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From Research to Road Map

Learning from the Arms for Development Initiative in Sierra Leone

Derek Miller, Daniel Ladouceur and Zoe Dugal

This joint UNIDIR-UNDP report presents the results of a 1,200-person survey on small arms and security in Sierra Leone. It offers an overview of the post-conflict DDR process, the origins of UNDP's Arms for Development project, and the findings of the survey at the national and district levels.

A detailed retrospective is also provided on the design and conduct of the survey itself in order to see how such activities might be improved. An appeal is made for the development of a more rigorous and systematic approach to learning about local security problems as they are understood by the stakeholders themselves. Some first thoughts on how this might be accomplished are provided. The analysis concludes with a road map for future voluntary collection efforts to stimulate discussion and provide guidance.

From Research to Road Map will be of great interest to those concerned with the security of Sierra Leone and its bordering countries, with the link between small arms and development, and with efforts to make small arms and security programming appropriate to culturally distinct communities.

From Research to Road Map
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About the artist

Gambian artist Baboucarr Etu Ndow is a former art teacher and host of a children's television series on art. He has exhibited his work in Gambia, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Guinea Bissau and also in England, Sweden and the Netherlands. His work is on permanent display in several locations in Gambia and Sierra Leone.

Note

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PREFACE

This study presents the findings of a 1,200 person survey on matters related to small arms, light weapons and personal security in Sierra Leone conducted in early 2003. All the work in the survey was designed and conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with support in the final stages by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), which assisted in the analysis of the research findings and the drafting of this document. It is authored jointly and produced as a collaborative effort.

The study provides the results of a district-by-district survey of small arms and security-related issues. It illustrates the types of security problems people encountered at the time the fieldwork was conducted. The results were used to refine approaches to project design and planning in Freetown. The findings, in almost all cases, are qualitative—that is, concerned with explaining the meaning of the social experiences of the communities interviewed rather than using the interview material to produce measurements. While the latter is important, it was decided early on that the limitations of the interview process made measurements based on their results too uncertain to use for policy analysis.

Key findings include:

- Arms for development efforts, while fruitful and worthwhile to pursue, should acknowledge that people also need "weapons for security". Assessments of security needs in close cooperation with the communities in question should be conducted prior to any design and plan for a weapons collection programme;
- Field offices and project managers need more support from dedicated research centres with both cultural knowledge and thematic expertise, for example, in small arms. Such active partnerships will better ensure that best practices, current knowledge and the most refined approaches are made available to the practitioners;
- Border communities have security needs that are different from communities in the interior. Collection programmes should work better to coordinate with counterparts in neighbouring countries;

- Close coordination and cooperation with local authorities—tribal, religious and political—are vitally important to the success or failure of projects. Support of the national government is necessary, but insufficient; and
- Research centres and implementing agencies must start the move from producing publications that explain what must be done to producing assistance services for those on the ground who are actually getting things done. Unless this is accomplished, the gap will persist between the policy and field communities, best practices will not implemented, and lessons about the unique cultural and historical experiences and needs of people will not be reflected in policy. The policy-field dialogue must be active, not passive.

In revisiting UNDP's efforts to date, this paper focuses attention specifically on the designing and planning of small arms collection initiatives. The central problem we observe—which is a theme throughout the paper—is the lack of cooperation between actual project designers in-country and the thematic or research experts who could profoundly assist in their work. Despite the wide number of "conflict analysis tools", "best practices" and "lessons learned" documents in circulation, field managers are still all but alone with their small staffs and limited resources when it comes down to proceeding with the task of constructing a project, with little if any advice on *how* to do this.

As the first collaborative effort between UNIDIR and a UNDP field office—although only in the latter stages of the project—we can now document how important it is for projects that research into local community security needs to be supported early on by those experienced in cultural research (which is more than just "learning by in-dwelling" in a community).

UNIDIR has, for many years, advocated for the fuller involvement of civil society actors in disarmament matters. In *Bound to Cooperate: Conflict, Peace and People in Sierra Leone*, published in 2000, then-executive secretary of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Lansana Kouyate, wrote in the foreword that:

> With this publication, UNIDIR gives a voice to the civil society of Sierra Leone and lets it tell what it thinks is the best way, not only to take part in the peace-building process, but also to collaborate with political

authorities and the international community in our collective effort to tackle the scourge of small arms proliferation.

This joint publication with UNDP is another small step in UNIDIR's ongoing objective, and we use this opportunity to advance a new idea on how to complement the surveys, round tables, and participatory research processes that have been part of the cooperative techniques in small arms matters. We introduce security needs assessments as a means of highlighting certain types of security problems—and solutions—that are not brought to the fore by these former techniques. The interviews conducted by UNDP and analysed by UNIDIR demonstrate the need for this approach.

For local knowledge of both security needs and solutions to be incorporated in project designs, we in the disarmament field need to raise the standards on the:

- quality and amount of support provided to field managers by research centres;
- willingness of in-country personnel to appreciate the value of the work of researchers and thematic experts;
- need for both to work more openly, explicitly, transparently and systematically with civil society in the countries in which we operate; and
- explicitness and care taken to devise and explain our theories about why we think certain things—such as weapons for development projects—will actually work.

At the moment, we are woefully silent about why we suspect certain policies will work and others will not because of a certain disdain for the word "theory". We must appreciate that every time a decision maker says that an activity (such as weapons collection) will lead to an outcome (such as security), it is built on a theory. If we do not make the theory explicit, we cannot subject it to scrutiny and, if that door is closed, we cannot learn through any process other than trial and error—which is an ethically questionable approach at best.

This report presents, first, an overview of the conflict and post-conflict periods, as well as the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) experience in Sierra Leone. Our intention in Part I is to place Sierra

Leone's Arms for Development (AfD) project in a wider context, rather than add significantly to what is already known. In Part II, the report provides a national small arms assessment, in partial alignment with the guidelines from the South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC), which were developed for the Balkans. Along with the Small Arms Survey, SEESAC has worked hard to harmonize reporting for the benefit of comparative knowledge, and we wanted to try their model in the African context. It worked well in some cases, but less well in others, and because SEESAC released the reporting guidelines after UNDP had conducted its survey, it was difficult to line up the categories after the fact. The district-by-district assessments are provided separately and do not follow other guidelines.

Part III of this report, called "A Road Map for Voluntary Weapons Collection", was born of the need to fill a demonstrably wide gap between the types of best practices offered by agencies, such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), on weapons collection and the actual, daily needs of field managers in building specific projects. While such studies often excel in explaining what needs to be done, they are somewhat vague and unhelpful in suggesting how best to achieve it. This shifts the burden onto the country staff, who then need to put forward something on their own. The evidence of this shift is apparent from the job postings for coordinators and managerial staff which do not require thematic experience in the areas in which people are needed.

In response, we have chosen to write a "policy paper from the field", offering a specific series of steps for field managers to follow, in the belief that even anecdotal experience can be informative in the absence of sufficiently detailed "best practices". Part III, therefore, presents disarmament (in post-conflict environments) as a series of steps that project designers can use to conceptualize the entire disarmament process, and then build long-term projects accordingly. It also offers some specific advice on how to do this. We hope it will function as a foil against which to start a lively discussion among project designers and planners.

Finally, Part IV, "In Retrospect", candidly explores the problems encountered by UNDP in designing and planning the AfD project and conducting research in the absence of the cooperation we now recommend. It is hoped that this honest admission of difficulties will be recognized as a great strength of the project. By showing our efforts, "warts

and all", we might help break one of the unspoken taboos: telling those few donor governments what we did *not* do well with their money, and why. While "best practices" are helpful, it is sometimes our worst practices that teach us the most.

The Arms for Development initiative in Sierra Leone, in seeking a cooperative relationship with UNIDIR, and encouraging this joint publication, has moved us all one step closer to a better partnership.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme was officially concluded in Sierra Leone in January 2002. The initial collection criterion of one weapon per combatant was dropped after complaints that members of fighting groups other than combatants (such as servants and "bush wives") should also be part of the programme. The programme then allowed for the demobilization of combatants in groups. As a result, several combatants per piece of weapon were admitted into the programme, while other combatants, who possessed more than one weapon, were still holding on to the extra ones. Personnel of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) noted that the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leader Foday Sankoh even instructed his combatants to keep their extra weapons and surrender only one.

It was also believed that weapons continued to be in the possession of civilians who used them before, as well as during, the war for both hunting and self-defence. Based on these assumptions, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) felt the need for a community-based approach to collect the remaining small arms and light weapons.

The Arms for Development (AfD) initiative, developed under the aegis of UNDP, aims to shift the mindset of communities from the benefits of owning weapons to the benefits of a weapons-free environment. This shift will enable the communities to put the war behind them and turn, instead, to development.

Between March and June 2003, the AfD initiative conducted an extensive survey of the small arms environment in Sierra Leone. This was in keeping with its mission to "promote the conditions of stability and development in the country through support to national security institutions and civil society organizations, creating opportunities for the voluntary surrender of weapons and community recovery".[1] The objective of our research was to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the small arms environment in the communities we are trying to assist.

Part I of this report provides a brief overview of the conflict in Sierra Leone; the efforts towards disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and an introduction to the Arms for Development initiative. Part I serves only as background and does not aim to contribute to the already well-documented history of this conflict.

Part II provides a national small arms assessment, followed by a more detailed district-by-district analysis. The assessment is based primarily on 1,179 interviews conducted across eleven of the country's twelve districts.[2] With 45 open-ended questions, and details catalogued from two separate questionnaires, we collected some 50,000 pieces of information from face-to-face interviews with both individuals and groups. The assessment was made possible by a partnership with the Civil Affairs section of UNAMSIL, which coordinated the work of the 20 field interviewers, all of whom had trained at the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Fourah Bay College.

Part III offers a "road map" for the design and planning of future arms for development initiatives, based on lessons learned thus far in Sierra Leone. Two aspects of the design and planning of such projects are discussed: first, a context analysis, and the way in which security needs assessments can provide insights into the differing needs of communities and community members; and second, the timing of the different "phases" of disarmament that are concluded by arms for development initiatives. Our goal is to be as specific as possible about the series of steps needed for sustainable post-conflict disarmament, as seen through the daily work practices of in-country project managers. We appreciate that the experience of other projects has been quite different, and that not all lessons learned here are applicable elsewhere.

The approach presented in Part III is offered after a review of the *Best Practice Guide on Small Arms and Light Weapons in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DD&R) Processes*[3] published by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which was based on a handbook on DDR by the Lester B. Pearson Peacekeeping Centre in Canada; the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ); the Norwegian Defence International Centre (NODEFIC); and the Swedish National Defence College. The OSCE's work was both a helpful guide and a foil in developing this section. Our contribution—so we hope—is to take a first pass at addressing *how* field managers can make use of these policy documents and their recommendations.

Lastly, we discuss the areas for improvement in our own efforts, mainly on how the field research was conducted. Seeing how much we have already learned from this research project, we are now deeply aware of how much more we might have learned had we done this differently. We therefore provide a novel research structure that can assist in the design and planning of community-specific security projects in a manner presently unavailable to field managers. This work is based on the Security Needs Assessment Protocol project, as developed by Derek B. Miller and Lisa Rudnick at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR).

OVERVIEW OF SIERRA LEONE'S CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT PERIODS

THE CONFLICT PERIOD

In December 1989, a conflict erupted in Liberia between the military dictator in power and a rebel movement, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), led by Charles Taylor. The "contagion effect" of the Liberian civil war was soon felt in neighbouring Sierra Leone. In March 1991, a Sierra Leonean rebel group, calling itself the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), invaded the eastern and southern parts of the country. The RUF's stated intention was to overthrow the corrupt All People's Congress (APC) government, revive multiparty democracy and end social exploitation. The initial group that created the RUF comprised students and activists from the Sierra Leonean universities. In the late 1970s, at the peak of the APC's repression of civil society, and in the context of the mounting popularity of the pan-African doctrines of Qaddafi's Libya,[4] members of the Green Book Study Group at Fourah Bay College had established contacts with Libyan authorities. Some of them were later to travel to Libya to receive instruction in revolutionary ideology and insurgency training.[5] The RUF was formed by these elements, as was an especially key figure—a former corporal in the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) named Foday Sankoh.

In Libya, Sankoh had established a personal relationship with Charles Taylor. He participated in Taylor's initial Liberian armed campaign in 1989. The force that invaded Sierra Leone in 1991 was composed mainly of Liberians, with some Sierra Leonean and Burkinabé elements. Taylor would continue funding the RUF throughout the conflict, and especially after 1997.[6]

In 1992, a group of military officers toppled the APC regime, formed the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC), led by Captain Valentine Strasser, and focused on trying to crush the RUF rebellion. The NPRC hired

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the South African security firm Executive Outcomes (EO) to assist in combating the rebels. EO succeeded in pushing back the RUF to the Liberian border, which compelled the RUF to negotiate with the government. Elections were held, and civilian rule was re-established in 1996, with the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) in power and Ahmad Tejan Kabbah as President.

Nonetheless, in November 1996, President Kabbah and Foday Sankoh signed a peace agreement in Abidjan.[7] In May 1997, the national army overthrew the Kabbah government, establishing the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) in its place. The AFRC was led by Major Johnny Paul Koroma, who invited the RUF to form a joint government and military force (the People's Army).

This junta was never recognized by the international community, and an embargo was imposed by the United Nations (UN) on oil and weapons.[8] The embargo was enforced by the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), the peacekeeping force of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The RUF/AFRC were ousted less than a year later by a large-scale ECOMOG operation, and were forced out of Freetown, while Kabbah was restored to power.

Box 1. Main actors in the conflict

The Revolutionary United Front (RUF)
The Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone was created in the late 1980s. The initial forces that invaded Sierra Leone in 1991 were comprised of Sierra Leoneans, Liberians from Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and Burkinabé mercenaries. The forces were trained on Liberian territory and subsequently entered Sierra Leone. The first incursion took place in Bomaru, in Kailahun district, on 23 March 1991. The stated goal of the RUF was to overthrow the All People's Congress (APC) government and its one-party system. The RUF was responsible for the vast majority of human rights violations committed during the Sierra Leonean conflict. The only document stating its ideology is *Footpaths to Democracy*, written by Foday Sankoh.

The Sierra Leone Army (SLA)

The Sierra Leone Army took power twice during the conflict, forming, in 1992 the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) and, in 1997, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). The SLA was responsible for numerous human rights violations throughout the conflict, including looting, beatings and killings.

Civil Defence Forces (CDF)

Created initially to defend towns and villages, the membership of the Civil Defence Forces was drawn from local hunters and vigilantes. Different groups were created in all areas of the country. They were regrouped in 1996 under the general organization of the CDF. The CDF has been responsible for several human rights violations against the civilian population, including forced recruitment and torture, followed by ritual killings.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)/The ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG)

The Economic Community of West African States was involved in the diplomatic process to resolve the many crises in Sierra Leone. ECOMOG, the ECOWAS peacekeeping force, conducted operations in Sierra Leone in 1998 to oust the AFRC regime and, in 1999, to remove the AFRC/RUF invasion forces from Freetown. ECOMOG was responsible for some human rights violations, mainly summary executions of suspected rebels, and beatings.

Liberia

The former president of Liberia, Charles Taylor, was involved in the conflict in Sierra Leone through huge support by the RUF. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) provided the bulk of the first combat troops who invaded Sierra Leone in 1991. Through the traffic in diamonds and weapons, Taylor funded the RUF during the conflict and, especially, after his election to the Liberian presidency in 1997. He also financially and politically supported the AFRC. He has recently been indicted under these charges by the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Private security firms

The NPRC government hired a South African private security firm called Executive Outcomes (EO) in 1995. The contract required the firm to push back the RUF offensive on Freetown, to provide support to the army, to take and destroy the RUF main base at Zogoda, and to secure government control over the diamondiferous areas in Kono district. EO's contract was terminated as a condition for the signing of the Abidjan peace accord[9] by the RUF. Another private security firm, Sandline International, was finally hired by the SLPP government in 1997 to replace EO. Sandline International was contracted to train and facilitate the supply of the CDF.

United Nations

The United Nations (UN) first sent an observer team to Sierra Leone in 1996 after a request from President Kabbah. This team helped negotiate the Abidjan peace accord. Subsequently, in 1999, a UN observer mission was established, called the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL). This observer mission was transformed into a peacekeeping one, known as the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), following the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement in July 1999. UNAMSIL was eventually to become the biggest UN peacekeeping mission in the world, with 17,500 troops.

West Side Boys

A splinter group of the AFRC, the West Side Boys initially fought in the Okra Hills, and later in the hills of the Western Area peninsula, during the final years of the conflict. They took several British troops and peacekeepers hostage before being defeated by the British army.

The "Invisibles"

The actors and groups who are visible to researchers from international organizations do not necessarily comprise all the relevant groups to the conflict. Much of Sierra Leonean society is made up of secret societies[10] which cannot be easily recognized by the uninitiated or uninvited. These groups, however, are key to the functioning of the society. Adda B. Bozeman explains that the mystical guild of the Poro had, and perhaps retains, "supremacy in Mende affairs" which was assured by:

interlocking systems of initiation, communication and administration. [The tutelage of the young in this system] was deemed indispensable for anyone hoping to occupy a position of authority in a chiefdom, apart from being valued as the most important experience in the life of the ordinary Mende.[11]

Failure to recognize the potentially profound role of the Poro, among others, will lead to improper assessments of why certain visible groups did what they did.

However, the AFRC and RUF forces remained committed to a course of violence. In January 1999, the AFRC forces invaded Freetown, leading to three weeks of intense violence which left thousands of civilians dead. The Sierra Leonean conflict, until then widely unknown to the public outside of West Africa, secured international attention as viewers elsewhere in the world watched the massacre of civilians and the massive amputation campaign.[12]

As it became clear that there was no end to the violence in sight, President Kabbah worked to ease tensions. After months of negotiations involving a wide variety of players, a ceasefire agreement was finally reached in Lomé, Togo, on 18 May 1999 between the RUF and the Government of Sierra Leone. This laid the foundation for the Lomé Peace Agreement, which was signed less than two months later, on 7 July.

Under the Lomé Peace Agreement, a blanket amnesty was provided for crimes committed during the war, and former rebel commanders, including Foday Sankoh and Johnny Paul Koroma, were given various high-level posts within the government. While the peace agreement formally ended the eight-year civil war, its implementation remained problematic and tensions remained high among the conflict parties.

UNAMSIL was launched in October 1999. In May 2000, RUF fighters under the command of Sankoh abducted over 500 UN peacekeepers, jeopardizing the entire peace process. On 5 May, civilians demonstrated outside Sankoh's residence to protest against the abductions. They were subsequently fired upon by RUF fighters and several demonstrators were killed. The government reacted by arresting Sankoh on 17 May.[13]

Soon after Sankoh's arrest, the implementation of the Lomé Agreement resumed and, in January 2002, President Kabbah announced that Sierra Leone's brutal civil war had finally and officially come to an end. In May of the same year, democratic elections were successfully held and Kabbah and the SLPP were re-elected. The RUF, which transformed itself into a political party, now known as the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFP), received less than 3% of the vote, demonstrating a clear desire for peace among the population.

With the qualified success of the DDR process, and the strong presence of UNAMSIL troops on the ground, the situation in Sierra Leone is now considered to be relatively stable. However, UNAMSIL is gradually withdrawing from the country.

While the security and political situation has improved tremendously since the ending of hostilities, the economic situation in the country remains precarious. Sierra Leone still ranks last on the UNDP Human Development Index, with an illiteracy rate close to 85% and the lowest life expectancy in the world.[14] Unemployment remains rife throughout the country, and inflation in 2003 and 2004 has driven the price of food and fuel to unaffordable levels for the general population. Dissatisfaction is mounting and the government is facing a growing opposition from civil society.

THE POST-CONFLICT PERIOD

The NPRC regime instructed police in 1993 to conduct a countrywide disarmament campaign. The government took possession of approximately half of the weapons (mainly shotguns) collected, and redistributed them to the army, to be used by new recruits. The police retained the remaining weapons and stored them in police stations across Sierra Leone. Most of the stored weapons were later stolen during rebel raids and used by RUF and AFRC fighters.[15]

In 1996, the SLPP launched a disarmament programme through its newly established Ministry for National Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (MNRRR). This ministry later became the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR).[16] Even as the NCRRR began its attempts at disarmament,

however, members of various forces engaged in "looting, robbery, and extortion".[17] The NCRRR's disarmament efforts were effectively interrupted when the AFRC overthrew President Kabbah in 1997.

Disarmament efforts in Sierra Leone resumed in March 1998 with the ECOMOG intervention and the restoration of the SLPP government. During this early period, the disarmament and demobilization process was rendered impossible due to the unwillingness of the warring parties to commit to the peace process. Many combatants left the country for Liberia or Côte d'Ivoire with their weapons. This is a well known phenomenon in West Africa, where the borders are porous and low intensity conflicts move from one country to another. It is impossible to estimate the number of combatants who left the country during this period.

The DDR process was implemented in three phases. Despite numerous setbacks, the need for a great deal of creativity and results that were somewhat less beneficial than anticipated for the community as a whole, the process has proven to be notably successful in retrospect. Sierra Leone is today presented as a "model for disarmament" by the World Bank[18] and other organizations, and the lessons learned here certainly have wider applicability in other post-conflict zones in West Africa and beyond.

SIERRA LEONE'S DDR PROGRAMME

The first phase of the DDR programme, marked by international governmental and non-governmental support, was prepared in April 1998, and was to be implemented by the Government of Sierra Leone with the support of ECOWAS and UNDP. It was to target all persons who belonged to any of the armed groups that participated in the civil war following the coup of 25 May 1997.

This programme was further reviewed in July 1998 with the assistance of the World Bank, soon after the establishment of the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR) in Freetown, also in July 1998. The NCDDR was set up to act on behalf of the government, and the World Bank was tasked with marshalling the resources to fund it by managing the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) for DDR. The UNDP was a major donor for DDR activities.

The first phase of the DDR programme was implemented between February 1998 and January 1999. However, it was cut short when the AFRC forces invaded Freetown on 6 January 1999. At that time, the ex-combatants participating in the DDR programme became the target of RUF attacks. Due to setbacks in the DDR programme, some combatants decided to leave and return to the ranks of the RUF.

The second phase was implemented within the framework of the Lomé Peace Agreement, between October 1999 and April 2000. Article XVI of the Agreement called for the disarmament of all combatants of the RUF, the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), AFRC, the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) and various paramilitary groups. This agreement came about as a result of the talks between the GoSL and RUF following the signing of an Agreement on Ceasefire in Sierra Leone on 18 May 1999, which also requested the UN to deploy military observers (MILOBs) to monitor the ceasefire.

During this phase, the UN presence in Sierra Leone was strengthened by the establishment of UNAMSIL by Security Council resolution 1270 (22 October 1999).[19] The new mission succeeded the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), with a mandate to also carry out the disarmament of the combatants. After ECOMOG's participation in the fighting against the rebels, the RUF was unwilling to disarm them. The intervention of a neutral peacekeeping force was, therefore, necessary in order to actively monitor the process.

Accordingly, the DDR programme was further reviewed and redesigned to represent a multi-agency effort, through an agreed Joint Operation Plan involving the GoSL, ECOMOG, UNAMSIL, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and other agencies and donors. This cooperation, and the resources it brought collectively to bear on DDR and broader security-building problems, played a huge role in the success that was eventually achieved.

Five demobilization centres were established: Lungi (ex-AFRC/RUF/SLA), Port Loko South (AFRC/RUF), Port Loko North (CDF), Kenema (CDF) and Daru (RUF). A total of 18,898 persons were disarmed. This phase was interrupted when hostilities resumed in May 2000 and the RUF took hostage over 500 UN peacekeepers.

A low-key disarmament process continued, meanwhile, bringing in a further 2,600 combatants during what is now referred to as the interim phase, from May 2000 to 17 May 2001.

The third phase of DDR was undertaken between 18 May 2001 and 6 January 2002, and came about as a result of the intensive and concerted efforts of ECOWAS and the UN to bring the peace process back on track. A ceasefire had been signed in Abuja,[20] Nigeria, on 10 November 2000, and an agreement was reached on 2 May 2001 between the GoSL and the RUF to resume disarmament.

Accordingly, the DDR programme was simultaneously re-launched in Port Loko (CDF) and Kambia (RUF) on 18 May 2001. Numerous disarmament centres were established by UNAMSIL where combatants were disarmed in groups with their commanders, and their weapons and ammunition were collected, tagged, disabled and transported to storage centres. The destruction of weapons was carried out by cutting them, under the supervision of the MILOBs, and in close cooperation with the NCDDR and GTZ. The destroyed weapons were then recycled into productive tools.

Box 2. Criteria for selection of combatants

The initial formula for the DDR programme was "one person—one weapon". This proved to be the wrong approach, as commanders felt it was an attack against their authority. It was eventually replaced by group disarmament, which was more efficient, but allowed commanders a great deal of discretion as to whom to include in the programme. This resulted in many individuals being excluded from the DDR process by their commanders.

The number of people entering the programme, therefore, no longer matched the number of weapons collected, and this left an undetermined number of weapons in circulation.

Source: Sierra Leone Disarmament and Demobilisation Program-Assessment Report, World Bank, July 2002.

Over three phases and four years, more than 72,000 combatants were disarmed and demobilized, and 30,896 weapons collected and destroyed.[21] These high figures may be due to the fact that many combatants were demobilized more than once as a result of the repeated resurgence in the fighting.

As the NCDDR November 2002 Report observed, in spite of major political and logistical challenges, the ultimate cooperation of all parties led to a rapid and impressive advance in the disarmament process.[22] However, it was acknowledged that, while the strategy used was the best for demobilization, the disarmament aspect of the programme suffered from some lacunas.

One of the problems with disarmament under the DDR programme was that shotguns were not accepted. The CDF, and especially the Kamajors, were armed almost exclusively with shotguns and machetes. Hence, many of them were excluded from the programme and not disarmed. This has caused much of the uncertainty over security that prevails today, especially with tensions running high as Hinga Norman, a former national coordinator of the CDF, is being tried by the Special Court.

The strategy used by the DDR programme to collect weapons was to offer personal incentives to individuals who surrendered their weapons. As explained above, some weapons were still in the possession of ex-combatants and civilians after the conclusion of the programme. This situation led to further attempts to collect weapons, but with a different focus.

Groups disarmed	Phase I	Phase II	Interim phase	Phase III	TOTAL
RUF	187	4,130	768	19,267	24,352
AFRC	0	2,129	445	0	2,574
Discharged/ex-SLA	2,994	2,366	593	0	5,953
CDF	2	8,800	524	28,051	37,377
Others (including paramilitary)	0	1,473	298	463	2,234
TOTAL	3,183	18,898	2,628	47,781	72,490

	Phase I	Phase II	Interim phase	Phase III	TOTAL
Children	189	1,982	402	4,272	6,845
Adults	2,994	16,916	2,226	43,509	65,645
TOTAL	**3,183**	**18,898**	**2,628**	**47,781**	**72,490**

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, report submitted to NCDDR, Freetown, October 2002. *Note that the number of male and female ex-combatants has not been tallied. A request was made to the NCDDR to determine these numbers, but no information was received by the time of publication. Also, no other source confirming the statistics presented in these graphs has been found.*

Category disarmed	Ex-SLA	Loyal SLA	RUF	CDF	AFRC	Others	TOTAL
Est. strength	6,000	N/A	15,000	15,000	7,000	2,000	**45,000**
Before 1999	3,483	0	259	13	66	1,107	**4,928**
1999	1,103	3,804	1,450	561	419	188	**7,525**
2000	1,250	0	2,926	8,195	1,943	473	**14,787**
2001 before 18 May	162	0	411	441	122	16	**1,152**
2001	56	0	16,608	25,284	142	0	**42,090**
2002	0	0	2,575	2,411	0	0	**4,986**
TOTAL	**6,054**	**3,804**	**24,229**	**36,905**	**2,692**	**1,784**	**75,468**
%	100.90	100.00	161.53	246.03	38.46	89.20	167.71

Source: UNAMSIL DDR Coordination Section Disarmament Statistics.

COMMUNITY ARMS COLLECTION AND DESTRUCTION

In the course of eleven years of civil war, weapons had proliferated beyond the combatant groups and to the civilian population, and were used for hunting, self-defence and aggressive purposes.[23] Many of these weapons, such as shotguns (commercially and locally made), have been part of the daily life of hunters and farmers in Sierra Leone for decades. Although a licensing system was previously in place, a moratorium was declared on firearms licensing in 1996.

The Government of Sierra Leone initiated the Community Arms Collection and Destruction (CACD) programme in order to try and mop up those weapons that had not been recovered during the disarmament process and that had remained within the communities. The original goal of this programme was to ensure a peaceful election by trying to recover small arms and light weapons (SALW) that fell outside of the scope of the DDR programme (such as shotguns). The NCDDR provided the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) with the requisite technical and logistical support to enable them to collect the arms and ammunition from individuals who did not qualify for the DDR programme. UNAMSIL also played an important role as an implementing partner for the storage of weapons and ammunition collected.

The CACD was implemented nationwide by the SLP between February and April 2002. Civilians were asked to voluntarily surrender all arms, ammunition and explosives in their possession within a specified period during which they were granted an amnesty. The amnesty remained in effect until the CACD programme was declared to have been completed in a particular district. At the expiration of the amnesty, it became illegal to possess arms, ammunition or explosives in the country, and cordon and search operations were conducted by the SLP.

The strategy used by the CACD was one of coercion. People were compelled by the SLP to surrender their weapons; failure to comply involved the risk of prosecution. Individuals surrendering legitimate weapons were promised that their weapons would be returned to them once the licensing system was in place. But this system has yet to be set up. The delay in returning legitimate weapons back to their owners has affected people's trust in the SLP and its disarmament initiatives.

The CACD programme collected 9,662 weapons and about 35,000 assorted pieces of ammunition. However, the report of the SLP at the end of the CACD shows that it was unable to cover the entire country due to constraints of time and logistics. The report also states that cooperation by members of the community was poor, and that not all weapons were surrendered.

THE ARMS FOR DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

As a result, the Government of Sierra Leone, in partnership with UNDP, created the Arms for Development (AfD) initiative. The AfD aims to promote the collection of illicit weapons through a community-based voluntary surrender initiative in exchange for providing development projects chosen by that community.

While the strategy of the initial DDR programme was to offer benefits to individuals in exchange for the voluntary surrender of their weapons, and that of the CACD was to use coercion, the AFD initiative was based entirely on community incentives. The arms for development approach rests on the belief that while a force of arms can bring about peace, the only guarantee of a lasting peace is the willingness of people to lay down arms and turn, instead, to development. Four concepts underlie this principle:

A grass roots approach: This approach aims at encouraging communities to participate in arms collection under a special waiver from legal prosecution. While the communities receive technical support in handling and depositing small arms safely, they are fully responsible for organizing the disarmament exercise.

Decentralization: Previous exercises were centralized at the district level, and inaccessible to the remoter areas and villages. The proximity of the arms collection centres, supported by grass roots sensitization, to the process and a special emphasis on an intimidation-free environment, allow for maximum coverage of the chiefdoms.

Community incentive: Community development projects are offered to the chiefdom after it is certified "weapons-free" on the recommendation of the SLP. This is a substantial incentive. The fact that the choice of the project lies with the community is also a decisive aspect that empowers communities to plan their future and take the lead in development issues.

A psychosocial impact: This initiative aims at promoting a mindset in which the prestige of owning guns is abandoned for the benefits of a weapons-free environment.

A pilot project—called the Preparatory Assistance Phase—was launched in November 2002, targeting the following four chiefdoms: Ribbi in Moyamba district, Nimiyama in Kono district, Kholifa Rowalla in Tonkolili district and Lower Bambara in Kenema district. In each chiefdom, communities were encouraged to surrender their weapons. The Sierra Leone Police then conducted a random search. When no weapons were found, the chiefdom was awarded a weapons-free certificate and a grant of 40 million Leones (around US$ 15,000) for the implementation of a community development project.

The achievement of a weapons-free status was guaranteed because the process of disarmament was community-led and characterized by very close social ties with virtually no secrets among its members. Everyone in the community knows who owns a gun and who has still not surrendered it. Therefore, individuals who hold the process back are under extensive community pressure to surrender their weapons.

Broad-based consultations were held for the choice of the community project in each chiefdom. The final selection was made by secret ballot by representatives of all sections of the chiefdom, including all of the various social groups (women, youth, elders and so on). The implementation of the project was the responsibility of the community, with the support of UNDP and the DDR section of UNAMSIL.

The AfD initiative also comprises a legislative aspect. UNDP is working closely with the Government of Sierra Leone to enact a new legislation on arms, ammunition and explosives. Once the legislation is adopted, the weapons collected from communities that are safe and licensable will be returned to their owners, in accordance with a future licensing procedure to be approved by the GoSL.

Lessons were learned from the survey and the pilot phase. In March 2004, UNDP began extending the AfD initiative to include 10 other chiefdoms, with the objective of covering 50 or more additional chiefdoms by the end of 2006, and then—depending on the funds available—the rest of the country.

In the next section, we will explore the results of the survey, and how they helped in the design of an AfD strategy in Sierra Leone.

Box 3. Why did it work?

After a brutal civil war that scarred the country as a whole, why would anyone give up their weapons? There were four main reasons.

Foreign armed pacification
The intervention by British troops made it clear that the RUF would not take Freetown. This use of military force, backed up by a massive peacekeeping operation by UNAMSIL, effectively pacified the country in the early stages. The demobilization process for ex-combatants was a result of coercion and political acceptance.

Disarmament and aid began during the conflict
It was never intended for each stage of the DDR process to be interrupted by renewed fighting. At each point, the DDR was begun in earnest, assuming the time was opportune. In retrospect, this optimism actually resulted in a process of getting governmental and international support for the DDR process *while the fighting was taking place.* This effectively pre-positioned the international community and the national government to take directed, planned and meaningful action that was informed by experience by 1998.

Cooperation and coordination
Inter-agency cooperation and coordination during the DDR process was—on the whole—excellent. Creative ideas were shared among agencies, people were informed about the work of other agencies, and partnerships and burden-sharing solutions were imaginatively formulated. While it was undoubtedly frustrating for field professionals at the time, the results were, on the whole, very positive.

We don't know
Why did people, all across the country, choose to give up their weapons and not hide them? Is it unreasonable to think that those who have seen mass murder and the amputation of children might want to keep a gun in the closet rather than give them to a weak government and foreigners in an uncertain peace?

No one really seems to know why it worked at the cultural level. "There was just a general feeling that this [war] was done with," said Professor Joe Alie of the Fourah Bay College in Freetown during an interview.[24] "We had guns for a specific reason, and there was no longer this reason."

The international community does not know—and has no systematic means of learning—why some communities respond positively, and some negatively, to disarmament policy options. Successful outcomes do not imply we know what made them successful, or that their successes can be replicated elsewhere. If weapons are surrendered because of a "general feeling", it is essential to learn where this comes from and how programmes can be designed around it—or better, instil it where absent. One aspect of this would be to rely more on the hidden influence of women, and women's groups, on communities helping to foster peace-building and disarmament. UNIDIR is now developing a security needs based approach to this problem for the benefit of the design and planning of post-conflict security-building policies so that these can be firmly grounded in local cultural experience.

And what didn't work
While the disarmament programme in Sierra Leone was considered a model, it was far from perfect. For example, shotguns and cutlasses were not accepted from combatants as weapons for disarmament. The CDF, for example, fought mainly with shotguns and cutlasses; its disarmament has, therefore, been incomplete, leading to some civil tensions in the south and east of the country.

The disarmament programme also failed to fully recognize the participation of women in the conflict. Many women were abducted and recruited by all factions during the conflict. Most were used by the factions as sex slaves or domestic help for commanders, and therefore did not participate in the fighting per se. They therefore had no weapons to surrender to the DDR programme and were not allowed to benefit from the reintegration package.

Finally, after the decade-long brutal conflict, communities and war victims perceived the reintegration packages offered to ex-combatants as a form of injustice. After all, these combatants were the ones who had caused all the destruction, and were now benefiting from their crimes. Moreover, local communities were being asked to accept these fighters and forgive them. While a provision was included in the Lomé Peace Agreement for the creation of a fund for war victims, the government has yet to implement this provision.

These flaws should serve as "lessons learned" for future DDR processes in West Africa and elsewhere, and solutions should be found to the exclusion of certain groups. This would prevent further civil unrest due to perceptions of injustice in the delivery of reintegration packages.

See "A model for conducting security needs assessments", below, for a further discussion of this approach.

SMALL ARMS ASSESSMENT OF SIERRA LEONE[25]

APPROACH AND METHOD

As part of CACD II, the UNDP office in Freetown recognized the need to conduct a small arms assessment for the country to learn if small arms were still a threat to communities after the DDR process, and determine if an arms for development programme was needed. The office turned to a Special Report by the Small Arms Survey entitled *Small Arms Availability, Trade and Impacts in the Republic of Congo* (hereafter *Special Report*).[26] This report, commissioned by the International Organization for Migration and UNDP was one of the only such reports on Africa at the time, and was used as a model for designing the survey for Sierra Leone.

Drawing on this work, UNDP used two approaches designed by the Small Arms Survey to study SALW availability and use. These were referred to as the "acquisition approach" and "possession approach". The acquisition approach was intended to make estimates of the quantity of SALW acquired, based on identified weapons that were either procured or looted, with data drawn mainly from official documentation. Trade data, end-user certificates and so on can be used for these purposes, if the information is available. The possession approach was designed to make deductive estimates of local holdings, based on locally applicable patterns of social behaviour. In this case, information drawn from interviews, discussions, and observation can demonstrate how small arms are used in daily life. Who has the right to carry weapons and who does not; how many weapons do people tend to possess; and whether these patterns vary with gender, age, social standing, wealth, social group or region within a country.

A large-scale survey of individual weapons holdings was then conducted, in cooperation with UNAMSIL, and administered to a sample of ex-combatants drawn from the former fighting forces and their spouses, as well as civilians, such as hunters and farmers. A total of 800 ex-

combatants—including the ex-combatants' wives (some 10% of the sample) and child soldiers (also some 10%)—and 200 civilians were interviewed at random in the 13 districts (including Freetown). In retrospect, as explained later, this could have been approached in a better way.

UNAMSIL's Civil Affairs section provided the human resources (two interviewers per district, one national and one international) to conduct the field interviews as they had direct links with ex-combatants.

Based on the Small Arms Survey's *Special Report*, the questionnaire (see Appendix A) was used as a basis to try and obtain the following information:

- weapons held during the war (type, quantity and condition);
- weapons currently held (type, quantity and condition);
- an explanation of any difference in weapons held (destroyed, surrendered or sold); and
- locations and contents of caches.

Interviews with government officials soon made it clear that the acquisition approach was not yielding any detailed findings about the number of weapons likely within the country. Borders were too porous, virtually no records could be found, and what could be learned from the trade information of other countries was too incomplete to create a reasonable picture in Sierra Leone. Attention, therefore, was turned to the possession approach.

For this approach, data was gathered through structured interviews—with specific questions requiring detailed and quantifiable answers, such as the number of weapons still held by individuals—and semi-structured interviews using broader questions to inquire into specific subject areas.

Individuals were interviewed on a one-to-one basis, generally targeting section chiefs, town headmen and those who led civilians or combatants during the conflict. These semi-structured questions (see Appendix B) were adapted from the work of the Small Arms Survey's *Special Report*.

Sixteen focus group interviews were conducted in each district, bringing together small groups of around four to six people. The local facilitators aimed at reaching as many groups in the community as possible

(including youth, women, ex-combatants and hunters). Comments on the success, and problems, with this approach are included in the final section of this study.

The interviewers and facilitators were appointed by the Civil Affairs section of UNAMSIL and received two and a half days of training in Freetown at the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Fourah Bay College. They were provided with a background of the conflict in Sierra Leone; the approach to be used; an introduction to participatory rural appraisal (PRA); and techniques for conducting interviews and filling out forms. Problems have been revealed in this process as well, and are presented later in this paper.

The final stage of the analysis of findings, and evaluation of the process, was conducted jointly with UNIDIR and the Small Arms Unit of UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) in Geneva.

The results of the surveys provide new information at both the district and national levels. Some of the findings from the interviews are similar to conclusions reached elsewhere, which does not diminish their usefulness. Testing and re-testing our basic knowledge—and hence our operative assumptions for policy-making—allows us to constantly check whether premises used to design projects remain in line with current realities in Sierra Leone.

In an effort to align this assessment with growing international practices, reference was made to the approach of the South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) to categorizing and presenting SALW assessment material, as set out in their *Regional Micro-Disarmament Standards (RMDS) 05.80*, and supported by the Small Arms Survey's *Protocol 1*. Both SEESAC and the Small Arms Survey deserve appreciation for their efforts to generate internationally accepted standards for the collection and presentation of national small arms data. Such efforts make cumulative knowledge easier to create and share, allowing for greater possibilities for cooperation and international learning.

The sections of the RMDS 05.80, entitled "Small Arms Distribution Assessment" and "Small Arms Capacity Assessment", as defined by SEESAC, were both found helpful and provided specific guidance for the

presentation of Part II of this paper. While we tried to present our material within the context of these categories, it was not always possible because this study was originally designed and conducted before the RMDS 05.80 was published, and the project designers at the time relied principally on the *Special Report*, referred to earlier, as the basis for their approach. Nevertheless, sufficient overlap exists to make use of the latter SEESAC categories.

The second and third sections of RMDS 05.80, called the "Small Arms Impact Assessment" and "Small Arms Perception" respectively, were less directly applicable. One reason for this was the lack of available data needed to complete these sections meaningfully. Crime and health statistics generally do not exist in Sierra Leone. Such records were destroyed during the war, and the little information that remains is not a foundation on which to build any useful conclusions. Information on the number of criminal incidents committed with or without a weapon, for example, is not available.

Likewise, certain problems with the definition of terms were soon made evident when conducting the surveys. For example, terms such as combatant and non-combatant were not immediately intelligible to interviewees. Interviewers were often unclear about why domestic abuse was cited as a problem caused by weapons. It was also unclear whether people considered shotguns "weapons" or not. As explained later in the concluding section, terms and ideas that seem entirely reasonable and clear to interviewers prove to be highly cultural (that is, community specific) in their usage, and thus lead to genuine misunderstandings between interviewers and interviewees.

This problem of understanding local definitions and their daily use complicates the idea of studying "perceptions" as a check-list activity as the RMDS would have it. In Sierra Leone, the very term "perception" is problematic. By treating culturally and historically specific information about weapons and their social roles as malleable or shallow, and hence subject to easy "correction", researchers can miss the role that weapons actually, and uniquely, play in the life of a given community. This, in turn, will obfuscate the deep structures of a community that give meaning to its actions and organization.

One example of the difference between a "perception" and an "understanding" is the common belief in Sierra Leone that people are known to turn into animals, and that hunters are able to disappear when hunting or fighting. The ability to become invisible during a hunt, or even to turn into animals, is a transcendental phenomenon associated with, and caused by, witchcraft. It is not uncommon to hear, "I shot at a monkey, but then he turned into a man".

The legal systems in various countries in Africa have negotiated a compromise with these sorts of killings when they are linked to witchcraft, dream evidence and the confounding of identities. Judge K. Azina-Nartey of Ghana, for instance:

> saw no difficulties … in the trial of a hunter charged with manslaughter of a fellow hunter in admitting, 'the wonderful evidence of the mother of the deceased that she killed her son by changing him into that animal which lured the accused to shoot …'.[27]

Another example is offered by the Kamajor combat troops in the Mende south: they had to go through a ceremony making them invisible before they were given weapons.[28] This evident transference of a "civilian" talent to a "combatant" talent meant that the skill is not a shallow perception (akin to a view, or opinion) but rather a clear and simple fact of the natural world, grounded on premises of what is possible in that world. During the course of this project, a local staff member of the UN office in Freetown requested a week's leave because of his having been "shot by a witch bullet" that left no visible mark but needed to be healed as soon as possible. He was granted the leave.

Such mental frameworks constitute the reality of people's lives and the basis on which they make decisions and undertake activity—not unlike the belief, for example, that swearing to tell the truth on a stack of Bibles is somehow different from swearing to tell the truth on a stack of phone books. As explained in *Our Common Interest: Report of the Commission for Africa,* in a chapter called "Through African Eyes: Culture":[29]

> Culture is … about the relationships between ideas and perspectives, about self-respect and a sense of security, about how individuals are socialised and values are formed and transmitted …. We believe that the inattention to culture in the policy-making of many donor countries goes

some way to explain the failure of so many development initiatives in Africa over the years.

As elsewhere, the premises that give life meaning are highly resilient to change and constitute the deeply-rooted structures of society. They are not immutable, but rather stable.

Lastly, the term "perception" itself could be read with certain aloofness about people's beliefs and concerns, implying a dismissal of the way people actually live their lives, which is central to the study of small arms violence. Whether these beliefs should be *valued as positive* by the international community is an entirely different matter. For these reasons, the two sections by SEESAC and the Small Arms Survey on impacts and perceptions were brought together and modified into "Small Arms Practices and Consequences".

In following two sections, we present the general findings of the small arms assessment and we summarize the findings of the survey for each district in the country. These findings have all influenced the design and implementation of the arms for development programme in Sierra Leone.

NATIONAL SMALL ARMS ASSESSMENT

SMALL ARMS DISTRIBUTION ASSESSMENT

The most common types of weapons in Sierra Leone at the time of the surveys were shotguns, locally made rifles and automatic assault rifles. Weapons are distributed widely throughout the country, though their number has been notably reduced due to the various weapons collection programmes conducted by the government, police and international agencies. The extent of the reduction, however, is largely unknown as there were no estimates of weapons in circulation immediately after the war. Only testimonies about the hardship of finding weapons now, compared to the war years, provide the evidence of notable reductions.

Before the war, illicit trafficking routes were rich, structured and highly regular affairs. Cities like Bo had well-known markets and traders, many of whom were from Lebanon and Syria, according to first-hand accounts. Border trafficking between Guinea and Sierra Leone, and Liberia and Sierra

Leone, started long before the war. The problem was exacerbated during the conflict, when the demand for weapons increased due to the fighting, and the government lost complete control over certain sections of its border. The problem persists today, although on a more limited scale.

Sierra Leone has no official production of weapons. It does have a network of local blacksmiths, spread throughout the country, who produce well-made hunting weapons for their own communities.[30] According to the *Small Arms Survey 2003*, locally manufactured weapons from Ghana are trafficked throughout the region. This does not appear to be the case in Sierra Leone, although along the border of Kambia region, locally made weapons circulate freely.

At present, because of the complex social customs surrounding "hunting", as well as practical needs, such as bringing home meat for food and selling the surplus at market, guns of a non-military design will continue to be needed. These weapons are unlikely to pose a threat to national security, while withholding them may well reduce the population's trust in the central government and encourage a return to viewing the government as adversarial. However, assault rifles remain a cause for concern when considered against the high levels of insecurity felt in the districts over the impending departure of UNAMSIL.

DEMAND FOR GUN LICENCES

Every region of the country expressed some demand for weapons and, therefore, some desire for licences. Broadly, the demand for licences comes in three forms. The first is the desire of blacksmiths to gain licences to continue local craft production of prized hunting weapons. The second comes primarily from hunters and farmers interested in legally acquiring and using non-military style rifles for legitimate purposes, including crop protection, hunting for food and profit, and performing traditional rites. The third comes from individuals and families who surrendered weapons that have some historical or social importance, and who now want to have these weapons returned to them by the government.

The role of blacksmiths in society is to provide the weapons to the hunters in the region, since hunters will usually prefer weapons from their own chiefdom, making an illicit market across chiefdoms rather less likely on a large scale. While these weapons may be trafficked across borders,

they are generally single-shot rifles and shotguns—which make for poor weapons of war compared to assault rifles, which remain available. Every region surveyed provided some evidence of craft production. Craft production levels appear low at the moment as the population—and the blacksmiths—wait for a national licensing structure to be put in place. However, the veracity of these testimonies is uncertain and the rate of manufacture could be higher than we suspect.

In the second case, hunters and farmers are expected to *increase* their demand for weapons over time, and the longer the government takes to issue licences for reasonable requests, the more people are likely to acquire illicit weapons. Also troubling is the fact that people may soon satisfy their demand for hunting weapons by acquiring and using assault rifles as substitutes.

The final group is formed by people who surrendered weapons to the government during the collection programme and were promised their return after a licensing policy was instituted. These weapons have an emotional, historical or social value that is unrelated to their use in a traditional sense. In some cases, these weapons belonged to relatives or friends, and the people who surrendered them had no "right" (locally defined) to turn these weapons over to a third party, but did so anyway. Whatever the reasons, the weapons are prized for their symbolic value, and people interviewed all over the country said they were waiting for them to be given back, as promised.

It is uncertain just how damaging to government/community relations it would be if the government were to fail to return these weapons. Doing so, on the other hand, may be considered a positive means of launching a national licensing policy, whereby the most honoured weapons are returned to the people as licensed guns, thereby showing a new era of trust, respect and the rule of law.

Small arms capacity survey

Legislation

The country's legislation on firearms and explosives exists in two separate acts—the Arms and Ammunition Act, 1955 and the Explosives Act, 1955. In light of the generally poor condition of state institutions following

the civil war, these acts are now obsolete as legal instruments for meeting the security demands of a post-conflict situation. They are so outdated that amending them would require a review of the entire legislation. Therefore, there is a recognized need by country leaders to draft new legislation.

Box 4. The former licensing system

Licensing procedures for weapons existed until 1996. According to Andrew Gbanie,[31] Officer-in-Charge of firearms at the Sierra Leone Police headquarters, applicants for firearms licences were required to apply to the Office of the President. These applications were forwarded to the Inspector General (IG) of Police who, in turn, sent them to the Fingerprints Department and Special Branch of the Police for screening of the applicant to ascertain eligibility for a firearm licence, based on the applicant's record.

An assessment of the applicant's criminal record was usually carried out, as well as an interview to verify the actual purpose for which a weapon was required. Upon satisfactory completion of such investigations, and if the Special Branch and Fingerprints Department judged the applicant to be suitable, the latter was then recommended to the IG of Police for a permit.

The IG, upon receipt of such recommendation, then advised the Office of the President to grant approval to the applicant, who was required to return to police headquarters to receive the permit. The permit allowed the applicant, first, to buy a weapon, and second, to be in possession of a weapon without a licence for a period not exceeding one month. Thereafter, the applicant was required by law to obtain a licence, failing which the person was liable to arrest and prosecution. Licences issued were only valid for one year.

The Arms for Development programme is presently collaborating with Sierra Leone's Ministry of Internal Affairs for the drafting of a new firearms and explosives act. This has followed consultations with the Commonwealth Police Development Task Force (CPDTF), the National Commission Against the Proliferation of Small Arms (NCAPSA), the Firearms

Act (1995) of Canada and the Firearms (Amendment) Act (1997) of the United Kingdom. Included in the legislation is a new licensing procedure that is intended to provide for a system of monitoring the trade in arms, ammunition and explosives, and to ensure that there is accountability in ownership, possession and use of firearms in the country.

Since 1996, no licence has been issued or renewed. It is generally agreed that this means that no one in Sierra Leone is allowed to own or carry a weapon unless they are members of the official security sector. The ban on the issuance of licences was intended to restrict the acquisition of private firearms during the war. It is unknown whether this has had any effect.

Under the AfD initiative, a recommendation has been submitted to the cabinet that, if and when approved, will shorten and simplify the pre-1996 procedures for obtaining a firearm licence, and will define terms for the effective accountability of the private and commercial firearms businesses.

Under these recommendations, applicants will be required to apply directly to the IG through a deputy registrar of firearms (a police officer in the community not below the rank of inspector, appointed by the IG). Such applications will need to be supported by three referees who are reputable members of the community and, preferably, local authorities. Upon receipt of these applications, which have received an initial approval, the deputy registrar will be empowered to vet the applicant by interview and then make a recommendation to the IG for final approval or rejection. Thereafter, the person is either issued or refused a licence. This three-step process is much shorter, more transparent and more direct than the pre-1996 system, and further benefits from local authority involvement.

Cross-border matters

Porous borders contribute to SALW proliferation in some regions of Sierra Leone. The instability in the Mano River basin, for example, coupled with years of civil unrest, has allowed for illicit trade across borders into and out of the country. This is, at the moment, one of the most important post-conflict challenges confronting disarmament efforts.

Porous borders have also made it relatively easy for combatants of one country to disarm in another in order to receive greater benefits. At the moment, the disarmament programme in Liberia offers combatants US$ 300 per weapon, while the programme in Côte d'Ivoire offers US$ 900. The result is that many combatants from Liberia go to Côte d'Ivoire to disarm.[32] This raises concerns that some people, from Sierra Leone or elsewhere, could also be tempted to bring their weapons to Côte d'Ivoire in order to benefit from the disarmament package. This situation brings many negative consequences—such as "double" disarmament (combatants being disarmed twice), cross-border trafficking and illegal crossing, and a widening of the conflict—as disarmed combatants enrol in other fighting forces in the next conflict. A way to reduce the impact of these negative consequences is to standardize disarmament packages within a given region in order to keep the combatants within their own country and encourage them to disarm there.

Storage facilities

A warehouse for commercial firearms is provided by the government at the harbour in Freetown under the management of the customs department. In theory, firearms and ammunition imported by traders are deposited in this store for a transition period. This allows the customs officers to determine the quantity and prescribe the appropriate levy on the goods. Traders receive these goods only after they have paid the duty charge on them. After that, they can move them to their own private store, but only with the authority and supervision of the police to ensure safe transportation. The question of when weapons may be imported at the commercial level is complicated by the absence of clear national laws concerning this issue, and the awareness that weapons possession by the population is illegal. At present, however, the procedures may relate only to the commercial importation of weapons for the government, although this remains unclear.

Personal firearms are stored in vastly different locations, usually determined at the discretion of the owner. There is a tradition, supported by the police, that no hunter should hold a gun in a ready position while in a town. According to Andrew Gbanie, hunters are to open the breech of their weapons (as with certain shotguns) and no rounds should be chambered. Also, hunters are usually warned by the police to keep firearms

and ammunition away from the reach of children. Interviews did not address this matter, and it is unknown whether this practice is actually followed.

The main police armoury is located at the Operational Security Division (OSD) headquarters in Freetown. There are other armouries in the Kingtom area and at the Sierra Leone Police Headquarters in downtown Freetown. In the provinces, the OSD has armouries at the district headquarters at each location where it is deployed.

All weapons in the armouries are registered. There are two ledgers kept in the armoury for recording weapons removed from, and returned to, the armoury. Police officers supplied with arms and ammunition are obliged to account for both. If a bullet is used, the police officer must complete a form supplying full details of the incident, or event, that warranted its use. Police officers serving as personal bodyguards to government authorities are only allowed to receive their monthly salaries upon presentation of their issued weapons and the ammunition supplied to them.

It remains unclear whether these systems are functioning as hoped. The normalization of these procedures, their rationalization and the improvement of safe storage (including armoury protection and accountability), all need continued work to reach acceptable standards. Continued international support, coordinated with security sector reform initiatives, can provide the needed expertise and funding to complement the skills of local professionals. It is suspected that any early withdrawal of international support could adversely affect reform and development efforts, as they have not reached a level of consistent national implementation supported by effective government institutions.

SMALL ARMS PRACTICES AND CONSEQUENCES

Though many weapons have been collected in the country, and public attitudes towards automatic rifles and other weapons of war portray them as dangers to society, many reasons exist for people to rearm. The war in Liberia, as well as border concerns, are constantly cited as sources of fear and a possible reason for people to resort to self-defence. Networks for purchasing weapons from Guinean traders and Lebanese and Eastern European arms merchants were robust and stable before the war, and may

be reconstituted if demand rises again. Traders are still known to exist, including "white men who speak French", and "hunters and smugglers from Guinea and Liberia" (Kono). Women are known to be active in the smuggling process as they "are seldom checked at the borders" (Kono).

There is a tenuous relationship of confidence between the general population and the security sector throughout the country. While the state is viewed as the new likely provider of community security, problems of trust remain. The urban areas of Freetown and the Western Area appear more dependent on state security than the rural ones, where traditional mechanisms for maintaining peace and security, and administering justice, are still functional.[33] For Freetown to remain stable, security sector reform and expansion are needed to provide effective security to the residents.

Questions about security in the interviews were almost always answered in terms of security for the community as a whole. Rape and domestic violence[34] appear to be extremely high, and are mentioned by men and women alike during interviews. These issues are cited as a concern throughout the country, along with the prevalent use of violence by young people as a means of settling disputes. This is causing great hardship for teachers in schools and affecting the education of the population more broadly. Chiefs and elders, who are old enough to remember life before the war, view this as a new problem. There appears to be little relationship between the prevalence of these problems and the existence of small arms, and interviewees rarely said they were inclined to rearm because of them. How much was *not* said to interviewers about the demand for weapons, however, remains highly uncertain.

As explained in greater detail in the district assessments, Sierra Leone has a strong and traditional hunting culture, whereby the cluster of activities associated with hunting constitutes a complicated and important aspect of communal life. Hunting has practical aspects, such as bringing home meat for food, selling the excess at market and fending off ruminants and other animals from fragile crops. Hunting also has psycho-spiritual aspects, such as providing meaning to the lives of men, maintaining traditions of skill, passing on magical traits like invisibility to the next generation, and other associated concerns such as pride, worth, dignity and identity.

Hunting is not traditionally associated with weapons of war—such as assault rifles or light weapons. Rather, hunting rifles—ill-suited for war when

other options are present—are preferred, and in some districts people explicitly said they would exchange assault rifles for single-shot weapons. This might provide an interesting opportunity for a weapons collection programme. The removal of war material would not be expected to adversely affect the benign or benevolent aspects of hunting in Sierra Leonean society (by which is meant the various tribal groups that together reside within the state), and the presence of single shot weapons would dramatically lower the potential harm from an armed population.

It is in Freetown and the Western Area that the role of weapons seems to be different from the rest of the country. Here, urbanization can be treated as a real force on social life that has challenged or undermined rural modes of "belonging". This has left individuals less closely connected to their families, villages, tribes and other communities that help people know their roles and, in turn, benefit from their protection. Small arms appear to be *more* highly prized here for self-defence than for other reasons. It can be inferred that the small arms are also valued for their use in crime, though no one admitted as much in the interviews.

The consequences of small arms use are easily classified into injury and death, intimidation and heightened levels of fear, as explained by the interviewees. What is less easy to analyse is who, or what, is considered to *blame* in many of these cases. "Hunting accidents", for example, were occasionally cited as worries by people in different districts, but unstated was the connection of these accidents to magic, which is often treated as a cause for certain actions and an explanation for their results. Shootings can be attributed to unseen forces, leaving the relevance of the weapon in doubt, with the assumption being that something bad would have happened anyway. But in other cases, the weapons themselves are singled out as the cause of violence.

There is reason to believe that the "district" may not be the best unit of analysis for a study of people's use of weapons in Sierra Leone, though it is obviously the preferred unit in matters of governance. It may well be the tribal or secret society relations that are far more important in explaining why people act as they do with weapons. This is not to underplay the urban/rural divide that appears quite real and should be addressed specifically. But people's identities and communal groupings always overlap, and sometimes even conflict. Consideration may be given in Sierra Leone, and elsewhere, to the design of collection programmes, or weapons for

development initiatives, based on communal groupings (which are better aligned to the way people are organized around weapons use) rather than those that are based on mainly administrative groupings. The "invisible groupings" mentioned earlier may be quite important here.

DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS

BO

The security situation in Bo has improved greatly since the war. The main concern for the community as a whole is the war in Liberia, but other concerns were regularly repeated. These included widespread rape in refugee camps, domestic violence, common violence and widespread fear of prosecution. Answers to questions such as, "What types of weapons are available in your community?" were given in unexpected ways. People all across the region and throughout the country—as explained in subsequent sections—replied by discussing domestic violence and rape, among

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other concerns, such as wife beating. Rape was often mentioned in reference to the Gbense refugee camp. This was especially notable, given that only two of the 20 subjects of the semi-structured interviews were women, one of whom mentioned that there is "physical fighting between husband and wife over food in the community".

There remain numerous reasons why people want weapons. Interviewees regularly mentioned a need for weapons to protect farms against ruminants and monkeys, and to hunt. Hunting, as previously mentioned, comprises a whole cluster of activities important to the community. It reinforces communal and gender roles, provides food and brings honoured positions to families who have hunters—often with spiritual or magical skills—amongst them. To remove the weapons needed for hunting (assault rifles are *not* necessary for any of these activities, and

none of the interviewees expressed any other need for them) is a challenge, and even a threat, to these social requirements. But while small arms are coveted for hunting and farming, they are also blamed for stopping business and children's schooling. The role that weapons play in Bo is therefore complex. Many people, even after the war, said that weapons had no effect on their communities, although this conclusion seems implausible to an outsider confronted with the death and suffering caused by the use of weapons. However, the unwillingness to discuss the consequences of weapons use during the war may have deeply rooted cultural reasons, such as "forgetting" as a means of healing.

People listed numerous incentives that may induce them to give up their weapons, though most also said there were no more weapons in the district. These incentives included cash, "sensitization", and assurances that valued hunting weapons would be returned by the government.

Single-barrel weapons are—according to one source—still available for purchase for 150,000 to 200,000 Leones (a price range common to other regions as well). One ex-combatant said that ammunition was "plentiful" in the region, but this was unconfirmed or not mentioned by other interviewees. Before the war, weapons were sold in the city of Bo, and the authorization to purchase them allegedly came from the district's paramount chief himself. The traders in Bo were, on numerous occasions, said to be Lebanese and Syrian. These businessmen are still said to be bringing in weapons to Bo district.

BOMBALI

Serious security concerns exist in Bombali. There is widespread belief that the CDF, the Kamajors and the RUF are systematically holding weapons. Many former RUF fighters said in structured interviews that weapons remain hidden. Some believe that if the government tried to indict people for weapons possession, the matter could be met with violence. Moreover, the majority of interviewees stated that they are likely to possess a weapon for purposes of self-defence against rampant criminality and, more worryingly, out of fear of a new military uprising. As some Makeni women explained, armed and uniformed soldiers walking around town "don't know their mission". The RUF ex-combatants are also said to be keeping their arms in case of reprisals (the survey was conducted at the time of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Sierra Leone /TRC hearings

on the atrocities perpetrated against communities by rebels during the conflict).

While most ex-combatants have gone through the DDR programme, individuals often stressed that many fighters carried more than one gun. An Italian Catholic missionary based in Makeni, who has lived in Sierra Leone for over 20 years, and knows the RUF fighters well, explained that these combatants have admitted to him that they had handed over to UNAMSIL only one of the two or three weapons they possessed. Some said that a wide range of weapons, notably assault rifles, were still available for purchase. Aside from hunting rifles made locally by blacksmiths or imported across the

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Guinean border, individuals also mentioned AK47s, AK58s and pistols. In fact, interviewees were very specific about gun prices. It also seemed that the Bombali inhabitants, who were recruited en masse during the conflict either by the RUF or the CDF, have not completely disarmed and could be re-mobilized as groups.

Unlike in Bo, interviewees indicated that hunting weapons were viewed here as a threat to the community, and many also raised concerns over drug trafficking by youth, ex-combatants and large sections of the military. Most mentioned a fear of crime. Also, the RSLAF does not engender trust, and its presence in one township, along with that of the RUF's ex-combatants from the south and east, is viewed with caution and suspicion. The withdrawal of UNAMSIL, credited with providing regional and national security, is considered premature and a threat to security. It will exacerbate instability if no trusted agent is able to take over community protection.

This is hardly conducive to development. As one person from Bombali explained, people are waiting for "any means of development", such as the building of shelters, and the provision of farming tools, cattle or livestock and other necessities. The critical living conditions of women were also

highlighted several times by interviewees. Numerous women have lost their husbands and partners, and many single mothers and girls have turned to prostitution to support their families. In general, tensions are high, and arms for development will not be effective unless serious efforts are made *immediately* to address security sector reform in a locally legitimate manner.

KAILAHUN

There are widespread security concerns in Kailahun associated with the war in Liberia, as well as the status of—and possession of weapons by—the ex-combatants (especially those who were not in the region during the weapons collection programmes). The interviews here provided less specific information about security concerns than in the other districts. People appeared less anxious about major threats, but they referred often to domestic matters.

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In Kailahun, semi-structured interviews were primarily conducted with men (90%) and all those interviewed had some notable standing in their communities. This bias towards men of higher social standing (which excludes those from less well-known, although possibly far more important, hierarchies, such as secret societies) does not make the following results widely representative. Furthermore, in the structured interviews, the interviewer noted that some of the data should be considered unreliable for numerous reasons, including fear of state prosecution. As in other districts, the interviewees in Kailahun answered the question, "What types of weapons are available in your community?" by discussing domestic violence and "common assault", which have little to do with small arms. It is safe to assume that women and children bear the brunt of domestic violence, while "common assault" probably affects everyone. The local definitions of these terms should be explored.

Some people said they wanted to retain their weapons, and the reasons were similar to those given in Bo. Interviewees occasionally cited

self-defence and fear of incursions from Liberia, but the most frequently cited reasons were hunting and farm protection. These explanations were especially pronounced in Kailahun, and people regularly expressed a strong need for additional rifles to protect the land against animals, claiming that farm yields had dropped dramatically since the weapons collection programmes began. Even a rough estimate of crop damage caused by animals would help in assessing the possibility that weapons collection programmes *that remove needed hunting weapons* may adversely affect development. If this is the case, then an arms for development initiative should focus on collecting *military* weapons and ammunition, and ensuring that traditional weapons functions are being performed by other means (such as the use of fences, non-lethal animal deterrents and so on).

There do not appear to be large numbers of weapons in the community—and there may even be a dearth of hunting weapons. No patterned information was provided on current weapons stores, purchasing locations, prices or other matters. People often said that Liberia was a main source of weapons, but they also mentioned Burkina Faso and the Government of Sierra Leone. No mention was made of local craft production, but the possibility cannot be ruled out due to the high skill level that used to exist in most districts. No one mentioned whether weapons could be acquired today, and other than some shotguns and "single-barrel" rifles (the meaning is unclear, since most rifles are single-barrelled), there is no information on who currently supplies weapons or how. When asked what would encourage people to give up their weapons, most people answered "sensitization", a term clearly acquired from UN and non-governmental organization (NGO) workers.

KAMBIA

Kambia's close proximity to Guinea has played an important role in shaping the conflict within this particular district. Many civilians were recruited, trained and armed by the Guinean Armed Forces (GAF) during the war in order to limit the rebels' incursions into Guinea. A great number of men were also forcibly abducted by the RUF.

Six of the 26 semi-structured interviews were conducted with women (23%). Most interviewees had some standing in the community, though several described themselves as housewives, farmers, and one even as a "blind man". Due to the social networks that remain invisible to

researchers, it is uncertain what status these people may really have in the community.

No particular security threat was observed in five of the district's seven chiefdoms.[35]   As in other districts, though, people used the terms "weapons" and "violence" synonymously when answering the question, "What types of weapon are prevalent in your community?" Only by appreciating that "weapons" are viewed here as social symbols of violence and hardship can answers like "rape" make any sense. Rape of women and sexual abuse of children are indeed common. Some interviewees claimed that NGOs were fraudulently collecting money from poor people, and that

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violence among youth continues to be a problem. Interviewees also raised political concerns. A youth leader from Magbema chiefdom said that the perpetrators of atrocities (former RUF leaders) are now "the very people in control". It seems their involvement in national institutions such as the TRC has not increased prospects for effective peace and confidence-building. Local chiefs and village elders are also held responsible for oppressing the populations.

There was confusion about the question of the impact of weapons on communities, and we are uncertain why. It seems people were not able to explain how the presence of weapons changed community life, because the idea of "impacts" was not easily communicable. Nevertheless, the war evidently devastated the communities, and thus hampered their economic and socio-political development. Despite the current state of hardship, though, it appears that security needs prevail over development ones.

People most often cited security guarantees by the government as incentives to disarm. Many interviewees suggested that the government should reform the national firearms licensing system and, in the meantime, launch a nationwide campaign offering free licences to arms owners. According to the interviewees, the government should pass new laws that

bear explicit enforcement measures against those individuals who possess weapons without licences and that deter others from illegally acquiring arms.

Most assault rifles used during the war were either handed over to UNAMSIL during the DDR process or collected by the GAF before disarmament began. Weapons of war, which many believe originated in Liberia, Guinea or Burkina Faso, were surrendered in massive numbers during the disarmament process. Most weapons available in Kambia today are shotguns made locally by blacksmiths. A 70-year-old imam from Samu chiefdom described these weapons as "Fulani type of guns", from the name of the West African tribe. Some interviewees explicitly stated that people are still keeping arms and that there is a need for further sensitization in the district.

KENEMA[36]

The interviewees' understanding of Kenema's security situation is limited. Most interviewees said that the district has no particular security problems, or that weapons in this district have been either collected or thrown into the river (the reason for this approach to destruction is not known). Interviewees were reluctant or unable to discuss the matter further. The field researcher did not take notes on the dependability of the interviews. Most people expressed a general ignorance about weapons, but many were forthcoming regarding the weapons they possessed during the war. The majority said that "only the

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strongest" were given weapons and that most people fought with sticks, cutlasses, machetes and slings. Small arms used during the war included the automatic Kalashnikov (AK) series weapons, rocket propelled grenades (RPGs), shotguns and grenades, all in working order and with ample ammunition. Occasionally, concerns were raised over border problems and the potential impact of the war in Liberia on the "fragile peace" in Sierra Leone.

As in other regions of the country, the question, "What types of weapons are prevalent in your community?" released a torrent of information that seemingly had nothing to do with the question asked—further emphasizing the need for pre-fieldwork by cultural specialists during the development of the research design. In this case, people regularly explained that there were interpersonal conflicts over authority in the community, domestic violence (undefined), rape, fights over women and property, and interestingly, fights among women over men. The reason for these fights is not entirely clear, but could be better explained by understanding that women need men to live favourably in the community. These concerns often include property rights, access to work and money, and social standing.

Many people continue to desire weapons for hunting, farming and defending crops. However, many others said there was no longer any reason to want a gun. Weapons were said to have come from Liberia, or to the front, during battles and skirmishes. One person said "from Russia", though it is uncertain whether this meant the origin of the transfer or the origin of the weapons.

As elsewhere, the question about "impacts" (that is, how SALWs affect the community) was met with confusion, as almost all interviewees said that the presence of weapons had no effect on their lives. This is contrary to what small arms researchers may expect, given the history of the war and its known impacts on people's lives and livelihoods.

Generally, interviewees asserted that there were no weapons left in the community. As explained earlier, however, there is reason to doubt these testimonies. Worries about prosecution were evident—for example, many people thought the Special Court was a threat to security. Also, the consistent denial of knowledge about small arms, even by the most senior people in the community, hints at either a general fear to discuss the matter, or else a communal decision made earlier to "forget" the matter. It could also just mean that people want to keep their weapons and are thus reluctant to comment on who possesses them. It is therefore uncertain whether weapons remain in the community.

KOINADUGU

During the war, the AK series weapons, pistols, sub-machine guns (SMGs), hunting rifles, grenades and GM-3s were all available in the region. Weapons were originally provided to groups of combatants rather than to individuals, and the ratio of weapons-to-combatant varied from as high as one gun per combatant, to as low as one gun per five combatants. Sources of weapons included Guinean traders, the GoSL, ECOMOG, collection from the frontline and significant local (craft) manufacture. The great majority of respondents claimed that weapons from the community had been collected by the NCDDR and SLP.

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There are mixed reports on the current availability of weapons, though few people insist weapons are a problem, and some—as explained below—say more are needed. Guinean traders continue to sell hunting weapons across the border, and one man said they can also be purchased from local blacksmiths for 150,000 to 200,000 Leones.

Without exception, people in Koinadugu were pleased with the overall security situation, saying it had greatly improved. As in other regions, the question about the availability of weapons was responded to by a discussion of violence, its manifestations and its prevalence in the community. As elsewhere, domestic violence was most commonly cited as a serious concern. Break-ins and rapes were also mentioned, as were disputes over land ownership between the Limbas and Fulani. In general, however, violence was often described as not "alarming".

The answers to questions about security in Koinadugu show some subtleties not seen in other interviews. In the chiefdom of Sengbe for example, one woman explained that when the SLA came to collect weapons, they only took her husband's gun. Without follow-up interviews, it cannot be known whether this meant there were weapons still left over

that the police did not collect. The issue of mobility was also emphasized in several cases, with people explaining that the weapons collections were beneficial because increased safety also meant increased mobility.

There remains a widespread demand for small arms for three purposes: protection against theft; protection for the farms against animals; and hunting (which includes a cluster of activities, such as the sale of meat, upholding rituals and so on). The problem of crop protection, however, was repeated numerous times, and as the region is dependent on farming, there is a need to combine an AfD initiative to round up weapons of war with a simultaneous licensing regime for the sale and possession of hunting weapons.

Though it appears contradictory, the issuing of licences was said to be a good way to encourage people to give up their weapons. Presumably this meant people would be willing to act in a legal manner to fulfil their needs if a reasonable fee were charged for appropriate licences to responsible individuals.

KONO

Interviewees in Kono were specific about a wide range of security concerns. UNAMSIL alone was credited as the main source of security in the district, and great concerns were expressed about the aftermath of their eventual withdrawal. Demand for weapons is increasing, and thus requires that substantive efforts be undertaken to build local capacity to police the region and secure the border.

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Border issues are problematic. Guinean traders say that the SLP imposes heavy "taxes" on them at the border, meaning that graft and bribes are common and have, perhaps, escalated to levels higher than what are considered locally acceptable. Sierra Leoneans, in turn, have been harassed and threatened on the Guinean side, and relations are said to be

deteriorating. Tensions and conflicts are increasing among fishermen along the river, and the borders are considered porous by those who say that migration is unchecked and illegal. Traditional social controls over communal conduct generally do not apply to people from outside the community. There is thus a growing fear that fewer UNAMSIL patrols will allow more outsiders to cross the borders, resulting in increased lawlessness and illegal imports.

The RSLAF, also, inspires little confidence in the people interviewed. Its personnel are considered unruly and unprofessional, and a possible security threat in the absence of UNAMSIL. The importance of civil-military relations should not be underestimated. A lack of trust and faith in local security forces encourages people to take security measures of their own, which may well raise the demand for light weapons. As one person said, "I am tired of relocating or running up and down. If J.P. Koroma or Charles Taylor plans to attack us again, I am ready to defend my land firmly this time."

There appears to be widespread concern that large numbers of small arms remain in the community, and that more are crossing the border into Sierra Leone. An AfD project may well be suited to this region if it is supported by security sector reform programmes dealing with institutional changes, increased capacity, and better civil-military relations (which could be achieved through increased dialogue and cooperation).

As in every other district, inquiries into the prevalence of weapons were met, instead, with a thorough discussion of the prevalence of violence. Fighting in mining pits was said to be common. Both rape and domestic violence, including "flogging children", were widespread as well. Women here are battered regularly, as explained by both men and women in the interviews. It is very clear that women need greater protection; any security efforts undertaken in this district should carefully consider both the psychological and physical needs of women.

Demand for weapons is high. The traditional requirement for weapons to hunt and farm as well as conduct funeral and other ceremonies and rites were regularly noted, but of greater concern was the demand based on security needs. The situation in Liberia and the involvement of some ex-combatants and the SLA concern people. As one man explained, "I don't have total confidence in the SLP and SLA given their past behavior,

particularly the arms who failed in protecting us and instead connived with the rebels. They haven't changed", he said. "So I and many people will like to own weapons for personal protection…".

The interviews make clear that insecurity here is high; the demand for weapons is increasing; relations along the border are poor; and confidence in the state institutions to provide protection is low. Security for the population is the greatest and most immediate concern, and weapons collection must be combined with programmes to address the *actual* security needs of the people here as they understand them.

MOYAMBA

The Moyamba district is located in western Sierra Leone, along the coast. While the district does not share a border with Liberia, the populations living in Moyamba still define their environment as very unstable due to the continuing war in Liberia. At the time of the survey, interviewees showed a consistent reluctance to answer questions on the availability, origin and distribution of arms after the war. Feelings of insecurity within this district at the time of the assessment made it difficult for individuals to discuss past and current small arms issues openly.

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Inhabitants of the Moyamba district have been greatly affected by the war. Commanders recruited individuals—especially the youth—in huge numbers into their ranks. According to the interviewees, all the villagers were involved in the fighting. The people interviewed in Moyamba appeared to have been heavily armed during the war—with combatants generally carrying more than one weapon per person. Individuals stated that in addition to possessing one or two assault rifles, such as the AK47, GM3 or M16, they also had handguns, shotguns, grenades and ammunition in sufficient quantity. These weapons, which were all in good working condition (and sometimes brand new), were brought in by commanders

and distributed at random, without any registration system. Individuals were responsible for keeping weapons concealed in their houses.

At the end of the war, it seems that most of the combatants were demobilized and disarmed by the government's DDR programme. Numerous guns were circulating or stashed in villagers' houses during the war, but today, the interviewees stress, all weapons have been surrendered and none remain hidden. However, while the interviewees also insist on the fact that no one in the district owns a weapon, more than half of the people interviewed from four different chiefdoms in Moyamba, recognize that they are likely to possess a weapon for self-defence.[37] While financial incentives might induce some individuals to surrender their remaining guns, only a tangible improvement in the security situation will convince populations to effectively disarm, and to begin rebuilding their communities.

PORT LOKO

The security situation in Port Loko appears reasonably secure and hopeful. People reported no particular security threats or reasons for fear. Problems with security relate mainly to crime and domestic violence. The demand for weapons is often explained in terms of "self-defence", and it is uncertain whether this term implies personal or household protection against criminals, or whether it suggests a more communal concern against other groups or state organs.

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As in every other district, when asked about the types of weapons available in the community, people spoke instead of the types of violence being committed. "Family violence" was a term that was used often, describing a national trend of violence against women that is considered excessive even by local standards—independent of the standards defined, or hoped for, by international organizations. As elsewhere, women and children are in special need of assistance in the form of physical protection

against harm, counselling and, possibly, the provision of shelters or other locally-specific solutions to provide them with a means of extracting themselves from abusive relationships, while remaining viable members of the community as a whole.

Though people reported that most weapons had been collected, they were also very specific about the incentives which could be used to encourage a further surrender of arms, implying that weapons still remain to be collected. The number and types of weapons here are unknown, but when asked about the origin of the weapons, numerous people said that local production continues (quality craft production); that weapons had been captured from ECOMOG (probably military-style firearms); and that some weapons came "from Europe, produced by white people", which is almost certainly accurate, if not specific.

TONKOLILI

At the time of the survey, individuals from six different chiefdoms of the district stated that they were feeling safe and that there was no serious or imminent threat to their security. The main source of concern for the populations is the widespread domestic violence as well as the serious cases of family disputes. The improvement in the security situation in Tonkolili has deflected inhabitants away from resorting to arms as a means of protection, since none of those interviewed mentioned possessing a weapon for self-defence. As in the case of many communities in Sierra Leone,

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game constitutes one of the principal resources for the populations and, therefore, all the interviewees stressed the necessity of possessing guns in order to go hunting.

The very fact of possessing a weapon is not perceived as taboo among the communities living in Tonkolili, and most of the people interviewed do not associate SALWs with the atrocities that have been perpetrated during

the war. More precisely, people are able to make a clear distinction between weapons of war—such as the AK47s that were brought in by commanders of the national armed forces or seized by rebels at the front line—and hunting rifles that are considered to be traditional and harmless tools of everyday life. It is important to note that the inhabitants of Tonkolili are primarily hunters who have been constrained to fight in the war along with governmental forces or rebel groups. As a person from the Tane chiefdom pointed out, villagers sometimes could not bear the tension during major battles because they were not fighters, and usually ended up dropping their guns in the bush and running away.

It appears, therefore, that the disarmament process has been completed without major difficulties within this district, as the majority of the interviewees stated that they went through the national DDR programme, and that their assault rifles have been handed over to UNAMSIL for destruction. Moreover, some individuals have shown a great willingness to engage personally in the eradication of weapons proliferation within their communities. A resident of the Yoni chiefdom promised during the interview to cross-check information on possible arms availability in the area and inform the civil affairs field officers of UNAMSIL in due course.

The people here consider that the government, UN agencies and NGOs should implement sensitization and education programmes, especially among the youth who have been brought up in a militarized environment and, therefore, have a very different "gun culture" than the adults and elders of their villages.

According to the survey, another means of diverting young people from weapons misuse would be to offer development projects to the communities. Indeed, the development needs in Tonkolili are particularly acute, and people here made a strong appeal for any form of assistance.

WESTERN AREA

The Western Area is not a district in the formal sense, but an urban area, broadly defined, encompassing Greater Freetown, and the rural districts of York, Mountain, Waterloo, and Koya. The findings here are different from those in the more rural areas. Social structures do not exist here in the same form as in the countryside. Security is provided mainly by the state, rather than by UNAMSIL.

The most common problems in this area are crime and domestic violence. Residents report that despite protection by the security forces, armed thieves raid, steal and loot. Some residents also worry about the stability of the entire nation. One man felt unsafe because "the boys that were recruited into the army could be plotting". There was no follow-up by the interviewer.

Again, when asked about the prevalence of weapons, people talked instead about violence—specifically, marital disputes, domestic violence, drug abuse, robbery, theft, rape, assault, prostitution and the disputes of women over money and boyfriends. Many other findings were as one might suspect: economic activity, education, and tourism were at a standstill and fear and danger were ubiquitous. It is notable, however, that when asked why people would want weapons, this was the only part of the country that answered this question in terms of why other people (in addition to themselves) might want guns. The interviewees wanted weapons for hunting, self-defence, and the protection of crops and plantations, and thought others wanted them to commit crimes, destroy, loot, terrorize or overthrow the government.

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When asked which incentives might be the most effective in encouraging disarmament in the area, the two most common responses were jobs and cash. Also, some supported active police searches, while others had no answer to the question. People generally thought that weapons were unavailable for purchase. However, some thought that drugs might be traded for assault rifles, and that pistols and grenades were available. It is unclear from these answers whether people thought they were being asked about the legal ways to buy weapons or other procurement methods.

Relations with the local police are complex. The police are perceived as the only force able to deal with armed violence, but they are also blamed for it. One man was certain that the police themselves were responsible for robberies. Similarly, another person was angered by the setting up of

roadblocks by the police without consultation with local authorities (who were not named, and therefore undefined). He insisted the police should work jointly with the communities in order to avoid future security problems.

The Western Area suffers from a poor economy, massive unemployment and questionable relations with the security forces. Greater efforts could be applied, as elsewhere, to security sector reforms, especially those that address corruption, instil a greater professional ethic, and improve civil-military relations in the communities. One problem with this district assessment is that the survey was conducted more than a year ago. Some of the information seems obsolete, especially the assessment of crime rates and violence. It is probably fair to say that the levels of violence have decreased considerably since the previous year, with the possible exception of Freetown, Kailahun and Pujehun.

A ROAD MAP FOR VOLUNTARY WEAPONS COLLECTION

PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

This section reviews lessons learned from post-conflict weapons collection in Sierra Leone at the field level. Recognizing that current international tools for "conflict analysis",[38] as well as international efforts to devise "best practices" and "lessons learned", are not specifically intended as direct support for project planners and designers in-country, Part III presents a practical road map for field level actors. It is intended as a tool to allow them to better conceptualize and plan for voluntary disarmament as *an integral and extended process of national recovery through security-building* rather than as a technical process of post-conflict weapons collection and demobilization. It is hoped that it will add some ideas to the integrated DDR standards currently being developed under the auspices of the UN by offering a West African field perspective and points for further discussion.

We recognize here that Sierra Leone's solitary experience cannot in any way be taken as a model for these programmes generally. Innumerable factors determine the extent of success in disarmament programmes, including whether there is: a peace agreement; international support from donors and the UN; a peacekeeping mission deployed with sufficient resources to stabilize the country; goodwill by the parties in the conduct of inclusive peace negotiations; and support by the national authorities for disarmament efforts.

Because of the differences in national contexts, and the generally few examples of post-conflict weapons collection processes to work with, researchers have been understandably hesitant to draw overly ambitious conclusions about generic road maps. In the meantime, however, the real burdens of project design are being left to country offices that may also lack specialist training in these matters. Consequently, managers may need to

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invent novel approaches each time a disarmament process begins because of the lack of detailed information at the operational level that can really be put to use. The "what" of disarmament is being well explored by research projects or organizations such as the Small Arms Survey, SEESAC, the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) and the OSCE. The process is being led by the integrated DDR approach of the UN, now underway at the time of writing. And yet, the "how" of voluntary weapons collection programmes remains currently vague.
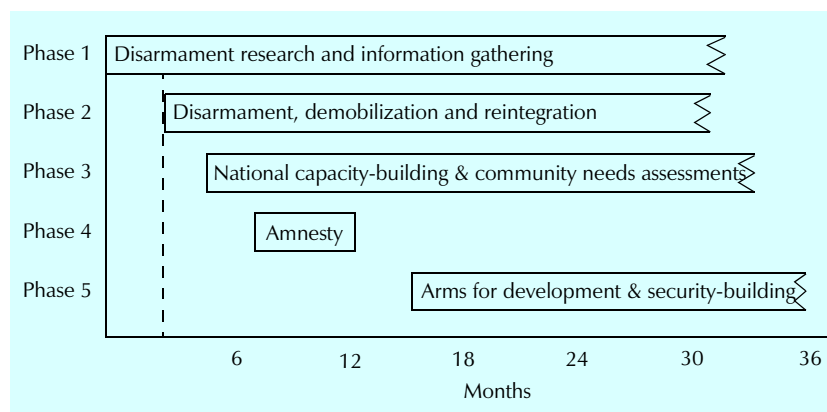
As we anticipate that voluntary disarmament processes will be needed elsewhere in West Africa, the outline and explanations provided here are meant to help officers at the ground level in the countries of this region, and to aid policy makers in foreseeing the needs at the operational level, as observed by those who were involved with it from a similar vantage point.

We assume the situation is characterized by the following:

- there has been a conflict that has ended in an unstable peace that the international community will try to strengthen through some form of disarmament programme, broadly defined;
- there will need to be a formal disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants, with donors—aware that "something" needs to come afterwards regarding reintegration, small arms and security-building—looking to country offices to provide that answer;
- the burden will almost certainly fall on a programme manager or project coordinator working on the ground with a small and overworked staff, limited financial resources, little or no direct small arms experience, and little knowledge of the local social systems;
- there is no system in place to provide the needed technical, research or management support, and therefore operational flexibility and creative partnerships will likely be the main methods used in the programme design, regardless of whether or not they should be; and
- there is (or will likely be) some support from the central government, and perhaps a UN peacekeeping presence, to make various stages of this implementation possible.

Assuming that such a situation exists in a given country, we propose a phased approach (described below) leading to the arms for development and security-building work. Part III concludes with a brief description of the theoretical background used for this research.

Figure 1. Example of a five-year disarmament timeline

Phase		Months
Phase 1	Disarmament research and information gathering	
Phase 2	Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration	
Phase 3	National capacity-building & community needs assessments	
Phase 4	Amnesty	
Phase 5	Arms for development & security-building	

6   12   18   24   30   36

Months

A FIVE-PHASE APPROACH

PHASE 1: PRE-DISARMAMENT RESEARCH AND INFORMATION GATHERING

The disarmament process begins before the barrels cool and the ink dries. Political pressure will likely be brought to bear on armed rebel groups to disarm after conflicts. During these negotiations, there is a good chance that the issue of numbers will arise, that is, how many weapons will need to be turned in when the war is over, and how many combatants disbanded. If disarmament is on the agenda during peace negotiations, work must begin immediately to formulate a multi-year plan of action to support it. Diplomats and military officers will usually place greater emphasis on the "disarmament and demobilization" aspects of the DDR process, disarming and demobilizing combat troops and decommissioning heavy and medium weapons. Small arms will be given attention during the troop demobilization phase, but will seldom be treated as politically significant. This is a mistake, because the sheer numbers of small arms, and their ease of use and portability, mean that their employment in post-conflict settings can undermine fragile agreements, and low-intensity conflicts can be waged for years with only small arms.

The diplomatic and military focus must be on small arms at this early phase. Likewise, community-level support for the peace agreements may waiver if the agreement does not promise them security.

It is vital that some baseline data be prepared early on about the small arms and security environment throughout the country *and across the borders*. Countries are *not* the only units of analysis here for considering security problems. The baselines can be drawn up during hostilities by estimating troop size, checking media coverage and photographs for the types and quality of weapons being carried and used, and verifying this against the pattern of diffusion of the combatants in the country. This is complicated and time consuming, but highly worthwhile.

Disarmament and demobilization will generally be conducted by professional peacekeeping troops with the support of the national authorities. Although their methods are increasingly sophisticated, rudimentary problems persist. Gathering information on the fighting forces, and their weapons holdings, should be ongoing throughout the demobilization and disarmament process.

Three central concerns can be addressed through information sharing.

First, baseline data is needed on the number of small arms nationally (what may be called a national holdings estimate). This is a large job, and should not be attempted by unskilled, busy field staff, though their assistance and management are central to the process. Pre-disarmament assessment is normally done through both intelligence gathering and cultural research. These assessments can inform a "possession approach" to making estimates. Intelligence gathering refers to the assembling of new information needed for policy makers that does not reside in the community being served, and includes data on supply routes, types of weapons available, caches and depots, forms and methods of stockpile security and known trade routes. It may also include a knowledge of force strength, the number of weapons held by the force and its motivation for disarming.

Cultural research means making visible the security problems, and the *reasons* for the problems, that different communities face (and the solutions they are willing to accept), so that proposed security solutions—such as weapons collection or community policing—can be designed to solve the

problems appropriately. Together, both intelligence analysis and cultural research create detailed portraits of community security matters. While formal field assessments are usually impossible to conduct immediately after a peace agreement for logistical reasons, many aspects of both kinds of research can, and need to be, conducted from a distance. Matters of intelligence are not detailed here, but see "A Model for Conducting Security Needs Assessments", below, for more information on cultural research.

While research may seem less of an immediate concern than getting started on the demobilization, it is not. If fighting groups show up at disarmament centres with broken bolt-action rifles and pistols, even though they had fought with new assault rifles and light machine guns, then the peace process itself is in jeopardy. Likewise, if they arrive with old weapons which they had, in fact, fought with, then claims of duplicity will be groundless, and the process can (possibly) be saved by third party interventions.

One can only know whether the combat groups are acting in good faith if their weapons holdings are known. The objective is to get a reasonably representative collection of their *actual* stockpiles.[39] Unless the weapons collection experts know what the representative estimate is, it is not possible to use the number of weapons turned in as an indication of the programme's effectiveness.

The extent of weapons movements into the country must also be factored into the equation. To collect weapons from ex-combatants without cutting off their supply of new weapons is like trying to remove the water from one half of the bathtub. Efforts must be made to stem the supply of weapons to non-state actors in the country before, during, and after the disarmament and demobilization process.

Part of the job of the UN military personnel will be to track and identify the names and units of commanders to form an idea of the composition of forces, including their fighting capacities (that is, their weapons numbers, types and operational status). It is likely that this information will be strong in some areas and very sketchy in others. Accurate information will be hard to obtain for various reasons, such as weak border controls on illicit trade. Efforts should be made at this early stage to identify transit routes and known suppliers, and bring international diplomatic pressure to bear at higher levels to stall these shipments.

Field managers will therefore need to develop relationships with in-country peacekeeping forces and military intelligence specialists, as well as foreign centres of small arms expertise. The UNDP's BCPR can be a resource as it keeps a roster of experts on small arms, or it can assist in contacting various centres of support outside the country. The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) also has a roster of groups working on small arms issues in a number of countries, and might be able to assist in contacting NGOs and research centres in-country, which may prove helpful. In Sierra Leone, some NGOs were active even during the fighting; hence it would be incorrect to assume that NGOs break down even during the worst of times.

Third, those focused on arms for development work (Phase 5) will need to develop or maintain a knowledge-network. Key contacts to foster are:

- international agencies, including UN operational organizations such as UNDP, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR);
- national actors at operational rather than political levels, such as police chiefs and border specialists, who can explain what *is* happening rather than what is *supposed to be* happening; and
- local authorities in the communities where the work is being done.

The last group is very difficult to identify without an intimate knowledge of a country's social structure. Key people may (or may not) include local religious, tribal and business leaders, politicians, heads of women's associations and youth groups and so on. It is important to map these groupings of relevant actors.

International agencies and donor governments, especially when working from national capitals, or from Geneva and New York, are often less informed about local cultural practices, history, and indigenous traditions of warfare and conflict resolution than the regional and area specialists, historians, anthropologists and ethnographers, both in and outside the country. Consulting with them is not a matter of "sensitivity" but of deep practicality, because societies will accept or reject policy solutions based on cultural realities. There is, as yet, no specific system in place to make such knowledge accessible to field practitioners in an effective

manner.[40] Early efforts here will prepare voluntary weapons collection programmes once the DDR process is well underway.

PHASE 2: DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION

As explained in the preface to *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: A Practical Field and Classroom Guide*, published jointly in 2004 by the GTZ, the Swedish National Defence College, the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre and NODEFIC,

> programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants have become an integral part of peacekeeping operations and post-conflict reconstruction plans. There is hardly any UN peacekeeping mission that is not confronted with aspects of DDR programmes. A number of countries have also implemented demobilization programmes as part of a national security sector reform or force reduction. DDR programmes constitute a vital link between military and civilian aspects of peace operations. The success of such programmes is essential for sustainable peace and development.

The appreciation of the importance of DDR activities is, in fact, quite recent and work on it is still in the early stages. On 14 June 2004, the Paris-based Center for International Studies and Research (CERI—Sciences-Po/CNRS) and the Secrétariat général de la défense nationale (SGDN—the French Prime Minister's Office) organized an international seminar in Paris entitled "Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Former Combatants: Lessons Learnt and Challenges Ahead" because "a comprehensive and coherent response from the international community to many of the issues at stake in DRR—both political and practical—has yet to emerge".

Efforts to assist the national government in some aspect of the DDR process will likely begin soon after the conclusion of some form of peace agreement or settled ceasefire. If pre-disarmament research into community needs, availability and movement of small arms, and force composition and strengths has been conducted, the design and planning of the disarmament process can be greatly facilitated, and the voices of civil society actors can be fed into the DDR design process. The Sierra Leonean experience suggests that the initial disarmament process should be

concluded within approximately six months, but full demobilization and reintegration will take a long time, perhaps several years.

The conduct of DDR programmes has been covered in depth by several organizations and research groups. The World Bank, Small Arms Survey, BICC, UNDP, UNIDIR and the OSCE—among many others—have all produced best practices, lessons learned, case studies, guidelines or other publications to assist in the process. A few points not often covered for project managers, however, might be noted here.

During voluntary weapons collection programmes, it is important that careful records are kept of weapons collected, and that these records are *reviewed* periodically throughout the process to know whether the process is working. It is very easy to collect hand-written records, throw them in a box and then lose the box. The actual act of collecting guns dominates the process among practitioners. But only a review of the data on the weapons collected will create a portrait of what has really been accomplished.

Are collection sites getting a representative sample of the weapons actually in circulation? If not, peacekeepers and the international community will need to know this to bring proper pressure to bear while there is still a chance of influencing the process. A list of "expected weapons" (prepared in Phase 1) can be compared to a list of "collected weapons" periodically to see how great the disparity is, if any.

Types of weapons include revolvers, pistols, carbines, bolt-action rifles, semi-automatic rifles, fully automatic rifles, grenade launchers, mortars and medium machine guns. If a wide disparity exists, it may be that the original baseline assessment was flawed or that the process is not working with proper compliance. Weapons may also have been hoarded. Measures of weapons collected are *not* synonymous with the security provided to communities. Evaluations of the security situation should be conducted after the programme is completed, but channels should be continually open to local authorities to learn how they see the influence of the process.

Benefits of this documentation work will include increased transparency in collection; improved confidence in the process and the likelihood of fair results; higher costs for deception; and lower risks of peace processes crumbling due to contradictory claims of weapons collected or destroyed.[41]

PHASE 3: NATIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING AND COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

After the completion of the formal demobilization and disarmament process, and the initial efforts to establish knowledge networks and conduct baseline assessments, the next step is national capacity-building and community needs assessment research *as a continuing part of the disarmament process*. National institutions, such as security sector actors, border controls, national legislation, the opening of new donor relations and so on, will all need attention after the initial resettlement of ex-combatants. National units for coordination and security should be identified as early as possible, with a slow increase in their responsibilities over time, coupled with on-the-job training. The aim is to prepare national institutions to take over when the mission phases out. Efforts should be made as early as possible to devise burden-sharing arrangements with other operational agencies as well as NGOs, both local and international, to accommodate the range of work that will need to be done.[42] It is important that lines of responsibility, delivery dates, quality control, as well as lines of authority, be established. If they are not, partnerships can be more time-consuming than profitable. Well managed, however, partnerships can bring tremendous added value.

The development of a professional security sector is vital for all disarmament processes, because people need reliable and trusted substitutes for their own security when they surrender weapons. Evidence from this report and elsewhere demonstrates—unsurprisingly—that fear of the security sector is one reason people demand, and maintain, small arms. Civil-military relations, or more specifically, civilian-security sector relations, are of ongoing importance in any post-conflict environment and, in many ways, form the backbone of state cohesiveness. People come in contact with security sector personnel far more often than they do with bureaucrats and politicians. These people are the frontline of confidence-building in new or re-constituted states. Understanding the experiences of communities, how they interpret these problems, and what solutions they think will work, will help immensely in devising appropriate solutions at the community and national levels.

Review of the legislation

In a post-conflict context, the legislation on small arms and explosives is often obsolete. This was certainly the case in Sierra Leone, where the legislation existed in two separate documents, the Arms and Ammunition Act No. 14 and the Explosives Act No. 15, both dated 1955. Efforts to revise or draft new legislation that addresses the new context, and is in conformity with international standards, should start early on. This will provide the government with an effective tool to monitor small arms and explosive remnants of war (ERW), and will serve as the basis for the design of a licensing system. Efforts must begin early for the following phase (amnesty) to work properly.

Understanding the needs of combatants

In the international theatre, the term "civilian" is often used synonymously with non-combatant. These terms, however, are not synonymous. Men, women and children can potentially be combatants, depending on the traditions of the society or the experiences of the past war. Furthermore, fighting does not only take place with a gun. In order to understand and adapt to the community in a disarmament process, the truth of the war experience in that country must be understood on its own terms.

It is well documented in Sierra Leone and elsewhere, as well as historically, that women often fight. Women in some places lead troops into combat or train troops for combat. They also experience life in war in ways that are hard for agencies to classify from the outside. What is a "bush wife", for example? Is her role voluntary or not? Is she a combatant or not?

Without care in constantly considering the actual roles, experiences and needs of female combatants, they can be too easily overlooked, and usually are. This is often the case because it is the men who will show up for meetings, and it is the needs of the male combatants that will naturally be tabled as though they were universal needs. If the needs of only a portion of the community is attended to, then the community as a whole cannot be considered, because all its members are part of a social system. Likewise, the needs of individuals will be overlooked.

This is an especially hard problem for project coordinators, as relationships with local authorities are the key to success in any disarmament process, and trying to change mindsets by including women in these processes—when they might be otherwise excluded—may be seen as antagonistic. Should local social orders, therefore, be respected by the researchers and project designers, which implies tacit acceptance of the status quo for women, or should Western values of equality deliberately elevate the status of women during these encounters, even though it may challenge the local notions of propriety?

A part of the solution is to appreciate that the very methods being favoured by international organizations to reach an understanding of "local needs" are themselves derived from a set of premises about how local needs can, and should, be learned by outsiders. If "town meetings" are used as a technique, they will attract certain actors as participants in that technique and exclude others. But if direct observation of social practices, for example, were also included as a technique of analysis—conduced with the understanding of local "informants"—then different actors will be involved in the technique. A range of appropriate techniques can, therefore, allow different types of people to participate in the process of generating community knowledge.

Some techniques are less invasive, and more respectful, of communal norms while allowing skilled observers to note the means by which life is lived, and hence how support can be offered in a non-confrontational manner. This is discussed in greater depth below.

Community needs assessment

Concurrent to the work on national capacity-building taking place during the reintegration of ex-combatants is a research agenda into the "deep structures" of violence and reconciliation in society, drawing on the work of the pre-disarmament research conducted earlier. Explained in detail in the next section, this is best conducted with expert assistance from those trained in this branch of social research. Once the disarmament and demobilization process is over, three questions will become central to all future peace-building activities: What constitutes "security" for the target population? What are the locally-defined development needs of communities? Under what circumstances, and with what motivations, will people genuinely disarm?

Box 5. The problem with "just asking"

The practical knowledge about social life needed for security and development programmes cannot be learned without direct engagement with that community. However, simply asking people what they need is not enough, and there are numerous reasons why.

For one, some information is private and people will not share it. Matters of sex, security, religion and health are just a few of the areas where people will seldom speak freely. Furthermore, different people around the world feel a need to withhold information that someone else might not regard as sensitive. Others may candidly express things the rest might assume to be awkward.

Second, there are some things that are often too complicated to expect people to know simply because they live in a particular place. Just asking, "What will bring you security?" may not elicit policy-relevant answers because people do not think in the same way as policy makers.

Third, and the most complex of the three problems, is that "security" does not have one meaning to all people. What makes us secure, how we act to make ourselves secure, and what we are willing to do (and not do) for that security, differs from place to place and changes through time. The meanings that a community gives to "security", and how this relates to the presence of firearms, provides shape and coherence to the community's own strategies and institutions for coping with security problems, and hence its likely response to operational policies that challenge or support those coping techniques. In Sierra Leone, parallel cultural practices dealing with reconciliation, the act of "forgiving" and secret practices involving magical and other matters, are central to the *real lives* of the people and, hence, to the disarmament process.

While the participatory interviews and workshops conducted for our survey were helpful, and based on practices used in the small arms community, we have now learned that the measure of comparison in these studies is still provided by the culture that designed the inquiry—namely, our own, and our expectations of "reasonable indicators" and interview

methods. Problems persist, however, in knowing whether we have learned what we think we have learned. In the context of participatory research, people can only answer what they are being asked, and we do not always ask the right questions.

Field research for the sections on small arms distribution and uses must be specifically designed with these concerns at the forefront, otherwise they will miss key concepts central to the given community. At present, no protocol exists for this sort of research, other than that presented in the next section, though the necessity for it is being increasingly realized. UNDP's roster of experts on small arms may benefit field managers who can contact UNDP's BCPR to request assistance. These are the specific areas in which UNIDIR's Security Needs Assessment Protocol will provide information to project designers and planners.

This information will benefit in-country project leaders by providing more informed approaches to the design of public awareness campaigns, and the identification of security and development needs. These are extremely practical tools for project design, and also make the monitoring and evaluation of programme objectives much easier.

PHASE 4: AMNESTY

After the initial disarmament of fighting forces, provisions should be made for a general amnesty on the possession of SALWs. An amnesty is a legal reprieve against prosecution for being in possession of a weapon for a fixed period of time. The duration of the amnesty is flexible, but the minimum duration can be set by the limitations of the communication strategy. How long does it take to inform people that an amnesty is in place? How much more time does it take to explain it is coming to an end? Countries with good infrastructures (with electricity, literacy, radio, newspapers, television and so on) can turn programmes on and off faster than in places where this is absent. Other considerations such as politics, operational problems with collecting the weapons, and safe storage and destruction should be weighed when determining the length of the amnesty. Generally speaking, several months will suffice.

The amnesty should be in place at the beginning of the national recovery process because it is important for civilians to disarm voluntarily.

While targeting civilians, ex-combatants who did not disarm earlier should also be allowed to participate.

The amnesty should follow immediately after the adoption of new legislation, and just prior to the implementation of a licensing system. The public should be informed of the new laws, the existence of the amnesty, and educated on the meaning of illegal and legal arms possession during a well-scripted communication strategy. Matters of weapons safety, safe handling, safe transport, and the difference between unloaded firearms and ERW must be incorporated into the process, otherwise people will be likely to get hurt.

It is important that the communication strategy be designed to reach the widest number of people, and for the legislation and amnesty to be explained in simple terms, bearing in mind that the information campaign is targeting both literate and illiterate people. Radio is one of the best tools for this, though other forms of mass media (such as television and newspapers) might be considered. Locally-specific solutions to disseminating messages should also be used, whether through health care providers, spiritual leaders, heads of tribes or households, celebrities or sports stars. Care should be given to the proper identification of *trusted* actors in society as these are defined by the population themselves—not those we assume are trusted, or might trust if we were in their shoes (this is known as "mirror imaging").

After collection, some people will receive their weapons back with a licence, if allowed in the new rules and regulations of the state. It is important that this be done well as it also functions as a confidence-building measure between the (usually new) government and the general population. At the end of the amnesty, new weapons possession and licensing laws should be enforced.

Later in the process, when arms for development initiatives are implemented, communities will naturally fear prosecution because the new laws will be in place and the amnesty will be over. These people will need protection against prosecution to hand over their weapons freely. A solution here is a "prosecution waiver", which is not the same as an overall amnesty. The prosecution waiver is limited, both as to location and time, and is applicable where an AfD initiative is implemented. The waiver is good only for the duration of the initiative. This means that certain areas of the country

will benefit from the waiver for a time while others will not. A helpful practice is to present the text of the amnesty, and later the prosecution waiver, in the official language, and then have the local community members translate it, as need be, into their local language(s) by trusted agents.

A final point concerns "acoustic separation".[43] Acoustic separation means that certain future policy actions, such as amnesties, AfD projects or prosecution waivers, should not be announced to the general population. If people know that development aid, for instance, will be offered for arms in several months, they will be far less inclined to surrender weapons during a voluntary amnesty period when they will get nothing. This aspect of the disarmament design and planning process is important to consider at all times, because community participation in policy solutions will always be contingent on how that community understands the value of the initiative— whether through fear of repercussions, or else benefits conferred.

PHASE 5: ARMS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY-BUILDING

People will not surrender their weapons unless security is somehow provided. During the DDR process, international peacekeeping forces operating under UN mandates usually provide this security, and certainly did in Sierra Leone. Eventually, there will be a reduction of those forces, and security provision will shift to national institutions on the one hand, and traditional community approaches on the other. Efforts need to be made to ensure that these are compatible.

Ensuring that disarmament leads security is partly a confidence-building exercise that is paramount to the success of any disarmament programme. It involves a shift in mindsets from one of conflict/insecurity to one of peace/security/development. Unexploded ordnance (UXO) and abandoned ordnance together constitute ERW. ERW pose a serious hazard to civilians. These weapons—including landmines, unexploded bombs, shells and grenades—can prevent access to land and pose immediate threats to populations. They constitute obstacles for people to go back to a normal way of life, for example, by stopping farmers from cultivating their land for fear of landmines. Communities must be encouraged to report ERW to competent authorities for removal. It is very important that project planners working on weapons collection coordinate with those working on ERW. The reason is that weapons collection usually depends on people

picking up and carrying their weapons to various sites. However, this is extremely ill-advised when dealing with ERW. Coordination with agencies such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), NGOs and UN agencies with expertise in weapons and landmine issues is recommended. They have useful guidelines for working with communities in these cases.

All AfD initiatives are advised to operate through the grass roots networks established since the earliest phases of the post-conflict period. Local authorities will need to be engaged, supported by the preparatory assistance phase conducted earlier, to best understand community needs. A small arms assessment, focusing on weapons distribution, small arms use and national capacity should be conducted, as it was for Sierra Leone. Aside from the findings, the very act of conducting the research will also enhance relations with local authorities. Trust and cooperation can be strengthened through this close community engagement.

Research findings need to be interpreted by those trained to do so. As learned here in Sierra Leone, the interviews do not speak for themselves and often raise more questions than answers. Moreover, there is a need to professionalize disarmament activities and small arms research in general. These are very serious issues that have long-term repercussions for the country. The specialists involved must have adequate academic and practical expertise and experience. However, local knowledge can be learned by agencies in an effort to help authorities design a legitimate and sustainable process whereby weapons are voluntarily surrendered in exchange for innovative development projects which, in the process, can improve relations with the security sector.

The AfD phase should be open-ended, with the time frame being adjusted according to the various national and local contexts, as well as the specific requirements of community capacity-building and development.

A MODEL FOR CONDUCTING SECURITY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS[44]

Appreciating the broad range of meaning that "security" can have for a community, the Security Needs Assessments at UNIDIR are structured around a sequence of research phases, the cornerstone of which is explicitly

concerned with the discovery of *local systems of social action and belief concerning "security"*. In other words, the problems people face are not divided into categories such as child soldiers, civil-military relations, small arms, or poverty—as they are by implementing and donor agencies. Rather, the categories of concern need to be "discovered" through a generative and iterative process of cultural analysis, based on the everyday practices and conversations of people. The broad phases are as follows:

1. Discover local formulations of security problems in and by post-conflict societies.
2. Make use of systematic and rigorous participatory, ethnographic and cooperative research methodologies, with the support of local authorities, to discover a range of strategies, mechanisms, and resources for making sense of security problems and coping with those problems.
3. Interpret these findings in a manner that provides a native characterization and understanding of the security problems, but is intelligible to project designers who operate using a different vocabulary and understandings of "security".
4. Generate policy recommendations on the basis of these interpretations that are:

   • grounded in local understandings and needs;
   • able to achieve articulation between agency objectives and local stakeholder needs; and
   • complimentary to the work practices of the implementing agencies.

The generation of this policy-relevant cultural knowledge takes the form of an investigation into the premises of social life as they pertain to security. The approach we employ provides an explicit and consistent framework for data generation, analysis and interpretation that is applicable for any site, but it does so in a way that resists the use of a priori assumptions and definitions of security. Instead, by ensuring that categories of local experience are *learned* from the community rather than imposed by outsiders, the full range of security problems can be made visible to policy actors.

To do this, the following questions are first asked. Are there local concepts of "security" here? If yes, what are they, and what are their

associated practices? If not, what are the relevant local concepts and associated practices? (This directs us to the local concepts and articulations of "security problems".) Who are the relevant actors? How are they organized in relation to one another? (Or, who is doing what to whom, and on what basis?) According to what concepts and systems of organization are security practices being structured and conducted? (Or, who can tell whom to do what, under what conditions, and with what range of consequences?) In what ways are the above distinctively (locally) intelligible? (In other words, according to what system of meaning and belief do the above derive their local sense?)

The next step formalizes the findings generated above for policy development. Given local understandings of, or beliefs about "security", and local articulations of "security problems", what needs to be "done" or "undone" in this community to increase levels of human security?

What are some locally intelligible ways to proceed? For example:

• What are some key methods of persuasion within that community? Which approaches are ideal, and which are acceptable or unacceptable? What kinds of things are persuadable, and what kinds are not?
• What are considered just or unjust inducements for generating sustainable security arrangements? From where do the inducements derive their force?
• Can these inducements be accomplished in a manner sensitive to wider conflict dynamics in the region?
• What are some bases for directives? (In other words, how does one tell people in this community what to do in a manner to which they will be receptive?)

The final step translates these findings into explicit policy recommendations at the project level that accommodate the work practices and resources of implementing agencies and donors. Given local findings, what:

• available policy strategies are (or are not) recommended, or suggested?
• changes need to be made to policy strategies?
• is the best way to implement agency goals?

Primary sources of data during fieldwork:[45]

- the everyday terms and phrases used by local people to conceive of, and evaluate, their conditions (that is, from spontaneous, everyday conversation);
- everyday practices that organize their typical and important routines around "security"; and
- events that run smoothly, and those that are conflicted and/or contested as they pertain to security matters.

Primary means of data collection during fieldwork:

- detailed observations of scenes identified *by local people* as significant and important;
- details of conversations *in* those scenes, and *about* those scenes; and
- interviews with key players/actors.

Approached with respect and humility, this method can yield highly detailed and systematic knowledge that project designers in the field can really *use* to craft disarmament programmes, all the way from the initial DDR phases through arms for development, public awareness campaigns and better civilian-military relations. At present, there is no established resource to help conduct this work. But should other field programmes come to see the benefit of this sort of work, efforts might be made to form strategic partnerships to create burden-sharing relationships that can make research truly supportive of fieldwork.

IN RETROSPECT—EVALUATION OF THE SURVEY AND PROJECT-DESIGN PROCESS

The following is a rather candid assessment of the successes and failures that occurred in the design, conduct, coding and analysis of UNDP's fieldwork, and its subsequent design process. This information is presented in the hopes that our own mistakes can benefit the learning of others. We believe that this sort of after-action assessment—free of concerns over donor relations and political backlash—is essential to the ethical conduct of our efforts. These are presented in the order of observation made by UNIDIR when examining the 1,200-odd surveys conducted by UNDP. They are not ordered by chief concerns.

SURVEY DESIGN

The UNDP office in Freetown recognized the need to conduct a small arms assessment for the country on which to base their claim that an arms for development project was needed. They turned to the *Special Report* (referred to earlier in this paper) as a model for designing the survey for Sierra Leone.

The need for external support was recognized at this early stage, but no advice was at hand to offer suggestions on how to design or conduct the survey to make it appropriate to the Sierra Leonean experience. It is well documented that the questions and approaches that are able to elicit useful knowledge in one population rarely work in the same form or manner in another. Instead, "pre-fieldwork" is always needed to find out just what questions and approaches will have resonance in the local populations. The final survey—or survey process—should have resulted from a few months of lead time effort. We believe that the above model will generate better knowledge about distinctive social systems in which people live and how they experience security and security problems. The survey methods of

SEESAC and the Small Arms Survey, however, are superior for mapping matters of weapons production, transfers, legislation and so on.

In looking at the questions that were asked, and how they were answered, it is now clear that more direct attention should be paid to the views and concerns of women and children, as well as to people who are not members of "high society" in their communities. The survey categories themselves often made this impossible. For example, the use of the category "domestic violence" was eventually used to include all cases of rape *and* sexual attacks—whether they took place at home or not. As a result, the experiences of women were poorly documented because the categories were not generated by looking at the Sierra Leonean experience before the survey was designed. This leaves the more complicated question of what "domestic" means (that is, is it violence experienced in the home? The village? The district? By a close relative? And what are the implementing agency's, or local Sierra Leonean, definitions of family?).

It is now clear that a wider and more culturally (and historically) informed process of discovery is needed to bring actual small arms problems into focus and allow categories to "emerge" rather than serve as boxes into which complex experiences are forced for the benefit of statistical simplicity. While this was not the intention of the survey designers in either the Congo or Sierra Leone, the experience with 1,200 interviews and over 50,000 pieces of individual data demonstrate clearly that the a priori determination of indicators and categories works very poorly in eliciting complex social knowledge on sensitive matters, such as small arms and security.

SURVEY CONDUCT

One great strength of the process was the creative cooperation shown in mobilizing both local and international staff to conduct the survey in almost every district of the country. In fact, all districts were originally slated for survey work, but two researchers became ill, leaving parts of the country uncovered. In the future, contingency plans should be in place if personnel fail to perform their duties.

Field researchers were supported by "field assistants", a system that proved crucial to logistical success. The assistants were selected by the

community in each pilot site, and trained to support activities at the ground level and liaise with the coordination unit in Freetown. Because they were proposed by the community, and were therefore trusted, they were key elements in gaining the confidence of ex-combatants, hunters and other civilians possessing SALWs. Interviews would not have been possible without this pairing process. The field staff reported on a weekly basis and were called for meetings on ad hoc bases to adjust the direction of the programme and correct any misunderstandings that may have arisen between stakeholders. They also fully participated in the consultative workshops that were organized.

During the research, respondents often did not answer questions in the ways anticipated by the field workers or survey designers. This may have been attributable to genuine ambiguity in the questions themselves. All the same, these answers opened doors for better appreciating local ways of understanding problems that UNDP is now institutionally unable to address. There is strong reason to believe that these answers could be examined more carefully to better understand the overall security problems in society. Engagement and research must go in waves, allowing the answers to be considered and then re-explored through other means of inquiry.

We are presently uncertain how much is being lost in translation from local languages to English or French (the most common survey languages). We are also currently unable to address this systematically. This is compounded by the inconsistent field notes taken by interviewers. When a woman leader in the chiefdom in Tikonko says there is "no prevalent violence but rape cases are sometimes reported in the refugee camp", whose phrase is this? The interviewer's or the interviewee's? Who said it was "reported"? Is that a turn of phrase, or was it actually reported to someone? If so, whom? The village elders? The police? There is simply no way to know from the data entry, and no way to find out, since second-round interviews were not planned. What could have been valuable information about the security needs of women was lost. Careful and transparent recording of interview data is the foundation of later analysis. This was not sufficiently controlled in the process, and so better training needs to be conducted in close consultation with those who design the research process.

There was insufficient attention to detail in the questionnaires by the interviewers. This became especially clear during the coding and evaluation

process. Many items were not marked, including simple categories such as male, female, region, document numbers, and so on. A great amount of information was lost as a result. The importance of recording seemingly minor information needs to be explained better to field staff during the training process.

INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Data entry is not a mechanical task and should not be left to the untrained. Embedded in the answers to our questions are new categories for classifying knowledge. Untrained personnel will not know whether to combine these answers with others, split them to create new categories, or even omit them altogether. The entry of data is also an act of *creating* knowledge. Specialists on the society itself, method experts, such as people in anthropology or ethnography, and local "informers" who are able to help build an inter-cultural bridge between the international researchers and the local interviewees, are all essential to an informed process of data analysis and sense-making of what has been recorded from the field.

In conducting fieldwork, interviewers are losing very important pieces of information because they paraphrase certain responses. It is uncertain whose terms and words we are reading. Trained specialists are needed for this. A systematic protocol is needed that is clear, simple and attractive enough for researchers to *want* to use it rather than feel burdened by yet another bureaucratic procedure.

The conduct of a survey involving hundreds, or even thousands, of people is an extraordinarily complex undertaking—especially in places that are poorly developed and which lack reliable infrastructure. People's responses to questions are valuable not only to the organization that asked the questions but, because the answers form a "data set", can also be helpful to researchers in other fields, such as development or healthcare. Those entering the data and organizing it should do so in a manner that is clear and logical for other researchers who might want to use it. It could prove very helpful in answering questions that the original survey designers did not consider. This can improve the lives of the people we are trying to help.

ADMINISTRATION

With the benefit of hindsight, it is now clear that *managing a project of this size and complexity is too much work for a single project manager* whose primary responsibility is project implementation and not research. A research director (however named) should design and oversee the research component of such projects, while the project manager in the field (as with UNDP, for example) should oversee all human resources, finance, donor relations, national and institutional relations, along with his or her normal duties. The project manager should be responsible for the overall quality and applicability of the research, but cannot be expected to design and conduct it.

Insufficient attention was given to filing the hard copy data. Over a hundred were lost or confused due to office moves, misplaced boxes, personnel changes, failure to label interviews and other reasons. The result was a waste of time, money and even political capital in-field. Especially among field staff, there is a tendency to feel that the work is "done" once the interviews are conducted, the material is brought back to the office and everyone celebrates a job well done. But of course, this is when the interpretation and analysis begin. This is another very human reason why partnerships between field staff and dedicated research teams—many of whom have extensive field experience—can be so helpful.

At one point during the data entry phase back at the offices, a key staff member's laptop was stolen, and consequently some data was lost, including notes on why certain decisions were made towards comprehending the sense of the material. Hours of interviews with the staff member and others were needed to reconstruct some of the lost knowledge. The research director must *ensure that all stages of the process are a team effort* so that the loss of data or setbacks for individuals do not threaten the hard work already done.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Far greater cooperation needs to exist—for the benefit of the stakeholders in the communities we are all trying to serve—between country offices and dedicated research or policy institutes. A constant

theme in this paper is that the work of both communities is not only complementary, but often fails without coordination with the other.

Thematic specialists often wonder why country offices are unable or unwilling to apply lessons learned that are widely accepted in policy circles. For example, some might wonder why so many weapons collection programmes remove weapons from the country without controlling the borders, making the value of the enterprise dubious. Field staff, however, may well explain that border control initiatives are hard to implement because they require the involvement and collaboration of neighbouring countries and weapons dealers, which is unlikely. What emerges is a gap between what needs to be done, and what actually can be done.

Country specialists, on the other hand, cannot make use of lessons considered distant and unhelpful to their own problems—even assuming they have time to engage the material at all. There is not a field manager worth his or her pay who is not profoundly overworked and often moving mountains to get things done in adverse conditions that are almost impossible to imagine from the outside. Consequently, even sound advice, such as that found in the OSCE's *Best Practice Guide,* is of almost no practical use. One is unlikely to argue with the OSCE's reasonable conclusion that:

> a comprehensive strategy must be developed with a view to reducing the number of weapons available to civilians commensurate with the improving security situation in the country or region, before any tactical plan is established or implemented [to collect weapons].

One is left, however, without any advice on *how* to make this happen in their particular war-torn country in the next few weeks with two staff members and an intern.

Research and policy circles must come to understand that unless their lessons are brought *directly* to the people who design, plan and implement weapons collection programmes—be they DDR processes or arms for development initiatives—and in a format they can really use, then they are unlikely to be heeded or make much difference. Dialogue among policy and thematic experts is, of course, absolutely vital to the creation of knowledge and the legal and organizational structures that make field action possible. But eventually, those with the know-how must bring it to

those who need to know in a format and manner that accommodates their real-life situations.

Field staff will also need to appreciate that simply living in a society for a long period of time only turns one into a certain *type* of local expert. As expatriates, we are seldom immersed in the local languages, customs, rituals, religions and daily lives of the people among whom we live. It is a fallacy that we become "cultural specialists" because we live in a foreign country for a few years. We usually drive white trucks with air conditioning, shop at places unreachable to the local populations, and pay higher prices for goods and services to people who are also not indigenous to the community. Consequently, the assumption that "real knowledge" is only available among those who work in the field is wrong and is a professional pretension we must challenge.

Good researchers often have not only a great deal of field experience, but have also been trained in techniques that make local cultural life visible in ways that *even someone living there* would find difficult to do. The very essence of sociology is that it is a systematic study of groups of people not discoverable by anecdote.

Country offices and field staff are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to appreciate each other's added value in crafting appropriate, legitimate, sustainable and useful projects. UNDP's Sierra Leone office and UNIDIR are pleased to contribute, if in a very small way, to that process.

Notes

[1] CACD Pilot Phase *Final Report*, Government of Sierra Leone and UNDP, June 2003.
[2] Originally, all 12 were slated for research, but last-minute staff problems unfortunately prevented the final district from being covered.
[3] OSCE, *Handbook of Best Practices on Small Arms and Light Weapons*, OSCE (Forum for Security and Co-operation), Vienna, 2003, at <www.osce.org/publications/fsc/2003/12/10621_29_en.pdf>.

4   As expressed in detail in Qaddafi's *Green Book*, 1976; available at <www.qadhafi.org/the_green_book.html>.

5   Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Sierra Leone, *Final Report*, October 2004, at <trcsierraleone.org/drwebsite/publish/v2c1.shtml>. A "child-friendly" version of this report is available from UNICEF, <www.unicef.org/infobycountry/sierraleone_23937.html>.

6   Ibid.

7   The text of the peace agreement between the GoSL and the RUF, signed in Abidjan on 30 November 1996, is available at <www.sierra-leone.org/abidjanaccord.html>.

8   The UN Security Council imposed an oil and arms embargo on 8 October 1997 and authorized ECOWAS to ensure its implementation. UNAMSIL mission description prepared by the Peace and Security Section of the Department of Public Information, in cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, available at <www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unamsil/background.html>.

9   The text of the peace agreement of 30 November 1996 is available at <www.sierra-leone.org/abidjanaccord.html>.

10 The Portuguese in the sixteenth century were the first, to our knowledge, to record the existence of secret societies in the area of modern-day Sierra Leone. These "associations provide for extra-family collective action around group tasks associated with community defence and biological reproduction". The so-called "secret" of, and initiation process into, these societies create strong social bonds amongst members. Though "elders" appear to exercise the most authority, actual hierarchical structures are unknown. See Paul Richards, Khadija Bah and James Vincent, "*Social Capital and Survival: Prospects for Community-Driven Development in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone*", Social Development Paper No. 12, World Bank, April 2004.

11 Adda Bozeman, *Conflict In Africa: Concepts and Realities,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1976, p. 111. See also Kenneth Little, *The Mende of Sierra Leone: A West African People in Transition,* London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967.

12 Human Rights Watch interview with war photographer Corinne Dufka, available at <www.hrw.org/video/2002/sierraleone/>. ICRC *Annual Report 1998*, Sierra Leone, 6 January 1999, available at <www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/iwpList165/C81D07C32CC9D444C1256B890033D62D#>.

13 The absolute and free pardon granted Corporal Foday Sankoh under the Lomé Peace Agreement covered only crimes committed before July 1999. This permitted the arrest of Sankoh in connection with the May 2000 abduction of UN peacekeepers.

14 UNDP, *Human Development Report 2003*, UNDP, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003. The Human Development Index, with more detailed information on Sierra Leone, available at <hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2003/pdf/hdr03_HDI.pdf>.

15 Assistant Superintendent of Police Andrew Gbanie, Officer-in-Charge of Firearms, Sierra Leone Police.

16 Institute for Security Studies (ISS), Arms Analysis, *Sierra Leone: Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration*, originally published in the OAU/AU-ISS newsletter *Focus*, No. 1, March 2002, and available at <www.iss.co.za/AF/Arms/102sl.html>.

17 United States Embassy, Stockholm. *Sierra Leone Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1996*, released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Department of State, 30 January 1997 and available at <www.usemb.se/human/human96/sierrale.html>.

18 "Sierra Leone Leader Declares Disarmament", Associated Press, 4 February 2004. Cites Eileen Murray of the World Bank, at <www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A13643-2004Feb4.html>.

19 UN Security Council resolution 1270 (1999) on the situation in Sierra Leone, 22 October 1999, at <www.un.org/Docs/scres/1999/sc99.htm>.

20 The text of the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement is available from the Institute for Security Studies at <www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No68/AppendA.html>.

21 Interim Phase and Phase II: 16,056 weapons collected and destroyed; and Phase III: 14,840 weapons collected and destroyed.

22 Government of Sierra Leone, National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration, *The DDR Programme: Status and Strategies for Completion*, Consultative Group Meeting, Paris, 13–14 November 2002.

23 Ministry of Internal Affairs, Sierra Leone Police, *Community Arms Collection and Destruction (CACD) Programme*, October 2001.

24 Interview by Derek B. Miller, 20 March 2004, UNDP office in Freetown.

[25] Part II is based on interviews conducted throughout Sierra Leone by the AfD survey team in early 2003.

[26] Spyros Demetriou, Robert Muggah and Ian Biddle, *Small Arms Availability, Trade and Impacts in the Republic of Congo,* Geneva, Small Arms Survey, Special Report, 2002.

[27] See *The Daily Graphic* (Ghana), 18 August 1977, as found in Adda Bozeman, *Strategic Intelligence and Statecraft,* New York, Brassey's Inc., 1992, p. 41, and footnote 29 on p. 45. An excellent and more contemporary discussion on witchcraft and how it can affect participatory research in development activities can be found in Frederick Golooba-Mutebi's "Witchcraft, Social Cohesion and Participation in a South African Village", *Development and Change,* vol. 36, no. 5, pp. 937–58.

[28] Interview with Joe Alie conducted by Derek Miller.

[29] *Our Common Interest: Report of the Commission for Africa,* March 2005, pp. 114–15. Available at <www.commissionforafrica.org/english/report/introduction.html>.

[30] This craft production of weapons is well explained in *The Small Arms Survey 2003*, pp. 26–36, which also includes a section on craft production in nearby Ghana. Craft production in Ghana appears to be more sophisticated in terms of the range of weapons produced, which include pistols, single-shot rifles, repeating rifles and double-barrel shotguns.

[31] Interview with Andrew Gbanie at SLP Headquarters, Freetown, March 2004, conducted by Derek Miller.

[32] *Proliferation of SALW in Sierra Leone: A Regional Problem*, UNAMSIL, February 2004.

[33] These mechanisms are increasingly under threat from unruly youth who, according to the elders, do not seem to have as much respect for their elders as they did before the war.

[34] The term's parameters are unclear but certainly include wife beating and even murder.

[35] Samu, Magbema, Gbinleh Dixing, Masungbala and Tonko Limba chiefdoms.

[36] Women comprised only a very small percentage of the number of interviewees in this district (as in many others), with interviews favouring men of standing in the community.

[37] Kongbora, Kaiyamba, Fakunya and Kori chiefdoms.

[38] See, for example, the "*Conflict Analysis Framework (CAF)*" of the World Bank; the "*Practical Guide to Multilateral Needs Assessments in Post-*

Conflict Situations", by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), UNDP and World Bank Guide, prepared by GTZ, with the support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, August 2004; and "*Conflict-related Development Analysis (CDA)*" by UNDP-BCPR, October 2003.

[39] One problem is that negotiating parties would like to retain such information as part of their bargaining strategy. It is also dangerous to collect such data in times of relative instability.

[40] A simple way to tap into the needed network when time is especially tight is through academic newsgroups. It becomes very easy to post a question and get back a highly informed response with very little effort. One key piece of information can bring seemingly unconnected observations together and shed new light on why people do what they do. Without understanding the reasons for people's actions, it is hard to know how to influence them. For a more detailed discussion of how to do this comprehensively, see the section entitled "A Model for Conducting Security Needs Assessments".

[41] Small Arms Survey, *Small Arms Survey 2002*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 315.

[42] Organizations such as (but not limited to) International Alert, Saferworld, Transparency International, BICC, Small Arms Survey, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, International Rescue Committee, the Norwegian Refugee Council and the American Bar Association (which has a great deal of experience in developing legal frameworks in post-communist countries in Eastern Europe, for example), and numerous others, are excellent sources for developing partnerships.

[43] Term taken from Dennis F. Thompson, "Democratic Secrecy", *Political Science Quarterly*, Summer 1999, pp. 181–93.

[44] Section written in collaboration with Lisa Rudnick.

[45] Donal Carbaugh, *Cultures in Conversation,* Mahwah (NJ), Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2005.

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTERED TO
EX-COMBATANTS AND CIVILIANS

Questionnaire on the possession of arms by ex-combatants and civilians

The following is a questionnaire on the assessment of small arms for UNDP. Be assured that all answers are kept confidential.

Code: _____   Ex-combatant / Civilian (block one)

Age: _____ Sex: Male / Female   Date: _____

District: _____ Chiefdom: _____ Section: _____

Interviewee's name: _____

PART I

1. How did you (or your husband) become a combatant? (Applicable only to ex-combatants)

    1. Abducted   3. Appointed by civil authority

    2. Recruited voluntarily   4. Other: _____

2. What is the number and type of weapons that you (or your husband) owned during the war, prior to the Lomé Peace Agreement?

Types	Quantity
Mortar	
Rocket launcher RPG	
AK-47 / GM-3	
Pistol / revolver / handgun	
Firearms / gunshot	
Grenades	
Ammunition	
Others	

3. What was the condition of these weapons?

	How many were new/ working/not working
New	
Working condition	
Not working	
Others (for wives only)	

4. How did you (or your husband) acquire those SALW? Did you (or your husband) sign for them? (YES/NO)

1. Received from your commander
2. Taken from a pool
3. Taken from front line
4. Others: _____

5. How did you (or your husband) keep the SALW during the war?

1. Pool in house
2. Pool in another town
3. In town of origin
4. Others: _____

PART II

1. How many and which type of weapons do you (or your husband) own today?

Types	Quantity
Mortar	
Rocket launcher RPG	
AK-47 / GM-3	
Pistol / revolver / handgun	
Firearms / gunshot	
Grenades	
Ammunition	
Others	

2. What is the state of these weapons?

	How many were new/ working/not working
New	
Working condition	
Not working	
Others (for wives only)	

PART III

1. If you have less weapons today, what happened to the other weapons, and why?

	BY WHO / TO WHOM?	
1. They were destroyed		
2. They were hidden		
3. They were sold		Price:
4. They were handed over		
Others (restricted)		

2. Are your weapons hidden in one location or many?

1. One place only ( )   3. Three places ( )
2. Two places ( )   4. Four place or more ( )

3. Where are your (or your husband's) weapons? (district, chiefdom for each weapons cache)

District, chiefdom	**Quantity in each cache**

4. Where are the arms located? (Indicate one answer only)

1. Pool in house ( )
2. Pool in town of origin ( )
3. Other _____

Comments:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Questionnaire on the possession of arms by ex-combatants and civilians

The following is a questionnaire, including open questions, on the assessment of small arms for UNDP. Be assured that all answers are kept confidential.

Name: _____ Status: _____	
Age: _____ Sex: Male / Female District: _____	
Chiefdom: _____ Section: _____	
Interviewer's name: _____	

PART I

1. How do you feel about your security today? (List and prioritize/rank conditions of insecurity)

_____
_____
_____

2. What types of weapons are prevalent in your community? (List and prioritize/rank conditions of insecurity; map (social, household)

_____
_____
_____

3. Why would an individual want to own a weapon? What are the reasons?

_____
_____
_____

4. How has SALW in your community affected business, farming, schooling, etc?

_____
_____
_____

5. What do you think will make people give up their weapons?
(List solutions and rank by strength of approach)

_____
_____
_____

PART II

1. Can you tell us the number of persons recruited as combatants in your region/town/village?

_____
_____
_____

2. How many weapons were allocated to combatants/households/groups?
(If group, how many persons?)

_____
_____
_____

3. How were the weapons distributed? (At random? Were they registered? Were they distributed equally amongst the combatants?)

_____
_____
_____

4. What was the origin of the weapons?
(Who brought them? How? When? What is their condition? Are they produced locally?)

_____
_____
_____

5. What happened to the weapons used during the war?

_____
_____
_____

6. If the weapons were hidden, how and where were they hidden?
(Buried in a plastic bag; hidden in the house; kept in a pool)

_____
_____
_____

7. Was there a weapons cache in the community during the war? Today?
(Map and rank by size)

_____
_____
_____

PART III

1. What can you get in exchange for a firearm/AK-47? (Cash? Livestock?
etc.)

_____
_____
_____

2. How can you acquire a firearm in your community? What would be the
approximate price?

_____
_____
_____

3. What are the types of weapons available to buy? (List and rank according
to their availability)

_____
_____
_____

4. Where do the weapons come from?

_____
_____
_____

5. Who brings them?

_____
_____
_____

Comments:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

ACRONYMS

AfD	Arms for Development
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC	All People's Congress
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
BICC	Bonn International Center for Conversion
CACD	Community Arms Collection and Destruction
CDF	Civil Defence Forces
CPDTF	Commonwealth Police Development Task Force
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EO	Executive Outcomes
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
GAF	Guinean Armed Forces
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit/ German Agency for Technical Cooperation
IANSA	The International Action Network on Small Arms
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IG	Inspector General
MDTF	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
MILOBs	Military Observers
NCAPSA	National Commission Against the Proliferation of Small Arms
NCDDR	National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
NCRRR	National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSD	Operational Security Division
RMDS	Regional Micro-Disarmament Standards
RPG	Rocket Propelled Grenade

RSLAF	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
RUFP	Revolutionary United Front Party
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SEESAC	South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SMG	Sub-Machine Gun
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Sierra Leone
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
UNOMSIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
WFP	World Food Programme