affected by guns often have the best ideas about incentives to support the removal of weapons from the community. Trained personnel should work with women leaders and women's groups to devise incentives and strategies to convince people to surrender their weapons.
3. All partners in weapons collection processes, including women and community leaders, need training and education on weapons safety and responsibility. Trust between women's and community groups, security forces and peacekeeping personnel needs to be carefully and deliberately built and maintained. Those responsible for weapons collection need to demonstrate their authority and competency to the community in order to earn such trust.

Lesson Learned on Cantonment and Demobilization

Assembly points and cantonment sites are often poorly designed and impair the proper procedure of DDR processes. Sites often fail to meet the needs of women and girls associated with armed groups, whether as ex-fighters or dependents. Women fighters often do not feel safe enough to participate in DDR processes, partly because cantonment sites do not offer them security, nor do they offer essential health and childcare services. Camps also do not meet the needs of male ex-fighters, especially when they are accompanied by dependents relying on them for security. Under these circumstances, women may stay away from cantonment sites precisely to allow men the opportunity to participate.

Recommendations

1. The geography of cantonment sites must be re-conceived to accommodate the humanitarian and security needs of women and girls. Sites must be planned to accommodate the ages and sexes of ex-fighters. The need for, and feasibility of, establishing separate facilities or camps for women or girls should be assessed. Secure food and water distribution, and the provision of health care, including reproductive and psychosocial health services, are essential. If women are to take advantage of training and education opportunities, childcare provisions cannot be optional or perceived as non-essential.
2. Assembly and cantonment cannot be allowed to commence unless funds have been allocated to secure proposed sites. The security of women and girls must be assured within camps through the allocation of resources for regular patrols, the placement of dividing fences and the inclusion of necessary measures to protect women from sexualized violence and other forms of exploitation, such as forced labour (i.e., cooking and cleaning for males in and around the cantonment site).
3. Part of the DDR transformation should aim to change violent attitudes, behaviours and identities, including violent expressions of masculinity, which are required and rewarded in warfare. Violence prevention activities should be targeted at men as a way of improving security in the camp and for preventing violence upon reintegration.

Lesson Learned on Reintegration

Reintegration packages rarely address women's needs, whether as recipients of reintegration assistance or as agents in the receiving community. The unpaid burden of care women shoulder in most societies places additional strain on ex-combatant and non-combatant women as they attempt to help their family members reintegrate or reintegrate themselves.

Recommendations

1. Male and female ex-combatants must be understood as part of broader institutions, such as families and clans, and therefore have varied roles, obligations and opportunities for support. An analysis of these varied roles would ensure the contextualization of the individuals within their communities and societies, which are relevant when designing and distributing reintegration packages.
2. Receiving communities must be informed about the intention and use of reintegration packages and the potential impact on them. It cannot be assumed that the benefits of DDR will automatically “trickle down” to dependents; instead, efforts must be made to include family members when distributing resources so that ex-combatants' use of these resources can be influenced and monitored by the community to which they return.
3. Women who provide care, especially for sick, traumatized and sometimes dangerous ex-combatants (children and adults), must be recognized as stakeholders in the reintegration phase. As such, women must be given appropriate long-term support and a voice in reintegration planning and execution.

3. Case Study: Liberia

Introduction

According to the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, “In order to be successful, DDR initiatives must be based on a concrete understanding of who combatants are—women, men, girls, boys. Recent analyses of DDR processes from a gender perspective have highlighted that women combatants are often invisible and their needs are overlooked.”⁶ The Secretary-General, along with many other policy makers and practitioners, is increasingly recognizing the need to integrate gender perspectives to precipitate the degree of social change and transformation required to demilitarize a violent society.⁷ However, the increasing recognition of the importance of gender-sensitive DDR has not yet yielded many examples of best practices.

On several fronts, the DDR process currently underway in Liberia provides an example of progress. The mandate of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the Accra Peace Accord and the Transitional Government’s Results-Focused Transition Framework (RFTF) all include specific emphasis intended to ensure that women are not left behind in the DDR process. In total, women and children are thought to have comprised up to 38 per cent of the 38,000 to 53,000 total Liberian combatants eligible for DDR in 2004. Estimates of the number of women combatants range from 1,000 to 10,000.⁸

However, preliminary findings reported to the Security Council and ascertained by a UNIFEM mission to the DDR site in Gbarnga, the second camp opened in April 2004 three hours north-east of Monrovia, indicate that despite gender-sensitive mandates, language and targets, women and girls are not participating in the DDR process in proportion to their participation in the actual fighting. While “getting it right” in terms of mandate and institutional scope are necessary prerequisites, “getting it right” does not automatically translate into “doing it right.” This case study shows that the advances made on paper have not been sufficient to ensure participation if those advances are not accompanied by sufficient funds and programmes that are aimed specifically at women and girl combatants, supporters and dependents.

Background to the conflict

After decades of relative peace and prosperity, Liberia imploded into civil war in 1989 as the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, led by Charles Taylor, began an insurgency against the regime of President Samuel Doe, who had come to power in a military coup in 1980.⁹ In 1993, the Security Council authorized the then-UN Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) to monitor the cease-fire between the parties and assist with the cantonment, disarmament and demobilization of combatants.¹⁰ During the mandate of UNOMIL, women’s groups were extremely active in organizing around disarmament. The Liberian Women’s Initiative (LWI) began a campaign in 1993 that called for the factions to be disarmed prior to the installation of the transitional government.¹¹ In March 1994, LWI and other women’s groups organized a march for disarmament and wrote an open letter to the UN Special Representative Trevor Livingston Gordon-Somers calling for disarmament to start before the handover of power to the transitional government. Women’s groups also started an organization called Funds for Disarmament that raised money to purchase weapons from combatants in order to destroy them.

Dedicated campaigning on peace and disarmament issues by women’s groups, the cessation of hostilities and elections in 1997 offered hope for a peaceful and secure future for Liberia. Nonetheless, unresolved insecurity, poor governance and slow development plunged Liberia back into turmoil as new insurgencies culminated into full-blown conflict between the Government of Liberia, the Liberians

United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). In April 2003, Liberian women began a Mass Action for Peace campaign, drawing in “women from the market place, churches, mosques, civil society, refugee camps and the government.”¹² Even then-President Charles Taylor granted them an audience to read their statement. When the factions signed a comprehensive peace agreement in Ghana on 18 August 2003, the women took their Mass Action to Accra, “bodily blocking the delegates in the hall and blocking the entrance” when rebel leaders threatened to walk out.¹³ Their campaign succeeded in gaining the women entry to key meetings. The peace agreement included provisions for the establishment of a DDR programme and, due to the activists’ efforts, language was included on the protection and promotion of women’s human rights.¹⁴

Women in Liberia’s Conflict

Women and girls actively participated in every stage of the most recent armed conflict in Liberia as combatants, as supporters, as peace-builders and as political actors. Women and girls joined the ranks of armed groups both involuntarily and voluntarily in order to survive harsh economic conditions or because they believed in the cause for which a particular side was fighting. In total, women and children are thought to have comprised up to 38 per cent of the 38,000 to 53,000 total Liberian combatants eligible for DDR in 2004. Initial estimates of the number of women combatants ranged from 1,000 to 10,000, but as of August 2004, 12,000 have already gone through the DDR process.¹⁵

In a February 2004 report, *How to Fight, How to Kill: Child Soldiers in Liberia*, Human Rights Watch described how all three parties to the conflict misused girls. Their experiences varied: they were gang-pressed and abducted in order to become cooks, domestics and fighters who were trained to use guns and other weaponry. Sex on demand was often required to “boost the boys’ morale,”¹⁶ and many girls were sexually assaulted to the point of death. Some girls joined LURD on their own in order to escape the torturous treatment by government soldiers, including rape, beating, robbery and forced labour. After joining, girls and boys forcibly recruited other children into LURD.¹⁷ Divisions of labour were highly gendered: girls in the Small Boys’ Units (SBUs) washed clothes, fetched water and cooked, while the older girls fought and scouted.¹⁸

Strict rules governed sexual relations between children and youth in the LURD units, but these were specifically directed at containing girls’ sexuality. The rules prohibited young women from trying to have sexual relations with a friend’s boyfriend, and also barred women from having two boyfriends at the same time.

Children who were members of MODEL offered similar stories of choosing to fight with the rebel force after horrific mistreatment at the hands of government forces. Young women in MODEL, LURD and the government forces often played dual roles as fighters and as wives of soldiers or military commanders, often for survival purposes.¹⁹ While exact numbers of girl combatants are not known, girls are thought to have been less prevalent than boys amongst armed groups, especially in purely fighting capacities. However, as illustrated by McKay and Mazurana in their research on Sierra Leone, women and girls associated with armed groups usually receive military training even if their primary functions within the group are as domestics, porters, spies or willing or forced wives.²⁰

While many women and girls can arguably be described primarily as victims, their willingness to participate in atrocities, even if their primary motivation for joining the fighting was to feed and protect their families, should not be glossed over.²¹ One group of female combatants, the Women’s Artillery Commandos (WAC), comprised young women who fought alongside the LURD. A Liberian health minister was quoted as saying that female combatants were preferred because, “they don’t get drunk and they take their mission very seriously.”²²

While many women ex-combatants reported surviving sexual violence at the hands of both the LURD and forces associated with Charles Taylor's regime prior to joining the WAC, they were, in turn, capable of facilitating sexual violence against women. One woman interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that she and other female soldiers purposefully captured female prisoners in order to provide women for male soldiers to have sexual relations with, whether through choice or by force. The girl soldiers described how they sought out female prisoners in order to provide a different target for possible rape and other sexual assaults from their male companions.²³

The Accra Accords

The Golden Tulip Declaration of Liberian Women Attending the Peace Talks in Accra Accra, Ghana, 15 August 2003 *

We, the representatives of the various Liberian Women's Organizations at the Accra Peace Talks on Liberia held a one-day Strategic Planning Meeting under the Chairmanship of Her Excellency Madame Ruth Sando Perry on Friday 15th Day of August A.D. 2003 at the Golden Tulip Hotel in Accra to analyse lessons learnt at the Accra Peace Talks from 4 June 2003 to present and to strategize on the inclusion of women within all existing and proposed institutions including all components of the current and in-coming Liberian Government (Executive, Legislative and Judiciary) and within all structures to lead the post-conflict peace building process.

Cognizant of women constituting approximately 51.2 percent of the Liberian population;
Recognizing the numerous contributions of Liberian women to the socio-economic development and the political and peace processes;
Noting the continuous exclusion and low participation of women from decision-making bodies;

Recalling UN Security Council resolution 1325 relative to the incorporation of a gender perspective into peace keeping and in the participation of women in the peace negotiation and post-conflict reconstruction, do hereby resolve as follows:

1. Greater participation of women in peace keeping missions as well as the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process;
2. More participation of women in the ongoing peace process;
3. Awareness and sensitisation meetings by rural and urban women, youth and combatants to lay down their arms...

*Agreed by Women Attending the Strategic Planning Meeting held in Accra with UNIFEM support.

Representatives of the LURD, the Government of Liberia, MODEL and Liberian political parties signed the Accra Agreement into force on 18 August 2003. The Agreement established detailed arrangements for the cantonment, disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of combatants, and established a National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (NCDDRR) in Article VI. Article XXXI of the Agreement states:

The National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) shall accord particular attention to the issue of the rehabilitation of vulnerable groups or war victims (children, women, the elderly and the disabled) within Liberia, who have been severely affected by the conflict in Liberia. With the support of the International Community, the NTGL shall design and implement a program for the rehabilitation of such war victims. The NTGL, in formulating and implementing programs for national rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, for the moral, social and physical reconstruction of Liberia in the post-conflict period, shall ensure that the needs and potentials of the war victims are taken into account and that gender balance is maintained in apportioning responsibilities for program implementation.²⁴

In order to implement the political and development goals of the Accra Accords, the World Bank, UN agencies, donors and other actors developed a Results-Focused Transition Framework (RFTF) at a workshop, which was then endorsed by the NTGL. The RFTF has DDR as a priority cluster.

The Results-Focused Transitional Framework sets out the following timetable for results:

Results June 2004: Up to 36,000 ex-combatants in DD process, including 8,400 children, 550 disabled and 1,000 women ex-combatants; 30,000 weapons collected and destroyed; 550 disabled ex-combatants are medically rehabilitated. Information campaign with daily radio broadcasts; distribution of pamphlets and visits to the field with relevant Faction Commanders to sensitize all ranks about DDDR process; National Commission on DDDR and the Joint Implementation United (JIU) established, including 5 field offices fully operational. 10 referral counsellors are deployed.

Results December 2004: 17,000 more ex-combatants in DD, including 7,100 children, 1,000 women and 850 disabled; 850 disabled ex-combatants are medically rehabilitated. Initiation of quick implementation projects in cantonment sites and resettlement communities. 40,000 more weapons collected and destroyed. Information campaign continues. 8,400 child ex-combatants are reunited with families or placed in community-based care.

Results June 2005: 13,000 ex-combatants in reintegration programmes. Ex-combatants assisted to return to communities of origin or preferred areas or resettlement. Field offices provide counselling and referral services to ex-combatants. Information campaign focuses on national reconciliation and peace-building. 7,100 ex-combatants are reunited with families or placed in community-based care.

The Results Framework states that a priority outcome is “Successful disarmament and demobilization of 38,000-53,000 female and male ex-combatants, including children and disabled; collection and destruction of 70,000 weapons by December 2004; counselling and referral services initiated for all ex-combatants; at least 50 per cent of adult ex-combatants reintegrated into Liberian society by December 2005 and productive.” At each stage of the DDR process, the Framework set out targets for the number of combatants to be demobilized. Out of the estimated 38,000 to 53,000 combatants, the Framework set an initial target of only 2,000 women combatants to be demobilized, although up to 10,000 women may have participated as combatants in the conflict. While the establishment of a clear target number of beneficiaries marks an improvement from earlier DDR processes where female combatants, supporters and dependents were not considered a target group, the Framework does

not establish a numerical target that approximates the actual proportion of women combatants, supporters and dependents. Women may have represented up to one in five combatants in the Liberian conflict. However, they represent one out of 25 of the beneficiaries of the DDR process as laid out by the Results Framework. The gross under-estimation of the number of women fighters is all the more puzzling because a significant lesson learned from Sierra Leone is that women were associated with armed groups in far larger numbers than originally imagined. This insight could, and should, have informed DDR planning in Liberia.

The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

In his report to the Security Council on the Situation in Liberia on 11 September 2003, the Secretary-General directed that special measures and programmes be established to address the gender-specific needs of female ex-combatants, as well as the wives and widows of former combatants. Specifically, the Secretary-General called for briefing, counselling and training in programmes for the eventual reintegration of ex-combatants that would take into consideration the differences in the experiences during conflict of women and girls as compared to men and boys. The Secretary-General recognized that because of the high rates of sexual violence in the conflict, reintegration programmes must include prevention of sexual violence.²⁵

On 19 September 2003, the Security Council passed resolution 1509,²⁶ which established the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and tasked it with incorporating a gender perspective into its activities in accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.²⁷ Resolution 1509 also requested that UNMIL develop a DDR Action Plan that pays “particular attention to the needs of child combatants and women.”²⁸

Like the targets established by the Results Framework, the mandate and scope of UNMIL marked significant progress compared to other missions in terms of recognizing the need for separate facilities and services for women, girls, boys and men in the DDR process. The DDR Action Plan that UNMIL created at the request of the Security Council and with the assistance of UNIFEM, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, WHO and others included special arrangements for female combatants. According to the Action Plan, “Female combatants [were to] be placed in separate interim care centres in the cantonment sites, where they [were to] receive special assistance in such areas as reproductive health, counselling, training on women’s rights and sexual trauma support. Their reintegration activities [were to] also include educational programmes.”²⁹

Despite the progress achieved in UNMIL’s mandate and the DDR Action Plan, the DDR process in Liberia suffered a false start in December 2003. Flooded by combatants eager to trade their weapons for the US\$300 cash payment, UNMIL was unable to provide the cash installment.³⁰ Over 12,000 fighters presented themselves to be demobilized at a site that was intended to accommodate 1,000. Riots in the Monrovia camp ensued, as combatants, filled with high expectations, were not able to fulfill their basic needs, let alone receive their benefits. The DDR process was officially suspended on 17 December 2003 after 12,664 combatants were disarmed and 8,686 weapons were collected.³¹

Shortly before the suspension of the DDR programme, Liberian women’s groups held a press conference to identify key flaws in the process. The Liberian Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), along with the Liberia Women’s Initiative, the Christian Community, the Government of Liberia and local NGOs, acted under the banner “Concerned Women of Liberia” to identify gaps they perceived to be contributing to the chaotic conditions in the cantonment sites. The Concerned Women of Liberia emphasized the importance of adequate communication and information dissemination so that combatants and those associated with armed groups understood the benefits they were to receive. The women also noted that the transportation, logistical arrangements and lodging facilities

of the cantonment site in Monrovia were inadequate, especially considering the large numbers of combatants who presented themselves to be demobilized.³²

In December 2003, WIPNET was called upon to help cope with the chaotic conditions in the cantonment site in Monrovia. As the number of combatants expecting to be mobilized exceeded UNMIL capacity, WIPNET was asked to come in and calm the combatants, provide them with essential services and safeguard the underage combatants. WIPNET’s leaders and members were eager to assist UNMIL in regaining control of the cantonment site. The camp was not prepared with adequate services for the thousands of combatants who turned up unexpectedly.³³ WIPNET’s actions in December 2003 were highly admirable, especially considering that civilian women without proper training or equipment were performing many essential tasks that would normally be the responsibility of armed military personnel in a cantonment site. Aside from the many male and female combatants who were injured in the riots or suffered in some other way from the false start, WIPNET’s members were put in harm’s way to regain control of the dangerous situation.

Three days after the women’s press conference, UNMIL shut down the DDR programme. On 15 January 2004, UNMIL met with commanders of the various factions to set terms for the recommencement of the DDR programme. The commanders and UNMIL decided that the factions would have to implement an information campaign for their combatants, commanders would submit lists of their troops and arsenals to UNMIL, cantonment sites with basic services would have to be established and a sufficient number of UNMIL troops would have to be on the ground to ensure security before DDR could begin again.³⁴ The DDR programme was officially re-launched on 15 April 2004.

During the interim, UNMIL created a Joint Operational Plan that articulated many of the specific provisions and services that were to be made available to women and girls in the DDR process, including separate accommodation, dining and recreation areas and pick-up points for men, women, children and the disabled. In addition, reproductive health and gender-based violence screening and services were identified as priority activities whilst combatants remained in camp.³⁵ Despite these preparations, UN IRIN News reported that fewer than 130 women were disarmed and demobilized by UNMIL out of a total of 1,789 during the first week of the re-launched process. This proportion is greatly lower than the actual proportion of women and girls believed to have taken part in Liberia’s war. In the first week, only 7 per cent of the total number of people disarmed and demobilized was women although women may have comprised up to one in five of all combatants.³⁶ As the weeks went on, however, more women presented themselves for disarmament and demobilization. Nationally, 17,485 combatants were disarmed in the first month of the re-launched process. This included 2,292 women, 1,561 boys and 352 girls.³⁷ Although women and children were estimated to have comprised 38 per cent of the combatants in the conflict, they comprised only 24 per cent of the beneficiaries of the DDR process in the first month. By the Secretary-General’s next progress report in September 2004, the percentage of adult female beneficiaries of the DDR programme had dropped to 17 per cent.

Number of Disarmed and Demobilized Combatants Disaggregated by Sex and Age					
	Total	Adult Men	Women	Boys	Girls
Week One ³⁸	1,789	1,384	130	238	37
Month One ³⁹	17,485	13,280	2,292	1,561	352
Month Four ⁴⁰	71,000	52,162	12,598	4,884	1,356

DDR in Gbarnga

In April 2004, UNIFEM commissioned a consultant to undertake a mission to Liberia to ascertain the extent to which UNMIL was complying with Security Council resolution 1325 in which the Council “encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male combatants.”⁴¹ Gbarnga, a town three hours north-east of Monrovia, was the second DDR site to open once the DDR process resumed in April 2004. With support from UNMIL, the consultant visited cantonment sites and NGO-run interim care centres (ICC), as well as meeting with the general populace living in and around Gbarnga.

Disarmament

Four pick-up points were established on the main road to Gbarnga where former combatants were instructed to gather on the appointed days with their weapons and ammunition. Lists of fighters were meant to have been previously collected from commanders in the fighting forces (in this case, LURD); however, it was reported that such lists were either incomplete or, in some cases, non-existent.⁴² UNMIL set the daily limit at 250, with the intention of continuing disarmament for as long as needed to process all ex-combatants in a given area.

Despite the publicity given to the provision that women supporters and dependents —and not just women ex-combatants— would be incorporated into the DD process, no preparations appeared to have been made to accommodate them.⁴³ In fact, there were no women processed in the first two days of disarmament, and explanations for this varied from “The women were told to stay away”⁴⁴ to “The women just didn’t know that they should show up.”⁴⁵ By day six, only 65 adult women were registered— well below expectations.⁴⁶ Joana Foster, Senior Gender Advisor at UNMIL, voiced serious concern about “the women ex-combatants who fall through the cracks, those whose names are not on a list, for whatever reason, and those who gave their guns away at an earlier date...What services will they get?”⁴⁷ Leymah Gbowee, Country Coordinator of WIPNET, with members throughout Liberia, including Gbarnga, stated: “I was asked where all the women went and all I could say is, ‘They vanished into thin air. They preferred to give their guns to the men, and so the men went to get disarmed, while the women stayed behind.’”⁴⁸

The cash incentive for disarmament and demobilization, \$150 to be paid upon discharge after five days in the cantonment site, and another \$150 after an ex-combatant’s return to his or her home community, was intended to draw both fighters and weapons. The requirement had been that each fighter hand in either a weapon or ammunition, or both, but by April 21 UNMIL was reporting that less than half of those registered had brought in weapons.⁴⁹ The same was true nationally, where 5,689 weapons were collected during the first month from over 17,000 combatants.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, the NCDDR had altered its estimation of the number of ex-combatants to be 60,000,⁵¹ up from the earlier projection of 58,000, with child and women ex-combatants assessed at 38 per cent.⁵² By the end of August, however, more than 70,000 fighters had gone through DDR, of whom roughly 12,000 were women and only 6,000—7,000 were children (including approximately 1,000 girls).⁵³

Demobilization

In Gbarnga, ex-combatants were transported from the pick-up points to the disarmament site (D1), where they were separated from their weapons and then transported the same day to the cantonment site for demobilization (D2). A total of four D2 sites were visited on 20 April by UNIFEM’s consultant, including the Gbarnga cantonment site—the receiving point for all demobilized combatants, and where adult men and women remained for five days before being discharged—two interim care centres for boys between ages 10 and 17 and one ICC for girls between ages 13 and 18. As part of the demobilization process, combatants remained at the cantonment site for five days, during which they received assessments for skills-training programmes, medical attention and counseling services.

Cantonment Site

Unlike Liberia's numerous open IDP camps, all demobilization sites in Gbarnga were fenced. The cantonment site was technically situated in Cari, a former agricultural research complex of considerable size, removed from the town of Gbarnga and accessible by dirt roads. The site was actually located within the military base of UNMIL's Sector 3 headquarters, and was ringed by a series of successive perimeters which included, from inside out: bamboo fences covered by tarpaulin that separated each group of ex-combatants (adult men, boys, girls and adult women), chain link fences that fronted the barracks and lengths of razor wire surrounding the cantonment site itself that were further secured by armed UNMIL personnel.

In amongst the barracks and communal facilities, unarmed Liberian representatives of the NCDRR, who were also responsible for security within the cantonment site, managed crowd control. It was reported, however, that such personnel responded only to general disturbances, and not to specific incidents of violence.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), in its role of providing services to victims of sexual and gender-based violence, stated that UNMIL soldiers would intervene only when called upon by the NCDRR, which was an unlikely scenario given the NCDRR's limited response to violence in general, and to incidents in the women's compound in particular.⁵⁵

Structurally, the cantonment site reflected a gender perspective in its planning and layout in compliance with Security Council resolution 1325. Separate compounds were provided for women, men, girl and boy ex-combatants, inclusive of separate arrangements for feeding and toilet and bathing facilities. Additionally, a large palaver hut equipped with television and video equipment offered shaded open space in each of the compounds for meetings, educational programmes and recreation. The four areas were laid out in a row, one after the other, separated by high tarpaulin-covered bamboo fences (affording a degree of privacy) with gates constructed of the same materials, in the following order: the first and largest compound was dedicated to adult men, the second to boys, the third to girls and the last to adult women. In fact, the boys and girls were merely sorted and held in their compounds before being transferred within the same day of their registration to the ICCs. This meant that the adult men and women were separated at night by two empty compounds.

Ostensibly, the layout demonstrated considerable compliance with Paragraph 13 of Security Council resolution 1325, especially since the separated compounds permitted gender-specific and age-appropriate assessments and counseling services. Furthermore, as noted by UNMIL's Gender Unit in its own monitoring of the DD process, "female and male ex-combatants were transported in separate vehicles...registered in separate lines...separately screened in the Medical Centre," babies were tended to, and "hygiene kits for women contained sanitary items."⁵⁶

Despite the extent to which the Gbarnga camp did comply with resolution 1325, the cantonment site still failed to protect female ex-combatants from harassment. In particular, the process for gaining access to the respective compounds deserved scrutiny and correction. Rather than having each group of ex-combatants enter and exit their respective areas through separate gates, the path most used was the one that was established through the successive compounds. Thus, the adult women were made to walk through three compounds before reaching their own, and the girls were made to walk through two, with the same occurring as they exited. In fact, the only ones observed to be using the separate entrance to the women's compound were IRC staff, and this route was described as undesirable due to the heavy collection of mud and poor drainage of rainwater. Even the NCDRR coordinator for Bong Country acknowledged, "When the women walk through this place, the men can be giving them a difficult time, they will say things to the women, and they will complain to the staff that they should be able to get to the women, especially at night."⁵⁷

Interim Care Centers (ICCs)

The interim care centers were established as residential facilities for child ex-combatants, with stays of up to 12 weeks. The ultimate goal is family reunification and in cases where family members are located, children are to be discharged from their ICC at the earliest possible date. Thus, the Red Cross and its tracing programme played a central role in the demobilization and reintegration of child ex-combatants. Where no family members were found, the goal was to identify foster care in each child's community of origin.

Save the Children-UK was charged with operating the ICC for girls, while Christian Children's Fund and the Children's Assistance Programme led the effort for demobilizing boys. The tasks, as reflected upon by the NGOs managing the ICCs, are daunting. Some of the children interviewed had no memories of their parents, and many of the children were struggling with addictions to substances. Health care within the ICCs was present but minimal and, at the time of UNIFEM's mission, each of the three ICCs was still awaiting deliveries of medicines and supplies.

Within the ICCs, each child was individually assessed on matters relating to health, family and psychosocial needs. The predominant health complaints concerned diarrhea and addictions to substances (most commonly marijuana and cigarettes). Each child was given a mat and a blanket, and conditions were generally clean—in the case of the girls' ICC in Gbargna, exceptionally so.

The ICCs varied in both number of residents and quality of services, but all three were consistent in regards to the high commitment and personal dedication of their staff. In theory, each ICC was designed for a capacity of 100 children, but the one ICC that had achieved this level (for boys, operated by the Christian Children's Fund) was chaotic and its staff very clearly under the enormous strain of having to supervise 100 boys who were full of energy and, just days before, had been living without restrictions to movement or behavior.

In the ICCs there was considerable evidence of structured and participatory programming. In the girls' ICC operated by Save the Children-UK, a set of programme rules was posted that reflected input from the girls themselves on what their requirements and expectations were for communal living. As well, a schedule of daily activities was posted and it was apparent that the schedule was in fact being followed: at 3:00 p.m. when it was time for kickball, the girls were chaperoned to a field outside their compound for exercise and recreation. Other scheduled activities included numerous daily classes on a host of subjects, "devotion" hours for religious observance and conflict resolution, and chores.

Furthermore, in one class of boys (in the ICC operated by the Liberian Children's Assistance Programme), a teacher was observed to be dealing very skillfully with a wide range of age and skill levels on the part of his students, with teaching methods that integrated art and that encouraged the boys to engage in personal visioning and goal-setting.

Thus, overall, the ICCs were impressive for the comprehensive nature of their efforts to address the needs of the child ex-combatants and, in their provision of gender-specific and age-appropriate programme activities, their compliance with Security Council resolution 1325 was readily apparent.

With regard to location and security, each ICC was located within a radius of approximately 20 minutes (by car) from the cantonment site. Concrete walls and/or fences with bamboo matting surrounded the compounds, and armed guards closely monitored all traffic in and out. However, unlike at the adult cantonment site, razor wire and UNMIL personnel were absent. In fact, the deliberate strategy was to locate ICCs within closer proximity to residential dwellings in the Gbarnga area, so as to facilitate reintegration and a return to normalcy. Indeed, the NGOs all indicated plans to ultimately approach children from neighboring homes to participate in shared activities.

Gbarnga Statistics: Disarmament and Demobilization⁵⁸

15 April 2004 (start of disarmament) through 20 April 2004

Date	Total	Adult Males	Adult Females	Boys	Girls	Number Discharged
15-Apr-04	255	222	0	33	0	0
16-Apr-04	204	160	0	44	0	0
17-Apr-04	306	250	12	34	10	0
18-Apr-04	279	223	22	25	9	0
19-Apr-04	256	225	4	26	1	223
20-Apr-04	234	158	27	41	8	160
Day 6 Totals	1,534	1,238	65	203	28	383

Gbarnga and its Environs

A follow-up visit to Gbarnga on 24 April 2004 focused on the general populace and relied on the Liberian staff of the American Refugee Committee (ARC) to obtain information in one-on-one exchanges with people in the marketplaces, on the streets and in the Phebe Hospital complex. Women in the marketplaces and streets were in fact often women combatants, supporters and dependents. They remained in Gbarnga, tending to income-generating activities, while the men reported for disarmament and demobilization. In fact, on 24 April, few men were to be found in Gbarnga itself. This observation suggests that women combatants, supporters and dependents were not engaged in the formal DDR process to the extent to which they were entitled. The separation of women supporters and dependents from other female combatants undoubtedly resulted in many women losing out on their benefits, especially given the fact that many women might have played multiple roles as supporters of the armed groups, including operating arms, cooking, cleaning, carrying and acting as forced or willing wives to the troops. The exclusion of many of these women from the formal DDR process will have negative ramifications for their economic and personal security if they are not given adequate tools and resources with which to reintegrate.

Nonetheless, the UNIFEM mission found that confidence in public safety and personal security were growing. Individuals reported a cessation in armed conflict and gun violence, with a return to peace especially noted in the night hours, due to UNMIL helicopter patrols. As an indicator of this increased confidence, small enterprises were being initiated and on the streets women were found to be selling prepared foods, personal care products, household and plastic wares, and fabrics. However, given that women are to be particularly targeted for micro-credit assistance, the exclusion of many eligible women from accessing such credit will undermine women's ability to propel the local economy in the post-conflict period. Furthermore, an overemphasis on micro-credit as the sole reintegration benefit for women combatants, supporters and dependents may limit them to the most marginalized sectors of the post-war economy.

Conclusion

Once the disarmament and demobilization is complete, the most difficult phase of the process will continue for years to come. Finding gainful employment for the tens of thousands of combatants while the Liberian economy is in tatters is an extremely challenging task. For the majority of combat-

ants, namely men and boys, a generation of fighting has left them largely unable to articulate their identities and gender roles in peacetime, and without weapons. Dealing with the implications of violent expressions of masculinity post-DDR may prove to be as challenging as encouraging the full participation of women and girls in the process. According to Lieutenant Colonel Barry Barnwell, DDR expert and DPKO consultant, the question of what to do with the “morass of malignant male muscle” remains unanswered. Men unable to positively manifest masculine roles may return to violent and destructive means of expressing their identities, which could jeopardize all the gains made to date and in the future.

Although gains have been made in the institutional arrangements and mandates that determined the DDR process in Liberia, evidence suggests that Liberian women are not participating to the extent to which they are entitled. Unequal participation will result in unequal distribution of the benefits. A UNIFEM Mission to Liberia in November and December 2003 revealed that women combatants often felt more comfortable turning in weapons to women’s NGOs than they did to military or peacekeeping personnel. Utilizing the capacities and reach of women’s NGOs, as long as they are adequately resourced, trained and protected, especially with regards to outreach to and communication with women combatants, can improve access and services to women combatants, supporters and dependents. In addition, new challenges to human security, such as the growing prevalence of HIV/AIDS amongst combatants and civilians alike, will require the full engagement of the women’s movement in order to mobilize women into action while preventing them from exploitation.

Liberian women have already endured years of violence and poverty. The social, political and economic marginalization of women from the DDR and other public processes, is likely to undermine the establishment of democracy, justice and rule of law in Liberia. The success or failure of the DDR process will have literal and symbolic repercussions for future stability in Liberia. If arms continue to circulate and proliferate, insecurity and violence will undoubtedly be a permanent characteristic of Liberian society. On a symbolic level, the DDR process offers an opportunity to transform violent and destructive behaviours and offer individuals a fresh start in life. Ultimately, not only do Liberian women have the right to receive the benefits to which they are entitled, the success of the transformative elements of DDR hinges on their democratic participation.

4. Case Study: Bougainville – Papua New Guinea

Introduction

“These weapons cannot remain in our community. These weapons caused the deaths and injuries of our men, women and children. They raped our mothers, daughters and sisters. They created widows and orphans, destroyed our homes, crops and businesses. They are our fear of the past, not the hope of our future....There is no such thing as safe containment. Containers have been broken into, that is a fact....We cannot build a democratic and free Bougainville if there are containers of weapons with guns next to our polling booths....Prove to the people of Bougainville that you have learned from the hard lessons of the crisis.”⁵⁹

The southwest Pacific islands of Bougainville were devastated by a violent civil war between local groups and the Papua New Guinea government between 1989 and 1998. Around ten per cent of the population, or 15,000 Bougainvilleans, died during those nine years, either from combat or as a result of conditions imposed by the conflict.⁶⁰ Bougainville is a small but very complex society with a great diversity of clans, sub-clans and language groups. The divisions, suspicions and mistrust created by the war have served to compound that complexity in profoundly negative ways.⁶¹ Armed violence, massive and widespread human rights violations, disease and starvation resulted in displacement of more than half the population and had specific physical, economic and political impacts on women, the landowners in matrilineal Bougainville. Many fled to the bush, and stayed there for months or even years. Others were forced to live in “care centers” run by the Papua New Guinea government. By April 1995, over 64,000 displaced Bougainvilleans had taken refuge in 39 care centers throughout Bougainville.⁶²

All actors—the warring parties, the United Nations, donor agencies and NGOs—credit women for sparking and sustaining the cease-fire and peace process. This widespread recognition of women’s role in creating and sustaining the conditions for peace stands in stark contrast to the absence and exclusion of women from the complex three-stage disarmament and weapons disposal plan, which is intricately linked to progress on political and constitutional issues in the Bougainville Peace Agreement, finalized in August 2001.

UNIFEM conducted a visit to Bougainville in December 2003 to assess the extent to which Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was informing the United Nations efforts, in particular those programmes targeting ex-combatants and their dependents. Interviews were conducted with women active in the peace process and post-conflict reconstruction efforts, with questions focusing on the gendered impacts of the DDR process. The UNIFEM visit coincided with the difficult inter-factional meeting held under Stage Three of the disarmament process at which the final fate of the collected weapons was to be decided. The fighting parties, allegedly the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) most vehemently, specifically campaigned against women attending this meeting because “they [knew] that the women will be in favour of destruction, and because the women didn’t fight.”⁶³ Only two women were permitted to join the gathering held at Nissan Island, thanks largely to the persistent efforts of the UN’s senior representative, who explained that, “Women have been wanting to attend the Nissan meeting for several months, and their voices would be critical perspectives, but the guys don’t want the women there, and I don’t want to push the women issue too much because I don’t want the guys to be distracted. I don’t want to have two battles with them when I am in danger of losing the one on weapons.”⁶⁴ Many women expressed anger and disappointment over their exclusion and relayed that while women were not absolutely unified on this issue, a large majority of women advocated for the destruction of the weapons.

The parties gathered at Nissan resolved to destroy the weapons, and a subsequent meeting held on 17 December put that commitment in writing, stipulating that the guns must be rendered so they “cannot be used again, recovered, repaired, used for spare parts or employed...to make or support threats.” By the last week of April 2004, the two-person United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB)⁶⁵ reported to the Security Council that more than 80 per cent of the weapons in Bougainville (1,588 weapons) had been destroyed and that five out of 10 Bougainville districts had completed the weapons disposal programme. Bougainvilleans carried out the destruction of weapons under UNOMB’s supervision.⁶⁶

Besides reinforcing the central importance of disarmament to rebuilding war-torn societies, this case study demonstrates the high cost of excluding women from political processes, particularly those pertaining to weapons disposal and destruction. The exclusion of women normalizes and reinforces gender roles that associate men with guns, violence and formal politics, and women with passivity and domesticity, which could have lasting impact on social relations and decision-making structures in Bougainville. The exclusion of women also reduces community ownership of and contribution to peace, which is particularly unfortunate in Bougainville, where women’s capacities for peace were recognized and utilized by international actors when convenient and discarded when women’s right to participate was deemed secondary, or endangering progress on other important issues. The study also repeats lessons learned, reflected in other peace processes, wherein the need to guarantee political representation to those involved in fighting in the post-conflict society is balanced against necessary efforts to dissolve armed groups, both in formation and identity. In the case of Bougainville, the peace agreement guaranteed minimum seats in the new autonomous government for armed groups, thereby encouraging their continued existence, and also leading those who did not take up arms to question why they do not enjoy similar guarantees of representation.

A perennial question when it comes to DDR efforts is how to handle opportunism, double dipping and disputes over the distribution of what are perceived as “benefits.” Rough estimates of the number of actual combatants provided to UNIFEM by United Nations personnel, local groups and those overseeing the Bougainville Ex-Combatants Trust Account (BETA) all register at around 5,000; however, 15,000 have signed up as ex-combatants to the BETA Fund in order to access skills and opportunities provided by AusAid, the Australian Government’s overseas aid mechanism. The study also reveals the importance of technical expertise, and the danger of viewing DDR as an unspecialized programme that can be carried out by untrained individuals, rather than the foundation stone upon which peace rests.

Background to the conflict

The conflict in Bougainville was directly linked to the operations of the Conzinc Rio Tinto Australia (CRA) copper mine that began operations in 1972 in Panguna at the centre of the main island. However, Bougainville’s colonial history and the fighting that occurred during the Second World War also have a direct bearing on the recent conflict. Japanese occupation of Bougainville between March 1942 and February 1943, combined with combat between the Allied and Japanese forces, resulted in large quantities of weapons and ammunition remaining scattered on the island, many of which were refurbished and adapted for use in the 1989-1998 conflict. The legacy of unexploded ordnance is so severe that one woman explained to UNIFEM that, “it’s still risky to have a fire in some places because random things still explode on Bougainville.”⁶⁷

After the war in 1947, Bougainville came under Australian administration as a UN trusteeship, which united the former German and British territories of Papua and New Guinea. While Papua New Guinea (PNG) is made up of a large mainland territory and many islands, a cursory glance at the map reveals that Bougainville is geographically closer to the Solomon Islands chain, and the annexation of Bougainville to PNG in 1899 by Germany is yet another example of colonial cartography creating

arbitrary separations and forced unity between distinct ethnic and cultural groups, all too often resulting in conflict. In the 1960's, Bougainville's leaders put forward submissions to the UN's Decolonization Committee, making a case for independence from PNG. Prior to PNG's independence, Bougainville was promised a special status in the new PNG constitution.⁶⁸ Papua New Guinea became independent on 6 September 1975 and joined the United Nations on 10 October 1975. Bougainville's mineral wealth contributed enormously to the post-independence prosperity of PNG. Royalties from the CRA copper mine at Panguna accounted for 40 per cent of PNG's exports and 17-20 per cent of government revenue.⁶⁹

Towards the end of 1988 a group of disgruntled Bougainvillean landowners, led by Francis Ona, began to demand a greater share of the earnings from the mine and increased compensation for the environmental devastation caused by its operation that included deforestation and large tailings mounds that poisoned rivers. When the demands were not met, Ona's group began carrying out attacks on the staff and sabotaging operations, which caused the closure of the mine in May 1989. Papua New Guinea Defence Forces (PNGDF) were sent to defend the mine, and fighting ensued between the PNGDF and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) made up of Ona's group and pro-independence groups. Bougainvilleans opposed to independence formed their own militia, known as the Bougainville Resistance Forces (BRF), which was armed with homemade weapons and arms supplied by the PNGDF. The BRF and PNGDF retained control of Buka; however, most of the island, including the area around the copper mine, remained in BRA hands.

In July 1996, after seven years of war and several failed formal peace negotiations, 700 Bougainvillean women met in Arawa for a week-long search of how to bring about peace. Prior to this meeting, numerous protests, long-distance peace marches and all-night vigils had been organized by women to demand peace from the warring factions. As a result of the Arawa meeting, women began working more actively for peace within their communities, including walking into the jungle to persuade their sons to return home and helping their sons resettle to village life. "Another positive spin-off from this Forum was a meeting between the organizers and a BRA group in the area, which was chaired by the women."⁷⁰ The effectiveness of women's actions was reinforced by the fact that Bougainville/Papua New Guinea is a matrilineal society and women carry respect and authority.

In 1997, the Papua New Guinea government decided to hire British and South African mercenary troops to crush the BRA and recapture the mine, which provided the catalyst for the peace process to begin. Amidst public outrage, the then-Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Julius Chan resigned, and the Sandline mercenaries never reached the shores of Bougainville.⁷¹ 1997 saw the beginning of a series of negotiated agreements between the parties, which established the basis of trust and clarified an agenda for successful peace negotiation that resulted in the 2001 Bougainville Peace Agreement.

Women in Bougainville's Conflict

"...[T]his was landowner against landowner, Bougainvillean against Bougainvillean, Bougainvilleans against government. How we women are involved? From day one, women were part and parcel, but we did not start the war. We women were talking about a better deal. Men took up arms without us knowing. I remember the first meetings that the men started to talk about taking up arms—women were asked to not attend—and did not attend. A lot of peace education and awareness raising was done between individual women and men, and also by mothers calling their children to talk to one another, using traditional ways. Ex-combatants came out and took over the process when the UN came in. The UN talked to ex-combatants. The ex-combatants started to suspect women of forcing them to disarm"⁷²

Women were involved in starting protests in the 1970's, calling for a review of the copper mine benefits coming to Bougainvillean landowners. In what is known as the 1974 Panguna riots, women lay across the mine road and the police came with canes and beat them. In matrilineal Bougainville, respect for women is accorded through guarantees of protection; in other words, there is a communal duty to provide safety and security, particularly of women's reproductive role. Because of this tradition, women usually spoke through men to the Australian mine owners and operators, who were also usually men. A number of women landowners interviewed stated that sometimes men brokered deals with the mine that misrepresented the views and express wishes of the women. Other women noted that during the operation of the mine, men were turning compensation from the mine into private property, transferring goods to male children, another aspect of cultural disruption caused by the mine, in this instance undermining the matrilineal passage of property and land through women to women.

According to those interviewed, women were not armed during the 1989-1998 war. Men fighters sometimes dressed as women in order to travel. Women did help prepare and participated in traditional feasts that indicate taking up of arms and thereby knowingly endorsed armed struggle. Women also supported men in their fighting capacities, through the provision of food and the making of fuel. Families fled towns and villages and went into the hills, both to escape the PNGDF forces and to establish new gardens that sustained families and also supplied food for fighters.

These gardens became even more important for survival after the blockade was imposed by the PNG Defence Force, which lasted eight years and had a disproportionate impact on women, depriving families of access to shelter, food, clothing, health and educational services. The unpaid burden of caring for the sick and dying fell on women. The destruction and closure of hospitals and health clinics, and limits on medical supplies and anti-malarial drugs led to significant problems in maternal child health.⁷³

At the height of the crisis, BRA and PNGDF both reportedly used rape, humiliation and forced marriage as war tactics. Women actively seeking to restore peace were often subjected to ill treatment and harassment by the authorities, and were also sometimes targeted by the BRF and the BRA.⁷⁴ According to Sister Lorraine Garasu, Coordinator of the Bougainville Inter-Church Women's Forum (BICWF) and participant in the Bougainville peace negotiations: "For those of us in government-controlled areas, it was 'life between two guns.' Women experienced harassment by both the BRA and the PNGDF forces. Our lives were constrained by rules and regulations, such as the curfew from dusk to dawn. Freedom of movement and communication were restricted whenever there was a military operation, affecting the supply of medicines, basic store goods and the provision of education... Women in the BRA-controlled areas bore the brunt of the war as they suffered sustained attacks by PNGDF and resistance forces. Eight years of blockade deprived them of access to shelter, food, clothing, health and educational services. Families who had fled into the hills had to establish new food gardens and while waiting for their crops to ripen, the women would return to their old gardens to harvest food. This was a long and dangerous journey and caused many health problems. Women behind the blockade struggled to care for their children without medicines, immunizations and adequate food supplies. Many babies died from preventable childhood diseases. Those in the mountains suffered from lack of warm clothing. Women and girls in both areas were at risk of rape by soldiers from all factions."⁷⁵

Bougainvillean women were crucial to fostering dialogue between the parties. In 1997, PNG Prime Minister Bill Skate did a tour of Bougainville to talk to those involved in fighting in an attempt to negotiate, with four women on his delegation. In the middle of the night, women knocked on the hotel door of one of the women on his delegation, bringing the women from the government out to meet with the BRA commanders. The women's delegation acted as the go-between, and was given the list of demands to pass onto the government. The next day the Minister for Bougainville Affairs was

shocked and asked, “How did you get a meeting?” and was told, “The BRAs trusted the women, there was a reason they came to us.”⁷⁶

At considerable risk, women went into the mountains, spoke to the hard-core fighters, and listened to those from other villages and areas. In some instance women threw their arms around men and physically stopped them being shot. Women’s peace education efforts included playing a convening role, introducing BRA and PNGDF to each other when family members came to eat, and introducing sport at the care centers, inviting the ex-combatants to play against the PNGDF. According to some women who had lived in care centers, these political enemies did become friends, especially towards the very end of the PNGDF occupation.

According to UN personnel interviewed by UNIFEM, the incidence of hold ups, break ins, rape at gun point, and weapons have increased since the end of the conflict, as have the problems the police face in keeping law and order. Staff from the Leitana Nehan Women’s Development Agency has done two pieces of research documenting the impact of guns, indicating that women still feel afraid because of the presence of arms. According to the studies, most but not all guns have been surrendered and people are resorting to knives and axes continuing the insecurity women experience in their communities.

Where they are in positions of village leadership, particularly in their role as mothers of former combatants, many women have played a role in encouraging weapons to be surrendered so that Bougainville’s peace and autonomy can move forward. One UN worker noted how important the role of women can be: “I have seen women being able to disarm a drunk or rowdy man or group of men, whereas a police or outsider would have enflamed the situation.”⁷⁷ While this is undoubtedly true, women who venture to disarm men in these kinds of situations do so at their own peril and without protection. According to women interviewed, informal initiatives are taken by women on the local level to support young men who fought in the war to engage in agricultural tasks, planting vanilla, cocoa, cardamom and, in some areas, mine gold.

The Peace Process and its Disarmament Components

“Women do not feel secure, and this is also because the guns are still around, men have friends with guns, they have access to them, the guns move between hands, one gun has the capacity to cause a lot of insecurity. Most people have put down their arms, but there is a sense of ‘when we need them, we know where they are.’”⁷⁸

The main parties involved in the peace process were the National Government of Papua New Guinea, the Bougainville Interim Provincial Government (BIPG) headed by the Governor, the Bougainville People’s Congress (BPC), the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) and the Bougainville Resistance Force (BRF).

The 1997, the Government of New Zealand facilitated a peace conference of leaders that produced the Burnham Declaration of 5-18 July 1997. The Burnham Truce was signed 1-10 October 1997, which created a peaceful environment for the further negotiation of interim measures concretized in the Lincoln Agreement on Peace, Security and Development of Bougainville, signed on 23 January 1998 (S/1998/287), which was signed by the national government and Bougainvillean leaders, except for Francis Ona, who has stayed outside the peace process. Paragraph 5 of the Lincoln Agreement gave the United Nations a formal role in the ensuing peace process. About 50 Bougainvillean women attended meetings in Lincoln and drew up an adjoining statement on peace, which was presented at the signing ceremony and which called for greater inclusion in the peace process: “We, the women,

hold custodial rights of our land by clan inheritance. We insist that women leaders must be party to all stages of the political process in determining the future of Bougainville.” One observer said: “The women showed tremendous strength and unity. They spearheaded the union of Bougainvilleans during all exclusive Bougainvillean sessions.”⁷⁹

On 30 April 1998, the Arawa Agreement (S/1998/506) was signed, which included a permanent and irrevocable cease-fire. The Truce Monitoring Team (made up of monitors from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu) became the Peace Monitoring Group (PMG) under the Arawa agreement, which also requested the Security Council to endorse the PMG and for the Secretary-General to send an observer mission to Bougainville.

The United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB) was established in August 1998 with a mandate (S/1998/507) to: a) work with the PMG in support of the peace process; b) consult on all aspects of the cease-fire and breaches thereof; c) promote public awareness and understanding of the peace process; and d) assist in other areas as agreed by both parties to the Agreement. UNPOB was also tasked with chairing the Peace Process Consultative Committee (PPCC) which was charged with: a) consulting the parties on all aspects of the cease-fire; b) assisting the PMG in monitoring and resolving problems resulting from possible breaches of the terms of the cease-fire; c) promoting the implementation of the Lincoln Agreement; d) developing detailed plans for weapons disposal and for the phased withdrawal of the Papua New Guinea armed forces; and e) promoting public awareness and understanding of the peace process. In March 2000, the Loloata Understanding (S/2000/265) committed the parties to an agreement on political autonomy for the province of Bougainville, and a possible referendum on independence and disarmament of all militia groups.

In May 2001, BRF and BRA leaders reached agreement on weapons disposal. Shortly afterwards, they met with representatives from the Papua New Guinea government and forged a consensus which was then integrated into the peace agreement.

On 20 August 2001 the comprehensive Bougainville Peace Agreement (S/2000/988) was signed, which includes three main parts regarding: a) autonomy; b) a referendum to be held between 5 and 15 years from the date of the agreement; and c) the weapons disposal plan. The first two elements, autonomy and the referendum, required alterations to the PNG constitution. The Peace Agreement requested the Security Council to agree that the five-person United Nations Political Office in Bougainville: a) continue to monitor and report on the implementation of agreed arrangements as provided in the Cease-fire Agreement; and b) assist in the implementation of the weapons disposal arrangements. In her address at the signing of the Bougainville Peace Agreement, Ruby Miringka, director of the Bougainville Community Integrated Development Agency, outlined the aspirations of the women to participate fully in political life. She devoted much of her speech to the need for peace-building and development in post-conflict Bougainville.

As agreed by the parties, the weapons disposal programme launched on 6 December 2001 had three stages:

In Stage One, small arms were handed over to local level factional commanders for storage in secure containers provided by the PPCC. The containers were then sealed by representatives from the UNPOB.

Stage Two begins with the delivery of the contained weapons to senior commanders from each faction, who then placed them in secure containers in a number of central locations. Once amendments were made to the PNG Constitution regarding autonomy and the referendum, the arms were then to be moved to secure containment with two locks, one key to be held by the ex-combatant commander, the other to be held by UNPOB. Stage two also required the constitutional amendments

to come into operation; however, before this can happen, UNPOB had to verify that sufficient arms had been collected and secured. Only then could preparations for the autonomous election begin.

Stage Three determined the final fate of the weapons. The agreement stipulated that discussions regarding their fate be held within four and a half months of the autonomy legislation coming into effect.⁸⁰

On 31 October 2001 the Security Council expanded the mandate of UNPOB (S/2001/1028), which provided, among other things, for UNPOB to chair the PPCC sub-committee on weapons disposal, verify the collection and storage of weapons, hold one of the keys for the dual locking systems in the weapons storage containers, and certify substantial compliance by the parties in the handing in of weapons, thereby creating conditions conducive for holding the first elections for an autonomous Bougainville Government.

From late 2001 until early 2003, some 1,920 weapons were collected and secured, including 313 high-powered, 309 sporting, 244 World War II relics and 1,054 homemade weapons. However, the absence of baseline data on the total number of weapons in Bougainville makes it difficult to assess the significance of this number.⁸¹ In the latter part of 2002, several Stage Two containers were broken into, with 110 firearms ending up in the hands of ex-combatants.

Nonetheless, in July 2003, UNPOB verified and certified the completion of Stage Two of the Weapons Disposal Plan, thereby triggering the constitutional process of bringing the Constitutional Amendment and the Organic Law on Peace-Building in Bougainville into full operation.

On 17 December 2003, the Peace Process Consultative Committee confirmed the decision made at Nissan Island on the final fate of all contained weapons. By the last week of April 2004, UNOMB⁸² reported to the Security Council that more than 80 per cent of the weapons in Bougainville, (1,588 weapons) had been destroyed, and that five out of 10 Bougainville districts had completed the weapons disposal programme.⁸³

The Disarmament Process and Package Offered by the Bougainville Ex-Combatants Trust Account (BETA)

“BETA has made a difference between nothingness and hope. It was abused, I’ve also heard of guys collecting money and blowing it on beer, or selling the equipment. Yes, abuse has occurred, but there are cases when it has been used as seed money, you could see businesses developing, training courses being attended, guys were taught how to get organized. Last week I presented certificates at a ceremony to people that had passed courses on bookkeeping, how to manage a business, technical skills. BETA has provided a springboard and a basis. While there are examples of abuse, there are good examples too, including a trade store, fish markets, et cetera. One success story I know of is a guy working on roads, he got trucks and bulldozers and secured contracts, construction contracts. He used to work for the mine, became a combatant and is now successfully reintegrated into a civilian occupation.”⁸⁴

Ambassador Sinclair, Director of UNPOB

UNIFEM’s assessment mission to Bougainville confirmed what the head of the UN’s Mission says above—the Bougainville Ex-Combatants Trust Account (BETA) Fund has made a difference. However, Ambassador Sinclair is also correct in identifying BETA’s beneficiaries as “guys.” At the conclusion of the project, BETA’s Co-ordinator indicated that widows and children comprised 9 per cent of the applicants. It is important to note that groups rather than individuals were the Fund’s beneficiaries, and a large number of that 9 per cent consisted of women who have signed an application form. In

not one instance were women the primary beneficiary of a project. One woman summed up the situation to UNIFEM as, “BETA for some, worse for others.”

Emerging from talks held in Townsville, Australia, the BETA approved 2,734 applications for projects to assist combatants to reintegrate at a total cost of AUS \$ 5 million (USD 2.44 million), funded by the Australian government. Groups of at least three combatants could apply if they were from an area that had reached Stage One in the weapons disposal process, and five other community members needed to sign onto the proposal. A Panel of 12 Eminent Bougainvilleans, which was to include at least one woman and actually included two (Francisca Semoso and Laura Ampa), approved assistance of up to PGK 50,000 (USD 12,500), which was soon adjusted to a PGK 25,000 maximum. Around PGK 4,000 (or USD 1,160) was the average amount given, with the project coordinator explaining that, “[a] lot of trouble was caused because people expected the maximum.”⁸⁵

BETA supported projects that would provide “training to develop skills and knowledge, development of viable businesses or strengthening of existing businesses and/or repair, maintenance or building of essential community infrastructure and facilities.”⁸⁶ BETA funded trade stores, hardware, stock, feed, agricultural projects, second hand clothing stores, bike shops, piggeries, chicken farms, cattle, butterfly farming, 12 education projects, fees for business college and high school, lots of chain saws, cocoa driers, grass mowing services, workshops, carpentry, rice mills, fisheries (20 boats and motors), fishing equipment, welding supplies, 21 tire repair services, compressors and water supply and building materials.⁸⁷

As Ambassador Sinclair indicated, there have been abuses and waste, a fact that was confirmed by UNIFEM interviews. One woman said, “The commanders encouraged people to apply for BETA, things like this happened: a commander broke into a place to get beer, and would then say to the person he had stolen from, ‘Fill this out and I’ll get you a project.’ ” Another woman relayed this story: “One commander approved five projects, and kept the proceeds for himself. The villagers wouldn’t complain or go near him because he was armed. When they knew he had sold his last weapon, they burnt his house and store to the ground.” Another woman said: “The terrible thing is that we now have a conflict of interest among victims. Victims did not receive compensation, no services; they were often not included in the package, with the ex-combatants seeing it as a free gift, which, without training or trauma counselling, is often wasted. One ex-combatant made an application on behalf of a group, and has individually owned the materials, basically misusing the process. This is not an isolated story.” Yet another woman complained that “there has been no monitoring of the BETA fund so far at all, ex-combatants are selling the goods and drinking, they have lost their sense of self, they have experienced major trauma. We say to them ‘Don’t forget why you fought’ implying the better life they are not having although the basic grievance has been stopped (the mine). But it is difficult for people to be independent when their identity and self-esteem is so damaged.” Another woman stated, “The PPCC has commercialized the process, and many non-ex-combatants have been brought into the process who did not fight in the war.” However, one woman was prepared to speak in favour of BETA, “Some widows did benefit from the BETA Fund, I know of five women who received something, projects included second hand clothing, trade stores, piggery and a chicken farm, they got between 3,000-5,000 Kina (US\$ 870-1450).”

BETA regional staff and the PMG were active in many areas of Bougainville and would go out, get news, talk to people and circulate a regular newsletter (*Nuis Bilong Pius*), which was printed in Pisin and English. They also used Radio Bougainville to get the message out about the BETA Fund. Despite these awareness raising and information distribution efforts undertaken by BETA staff, the PMG and the UN, there was still confusion about the process itself. A cut-off date for applications was set at 24 December 2002. The first meeting to approve projects was on 1 February 2003, which approved 25 projects from each side, or 50 from each district. The next meeting was March, then in April and the final meeting was in June, where 175 applications were considered. In April, when the first lot of projects started going out, the BETA Coordinator stated another huge number of applica-

tions of around 1,500-2,000 applications poured into the BETA Office, because people began to see what was available. This was in addition to the eleven filing cabinets full of applications that had already been received.

In 2002, donors began to suspect that the disarmament process had become so lucrative and comfortable that it had almost become an impediment to disarmament itself. Donors communicated to local UN and project staff that if new funding was to become available, ex-combatants needed to understand that the process was not open-ended—funds for ceremonies, vehicles and high transportation costs associated with awareness raising efforts or the collection of isolated weapons were viewed as too high. In June 2002 a meeting was convened by the United Nations bringing leaders from every level of the weapons disposal process to Buka so that full and frank discussions could be held. Participants agreed on new procedures to target funding more carefully, and to strengthen communication between different levels. Ex-combatants agreed on the future sequencing and timetable for implementation of the disposal plan and likely exit dates for the PMG and UNOMB. In return, donors reconfirmed their support for the peace and disarmament process in Bougainville. Following the meeting, the head of the UN mission announced the immediate start of an intensive one and a half month peace process awareness programme throughout all districts of Bougainville. Church leaders and women's groups supported this final push, urging ex-combatants to surrender any remaining guns and stressing the importance of the continued engagement of the Me'ekamui Defence Force in the process.

Phillip Alpers and Conner Twyford noted in their study of the disarmament process that “Many sources felt that ex-combatants had built up a formidable position within the weapons disposal process, and that this was now becoming an impediment to disarmament, and indeed to the recovery process. With so much energy being directed at weapons disposal, potential existed for community-wide resentment to develop as other needs were not met, or were met more slowly than expected. Many people involved in the peace and disarmament process felt it was important to try to build a district-specific peace dividend, or one that covered the whole population, rather than focus on individual ex-combatants or combatant groups. Programmes that sought to reintegrate ex-combatants into society needed to take this into account.”⁸⁸

The central issue of defining the ex-combatant is demonstrated in the Bougainville case where 15,000 people have declared themselves as ex-combatants, when the highest estimate of actual combatants stops at 5,000. Some of this problem is attributed to the process itself that required at least three ex-combatants to be part of a group of eight applying for each project, with projects benefiting larger groups more likely of succeeding. The process also required BRA or BRF delegates to endorse the application, and responsibility was given to the factional leaders to negotiate with the local Council of Elders/Council of Chiefs, which some women pointed out further consolidated the competition between traditional leadership structures and those created by the war. With the abundance of real and fake ex-combatants to satisfy, it is little wonder that widows, dependents and women more generally have been failed by the process.

Other problems attributed to the fund include the de-containment of weapons, which often occurred due to grievances about the distribution of funds. The first de-containment of weapons was in Bana in August 2002, which occurred when it was rumoured that Me'ekamui were trying to invade; however, the second time was in Connwa, around the time when PNK 1.2 million was given to the BRF. According to UNIFEM sources, other de-containments happened because people were angry about BETA payments, an unfortunate result of tying the disarmament process to a monetary figure, and Bougainville is not the first instance of this mistake. “Many projects were not funded, causing problems, causing people to feel they had the right to take back their weapons.”

Along with the connection made between the disarmament process and autonomy for Bougainville, the BETA Fund was the key incentive for disarmament. As such, it was a lot more than merely a

development project and required expertise that was not always made available. The Australian project coordinator was a devoted and hard-working person; however, he had no previous experience in this technical area; he had been in Bougainville as a builder, and in that capacity had been associated with the building of 160 schoolrooms for the Bougainville Provincial Rehabilitation Project. Through such activities this individual had certainly gained a lot of insight into the country, but was not necessarily prepared for the complexities of the DDR effort.

Conclusion

If nobody claims to be the winner of the war in Bougainville, women certainly are the losers. Women have lost loved ones, their health, their livelihoods and their land, and they have sustained considerable attack on their decision-making powers and status as landowners. Women paid the price of the war, forged the conditions for peace and have watched the peace process from the sidelines, witnessing a great proportion of the funds contributed in good faith by donors going to waste or into the wrong hands, with little regard for their potential or actual work as leaders or as peace-builders. Today Bougainville is not a safe place to be a woman, with the senior UN representative at the time of UNIFEM's visit concurring that "male chauvinism has taken over."

UNIFEM's visit confirmed that when weapons disposal processes remain strictly in the hands of ex-combatants, the demobilization of armed groups takes longer, and communities of civilians are denied the opportunity and the right to participate in rebuilding their war-torn society at critical phases of the peace. The visit also confirmed the relevance of implementing paragraph 13 of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) that points out the importance not only of considering the different needs of female and male ex-combatants, which is less relevant in Bougainville's case than the latter part of the paragraph, which includes the need to "take into account the needs of their dependents." The fact that women received hardly any of the resources and training supposed to help Bougainville adapt to post-war conditions helps explain some of the real difficulties encountered by communities faced with the task of reintegrating traumatized and militarized former combatants in Bougainville.

5. Standard Operating Procedures on Gender and DDR⁸⁹

Negotiating DDR: Promoting Women's Political Participation

Women's organizations and networks are important players in the peace process, but they frequently lose political ground during and after peace negotiations; despite their active engagement in all aspects of conflict, they often fail to enter into positions of political leadership when post-war reconstruction processes begin. Since DDR processes are usually conceived at the peace table, any UN personnel involved in facilitating or expediting a peace process should proactively assist the attendance of women's representatives, inform them about what DDR is and promote their involvement in the planning phase. This will contribute towards ensuring that women and girl ex-combatants, women working in support functions to armed groups and forces, wives and dependents, as well as members of the receiving community, are informed and included in shaping any peace accord and related DDR plans.

- ✓ Specific reference to women and girl combatants, supporters and dependents should be included in the mandates of facilitators, SRSGs and senior UN personnel supporting the peace process, and in ensuing Security Council resolutions.
- ✓ Peace process facilitators, SRSGs and Envoys should be apprised of the internationally agreed minimum standard requiring that at least 30 per cent of participants in any democratic decision-making forums be women. In this regard the participation of women fighters, veterans and other community-based women peace-builders familiar with their needs should be sought to adequately represent and raise their concerns during the negotiation process.
- ✓ The UN should commit itself to developing a group of deployment-ready experts in gender and DDR through a combined strategy of recruitment and training.
- ✓ Women leaders (national and local) who will assist the return of women combatants, supporters and dependents to civilian life are crucial stakeholders in the peace process and must be enlisted as participants. Governmental machineries or departments with gender-related mandates should be included in negotiations and decision-making whenever possible.
- ✓ To facilitate their participation, a risk assessment should be done and adequate protection should be provided to those women who may be endangered for taking up a public role in the peace process.
- ✓ Information about the DDR package and process should be made available to any subsidiary bodies or sub-committees established to facilitate non-party and NGO input and investment in the peace process.
- ✓ The release of abducted women and children, in particular girls, from within the ranks of an armed group should be made a condition of the peace agreement.
- ✓ The representation of women in structures established to manage DDR processes, such as national DDR commissions, should be stipulated in the peace accord.

Planning DDR: The Assessment Phase

Planners should develop a good understanding of the legal, political, economic and social context of the DDR programme and how it affects women, men, girls and boys differently, both in the armed groups and in the receiving communities. In addition, planners must understand the different needs of

women, men, girls and boys who are combatants, supporters of combatants, wives and dependents. Programme planners should take into account that women and girls may have very different needs in the post-conflict period, and that some may want to make different choices from the men with whom they are associated. While some may wish to return to their original homes, others may choose to follow male partners to a new geographical location, including across national boundaries. Some women and girls may be abandoned by departing soldiers. Some may choose to remain behind in a new place when their male partners return to their places of origin.

- ✓ Gender expertise should be considered an essential element of any assessment mission undertaken by the UN, specifically those teams with DDR-related mandates, and gender analysis and information should be adequately reflected in reporting.
- ✓ The number and percentage of women and girls in armed groups and forces, as well as rank and category of their roles, should be ascertained. Examples of non-combat functions include women working in support functions, such as cooks, spies, messengers, soldiers' wives, women used as sex slaves, etc.
- ✓ Evidence ascertained in the assessment mission on the prevalence of women, men, boys or girls in the military and armed groups who have been abducted, who joined due to lack of protection, trafficked, forced into marriage and/or used as sex slaves, should inform planning. There are important differences in the services required by each group.
- ✓ The assessment team should identify local capacities of organizations already working on DDR-related issues and their key lessons learned.
- ✓ Along with these community peace-building forums, women's organizations should be routinely consulted on assessment missions as they are often a valuable source of information for planners and public information specialists, for instance, regarding the community's perceptions of the dangers posed by illicit weapons, attitudes towards various types of weapons and the location of weapons caches, and other problems, such as the trans-border weapons trade. Women's organizations can also provide a window into local perceptions about returning female ex-combatants and women and girls associated with fighting forces.
- ✓ Women interpreters familiar with relevant terminology and concepts should be hired and trained by assessment teams to facilitate interviewing women and girls associated with fighting forces.
- ✓ The assessment team should identify the range of existing attitudes on giving women ex-combatants the option of joining peacetime armies and other security institutions, such as intelligence services, border police, customs, immigration and other law enforcement services.
- ✓ An ongoing assessment must be conducted of the range of attitudes at the local level towards returning female combatants, supporters and dependents to anticipate the kinds of obstacles to reintegration, so as to better prepare the community and returnees. Perceptions of the children of women and girl combatants, supporters and dependents must also be assessed.
- ✓ If the assessment team is tasked with identifying sites for cantonment, sites must be able to accommodate separate facilities for women and men, girls and boys, as required. Sanitary facilities should be designed in a manner that allows for privacy in accordance with culturally accepted norms, and water and sanitary wear should be available to meet women's and girls' hygiene needs.
- ✓ Women's specific health needs, including gynecological care, should be catered for.
- ✓ When planning the transportation of people associated with armed groups and forces to cantonment sites or to their communities, sufficient resources should be budgeted so as to offer women and girls the option of being transported separately from men and boys where personal safety is a concern.

- ✓ The assessment team report and recommendations for personnel and budgetary requirements for the DDR process should include dedicated international and local staff that include women DDR experts, women translators and women field staff for reception centers and cantonment sites to which women combatants can safely report.

Planning DDR: Mandates, Scope, Institutional Arrangements

DDR processes have traditionally focused on adult male, able-bodied combatants and paid scant attention to the needs of women and children involved in armed groups or forces,⁹⁰ the wives and dependents of combatants and those disabled (mentally and/or physically) in conflict. A strict “one-man, one-gun” approach to eligibility for DDR, or an eligibility test based on proficiency in handling weapons, may exclude a significant number of women and girls, who may be found in larger numbers in support functions than as armed combatants. While the narrow definition of who qualifies as a “combatant” has generally been excused as arising from budgetary constraints, it has meant that DDR programmes have often overlooked or inadequately attended to the needs of a large segment of persons participating in and associated with armed groups and forces. By overlooking those who do not fit the category of a “male, able-bodied combatant,” DDR activities are not only less efficient, but run the risk of reinforcing existing gender inequalities in local communities and exacerbating economic hardship for women and girls participating in armed groups and forces, some of whom may have unresolved trauma and reduced physical capacity due to violence experienced during the conflict. Such conditions are fertile ground for re-recruitment into armed groups and forces, and together with the presence of small arms, may undermine the peace-building potential of DDR processes.

- ✓ When providing support to the Secretary-General in drafting a peace mission’s concept of operation for the consideration of the Security Council, DPKO should reflect the recommendations of the assessment team and supply language that anticipates a mandate for a gender-sensitive DDR process in compliance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Specifically, the definition of a beneficiary should not be limited to armed combatants, but rather include those who play support functions essential for the maintenance and cohesion of the armed forces.
- ✓ Definitions of who constitutes a dependent should reflect the heterogeneity and complexity of the conflict situation where dependent women and girls may not be legal wives of ex-combatants. Where a male ex-combatant and a woman/girl are living as man and wife according to local perceptions and practices, this should guarantee eligibility for the woman/girl for assistance under the DDR programme. The dependents of an ex-combatant should include any person living as part of the ex-combatant’s household under his or her care. This may include, for instance, other wives, children, parents or siblings and members of the extended family.
- ✓ When the Security Council establishes a peacekeeping operation with mandated DDR functions, components that will ensure gender equity should be adequately financed through the assessed budget of UN peacekeeping operations and not through voluntary contributions alone. From the outset, funds must be allocated for gender experts and expertise to inform the planning and implementation of dedicated programmes serving the needs of women ex-combatants, supporters and dependents.
- ✓ United Nations representatives should facilitate financial support of the gender components of DDR processes, particularly in situations where governments are primarily responsible for disarmament.
- ✓ In situations where governments are responsible for disarmament of ex-combatants, UN representatives should encourage National DDR Commissions to work closely with women’s governmental machineries and ministries and women’s peace-building networks.

- ✓ When collaborating with regional and other multilateral organizations, DPKO representatives should encourage gender mainstreaming throughout all demobilization and reintegration efforts that it leads or supports, encouraging all partners, such as client countries, donors and other stakeholders, to dedicate human and economic resources towards gender mainstreaming throughout all phases of DDR.
- ✓ A gender and DDR component should be included in the training programmes routinely given in the context of multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations. There is a need to increase the technical qualifications of those in leadership positions regarding gender—and gender and DDR more specifically. UN, donor countries and troop-contributing countries should be encouraged to include women and gender issues in all training exercises and policy guidance provided to troops, technical experts and all high-level appointments, particularly Special Representatives of the Secretary-General. Accountability measures must be developed and applied to ensure that all staff is committed to gender equity.
- ✓ Troop-contributing countries should be encouraged and supported to fast-track women for deployment in peacekeeping operations and DDR processes. Enhanced employment opportunities and training must be given to women in troop-donating militaries, including the use of existing modules and training and the development of new modules and training where necessary.
- ✓ DPKO should continue to work closely with other UN agencies, funds and programmes, specifically consulting and including in planning processes, integrated task forces and training exercises those agencies with experience and expertise in gender and DDR issues, such as UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNFPA, UNDP, UNHCR and DDA.

DDR Planning: the Package of Benefits and Incentives

Benefits packages can include one or more of the following: financial resources, material resources and basic training. The overall aim should be to ensure that the distribution of benefits enables women and girls to have the same economic choices as men and boys. A good understanding of women's rights (e.g., regarding property ownership) and social attitudes relating to women's and girls' access to economic resources is needed when designing the composition of the benefits package. This will assist planners in designing the package in a manner that will allow women and girls to retain control over benefits, especially financial reinsertion packages, after leaving the cantonment site. For example, providing ownership of a parcel of land as part of the benefits package may not be appropriate in a country where women cannot legally own land. While DDR planners have assumed that financial packages given to male ex-combatants will be used for the benefit of family members, cumulative wisdom from the field asserts that demobilized men may go on spending sprees in the discharge phase rather than share their money equitably. Sustainable reintegration cannot happen unless male ex-combatants are recognized as members of a larger community, which often means being part of a family unit, rather than as individuals.

- ✓ Planners should pay careful attention to budgeting: reintegration is the costliest and longest process in DDR and requires the largest allocation of resources.
- ✓ When planning the demobilization package, women/girls and men/boys should receive equitable basic demobilization benefits packages, including access to land and tools.
- ✓ Planning should include a labour market assessment so that a compilation of information of the different job options and market opportunities that will be available to men and women on discharge is available. This analysis should take place as early as possible so that training programmes are ready when ex-combatants need them, and should reflect an understanding of

local gender norms and standards about gender-appropriate labour, as well as changes in gender roles that may have occurred during conflict. Opportunities for women's and girls' economic independence as well as potential drawbacks for women and girls entering previously "male" workplaces and professions should be considered.

- ✓ If money is disbursed as part of the demobilization programme, the different funding needs and spending patterns of women and girls should be recognized and accommodated (e.g. Do women and girls prefer large payments of cash or monthly disbursement? Does either form of payment place women and girls at additional risk?).
- ✓ Care should be taken to discuss and pay the financial portion of demobilization package (if any) with women and girls in private, away from male family members, but discreetly so as not to arouse suspicion and potentially hostile and violent reaction.
- ✓ Women's traditional forms of money management should be recognized and supported (e.g., rotational loan and credit schemes) and, where available, access to banks and the opening of a private bank account to safeguard money should be facilitated.
- ✓ Education and training efforts should correspond to the needs and desires of the women and girls and start as soon as possible during the demobilization phase, as experience has shown that women and girls tend to be overwhelmed by household responsibilities and may face restricted mobility once they return home, and are therefore less likely to be able to attend training.
- ✓ In many low-income countries, women and girls have lower educational levels and skills in less profitable occupational areas than their male peers. Training provided should take this into account through providing additional resources for literacy and training in high-earning skills for women and girls.
- ✓ Educational opportunities should be equally available to female and male children of ex-combatants and widows.
- ✓ The spouse or other female family members of an ex-combatant should be brought in to witness the signing of an agreement on how his money will get paid. By this means the resources may actually get passed on to the family, and from there move into the broader community.
- ✓ Receiving communities must be informed about the intention and use of reintegration packages and the potential impact on them. It cannot be assumed that the benefits of DDR will automatically enrich the community into which they enter, and may in fact cause resentment and violence. Efforts should be made to include communities when deciding development packages so that ex-combatants' access to these resources can be influenced and monitored by the community to which they return.

Assembly and Cantonment

Female ex-combatants are less likely to come forward to participate in demobilization programmes than their male peers. This may be for a variety of the following reasons: a failure to adequately assess the number of women combatants, supporters and dependents during the assessment phase so that women are neither expected nor catered for; women having poorer access to news sources, such as radios, and being less able to read than men in many peacekeeping contexts; the stigma of being associated with an armed group during peace time; or perhaps the perception or fact that a weapon is needed to be exchanged against participation in a DDR programme. Efforts should be made to ensure that information about the DDR programme reaches, and is well understood by, women and girls participating in and associated with armed groups and forces.

- ✓ Men and women ex-combatants should be equally targeted with clear information on their eligibility for participation in DDR programmes, including information about the benefits available to them and how to obtain them. Concurrently, information and awareness raising sessions should be offered to the communities that will receive them, especially women's groups, to help them understand what DDR is, and what they can and cannot expect to gain from it.
- ✓ The geography of cantonment sites should be reconceived to accommodate the humanitarian and security needs of women and girls, such as regular patrols, fencing, etc. Sites should accommodate the different ages and sexes of ex-fighters. If women and girls are to take advantage of training and education opportunities, childcare provisions cannot be optional or perceived as non-essential.
- ✓ In order for women and girls to feel safe and welcomed in a DDR process, and to avoid their self-demobilization, women and child protection workers at the assembly point are essential. Training should be put in place for women field workers whose role will be to interview women and girl combatants and other participants in order to identify who should be included in DDR processes and to support those who are eligible.
- ✓ Gender balance should be a priority among staff in the assembly and cantonment sites. It is especially important that men see women in positions of authority in DDR processes. If women leaders (including field officers) are absent, men are unlikely to take seriously education efforts aimed at changing their attitudes and ideas about militarized, masculine power.
- ✓ The physical layout of the reception centre should be structured so that women and girls may register separately from their male partner, and receive separate identity cards, which is important for women and girls who are captives, for whom the assembly point may offer a rare opportunity for escape from their captors.
- ✓ Translators should be hired and trained so as to be sensitive to the needs and concerns of those assembling, who are often experiencing high levels of anxiety and facing particular problems, such as separation from family members, lost property, lack of identity documents, etc.
- ✓ Existing gender-aware registration forms and questionnaires should be routinely made available at cantonment sites to supply gender-disaggregated data on groups to be demobilized.
- ✓ Men, boys, women and girls should be escorted to separate facilities, while assured and shown that there will be frequent opportunities offered for contact in the initial stages of the demobilization processes, as families may have joint decisions to make about their futures.
- ✓ The threat of sexual violence must be fully recognized and appropriate placement of latrines, washing and kitchen facilities must reduce security threats to women and girls. The provision of fuel and water decreases the need for women and girls to leave a secured area, and is therefore an essential service.
- ✓ Secure food and water distribution and the provision of hygiene facilities and health care, including reproductive and psychosocial health services, are essential. Women and girls may have specific health and psychosocial needs, for instance relating to gender-based violence. Health screening, including reproductive health should be mandatory at all centers. Women and girls who have been abducted and/or suffered sexual assault during and after the conflict should be assisted by women who are trained in trauma management and offered counselling services where these are culturally acceptable and appropriate. Such assistance is essential to allow female ex-combatants in particular to participate in training and receive any health care or counselling services required.

- ✓ Efforts should be made to balance domestic duties between men and women so that rather than collecting fuel or water, women can take equal advantage of briefings, re-trainings and other facilities at the site.
- ✓ Opportunities should be provided to educate women and girls about their rights, e.g., the right to own land or the right to pursue legal recourse.
- ✓ Men, boys, women and girls should be offered equal (but if necessary, separate) access to education about HIV/AIDS.
- ✓ In some countries, demobilized soldiers are offered opportunities in new security structures. Women ex-combatants should be provided the same opportunities as their male counterparts to be retained as part of the restructured police and security forces.

Disarmament

The disarmament phase in DDR is the first step in the process of turning combatants back into civilians, and includes the collection of small arms and light and heavy weapons within a conflict zone. According to the 11 February 2000 report of the Secretary-General, this initial disarmament “should also comprise the development of arms management programmes, including their safe storage and their final disposition, which may entail their destruction. De-mining may also be part of this process.”⁹¹

Because of the breadth and severity of their impact, and the danger they pose when peace is fragile, a reduction in the number of small arms and light weapons (SALW) that circulate before, during and after a conflict is a vital accompaniment to reconstruction efforts. The prevalence of portable weapons has made it imperative that disarmament as part of DDR be recognized as a symbolic prelude to a much longer and broader series of initiatives designed to convince a post-conflict society to disarm. Different types of disarmament take place after a conflict ends. Firstly, efforts are made to collect the arms held by fighters at the beginning of the DDR process. However, at this early stage of the peace, disarmament efforts are unlikely to collect all the weapons in a society because trust in the provision of security has not yet been fully established. As that trust grows, further disarmament efforts will extract more weapons.

However, when weapons remain in circulation, they combine with trauma, poverty and lawlessness to turn women’s neighbourhoods and homes into war zones, heightening the lethality of crime and of domestic and political violence. The insecurity felt by women, girls, men and boys is reflected in their reluctance to hand in quality weapons or reveal the existence of arms caches.

- ✓ Policies of exchanging weapons for cash in DDR should be avoided. This practice has proven to start a new arms trade wherein weapons are smuggled to reap the cash payment, creating a market for weapons, which undermines the disarmament effort.
- ✓ Armed and non-armed combatants should be separated while weapons are collected.
- ✓ Experience has shown that commanders sometimes remove weapons from the hands of women, and especially girls, prior to arrival at the assembly point. In the past this has denied women and girls access to services and benefits of the DDR programme.
- ✓ Ongoing programmes to disarm, through weapons collections, weapons amnesties, the creation of new gun control laws which assist in the registration of legally owned weapons, programmes of action such as Weapons in Exchange for Development (WED; sometimes also referred to as WfD),

and other initiatives, should be put in place to support the reintegration and development processes.

- ✓ Weapons for development projects should be seen as ideal opportunities to target and train women and girls as such projects are often related to the provision of services or goods which can alleviate the burden of care disproportionately placed on women and girls in many parts of the world, such as water and fuel provision.
- ✓ Women's existing efforts to raise awareness of proliferation and misuse should be identified and recognized when planning long-term disarmament processes.
- ✓ Women's and girls' knowledge of trading routes, weapons caches and other sources of hidden small arms and light weapons should be recognized and drawn from in disarmament planning, while priority attention should be given to the risks posed from such disclosure.
- ✓ Women and girls should be interviewed along with, and if possible separately from, men and boys when conducting surveys to determine attitudes to small arms and light weapons.
- ✓ Other incentives can be given that replace the prestige and power of owning a weapon, and social pressure can be applied when communities have a sense of involvement in weapons collections processes. Men are traditionally associated with the use, ownership and promotion of small arms, and are injured and killed by guns in far larger numbers than are women. However, the discrepancy between female and male gun ownership should not preclude the assumption that women and girls have guns, may pose threats to security and are not simply nurturers, innocents and victims in situations of armed conflict.
- ✓ Educating and including women and girls prominently in disarmament activities can strengthen women's and girls' profile and leadership roles in the public sphere, and should be encouraged. Opportunities should be taken up to link women's new expertise in disarmament to the promotion of their broader political participation.
- ✓ Collected weapons should be properly guarded and, ideally, destroyed. The involvement of women's groups in monitoring weapons collection and destruction, and as participants in destruction ceremonies can be a powerful way of solidifying community investment in the peace process.

Resettlement

After demobilization, mechanisms should be put in place to facilitate the return of women and girls to their destination of choice via a safe means of transportation that minimizes exposure to gender-based violence, such as sexual assault, or re-recruitment and abduction into armed groups.

- ✓ Women and girls should be properly catered for and included in any travel assistance that is offered after encampment. If a journey will take several days, the needs of women and girls and their children must be catered for, with separate vehicles available if required.
- ✓ Women and girls should be free to choose where they will live, electing to return to land from which they or their partner came, or to move to semi-urban or urban areas where they may have more freedom from traditional gender roles.
- ✓ A transitional safety net should be put in place to help resettled women and girls with housing, healthcare and counselling, and offer educational support to get their children (especially girls) to school.

- ✓ Women and girls should be fully informed about and able to access the local demobilization support office.
- ✓ Measures should be put in place to help reunify mothers and children.

Social Reintegration into Communities

Although the primary intent of demobilization is to remove combatants from their fighting roles as quickly as possible, even in the planning stages, it is imperative to think about how returning ex-soldiers will be received by the civilian community. From the perspective of the receiving community, it can seem that DDR “rewards” people who supported or committed atrocities. Communities often express resentment that they are expected to re-embrace those who have wronged them, and they often feel excluded from the plans that are developed to reintegrate ex-combatants and their supporters. The period of rehabilitation and reintegration will be a long one, and if it not well planned, it is highly likely that ex-combatants will not reintegrate and that divisions between them and the receiving community will widen as time goes on. Recognizing this danger from the outset is part of ensuring long-term stability and peace-building.

Returning ex-combatants may face a variety of difficulties in readjusting to civilian life, and their families may face problems in coping with their return. Such difficulties may relate to the reallocation of intra-household roles and responsibilities and coping with new attitudes and behaviour from returning ex-combatants, to resolving conflict through non-violent means as well as changes in household composition. In many post-conflict societies, the high numbers of men and boys killed in combat results in increases in the dependency ratio of households as families, for example, when orphaned relatives are taken in. This can place an economic strain on the ex-combatant’s household.

- ✓ As part of the broad consultation undertaken with a wide variety of social actors, community awareness-raising meetings should be held to prepare the community to receive ex-combatants. Inclusion of women and women’s organizations in these processes should be considered essential as women often play a central role in post-conflict reconstruction and the provision of care.
- ✓ Receiving communities should be informed about the intention and use of reintegration packages and their potential impact.
- ✓ Resources should be allocated to train women to understand and cope with traumatized children, including how to help abducted girls gain demobilization and reintegration support. It is unfair to burden women with the reintegration and rehabilitation of child soldiers simply because they are usually the primary caregivers of children.
- ✓ Ex-combatants who have been wounded or disabled in action, or have become chronically ill due to combat exposure, should be provided with medical care, counselling, rehabilitation facilities and relevant vocational training. This will also reduce the burden of care that is usually unpaid and carried out by women and girls and that can lead to negative coping mechanisms by the household, such as withdrawing girls from school to care for disabled relatives.
- ✓ Ex-combatants, their wives and dependents and receiving families and communities need to be sensitized to the difficulties of readjustment to civilian life of persons associated with armed forces. Messages of reconciliation should also address the plight of women and girls who may have suffered abuse whilst with armed groups or forces and their specific needs.
- ✓ Women’s organizations should be encouraged and trained to participate in healing and reconciliation work in general and, in particular, to assist the reconciliation and reintegration of

ex-combatants from different factions. Have women in the post-conflict zone already begun the process of reconstruction after war? Is this work recognized and supported?

- ✓ The expertise of women ex-combatants—which may be non-traditional—should be recognized, respected and utilized by other women. Women ex-combatant's reintegration should be connected to broader strategies aimed at women's post-conflict development in order to prevent resentment against fighters as a "privileged" group.
- ✓ Radio networks should include women's and girls' voices and experiences when educating local people about those who are being reintegrated, and thus alleviate potential tensions.
- ✓ Community mental health practices (such as cleansing ceremonies) should be encouraged to contribute to the long-term psychological rehabilitation of ex-combatants and to address women's and girls' specific suffering (often a result of sexualized violence).
- ✓ Women ex-combatants and supporters should have equal access to legal aid or support to assist them in combatting discrimination (in both private and public spheres).

Economic Reintegration

Female ex-combatants often find it more difficult than male ex-combatants to achieve economic reintegration. With few job opportunities, particularly within the formal sector, women and girls have limited options for economic reintegration, which has serious implications if they are the main providers for their dependents. Female ex-combatants in particular, who may have become accustomed to a relatively independent and egalitarian life whilst away, may find it hard on return to adapt to the expectations of traditional communities. Furthermore, women and girls who have suffered gender-based violence may face particular difficulties in gaining acceptance for themselves and any children they may have had as a result of rape or forced marriage whilst in the armed forces. This group is likely to face rejection, denigration and abuse by their communities and families. Wives of ex-combatants may also face difficulties in adapting to or being accepted by a new community that may have distinct linguistic, ethnic or cultural traditions.

- ✓ Special measures have to be instituted to ensure that female beneficiaries have equal training and employment opportunities after leaving the cantonment site. This entails allocating funding for childcare and providing training as close as possible to where the women and girls reside to minimize irregular attendance due to problems associated with transportation (e.g., infrequent buses) or mobility (e.g., cultural restrictions on women's and girls' travel). Obstacles, such as employers refusing to hire women and girl ex-combatants, or narrow expectations of the work women and girls are permitted to do, should be taken into account before re-training is offered. Potential employers should be targeted for sensitization training to encourage them to train and employ these females.
- ✓ Measures should be put in place to prevent the ghettoization of women ex-fighters and war widows on the fringes of the economy. This includes excessive reliance on unpaid or low paid NGO activity, which might become a substitute for long-term participation in the labour market.
- ✓ Women and girls should be given a voice in determining the types of skills that they are taught. Options should be provided to allow women and girls to build on skills acquired during their time with the armed groups and forces including skills that may not typically be considered "women's work," such as driving or construction jobs. Vocational skills should be taught in economically viable areas, where there is likely to be a long-term market demand.

- ✓ Widows, widowers and dependents of ex-combatants killed in action may need financial and material assistance. They should be assisted in setting up income-generating initiatives. Widows and widowers should be made active participants in reintegration training programmes and should also be able to benefit from credit schemes.
- ✓ Demobilized women and girls should be offered training in administration, planning and money management.
- ✓ Because their homes are often the principal geographical base for women's and girls' work, technical and labour support systems should be in place to assist demobilized women and girls in building a house and to support self-employment opportunities.
- ✓ One of the greatest needs of ex-combatants and their families is access to land and housing. In securing these, the specific needs of women and girls have to be taken into account, particularly when traditional practices are not willing to accommodate female-headed households.
- ✓ Single or widowed women ex-combatants should be recognized as heads of household and permitted to own and rent existing housing and land.
- ✓ Measures should be taken to protect women ex-combatants and war widows from being forced into casual labor on land which is not their own.
- ✓ Where needed, women and girls should be provided with training in agricultural methods and the right to farm cash crops and own and use livestock.
- ✓ Security should be provided for women and girls en route to work or to the marketplace, particularly protecting women and girls from banditry, especially in places with prolific small arms.
- ✓ Women and girls should have equal access to communally owned farm implements and water pumping equipment, and have the right to own such equipment.

Acronyms

ARC	American Refugee Committee
BETA	Bougainville Ex-Combatants Trust Account
BICWF	Bougainville Inter-Church Women's Forum
BIPG	Bougainville Interim Provincial Government
BPC	Bougainville People's Congress
BRA	Bougainville Revolutionary Army
BRF	Bougainville/Papua New Guinea Resistance Forces
CRA	Conzinc Rio Tinto Australia
DDA	Department for Disarmament Affairs
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration
DPA	Department for Political Affairs
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
ICC	Interim Care Centres
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Network
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
LWI	Liberian Women's Initiative
MODEL	Movement of Democracy in Liberia
NCDDR	National Commission for DDR
NGO	Non-Governmental governmental Organization
NTGL	National Transitional Government of Liberia
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PMG	Peace Monitoring Group
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PNGDF	Papua New Guinea Defence Force
PPCC	Peace Process Consultative Committee
RFTF	Results-Focused Transition Framework (for Liberia)
SALW	Small arms and light weapons
SBU	Small Boys' Unit
SRSR	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNOMB	United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville
UNOMIL	UN Observer Mission in Liberia
UNPOB	United Nations Political Observer Mission in Bougainville
WAC	Women's Artillery Commandos
WED/WfD	Weapons in Exchange for Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPNET	Women in Peacebuilding Network

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End Notes

- 1 For more information on Gender and DDR and UNIFEM's response, see <http://www.womenwarpeace.org/issues/ddr/ddr.htm>
- 2 Definitions are taken from the Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on The Role of United Nations Peacekeeping in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration 11 February 2000 (S/2000/101)
- 3 De Groot, "Is the United Nations Seriously Considering Women Military...as Peacekeepers?" <http://user-pages.aug.com/captbarb/degroot.html>
- 4 Peacekeeping Watch. "Women, Gender and Peacekeeping." June 2004; DPKO. "Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective into Multi-Dimensional Peace Operations." Lessons Learned Unit. New York. July 2000 http://pbpu.unlb.org/pbpu/library/Gender_per_cent20Mainstreaming_per_cent202000.pdf
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