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Comparative Analysis of Evaluation Methodologies in Weapon Collection Programmes

Shukuko Koyama



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United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
Geneva, Switzerland



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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FOREWORD

In post-conflict settings, small arms and light weapons threaten security and livelihoods and deprive communities of economic and social opportunities long after a formal ceasefire or peace settlement is signed. In recent years, programmes to collect and destroy illegally held small arms have become popular responses to these ongoing threats.

UNIDIR undertook a two-year assessment of weapons collection programmes in which the incentives provided to people to give up their weapons were based on community development projects. The case studies applied participatory research methods to assess the impacts of the post-conflict programmes in Albania, Cambodia and Mali. These UNIDIR evaluations complemented other analyses of weapons for development programmes that used standard, non-participatory research tools. As was to be expected, the results of these two types of evaluations were distinct, as they often measured different variables.

In this volume, Shukuko Koyama compares the results from the two evaluation approaches—UNIDIR’s participatory evaluations and the other more conventional interview technique applied by other organizations.

The results of this comparison show the two evaluation techniques to be complimentary. The conventional evaluation paints a broad picture of project implementation, while participatory evaluation can document how local communities’ roles, perceptions and expectations matter to the success of weapons for development programmes. This volume suggests that the combination of the two evaluation techniques can assist governments and international organizations in more effectively implementing and evaluating small arms policies in post-conflict disarmament efforts.

UNIDIR is grateful for the generous financial support from the Government of Japan for this project. UNIDIR is also indebted to the community members who participated in the workshops for this research, the local authorities and the national Governments of Albania, Cambodia

and Mali. Without their contribution and assistance, this research would not have been possible.

Patricia Lewis
Director
UNIDIR

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ACRONYMS

ACORD	Association de Coopération et de Recherches pour le Développement (Mali)
BICC	Bonn International Center for Conversion
CAR-Nord	Consolidation des Acquis de la Réinsertion des ex-combatants
CM&E	Conventional Monitoring and Evaluation
CNLPAL	Commission Nationale de Lutte contre la Prolifération des Armes Légères (Mali)
CTB	Coopération Technique Belge
DDA	Department for Disarmament Affairs (United Nations)
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
EU	European Union
EU-ASAC	European Union Assistance on Curbing Small Arms and Light Weapons in Cambodia
GPP	Gramsh Pilot Project
JSAC	Japan Assistance Team for Small Arms Management in Cambodia
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PAREM	Programme d'appui à la réinsertion des ex-combattants au Nord Mali
PM&E	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
SALWC	Small Arms and Light Weapons Control (Albania)
SAS	Small Arms Survey
SEESAC	South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
WfD	Weapons for Development

INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, post-conflict arms reduction efforts have expanded and diversified. Among the variety of types of projects, community-based weapons collection programmes that provide development projects as incentives—so-called weapons for development (WfD) programmes (sometimes referred to as “weapons in exchange for development”)—have become increasingly popular among donors. More recently, implementing agencies have begun to evaluate their WfD programmes, and there are growing efforts to develop a more comprehensive evaluation system.¹ Yet methodologies to monitor and evaluate these projects have rarely included the primary stakeholders—local community members.

Working from the assumption that the primary stakeholders are in the best position to evaluate WfD schemes, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) instituted a participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) campaign that placed community members at the centre of the process. Funded by the Government of Japan, the UNIDIR Weapons for Development Project appraised a selected array of weapons collection programmes in Albania, Cambodia and Mali. The participatory research methods, including focus group discussions and participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques,² resulted in findings that deepen our understanding of the participation, motivations and satisfaction of the various stakeholders—and in some cases these findings differ in significant ways from those arrived at through Conventional Monitoring and Evaluation (CM&E) methods.

Both evaluation approaches confirm that security and livelihood conditions improved in the wake of WfD projects. Another commonality across evaluations is an acknowledgement that alternative indicators are needed to measure changes in communities. There is now a growing effort among small arms programme evaluators to develop such indicators.

One of the revealing findings of the UNIDIR PM&E work suggests that what goes by the name of “community participation” is often not very participatory. Especially at the decision-making level, implementing agencies often neglect the opinions of rank and file community members in favour of community leaders, usually middle-aged men, thus critically

limiting the range of information and perspectives obtained, while perpetuating societal and gender hierarchies.

These are the kinds of observations—touching on social dynamics and community involvement—that CM&E can overlook. Yet community involvement is central to weapons reduction initiatives. The UNIDIR evaluations record the active contributions of local communities and individuals to disarmament throughout the project process. They reveal the active roles community members play in planning and developing the programmes long before implementation. Documenting and understanding these contributions are essential to building a solid base of “best practices” for WfD and other post-conflict disarmament programmes.

By articulating the differences between participatory and conventional evaluation methodologies and research findings, this report aims to demonstrate the compatibility of the two different approaches. Ultimately, this compatibility provides a fuller picture of how weapons reduction efforts work in practice in a post-conflict society, which can usefully inform future programme design and evaluations.

STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

This report compares evaluations carried out by UNIDIR and a range of other organizations in Albania, Cambodia and Mali. It does not present a critical review of each evaluation but rather examines the constructive compatibility between the conventional and participatory evaluation approaches. This report limits itself to issues relevant to actual arms reduction policies. It begins by examining the methods of the evaluations, then presents a comparative analysis of the research results. The final section discusses what implications these differences suggest for future arms reduction policy-making.

This report reviewed the following evaluation reports (see bibliography for full details).

Albania

- SEESAC APD 20, ‘You Have Removed the Devil From Our Door’: An Assessment of the UNDP Small Arms and Light Weapons Control

(SALWC) Project in Albania, 2003 (hereafter, SEESAC/BICC evaluation);

- Report of the Independent Mission to Evaluate the Pilot Programme for Weapons in Exchange for Development in the District of Gramsh, Albania, 2001 (hereafter, SAS/BICC evaluation); and
- Exchanging Weapons for Development in Albania: Gaps and Grey Areas in Weapons Collection Programmes Assessed by Local People, 2004a (hereafter, Mugumya, 2004a).

Cambodia

- Buwalda, J., 2002, Report of an Evaluation Mission in Cambodia from September 21 till [sic] October 19, 2002 (hereafter, EU 2002 evaluation);
- EU Programme on Small Arms and Light Weapons in Cambodia: Interim Evaluation and Recommendations Relating to Contribution, 2001 (hereafter, EU 2001 evaluation); and
- Exchanging Weapons for Development in Cambodia: An Assessment of Different Weapons Collection Strategies by Local People, 2004 (hereafter, Mugumya, 2004b).

Mali

- Appui aux commissions locales de recuperation des armes légères de Tienkour, Diré, Dianké, Soumpi et Léré, 2003 (hereafter, CTB evaluation); and
- Exchanging Weapons for Development in Mali: Weapons Collection Programmes Assessed by Local People, 2004 (hereafter, Mugumya, 2004c).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Ideally, a rigorous comparison between the two methodologies would call for conducting evaluations using both methods in the same communities and with reference to the same disarmament projects. This was not possible in the present study. UNIDIR performed the participatory evaluations prior to the intention to conduct a comparative study, so the selection criteria for case study sites did not depend on whether conventional evaluations had taken place there. Thus only in the three capital cities—where project staff and governmental officials are located—

and in Gramsh, Albania and Léré, Mali, did both evaluation teams interact with the same communities.

At the same time, the evaluations compared here do not always cover the same specific projects, although in some cases they do. The explanation for this lies in the different objectives of the two types of evaluation. CM&E typically assesses project efficiency, efficacy and performance, often on behalf of donors supporting those projects. PM&E is designed to assess overall social changes in the communities where weapons collection initiatives have taken place, whether they are WfD projects, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes, or other disarmament initiatives.

METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH METHODS IN DISARMAMENT RESEARCH

Participatory methods, long tested in the development and health sectors, have the potential to facilitate communication with and among the actual beneficiaries of disarmament projects—community members. Recently, qualitative research has been conducted to study the impact of small arms and light weapons on security, mainly using PRA techniques.³ Landmine awareness initiatives by the Child-to-Child Trust, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the International Committee of Red Cross have also applied participatory methods.⁴

Concerned that the predominating “consultants with clipboards” evaluation approaches to small arms projects did not fully engage the most important stakeholders—women, children, elders, youth and other local community members—UNIDIR pioneered the use of participatory research methods in the micro-disarmament field. UNIDIR’s Weapons for Development Project applied participatory techniques to assess each stage of the project cycle: project appraisal, design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The growing experience with these methodologies—both successes and failures—has instigated an ongoing process of improving and refining the participatory toolkit available to evaluators examining micro-disarmament projects.

PM&E methods involve interactive discussion and visual aids such as flow charts and pictures that require no specialized skills on the part of the participants. Participatory workshops allow any community members, literate or illiterate, rich or poor, men or women, to take part. Unlike CM&E research techniques, there are no standardized questionnaires or surveys to fill in, and the flexible approach allows community members to participate when it suits their daily schedules, rather than the schedules of external researchers.

Table 1: Differences between conventional and participatory monitoring and evaluation

	Conventional monitoring and evaluation	Participatory monitoring and evaluation
Who	External experts	Stakeholders including community members and project staff, as well as outside facilitators
What	Predetermined indicators to measure project inputs and outputs	Indicators identified by stakeholders to measure a project process as well as outputs and/or outcomes
How	Structured research techniques such as questionnaires and surveys	Qualitative and quantitative research methods, partly created by stakeholders themselves
Why	To make projects and staff accountable to donor agencies	To assess actual impacts on the stakeholders and to empower stakeholders to take action

Adopted from Rietberger-McCracken and Narayan, 1998, p. 193.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS FROM THE METHODOLOGICAL COMPARISON

Research subject

The primary difference between the two types of evaluation methods is the main research subjects and information sources. The primary targets of participatory evaluations are the stakeholders themselves (i.e. local community members). The conventional evaluations have a strong grasp of the project activities but their main information sources are project

documents and interviews with project staff. This difference in the evaluation approach naturally provides the two types of evaluations with different emphases. With the conventional approach, assessment of project impacts is limited because it is typically based on what quantitative data may be available—or anecdotal evidence.

Significantly, using PM&E techniques, the UNIDIR evaluations did not consult project documents at all. While evaluators did interview project staff members, their responses were not given more weight than the extensive consultations with local project stakeholders. Thus the focus of the participatory approach was not to obtain a comprehensive project implementation record but to assess how the stakeholders themselves perceive the successes and failures of the project intervention, and how they themselves evaluate the project performance.

Table 2: Research tools used in the evaluations

Applied research tools	Albania			Cambodia			Mali	
	SAS/BICC	SESAC/BICC	UNIDIR	EU 2001	EU 2002	UNIDIR	CTB	UNIDIR
Interviews with national government and international policy actors	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Interviews with local authorities	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Interviews with local policy actors	X	X	X		X		X	X
Focus group discussions in communities	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
PRA workshops with local stakeholders			X			X		X
Review of internal project documents	X	X		X	X		X	

Research focus

Unlike the conventional evaluations in Albania and Cambodia, which sought to assess project performance, UNIDIR's evaluation focused more on assessing project impacts of WfD activities. The UNIDIR evaluations do not assess particular programmes and/or projects to monitor their

performance. They rather focus on exploring how communities are affected by any kind of intervention relating to weapons collection. Therefore, UNIDIR's evaluations targeted community members rather than community leaders, governmental officials and programme implementers. This approach has the advantage of scrutinizing actual impacts and measuring the beneficiaries' satisfaction level with a programme. The UNIDIR evaluations consulted a variety of social groups, thus capturing multiple perspectives.

Only one of the conventional evaluations, performed by the Association de Coopération et de Recherches pour le Développement (ACORD) for Coopération Technique Belge (CTB) in Mali, carried out extensive evaluation on the development component of the WfD projects. Neither the SAS/BICC and SEESAC/BICC evaluations in Albania, nor those by the European Union in Cambodia, extensively assess development components of the project interventions. The reasons differ from one evaluation to another. The EU 2001 and the SAS/BICC reports claim that it was too early to assess long-term impacts of the development projects. Although the SEESAC/BICC evaluation stated that the development projects benefited the local population,⁵ it did not report how the development projects were identified or describe in what ways improvements were recognized.

In Cambodia, the EU 2001 report claims that it is important for the European Union, and EU-ASAC in particular, to explore opportunities to establish mutually re-enforcing links between weapons collection and destruction efforts and wider development programmes. The report suggests the European Union and the European Commission review opportunities for "adjusting or using their existing or planned *development* programmes in this respect"⁶ (emphasis added). However, because European development projects in Cambodia are still in the early stages, the EU 2001 report did not assess their impacts. The EU 2002 evaluation reports on the implementation of ongoing infrastructure construction in Snoul and Bakan Districts but, unlike the SEESAC/BICC evaluation in Albania, it could not assess the actual utility of the new infrastructure. The evaluations in Mali by CTB and UNIDIR scrutinize the development aspects of the WfD projects.

Indicators for impact assessment

As noted above, CM&E is characterized by measuring project outcomes. However, the conventional evaluations examined here had difficulty establishing quantifying indicators to measure project impacts and efficiency. Although they acknowledged the positive outcomes of the WfD projects, they found it hard to quantify the impacts with “hard evidence”.

In order to measure the security improvements, these evaluations tried to obtain quantitative crime and health data. In the case study countries, however, this data is often not available. Further, state-supplied data on the number of pre-intervention weapons in the community was found to be unreliable, with the result that the percentage of weapons collected could not be calculated. Due to transparency and monitoring issues, project agencies typically cannot even obtain information on the number of weapons collected and destroyed.

Acknowledging that collecting quantitative data to measure impacts is often unrealistic, the reports suggested devising future evaluations with alternative methods, including qualitative indicators. Specific indicators noted included: the reduction in armed robberies, shooting, killings and domestic violence; return and settlement of formerly displaced people; revival of economic activities; restoration of non-violent mechanisms of solving local disputes; improved rapport with the local authorities and security forces; and resumption of free movement of people and goods.

Role of donors

Finally, a significant difference between CM&E and PM&E is the role of the donors. All of the conventional evaluations were funded by project implementing or funding agencies—with the inherent difficulties and unintentional biases of self-evaluation efforts. Conversely, the Government of Japan funded UNIDIR’s Weapons for Development Project, with the independent objective to collect best practices for WfD efforts, rather than evaluate a particular project. Thus, the financial sponsor of the UNIDIR evaluations had no role in data collection, analysis, interpretation or writing the evaluation reports.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EVALUATIONS

ALBANIA

In Albania, there were said to be 700,000 weapons looted from military weapons storage facilities during the political turmoil in 1997. The looted weapons threatened daily life through their availability for domestic and communal disputes and due to accidental discharge.

In 1997, the first WfD programme was implemented in Albania. Financed by several EU countries, the UN and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), together with the Albanian government, carried out the first pilot project in Gramsh (the Gramsh Pilot Project or GPP). This pilot was followed by the “Weapons in Exchange for Development” programme, implemented in Gramsh, Elbasan and Diber between 2000 and 2002. Between 2002 and 2004, UNDP launched a project called “Small Arms and Light Weapons Control” (SALWC) in Tirana, Kukes, Shkodra, Lezna and Vhlorë. In this scheme, participating communities competed against each other to collect the largest number of weapons. Development projects were given to communities that collected the most weapons.

The following evaluations are analysed here:

- SEESAC APD 20, ‘You Have Removed the Devil From Our Door’: An Assessment of the UNDP Small Arms and Light Weapons Control (SALWC) Project in Albania, 2003 (SEESAC/BICC evaluation);
- Report of the Independent Mission to Evaluate the Pilot Programme for Weapons in Exchange for Development in the District of Gramsh, Albania, 2001 (SAS/BICC evaluation); and
- Exchanging Weapons for Development in Albania: Gaps and Grey Areas in Weapons Collection Programmes Assessed by Local People, 2004 (UNIDIR evaluation).

Of the three evaluations reviewed here, the first two were conducted to assess project performance. The primary SAS/BICC evaluator was selected from BICC by UNDP and the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA), the project implementing agencies. Another international evaluator was provided by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), another project implementer. The Small Arms Survey, an

independent research institute, also provided an international evaluator. Of the five evaluators on the team, two were Albanians. For the SEESAC/BICC evaluation, the two international evaluators were provided by BICC. The evaluation report does not provide further information on the composition of the evaluation team. The UNIDIR evaluation was not tied to any projects, and was to look at actual impacts of projects on beneficiaries and their communities. The UNIDIR evaluation team in Albania consisted of two international evaluators from UNIDIR; one Albanian consultant selected from the local disarmament NGO; and two Albanian translators. A total of 18 Albanian facilitators were selected from case study communities. The duration of actual field research is almost the same in the three cases. All three evaluations looked at Gramsh, where the pilot project took place.

The SAS/BICC evaluation provides a quantitative result of the weapons collection, i.e. the number of collected weapons. Yet the evaluators are cautious about estimating the cost-effectiveness of the project on the basis of cost per weapon collected alone. They suggest rather that WfD projects should consider the decrease in the incidence of weapons use (through the removal of weapons from society), communal mobilization towards improving local conditions and the tangible benefits generated by the development projects.⁷ Similarly, the SEESAC/BICC report is sceptical about measuring success quantitatively, given the absence of quantitative data, and on the grounds of cost-effectiveness. The SEESAC/BICC report is also critical about measuring success of multifaceted projects such as WfD projects by their cost-effectiveness, i.e. calculating the average cost per collected weapon.⁸ The report suggests developing alternative methods to measure success, especially changes in subjective perceptions of security. This is just what the PM&E techniques used in the UNIDIR evaluation do through workshop discussions with local community members to generate criteria—indicators—for measuring the success or failure of weapons collection projects.

Only the UNIDIR report highlighted the differences between men and women in perceptions about weapons collection. For example, women's focus groups indicated that weapon collection and WfD projects should be more gender sensitive and take more account of the different needs and capabilities of other social groups.⁹

SAS/BICC EVALUATION

The SAS/BICC evaluation report provides key findings on each project component: project design, implementation and management, weapons collection, development, public awareness, and overall impact and effectiveness. The evaluation included interviews with local, national and international stakeholders, as well as focus group discussions with local beneficiaries.

The evaluation team interviewed representatives of the Albanian government, the international assistance communities, Albanian NGOs, and journalists. Among the officials interviewed were the Minister of Public Order, Prefect of Elbasan, the Mayor of Gramsh, and governmental officials from the security agencies such as the Ministry of Local Government and the General Headquarters of the Albanian armed forces. Interviewees from the international assistance community in Albania included the UNDP project staff, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) officials and staff from the embassies of donor countries.

The evaluators also held focus meetings with groups of women, business people and youth in Gramsh. However, the majority of the field research was dedicated to the stakeholder interviews rather than to focus groups.

SEESAC/BICC EVALUATION

This evaluation looked at a competitive collection scheme, where participating communities competed against each other to collect the greatest number of weapons. Unlike the previous programme, not all of the participating communities received development projects. Instead, the communities that collected more weapons were awarded development projects.

The SEESAC/BICC evaluation assesses the small arms collection project's performance in terms of cost-effectiveness and efficiency. The report criticizes the competitive scheme on the grounds that the criteria to judge competencies within communities were unclear. As for cost-effectiveness, the report indicates that it is very difficult to measure weapon collection project impacts on security improvement.

The report does acknowledge, however, that most interviewees link the weapons collection intervention and the improvement of security. Despite this, the report authors struggle with whether such subjective perceptions should be treated as a criterion of success.

The SEESAC/BICC research uses both qualitative and quantitative data. On the qualitative side, the evaluation team conducted interviews with relevant stakeholders—many of whom are the same as those interviewed by the SAS/BICC team. In comparison with the SAS/BICC evaluation, however, the choice of the interviewees seems more selective: the SEESAC/BICC research refers to testimonials by the Albanian governmental officials and the UNDP project staff more than those of local community members. The report notes two primary kinds of quantitative data: the number of weapons collected and the project costs in relation to the number of weapons collected. The SEESAC/BICC report also refers continually to the results from the survey conducted by SAS/BICC. While both the SEESAC/BICC and SAS/BICC evaluations attempt to quantify the cost-effectiveness of the weapons collection projects, only the SAS/BICC report mentions the local beneficiaries' perceptions of security.

UNIDIR EVALUATION

The UNIDIR evaluation utilized participatory methods in the form of focus group discussions among local beneficiaries. Based on these discussions, the report assessed project goals and purposes, project identification and design, project appraisal and implementation, project monitoring and project performance.

In addition to the focus groups, UNIDIR applied conventional qualitative research methods such as semi-structured and conversational interviews. Quantitative data was not collected for the evaluation. The evaluation focused on assessing impacts of the interventions on local beneficiaries and their communities, rather than on programme implementation and performance. The main research subjects were local beneficiaries of weapons collection interventions, i.e. general community members and not exclusively community leaders.

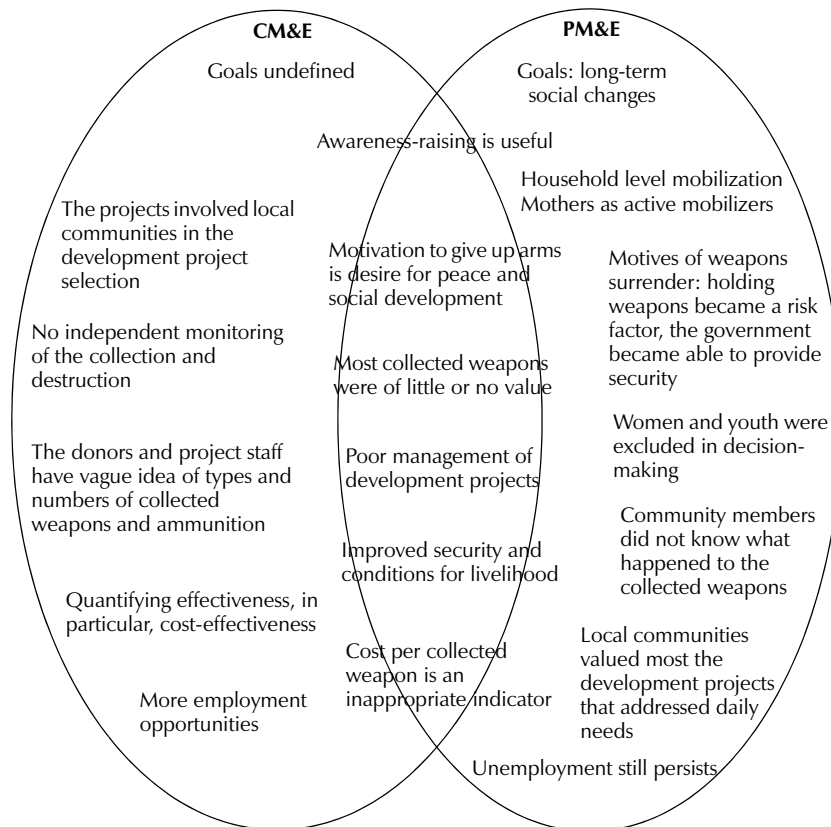
The research team also interviewed the former head of the Weapons Collection department at the Ministry of Public Order, UNDP project staff, OSCE staff, the Mayor of Gramsh, the Prefects of Elbasan and Shkodra,

officials from the local police and emergency office, and commune and village chiefs in Gramsh, Elbasan and Shkodra. In each community, the UNIDIR team stayed for four to five days in order to prepare for and facilitate workshops with beneficiaries. Community members participated on a voluntary basis.

Table 3: Methodological comparison of evaluations in Albania

	SAS/BICC	SEESAC/BICC	UNIDIR
Why	To assess the GPP and to identify potential modifications to programming for similar forthcoming programmes in Albania	To review the outcomes and the impacts of the SALWC project; to discuss its value in term of the resources used ¹⁰	To identify criteria for successful weapons collection
What	The GPP	The SALWC project	The GPP, the SALWC project, the Support to Security Sector Reform project
Who	Three international evaluators, three Albanian staff ¹¹	Two international evaluators from BICC and commissioned by SEESAC	Two international researchers, three Albanian staff, 18 Albanian facilitators selected from case study communities
When	4–16 September 2000 (12 days), near the end of the GPP	1–14 September 2003 (13 days), near the end of the SALWC project	13–20 September and 19–31 October 2003 (13 days)
Where	Gramsh, Elbasan, Tirana	Gramsh, Vlora, Kukes, Tirana	Gramsh, Elbasan, Shkodra, Tirana
How	Interviews and focus group discussion ¹²	Interview, survey, weapons collection statistics ¹³	PRA workshops and interviews ¹⁴

Figure 1: Selected findings from the two evaluation techniques (Albania)



CAMBODIA

Cambodian society experienced a large-scale violent conflict in the form of two decades of civil war in the 1970s and 1980s. Today, the Cambodian people still suffer from the use of weapons hidden away after the conflict as well as un-cleared landmines. The process of returning to their communities and rebuilding their livelihoods continues.

Since 2000, the European Union's Assistance on Curbing Small Arms and Light Weapons (EU-ASAC) has carried out weapons collection projects as part of its overall security-building assistance in Cambodia. While EU-ASAC has implemented projects in central and southern Cambodia, the Japan Assistance Team for Small Arms Management in Cambodia (JSAC) started its own weapons collection projects in northern Cambodia in 2003. While both of the programmes have aimed at collecting weapons, the major goals are broader and more holistic, such as institutional reform and capacity building in law enforcement bodies, in particular, the police (EU-ASAC) and peace-building and development (JSAC).

The following evaluations are analysed here:

- Buwalda, J., 2002, Report of an Evaluation Mission in Cambodia from September 21 till [sic] October 19, 2002 (EU 2002 evaluation);
- EU Programme on Small Arms and Light Weapons in Cambodia: Interim Evaluation and Recommendations Relating to Contribution, 2001 (EU 2001 evaluation); and
- Exchanging Weapons for Development in Cambodia: An Assessment of Different Weapons Collection Strategies by Local People, 2004 (UNIDIR evaluation).

The first two evaluations were conducted to appraise a particular project's performance, while the UNIDIR evaluation was implemented to assess actual impacts on beneficiaries and their communities and was not tied to a specific project. The duration of field research is almost the same in each case. All three evaluations took place in Snoul in Kratie Province, where the pilot project was implemented.

The European Commission, which funds the EU-ASAC programme, contracted the evaluator for the EU 2001 report. Similarly, EU-ASAC appointed an evaluator for the EU 2002 report. Both were international.

The evaluation reports do not provide further information on the components of the evaluation team. The UNIDIR evaluation team consisted of two researchers from UNIDIR, one Cambodian coordinator and two Cambodian translators selected from the local disarmament NGO, and a total of 18 Cambodian workshop facilitators selected from case study communities.

The two EU evaluations were carried out to investigate programme performance for programme implementers and donors. Thus the evaluations focus on project management. Comparing the two EU evaluations, the later report gives stronger emphasis to impact assessment. The main interviewees for both the EU reports were programme implementers and governmental officials at the national, provincial and communal levels, while the amount of time spent interviewing the local beneficiaries appears quite limited. The EU evaluation reports treat local people as a homogenous group, and when referring to them do not note their gender, age or social standing.¹⁵

As for an impact assessment, a lack of clear indicators meant that a systematic assessment was not possible. The EU 2002 report explicitly acknowledges this hindrance.¹⁶ Both the EU 2002 and UNIDIR reports question the feasibility of using the number of collected weapons as an indicator. Both reports suggest similar alternative indicators, including the reduction in crime rates and the resumption of unrestricted travel.

EU 2001 evaluation

The EU 2001 report is an interim evaluation of the EU–ASAC programme, underway for 14 months at the time of evaluation. The evaluation includes assessments of WfD pilot projects. However, because these pilots were at an early stage of implementation due to a delayed start, they are not extensively examined in the report.

Following the European Commission evaluation guidelines, the evaluation reviews the EU–ASAC programme both as a whole, and in terms of its separate elements. These components include assistance in preparing an arms law, improved record-keeping and safe storage of military weapons stocks, destruction of civilian and surplus weapons, WfD pilot projects and other assistance with voluntary weapons collection and public awareness.

The report evaluated the programme and each component according to the criteria of relevance, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

EU 2002 evaluation

Unlike the previous EU evaluation report, this report is limited to the evaluation of the WfD component of the EU–ASAC programme. By the time the second evaluation was carried out, the programme had implemented small-scale projects in seven additional provinces.

UNIDIR evaluation

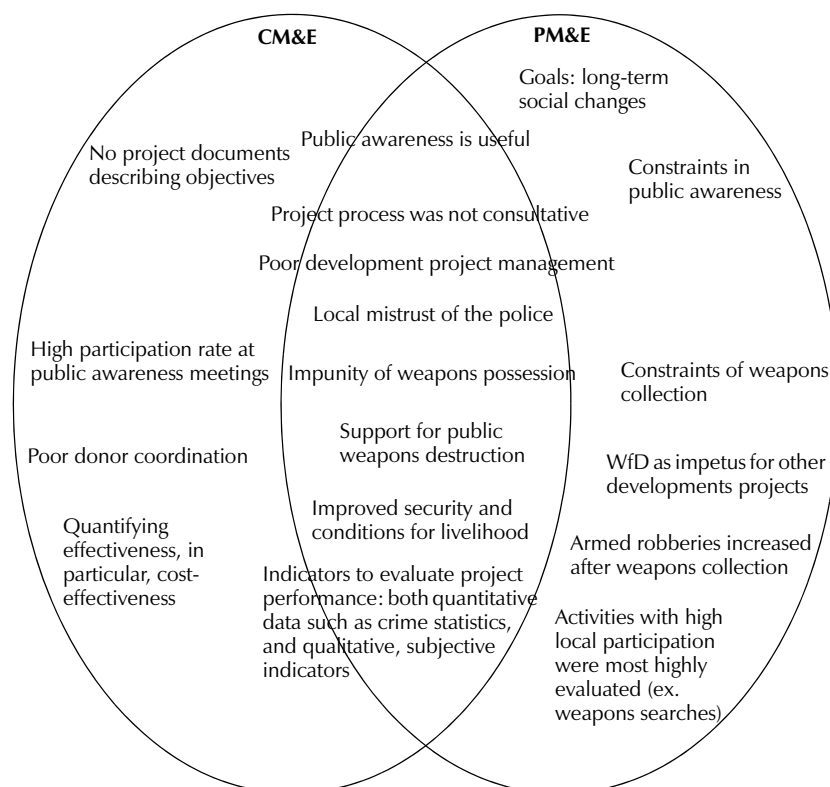
The UNIDIR evaluation reports a wider range of implications of WfD projects, since it focuses not only on project performance, but on overall impacts as a result of the intervention. For example, the UNIDIR evaluation reports the unexpected outcome that local people obtained new skills by interacting with external agencies during the construction of development projects. The evaluation also notes that the projects raised new areas of concerns for local people, such as fighting illiteracy and an increased interest in improved sanitation.¹⁷

The UNIDIR evaluation reports that interviewees in the three communities held a variety of views on small arms and weapons collection interventions.

Table 4: Methodological comparison of evaluations in Cambodia

	EU 2001	EU 2002	UNIDIR
Why	To assess the results of the EU-ASAC programme; to provide positive evidence for its continuation and sound basis for the future programme implementation	To evaluate the structure, implementation, management and perceived impact and effectiveness of the projects ¹⁸	To identify criteria for successful weapons collection
What	EU-ASAC programme, large-scale projects	EU-ASAC programme's development component, small-scale projects	EU-ASAC's large- and small-scale projects and JSAC programme
Who	An international evaluator, others unknown	An international evaluator, others unknown	Two international researchers, three Cambodian staff, 18 Cambodian facilitators selected from case study communities
When	19-31 May 2001 (13 days)	N/A	3-10 February, 18 April-7 May 2004 (28 days)
Where	Phnom Penh ¹⁹	Phnom Penh, Pursat, Kratie ²⁰	Phnom Penh, Kratie, Pailin, Angkor Thom
How	Review of documentation, interviews and observation ²¹	Interviews and focus group discussions ²²	PRA workshops and interviews ²³

Figure 2: Selected findings from the two evaluation techniques (Cambodia)



MALI

Mali, especially the northern regions, experienced severe drought in the 1980s, causing a large-scale displacement of the population, particularly the nomad population, the Tuaregs. The social and economic deprivation of the north was followed by civil strife, because people in the north felt their problems were due to the centralization of governance. Firearms became a crucial means of livelihood for the Tuaregs, who increasingly used them for cattle rustling. In response, the livestock owners, too, took up weapons. This spiralling arms race led to rising violence.

Between 1997 and 2003, CTB implemented WfD projects in the Timbuktu region, providing television antennas, water pumps and other social infrastructure incentives. The town of Gao has experienced two different types of weapons collection: weapons collection targeted at ex-combatants as part of a DDR process, and a more community-based weapons collection. The first collection initially took place under the guidance of the UNDP and was then taken over by Consolidation des Acquis de la Réinsertion des ex-combatants (CAR–Nord).

The following evaluations are analysed here:

- Appui aux commissions locales de recuperation des armes légères de Tienkour, Diré, Dianké, Soumpi et Léré, 2003 (CTB evaluation); and
- Exchanging Weapons for Development in Mali: Weapons Collection Programmes Assessed by Local People, 2004 (UNIDIR evaluation).

While the CTB evaluation looks at the CTB projects in the Timbuktu region, the UNIDIR report evaluated not only externally developed weapons collection projects but also weapons collection initiatives organized by local communities. The latter evaluation also had a wider regional focus, including Léré in the northwest region, Gao, the central region and Menaka in the northeast region.

Both the CTB and UNIDIR evaluations assessed the weapons collection project in the community of Léré in 2003. The two evaluations employed open discussions and interviews with members of local beneficiary communities. The evaluators from both UNIDIR and CTB had operational relations with the implementing agencies and were development rather than disarmament experts.

CTB evaluation

The CTB evaluation, like the four other non-UNIDIR evaluation reports on Albania and Cambodia, is a programme management evaluation report. It aims to provide the implementing agency with a final evaluation to examine the programme's impacts and the achievement of its goals. The report is oriented towards the possibility of expanding the programme's projects into other parts of the region.

Although the CTB evaluation analyses the impacts of weapons collection interventions, it finds that due to the lack of indicators and quantitative data it was not possible to assess the project's socio-economic impacts. Unlike the other evaluations discussed in this report, the CTB evaluation was carried out by a local evaluator. In contrast with most of the other non-UNIDIR evaluations, the evaluator was not a weapons collection or small arms specialist, but a development expert.

UNIDIR evaluation

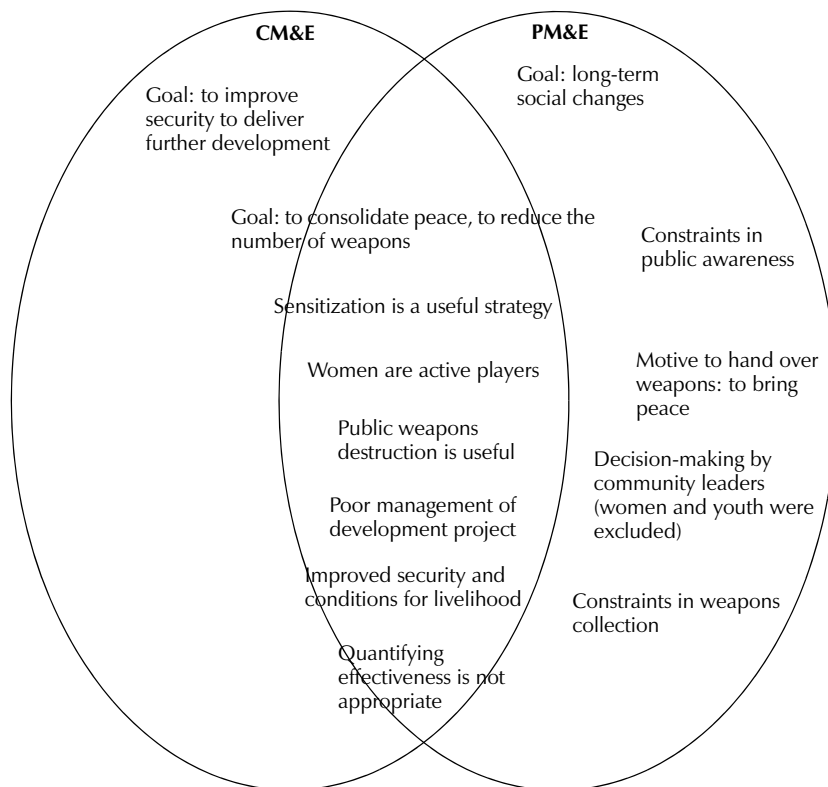
The UNIDIR report on Mali was UNIDIR's first participatory evaluation of a WfD programme. For this reason the field research was essentially a pilot project. In comparison with the two other UNIDIR case studies, the Mali report focuses more on the communities where weapons collection projects took place than the projects themselves.

Table 5: Methodological comparison of evaluations in Mali

	CTB	UNIDIR
Why	To evaluate the projects to support local commissions for weapons collection in Léré, Dianké, Soumpi, Diré and Tienkour	To identify criteria for successful weapons collection
What	To examine the methods and impacts of the projects, and their contribution to peace, security and inter-communal dialogue. The evaluation also examines replicability of this type of project in other parts of the country	To examine how weapons collection initiatives had been implemented in two areas (CTB project in Léré, UNDP/CAR–Nord project in Gao)

Who	A Malian evaluator from a local NGO (ACORD) and a CNLPAL project leader	Two international researchers, three Malian staff, six Malian facilitators selected from Léré
When	20 March–10 April 2003 (22 days)	1–30 March 2003 (30 days)
Where	Bamako and the Timbuktu region (Timbuktu, Diré, Tienkour, Léré, Dianke and Soumpi)	Bamako, Timbuktu, Léré, Gao and Menaka
How	Review of documentation, interviews and focus group discussions ²⁴	PRA workshops and interviews ²⁵

Figure 3: Selected findings from the two evaluation techniques (Mali)



FINDINGS

The evaluations report a range of findings, which vary from country to country and between the evaluations. There are, however, a number of consistencies between the participatory and conventional evaluations across the three case study countries.

In general, findings from the conventional evaluations affirm project performance and impacts. However, particular findings do not always support the conclusions of the evaluations and often echo UNIDIR observations concerning the limitations of project performance measures. On the question of how to quantify the success of weapons collection interventions, in particular, they express doubt on the appropriateness of certain evaluation indicators. These comments are typically made in passing, however, and do not appear in summaries or conclusions, or affect the reports' main findings that the weapons collection projects are effective interventions.

While the UNIDIR participatory evaluations are generally consistent with these conventional evaluations, they provide more complex and nuanced perceptions about project performance from local stakeholders' perspectives. The PM&E techniques used also help articulate the actual motivations behind local community members' decisions to hand over weapons. More importantly, these evaluations highlight the active roles community members played in the projects, which went largely underreported in previous evaluations.

Livelihood and security improved after weapons in exchange for development projects. All of the evaluations, with the exception of the interim EU 2001 report, found that security and livelihood conditions improved after the WfD projects. The evaluations do not always find a clear causality between the project and the improved situation, however.²⁶ Nevertheless, the stakeholders themselves have positive impressions of the projects and their impacts on livelihood and security.

Both the conventional and participatory evaluations note a number of positive post-intervention changes. First, psychological effects were recognized among local stakeholders, including a reduction in fear among the people, and increased confidence between different communities. Second, local people felt that after disarmament activities armed violence

declined, including murders and non-fatal shootings. Third, local people indicated that the improvement in security conditions led to further social reconstruction, including the return of displaced persons, the improvement in the mobilization of people and goods, the resumption of investments in communities, and the resumption of social services, in particular health and education services. In addition, local stakeholders involved in UNIDIR's PM&E research emphasized that the WfD projects acted as catalysts for other development assistance agencies to resume their activities.

However, all the evaluations, except the EU 2001 report, found it difficult to quantify impacts. The absence of reliable quantitative data, such as crime and health statistics, is the primary obstacle to assessing the success of WfD projects. The number of collected weapons was used as a quantitative indicator to assess projects by the CTB evaluation in Mali and the SAS/BICC and SEESAC/BICC evaluations in Albania. However, these evaluations express caution against over-reliance on this indicator, because of the lack of reliable pre-intervention weapons stockpile information.

Because the UNIDIR evaluations engaged with a range of local social groups in the community, they provide additional, more nuanced findings on security perceptions. For example, women and youth sometimes perceive security—and changes in security—differently. In Cambodia, the EU 2002 report found that community members feel less insecure after the project intervention.²⁷ Youth and women participating in UNIDIR's workshops, however, did not necessarily agree with that assessment. Both groups reported to the UNIDIR team that banditry had increased after the weapons collection projects because thieves recognized that locals had relinquished their weapons and therefore could not defend themselves. This suggests the need for capable community policing programmes to follow weapons collection projects. UNDP in Albania and EU-ASAC in Cambodia have implemented such programmes.

In addition, the UNIDIR evaluation revealed that women continued to be at risk of domestic violence after the intervention.²⁸ And although in Albania, where the EU 2002 evaluation indicated that each village in the commune was visited daily by police and that an increase in security was obvious,²⁹ this does not square with the comments made by women and girls in the UNIDIR workshops. They reported still feeling fearful, especially in communities where there was no police station. In all three countries, women and girls felt they were the last to benefit.

Development projects need to be better managed. A common finding of the conventional evaluations, except the interim EU 2001 evaluation, was poor management of development projects. Some of the evaluators were development specialists (CTB and EU 2002 reports), and others were not (SAS/BICC and SEESAC/BICC). But all were critical of the lack of organizational capacity for development project management within the agencies, i.e. the Local Commission in Mali and local NGOs. In Albania, the SAS/BICC evaluation points out the inadequate management of development projects. The SEESAC/BICC evaluation did not assess development projects, because the development component of the SALWC programme was not the main focus of the evaluation. Yet, the SEESAC/BICC evaluation does point out the time constraint of the programme. In Cambodia, the interim EU 2001 report did not assess development projects because the evaluation predated the development component of the project. The EU 2002 evaluation reports the lack of local NGO expertise in the area and recommends a different approach to development, i.e. participatory community development.

The CTB evaluation in Mali reports that the Local Commission did not initially have the capacity to carry out development projects. Further, the development projects were neither sustainable nor economically profitable. Equipment provided to the communities, for example, could not be maintained.³⁰ The UNIDIR evaluations also found development project management could be improved. In particular, a delay in the delivery of projects led to frustration and mistrust among the local stakeholders in Albania and Cambodia. Finally, community members complained of development projects that could not be completed for lack of funds (Albania and Mali) and projects that did not respond to community needs (Albania and Cambodia).

This suggests that the current management of weapons collection projects requires a serious revision of project cycle and resource mobilization. Usually, a weapons collection incentive scheme is implemented as a disarmament project, i.e. a short-term intervention. But programme managers of WfD projects are expected to achieve programme objectives, such as fostering a more secure environment, which takes a considerable amount of time. Thus they face limitations in resource mobilization and unrealistic timelines. Donors and policy makers need to reassess how they categorize community-based arms control interventions—as development or security projects.

People handed over weapons in the hope of peace, not because of incentives. The UNIDIR findings dispute the notion that community members hand over weapons because they seek the benefits of the development projects. In fact, UNIDIR's PM&E work found that this was often not the motivation to participate. According to the respondents in Albania, Cambodia and Mali, the desire for peace, the belief that weapons pose more risk than offer protection, and the confidence in the government's ability to protect them motivated weapon holders to relinquish their guns. Respondents indicated that handing in weapons was itself a voluntary act in service of the community, to which development incentives were secondary.

The UNIDIR evaluation in Albania observes that the local beneficiaries in Gramsh, for example, volunteered to hand over weapons and that they regarded the development component of the project as a reward, awarded for their efforts to collect weapons, not as an incentive, motivating them to hand them over. In Cambodia, male respondents said they turned in their weapons primarily to stop senseless deaths and injuries and to prevent their children from repeating their experiences.³¹ Female participants cited a number of daily experiences of gun violence as motivation for gun surrender. For example, they repeatedly noted weapons in the home had become a hazard to family members, especially to children.³² Local respondents in Albania indicated that a number of factors led them to hand in their weapons:³³

- keeping a gun at home had become a risk in itself;
- gun violence had escalated;
- sensitization activities had been effective;
- elders set precedents by handing in the weapons first;
- women and local leaders exerted pressure, intensified by searches by the police;
- development projects that had been promised to the communities by the government were started; and
- the government made good on its promise to provide adequate security through an increased, positive police presence.

In Albania, the voluntary aspect of community participation in weapons surrender was more prominent in the pilot projects than in the fully fledged WfD project that followed. In the UNIDIR evaluation reports, however, the focus group of men noted that because of the benefits of the

incentive scheme, areas that were not targeted by the WfD project withheld their weapons until development projects would be provided.³⁴ In Schkodra, villagers indicated that they would wait to surrender weapons until a better incentive scheme was provided. In the same community, those who had purchased their guns wanted individual reimbursement instead of collective, community-wide compensation.³⁵ The UNIDIR team also found that when weapons were exchanged for incentives, the projects tended to attract old weapons and/or weapons that were too dangerous to store or too difficult to sell.³⁶ The UNIDIR evaluation concludes that the exchange scheme might jeopardize the spirit of voluntarism in weapons surrender, depending on how the project is perceived by the local beneficiaries.³⁷

In contrast, the other evaluations in Albania and Cambodia conclude that the development projects did motivate the stakeholders to hand over their weapons.³⁸ The EU 2002 evaluation claims that the development projects encouraged people to deliver their weapons in Cambodia,³⁹ and the SAS/BICC evaluation concludes that the development component of the Gramsh pilot project in Albania was a contributing factor in for the turning over of weapons. Similarly, the SEESAC/BICC evaluation concluded that the incentive provision had successfully motivated people to hand over their weapons.

The evaluations in Albania present contradictory observations on the motivations and incentives to turn over weapons, however. The SEESAC/BICC report points out that in the seven prefectures that did not join in the scheme, similar numbers of weapons, ammunition and explosives were collected, despite no rewards being offered.⁴⁰ But like the SAS/BICC evaluation, the SEESAC/BICC report also claims that the people in Gramsh handed over weapons voluntarily, without expectation of reward, at the time of the Gramsh Pilot Project. Based on these evaluations, therefore, it is unclear whether the development projects increase the yield of weapons surrendered. Nevertheless, by highlighting the positive results from these programmes, the two evaluations in Albania appear to justify the development aspect of the projects.

Moreover, project managers and local community members seem to understand the goal of WfD projects differently. For community members, the weapons collection initiative is part of a long-term process of social change, rather than merely the one-time removal of weapons. In Cambodia

and Mali, for example, the local stakeholders located WfD in the long continuum between war and peace. When asked to discuss community experiences around weapons collection, for example, workshop participants began by relating their return home after the conflicts in the 1970s and 1980s, then the gradually stabilizing security conditions in the 1990s, then their most recent experiences with weapons collection efforts. Local stakeholders thus situate the recent disarmament projects in the much wider and longer social process, rather than in the brief time frames of the project cycles themselves.

In all three case study countries, the local stakeholders indicated to UNIDIR evaluators that they viewed their participation in weapons collection as a way to transform their society into a more peaceful one, and one better conditioned for development. For community members, the creation of an environment favourable to rebuilding livelihoods, the establishment of rule of law, and the reconciliation between communities were the primary goals. They viewed the reduction of weapons and armed violence as means to achieve these goals.

Besides UNIDIR, only CTB, the implementing agency of the WfD projects in Mali, recognized this long-term goal. The CTB evaluation is also unique in identifying project goals in the original project documents of implementing agencies. The conventional evaluations in Albania and Cambodia reported that the evaluated projects did not clarify goals in their project documents, or that there were no such documents available. For example, in the absence of a clearly stated project goal,⁴¹ the SEESAC/BICC evaluation in Albania was limited to citing a statement that appears to come close to a project goal: "For sustainable development to occur, small arms have to be removed from circulation."⁴²

People contributed to disarmament, but project decision-making was exclusive. Local community members were active actors in weapons collection initiatives. They also provided resources, such as labour, in order to implement the projects. However, most of the conventional evaluations overlook the active roles played by the local community members. A prime example is the role of women. In Albania, Cambodia and Mali, women acted as strong mobilizing forces to sensitize the whole community to hand over weapons. Their efforts at the mobilization stage are not well recognized in the conventional evaluations, with the exception of the CTB report for Mali.

Male community members also contributed to the projects, by volunteering their labours for the search and collection of weapons, as well as the construction of development projects in some communities in Albania and Cambodia. In the community of Snoul, Cambodia, EU–ASAC engaged local men in weapons search and collection in the jungle, transferring weapons from the jungle to collection points in the communities, and the construction of infrastructure such as water wells and a school.

Based on their experiences with the weapons search and collection, the local stakeholders provided useful feedback on how to raise programme performance. For example, men highlighted the problems of locating and retrieving weapons hidden in landmine-ridden areas without adequate protective equipment. Women raised the issue that although they were feeding their male family members while they participated in this project, there was little financial aid to cover their costs. If these needs had been assessed on time, project resources might have been allocated more effectively—resulting in higher local satisfaction with the project.

Community members had other recommended “best practices”. Men suggested that the weapons collection process should be as transparent as possible, to prevent both hidden and collected weapons from being looted and trafficked back into society. Men’s focus groups strongly recommended that the collected weapons be monitored by local community members during transportation. For the same reason, local people recommended that the collected weapons be counted, and all weapons be destroyed, preferably in a public ceremony. Support for public destruction was valued not only for its symbolism but also for the opportunity it presented for monitoring whether all collected weapons were actually destroyed.⁴³ Ideally, community members preferred destruction events to take place as close as possible to the communities that collected the weapons. Finally, community members indicated that the government had a responsibility to ensure security for the communities that handed over weapons.⁴⁴

However, community members’ contributions and recommendations are not always well-documented or acknowledged in the conventional evaluations. Because these evaluations rely extensively on project documents for their information, evaluators were not able to recognize activities that took place outside of the formal project structure.

The UNIDIR findings diverge from those of the other reports on the question of the level of local participation. While the conventional evaluations report a high level of local participation in WfD programmes, the UNIDIR reports find that it was community leadership that was involved, to the exclusion of other actors such as ordinary community members. In particular, female community members were systematically excluded from the programme process in all the three countries.

High local stakeholder participation is reported in almost all the evaluations. In particular, the community awareness-raising workshops had high local community attendance at the initial stage of projects. Not only community leaders but also ordinary citizens, including women, attended these meetings. However, the UNIDIR evaluation provides a contradictory observation. Women and youth, in particular, told the UNIDIR team that they had not been consulted or given a role in the project process. In a striking example of this exclusion, female workshop participants in Gramsh, Albania, did not even know the Gramsh Pilot Project took place. During sensitization activities, women told the UNIDIR team that they often had to stay at home while their children participated in the cultural events at school and a community centre. In Cambodia, both of the EU evaluations give a positive account of the small-scale projects. For the interim evaluation in 2001, the EU report suggested to the donor that a large-scale expansion of the WfD project to new areas was not appropriate because a national programme and the small-scale collection and destruction effort (part of the WfD pilot projects) might be confused.⁴⁵ As an alternative, the report recommended the establishment of one to three additional small-scale WfD projects at the commune level in other provinces.⁴⁶ However, the shift from the large-scale to small-scale projects seemed not to increase local stakeholder participation. UNIDIR's report notes a lower degree of participation among the local communities in the small-scale projects.

The decision-making process showed even less local participation. The UNIDIR evaluations report that decision-making is rarely done with the community members' participation but rather by select members of the community, such as community chiefs and other local authorities (and in the case of Mali, the Local Commission). In Cambodia, UNIDIR workshop participants in both rural and urban communities noted that most decisions were made by local authorities, and that the other community members had to follow those decisions. Men in rural areas also argued that orders to collect weapons were made by district authorities to commune chiefs who

in turn issued instructions to the communities.⁴⁷ In the same evaluation, border-based men in Cambodia indicated that because there had not been adequate consultation prior to undertaking the project, the primary school that was built as part of one programme is not equidistant from the villages that collected weapons. As a result, children from some of the outer villages have to travel a disproportionately long way to school. The experience of both urban- and rural-based men was that project implementation had been decided between funding agencies and local leaders, who would brief the involved communities only afterwards. Commune councils, chiefs and sub-chiefs were responsible for everything, including the way in which projects were distributed.⁴⁸

The time constraints of projects also played a role in the lack of local participation in some cases. The SEESAC/BICC evaluation in Albania reports that local authorities handed in project proposals that had already been submitted to other assistance programmes because of a lack of time to consult with the local communities prior to the application deadline.⁴⁹

UNIDIR's evaluations show that youth and women are particularly excluded from the decision-making process. Women's focus groups echoed the claim that decisions related to WfD projects were dominated by village and community chiefs, commune councils and the male community as a whole. That is, most decisions were not only made by male community leaders, but also by ordinary men—but not ordinary women. Women as well as youth groups also mentioned that youth were hardly given any role in decision-making.⁵⁰ Although some women participated in community meetings, they attended these meetings largely as proxies on behalf of their husbands.

The PM&E work also reveals that the development incentives identified by community leaders and men received the highest priority. For example, assessing their level of satisfaction with development projects, the groups of women in the three communities in Albania said they would have preferred different projects rather than those provided.⁵¹ The UNIDIR evaluation reports that:

[I]t seems that women are hardly encouraged to participate in designing or implementing weapon collection programmes, and most decisions are made by men. Therefore, the women felt that the incentives offered

in exchange for weapons did not address their needs in the best possible manner.⁵²

People appreciated the practicality—not only the symbolism—of public events. All the evaluations consulted for this study agree on the usefulness of public awareness campaigns and public weapons destruction events. However, the conventional and participatory evaluations provide different explanations for the usefulness of these public activities—an excellent example of how PM&E and CM&E are complementary evaluation tools.

All the evaluation reports identified public awareness-raising as a crucial component of WfD project activities. Public awareness typically entails campaigns on the danger of weapons, how the weapons collection programme works and, if applicable, amnesty laws. Usually, the public awareness-raising campaign begins prior to the weapons collection period and extends through to the completion of the project. Campaigns target local community members, although the methods vary from programme to programme. In Albania, sensitization was done through TV and radio, as well as by house-to-house visits by the local police. Community workshops were organized by the local authorities and the implementing agencies in all three countries.

The local stakeholders interviewed by UNIDIR confirmed the value placed on public awareness, first and foremost as a means of educating and informing themselves. In a “cascading effect”, these individuals would then act as messengers to help convince other community members to hand over weapons. In other words, for the stakeholders, the public awareness campaign serves two purposes: providing accurate information on the project and mobilizing the community.

Although local community members supported the overall campaign activities, they had criticisms of how the campaigns were implemented. First, they questioned the quality of workshop trainers. In Cambodia, the local respondents were critical of the inability of local NGOs and local authorities to clearly explain the WfD scheme.⁵³ In politically unstable Cambodia, the locals sought clear information about exactly what consequences the weapons handover would bring to their communities. The vague explanations left confusion about the project within the community.

Second, the content of community workshops could have been altered. Cambodian locals indicated that given their experiences with the civil armed conflict, they did not need further sensitization to the risks of small arms. Many would have preferred to learn instead about the details of the weapons collection process and to cover legal issues such as arms regulations and amnesties.

Third, the conventional evaluations (except CTB's) overlooked the active role of women as housewives and other female family members in the mobilization. Locals regarded awareness-raising activities as part of a longer-term sensitization process in the community, and not simply as the campaign activities carried out by the external agencies. In all three case study countries, the locals recognized the contribution of women at this prior stage of sensitization. Their activities included convincing male family members to hand over weapons (Albania, Cambodia and Mali), organizing inter-community meetings to generate trust between different tribal groups (Mali) and serving as the direct contact point with local police (Albania). Yet despite their active roles, their participation was not built into the project design.

In sum, for the local stakeholders, the public awareness-raising campaign is supplemental to the pre-existing local mobilization efforts. They view the role of the campaign as providing community members with accurate information on activities and events relevant to weapons collection, in order to enhance the local initiatives to sensitize a wider range of the population. In other words, the public awareness campaign by itself is insufficient to change the tide of the local attitudes towards weapons possession. However, the campaign can play a crucial role to support the longer-term sensitization effort by providing much needed information to the local audience.

The locals supported the public destruction of weapons at the community level, preferably in the communities that collected the weapons as opposed to in distant or larger towns such as the capital. The conventional evaluations highlighted the psychological impacts on the locals who witnessed weapons being destroyed. The SEESAC/BICC evaluation, for example, notes that the mentality change among the stakeholders was more fundamental than the actual "hardware" impacts, such as the physical removal of weapons and ammunition and the provision of development projects. These evaluations thus support the public

destruction events for their symbolic value, though they note the relatively high monetary cost of such activities.

Table 6: Summary of the comparison between evaluation methods

	Conventional evaluations	Participatory evaluations
Impacts of WfD projects	Positive	Positive
Development project management	Poor	Poor
Security conditions	Improved	Insecurity persists for some social groups
Local participation	High	High in workshops, low in decision-making
Motivation to hand over weapons	Development projects	Not development projects (peace-building primarily)
Goal of WfD projects	Weapons collection	Peace-building and development
Rational to support public activities	Symbolic	Practical
Activities of local stakeholders	Not measured	Active

The local stakeholders recognized another significant purpose of public destruction events—the verification of the weapons collection, transfer and destruction process. This is significant, because weapons collection and destruction typically suffers from a lack of full transparency. The SEESAC/BICC evaluation points out that in Albania, there was no independent monitoring of either the police’s weapons collection activities or the military’s destruction activities.⁵⁴ In addition, community distrust of the state security agencies increases the need for greater transparency. Locals demanded that UNIDIR evaluators ensure that the number of collected weapons be recorded and double-checked before and after their transfer to a collection depot, then again prior to destruction. They requested these counts to prevent the collected weapons from being leaked to criminals and state security agencies.

Thus it was not only the psychological effects that locals valued in public destruction events. It was in fact the lack of trust in the weapons collection process that prompted locals to insist on the public destruction events in order to verify that all the collected weapons were destroyed. It was primarily for this reason that stakeholders supported the locally organized weapons destruction events.

DISCUSSION

The major difference in the evaluations lies in the nature of findings. The conventional evaluations provide a comprehensive overview of project implementation and performance. In contrast, the participatory evaluations undertaken by UNIDIR distil nuanced findings directly from the primary stakeholders. This difference between primary sources—project documents and implementers in the first instance and community members in the second—is largely responsible for the difference in findings.⁵⁵

Moreover, the demography of the primary stakeholders consulted differs between the two types of evaluations. While the UNIDIR evaluations separately consulted groups of men, women and youth and included non-privileged community members as well as privileged ones, the conventional evaluations spoke exclusively to community leaders (mostly middle-aged men). It was clear in the participatory evaluations that community leaders did not always represent other community members' opinions. Yet these differences were not acknowledged or explored in the conventional evaluations.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS: PROJECT DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

The comparative analysis of the two different evaluation approaches shows that:

- The WfD projects contributed to improvements in local livelihoods and security conditions. However, the degree of perceived security varies among different social groups, and especially between men and women;
- Local stakeholders view development as the ultimate goal of the WfD projects. However, the development projects are poorly managed;

- The WfD projects are predicated on the idea of development projects as incentives for turning in weapons. But for many stakeholders, the development projects are not the principal motivating factor for relinquishing their weapons; and
- The local stakeholders are active, not passive, actors throughout the WfD project process, including in the pre-project period.

These observations indicate a need for possible modification of weapon collection programme design and management. First, given the importance of the development component for local stakeholders, this element should be central to WfD projects—it is currently viewed as secondary, as an incentive or reward for weapons. Thus WfD project priorities need to be revised. Accordingly, the development projects require more appropriate project management. In particular, the budgeting and project timelines need to adopt the mid- to long-term management style of development projects rather than that of short-term disarmament projects.

Second, the operating assumptions behind these programmes may need revising. As the preceding discussion shows, there is a clear linkage between weapons collection and development. However, the development projects themselves do not motivate the local stakeholders to hand over their weapons—it is the impacts of development projects that attract them to surrender their arms. Thus it is imperative for ongoing confidence in WfD programmes that the development projects perform well, providing positive benefits in exchange for the surrendered weapons.

There is another reason why the development projects should receive more attention and better management. As the local stakeholders themselves voiced in the UNIDIR evaluations, the goal of WfD projects is the creation of improved conditions for better livelihoods and development. For this to occur, community members need development assistance to address the locally specific needs and vulnerabilities of their communities, which are emerging from armed violence. This is why the development components of WfD needs to perform as a catalyst for peace, not as mere “reward” or “incentive” to collect weapons. As UNIDIR’s PM&E work confirmed, local people’s needs for development projects differ within a community, and it is crucial for aid agencies to consult a range of social groups to prioritize their needs, instead of relying on the opinions of a specific group, such as community leaders.⁵⁶

An increased emphasis on the development component of WfD requires a different approach from policy makers, one that reconsiders their attitudes to the roles of local stakeholders. To date, WfD projects have regarded the local stakeholders as passive actors—as audiences in community workshops and receivers of development projects. But given their active and significant contributions to the projects, local stakeholders should rather be involved throughout the process. For example, their involvement at the design and planning stages would allow for more accurate needs assessments for the project designers. Since, as discussed above, the needs of different social groups vary, consulting local stakeholders early would reduce the risk of providing inappropriate development projects and raise project performance and satisfaction. Project design and planning is typically not participatory, despite project implementers' intention, resulting in the needs of some social groups such as women and youth being left unaddressed. A more participatory design and planning stage might lead to better success. Further, given the lack of independent monitoring by the third parties—including the WfD project policy actors—greater participation of the local stakeholders in the weapons collection and destruction would improve the verification process. Lastly, evaluations of WfD projects need to assess the development components more rigorously.

Effecting these changes in the project design requires policy coordination between the disarmament and development sectors. Currently, there is little communication between the disarmament and development agencies to bridge the gap between their assistance activities. As a result, communities that hand over weapons are left to wait for other development agencies to bring further assistance. One disarmament agency programme manager told the UNIDIR team that the development assistance community sometimes fails to even understand how small arms link to development.⁵⁷ This observation was confirmed when the UNIDIR team held a debriefing meeting with various assistance agencies, including development and humanitarian actors, and discovered that it was the first time they had discussed micro-disarmament and community security issues with disarmament actors. This knowledge gap must be bridged at the international level as well as at the national level in donor countries.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS: PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The conventional evaluations demonstrated often-repeated challenges to measuring the impacts of weapons collection projects. All the conventional evaluations—with the exception of the interim report in Cambodia—recognize the difficulty of collecting quantitative data to measure the impacts of these projects. These evaluations try to measure effectiveness of WfD projects by calculating the ratio of the number of collected weapons to project cost. However, each of these reports questions the appropriateness of such a measure given the lack of reliable quantitative data, including baseline information prior to project implementation in target community. Other potentially useful quantitative data, such as crime and hospital statistics, are often not reliable or available in the case study countries. Thus the evaluations found it difficult to quantify the impacts of projects on social safety and security. But in the participatory evaluations by UNIDIR, the number of collected weapons was referred to as an indicator only once by the local stakeholders, a group of elderly men in Mali. This suggests that the local stakeholders either do not know how many weapons were collected or do not associate the improvement of security with the number of collected weapons.

It is possible that the subjective, qualitative data used in the UNIDIR evaluations does not match the “actual” situation vis-à-vis reductions in armed crimes and economic growth in communities. But as most of the conventional evaluations point out, the absence of reliable “hard” data to measure these indicators means evaluators cannot quantify them in the first place. Thus, qualitative data is valuable for measuring social changes, both before and after the project interventions.

Other quantitative indicators to evaluate the success and effectiveness of WfD projects remain underdeveloped. No clear single indicator has been developed so far. One evaluator fretted over this fact, asking how it is possible “to evaluate the effectiveness of the project component when basic indicators are lacking”.⁵⁸ As illustrated in the previous sections, all the conventional evaluations applied vague and imprecise indicators.⁵⁹

Despite these problems, evaluations continue to use the number of collected weapons as an indicator to measure success and effectiveness. The SEESAC/BICC paper refers to the difficulty to evaluate both the impacts of projects, because:

[T]here are very few available statistics on (firearms related) crime for SALWC's operation area and even less secondary (for example medical) data which could measure the impact of the programme in objective terms.⁶⁰

Thus this method seems not to be working for three reasons. First, in case study countries, crime and health statistics are often unavailable. Second, the baseline assessments of the number of weapons in circulation are not precise.⁶¹ Third, if the objective of the WfD project is to improve security, the number of collected weapons is an inappropriate indicator, because a decrease in the number of weapons circulating does not automatically translate into an improvement in security.

These points are raised in the conventional evaluations. The EU and BICC evaluations in Albania and Cambodia note that quantitative measures are not workable because estimates of circulating weapons and other indicators are unreliable. The EU 2002 evaluation explicitly indicates that using a number of collected weapons as an indicator is "questionable when it is unknown how many weapons are in the area concerned."⁶² The same evaluation also points out that EU-ASAC does not run the data system to estimate the number of weapons in circulation but relies on information supplied by the police.

In order to confront this measurement challenge, the three evaluation reports—SAS/BICC, SEESAC/BICC and EU 2002—suggest measuring community members' perceptions of security as an alternative approach to assessing impacts of weapons collection interventions. One report suggests exploring:

how the people in the project area respond to the progress of weapons collection: increasing feeling of security, growing confidence in the police, increase of travelling in the area, increase of farming on remote land, etc. It has been noticed that these indicators show a positive development of a feeling of safety and security in the project area.⁶³

If a cost-effectiveness analysis shows that a WfD project "fails", perhaps there is a need to reconsider the meaning of success and to adopt a different set of criteria. If so, what should they be?

The results of the PM&E research concur with the idea of using subjective indicators, and recognize that community-based qualitative

indicators, such as impressions of the changes in the security situation, can be crucial in assessing the success or failure of interventions.⁶⁴

Exploring subjective perceptions has to be conducted carefully, and avoid treating local participants en masse as homogeneous and like-minded. Different social groups have different perceptions of security and how interventions do or do not improve safety. For example, women in Albania and Cambodia reported to UNIDIR that they did not feel their security improved much as a consequence of the WfD programmes. This suggests that according to a different set of indicators WfD projects might be assessed as success.

Measured by the “guns collected” indicator, WfD projects are often found costly and therefore a “failure”. Are they really a failure? The evaluations examined in this report do not suggest that WfD projects collect more weapons than other types of weapons collection programmes. If the primary criterion of success is a large quantity of guns collected, then the programmes could be considered a failure. However, it is unfortunate to conclude that these projects have failed when neglecting other criteria such as the improvement of security. The general assumption in project evaluations seems to be that more weapons collected equals greater success on the basis of cost-effectiveness, even though most evaluations seem to agree that cost-effectiveness is not the best measure for these types of programmes. One of the evaluations in Albania indicated that many people interviewed stressed that the overall SALWC programme made an important contribution to public safety and security by changing the “mentality” of the community members. The report argues that:

citizens in the project areas understand that the real impact of the weapons collection programme lies less in the number of arms collected but rather in motivating people to re-think whether they truly need weapons in homes.⁶⁵

UNIDIR’s evaluation in Cambodia concurred with this observation, finding that weapons destruction really changed people’s attitudes toward weapons.⁶⁶ However, public weapons destruction ceremonies are often eschewed by donors due to the high financial cost. These strong, if intangible, shifts in attitude are not generally captured by conventional evaluation approaches.

Most evaluations judge WfD projects successful and justify their assessment with reference to cost-effectiveness, rather than the impacts on local beneficiaries. But some evaluations such as SEESAC/BICC and EU 2002 include comments in the body of the evaluation that contradict their conclusions. These reports open and close on positive notes but fail to highlight the more critical or negative details found in the body of the evaluation. This tendency is particularly pronounced in discussions of the success and cost-effectiveness of WfD projects.

For example, the EU 2002 report concludes that, given the modest time and money invested, the small-scale WfD projects were successful,⁶⁷ based on cost-effectiveness, an increase in the number of weapons collected in the target areas, a decrease in the number of armed crimes and improved physical security.⁶⁸ However, in the same report, the evaluator repeatedly raises doubts about the success and cost-effectiveness criteria. The SEESAC/BICC report also refers to the cost-effectiveness of the projects, and seemingly tries to judge the success of the project in that context, but then states that “The authors do not believe it is fair or appropriate to judge the success of the project only, or even primarily, by the cost of the programme per weapon collected.”⁶⁹ Similarly, despite citing weapons collected figures to show the effectiveness of the Gramsh Pilot Project,⁷⁰ the SAS/BICC evaluation expresses wariness about the appropriateness of this criterion.⁷¹

The UNIDIR evaluation clarified that people’s main motivation to hand over weapons was their desire for peace and security, and, more importantly, further development to rebuild livelihoods in their communities. Thus it seems inappropriate to judge these collection programmes solely on whether development incentives increase the number of weapons collected or not. Methodologically, based on the current project evaluations, it seems safe to say that measuring success by cost-effectiveness based on the number of collected weapons to resources invested has not been feasible and appropriate. A key question for project assessments therefore seems to be whether the projects actually bring development to the communities. Thus in order to assess WfD projects, project evaluations need to examine how weapons collection and the provision of incentive projects are linked, and how the development component benefits the local communities.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper reviewed two different approaches to evaluating WfD projects by comparing their methodologies and findings. In the case studies reviewed, both approaches found security in community improved in the wake of project interventions.

The research carried out by UNIDIR shows that an inclusive and bottom-up evaluation is possible, applicable and useful to the disarmament field, and can provide fresh insights to help increase the effectiveness of community-based arms reduction schemes. These evaluations also refute the assumption—conscious or unconscious—that community members are merely uninformed and passive actors in the process.

In fact, the primary stakeholders are often the closest observers of disarmament projects, and so are ideally positioned to critically monitor the project process. Their accounts provide useful insights that have significant policy implications. The advantage of the participatory approach is to be able to distil primary stakeholders' motives, actual roles, and perceptions of disarmament interventions impacts.

This methodology is not without its drawbacks. PM&E can create unfulfilled expectations among local community members, as well as be too focused on a small number of communities. Where the CM&E approach can provide a holistic evaluation of programme management at the regional, country and international levels, this type of analysis is beyond the reach of participatory methods. The conventional approach is also better suited for obtaining input from programme managers.

With this in mind, it should be clear that PM&E alone is unable to improve the practice of weapons collection. On the contrary, this report has tried simply to demonstrate the relevance of the participatory approach to evaluating post-crisis disarmament initiatives. The two approaches—conventional and participatory—complement each other and together can contribute to more effective post-crisis disarmament programming.

However, given the overwhelming primacy of CM&E methodologies in the field, participatory methodologies deserve to be in wider use. The main stakeholders of these projects deserve to have a stronger voice in the policy-making process. Used in combination with CM&E techniques, participatory

evaluation is a useful tool to increase their own contribution in efforts designed to improve their lives.

Notes

- ¹ South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC), 2004, *Performance Indicators for the Monitoring and Evaluations of SALW Control Programmes*, SEESAC, Belgrade. Also available at <www.seesac.org/resources/PI%20Discussion%20Paper.pdf>.
- ² For details on the methods applied in the UNIDIR evaluation, see Appendix A.
- ³ See, for example, Banerjee and Muggah, 2002.
- ⁴ Willett, 2003, p. 7.
- ⁵ BICC and SEESAC, 2003, p. 34.
- ⁶ Greene, 2001, p. 35.
- ⁷ BICC and SAS, 2001, p. 8.
- ⁸ BICC and SEESAC, 2003, pp. 30–32.
- ⁹ Mugumya, 2004a, p. 82.
- ¹⁰ According to the report, “as this evaluation was mostly concerned about the arms collection aspect of SALWC, we are not able to measure the objective impact of the development projects awarded by the programme”. BICC and SEESAC, 2003, pp. 2, 33.
- ¹¹ Project leader provided by BICC and selected by UNDP and DDA, independent international evaluator provided by SAS, international evaluator provided by UNOPS, representative from the Albanian government, independent interpreter and an Albanian driver (BICC and SAS, 2001, p. 85).
- ¹² Interviews with UNDP project staff, OSCE officials, Albanian government officials, local authorities, NGOs, the Gramsh Police and donor country embassy staff; focus group discussion with local community members (women, business people, youth) (BICC and SAS, 2001, p. 81).
- ¹³ Interviews with UNDP project staff, OSCE officials, the Albanian government officials, local authorities, journalists, donor country embassy staff and local community members. The report uses quantitative data such as the collection statistics of the SALWC projects. However, the data and analysis do not appear in the body of

the report, only as an annex (BICC and SEESAC, 2003, p. 33). The survey on community members' perceptions of security was referred to in the report. The survey was conducted by Albanian researchers in the five prefectures where the SALWC operated, as well as in Gjirokaster and Durres, *ibid.*, pp. 15–17. No citation of the original source. Project costs in ratio to a number of collected weapons were also mentioned (*ibid.*, p. 30).

- 14 Workshops were carried out with groups of women, men and youth from the local communities. The mission also carried out interviews with local authorities, Albanian government officials, NGOs, UNDP project staff and OSCE officials.
- 15 The evaluator for the EU 2002 report conducted interviews with local people. "It appears that the opinion leaders answered correctly that it [the disarmament project] aims to collect weapons as part of a peace and security process that is an essential basis for development. The 'grass root' people answered that EU-ASAC is helping the poor and provides facilities. Most of the people, however, know from posters that weapons need to be turned in to the police. The relation between the donation of development incentives and the delivery of weapons was scarcely made" (Buwalda, 2002, p. 10). The evaluator's distinction between "opinion leaders" and "grass root" people shows his caution over the possibility that opinion leaders might deliver expected messages to an evaluator.
- 16 Buwalda, 2002, p. 16.
- 17 Mugumya, 2004b, p. 100.
- 18 The Terms of Reference for this evaluation outlines the issues to be addressed in the evaluation. These issues include to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy of implementing a voluntary weapons hand-over programme and to compare the cost-effectiveness and different styles of project (large scale against small scale) in the light of the local social, economic and political environment in which the projects are taking place (Buwalda, 2002, p. 29).
- 19 It is unknown whether the evaluation mission visited other locations.
- 20 It is unknown whether the evaluation mission visited other locations where small-scale projects took place.
- 21 Interviewed personnel include Project Manager of EU-ASAC, EU-ASAC staff members, senior representatives of the Cambodian Ministries of Interior and Defence, the Police and Armed Forces, and Cambodian NGOs. Meetings were held with development agencies, NGOs and international organizations. At the province and district

- levels, consultations were carried out with: governors; deputy governors; district and village representatives; local officials; representatives from the police, gendarmerie, military; and local villagers at village meetings. Other meetings were held with ambassadors or senior officials of each of the three EU embassies in Cambodia (France, Germany and the United Kingdom), the Swedish government development agency representative, and the EU Technical Coordination Office and officers of the embassies of Japan and the United States.
- 22 Meetings were held with EU–ASAC staff members, the NGO Partner for Development, international agencies such as the EU and UNDP. In target areas, meetings were carried out with local target groups, the police and local NGOs.
- 23 Workshops were held with groups of women, men and youth from the local communities. The evaluation team also carried out interviews with local authorities, provincial governors, Cambodian government officials, NGOs and EU–ASAC project staff.
- 24 Ag Mohamed, 2003, pp. 6–7.
- 25 Workshops were held with groups of women, men and youth, including ex-combatants, from the local communities. The evaluation team also carried out interviews with local authorities, provincial governors, Malian governmental officials and NGOs.
- 26 The SEESAC/BICC evaluation is an exception, as it attributes the improvement in public safety and security to the SALWC programme.
- 27 Buwalda, 2002, p. 20.
- 28 Weapons for development projects themselves are not designed to reduce domestic violence. However, for the stakeholders, reducing domestic violence is part of their goal.
- 29 Buwalda, 2002.
- 30 Ag Mohamed, 2003, pp. 17–18.
- 31 Mugumya, 2004b, p. 53.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p. 76.
- 33 *Ibid.*, pp. 54–55.
- 34 *Ibid.*, pp. 47–48.
- 35 *Ibid.*, pp. 48–49.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p. 76.
- 37 Mugumya, 2004a, p. 47–48.
- 38 In the CTB projects, on the other hand, the development projects were not provided as incentives to collect weapons.
- 39 Buwalda, 2002, p. 17.

- 40 Ibid., p. 25.
- 41 BICC and SEESAC, 2003, p. 12.
- 42 SALWC Project Document, 2001, p. 1, cited in BICC and SEESAC, 2003, p. 12.
- 43 Mugumya, 2004b, pp. 53–54.
- 44 Ibid., p. 105.
- 45 Greene, 2001, p. 34.
- 46 Ibid., p. 34.
- 47 Mugumya, 2004b, p. 52.
- 48 Ibid., p. 57.
- 49 BICC and SEESAC, 2003, p. 33.
- 50 Ibid., p. 72.
- 51 For further gender analysis, see Koyama, forthcoming.
- 52 Mugumya, 2004a, p. 82.
- 53 However, this critique was not made at the workshops attended by the implementing agencies themselves.
- 54 The same evaluation also reports that due to the lack of independent monitoring, the donors, evaluators and project staff have only a vague idea of the types and conditions of weapons and ammunitions handed in.
- 55 This is not to say that the non-UNIDIR evaluations did not consult local stakeholders at all; they did, but only in relation to project impacts, not project process.
- 56 Mugumya, 2004b, p. 75.
- 57 Interview conducted in Phnom Penh, April 2004.
- 58 Buwalda, 2002, p. 16.
- 59 UNIDIR’s evaluators asked the workshop participants to generate their own indicators to assess the WfD projects.
- 60 BICC and SEESAC, 2003, p. 35.
- 61 Small arms researchers employ two major techniques in such estimations: the acquisition method and the possession method. For a more detailed discussion on these techniques, see Khakee and Florquin, 2003, Box 4.1, p. 16.
- 62 Buwalda, 2002, p. 18.
- 63 Ibid., p. 19.
- 64 Mugumya, 2004b, p. 105.
- 65 BICC and SEESAC, 2003, p. 35.
- 66 Mugumya, 2004b, p. 79.
- 67 Buwalda, 2002, p. 23.
- 68 Ibid., p. 20.

⁶⁹ BICC and SEESAC, 2003, p. ii.

⁷⁰ BICC and SAS, 2001, p. 6.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

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APPENDIX

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH TOOLS USED BY UNIDIR

The research team consisted of two UNIDIR researchers from Geneva, one or two local translators and six local facilitators in each country. Facilitators were trained in communication skills and research tools prior to each workshop. It was essential that there was gender balance in the research team as local men often resent outsiders talking to “their women”. Even when this initial barrier is surmounted, young women are still more difficult to get involved in a project process.

The number of participants in each session group ranged from five to twenty-five, depending on the daily schedules of community members. Timing was crucial, especially for women’s participation, given their domestic commitments. While international organizations and community councils often organize formal meetings to discuss weapons collection projects during “office hours”, this is the worst possible time for women to participate. UNIDIR evaluators soon discovered that the most advantageous times for women were an hour or two immediately after midday meal and before the start of dinner preparations. This was especially true in rural areas.

Workshops were conducted with separate groups of men, women and youth. The primary techniques applied in the workshops included force-field analysis, voting on a decision-making process, focus group discussion, monitoring form approach, the three star game, and testimonials.

Force-field analysis

Using a “story with a gap” technique, facilitators ask participants to describe the local situation before and after a weapons collection programme took place. “Before” and “after” drawings of a village scene are then presented to the participants. Participants identify the steps and resources needed to move from the “before” to the “after” situation.

Determining a decision-making process in a community

This technique enables participants to understand and evaluate the decision-making process in a weapons collection project in the community. Participants are given small cards that represent different actors in the community, such as community leaders, external agents and community members (men, women, youth and elders). A facilitator then asks the participants to compare those actors to one another and discuss who takes initiatives, and who does not, in the weapons collection project.

Focus group discussion

Taking the form of casual and unstructured discussions, focus group discussions are used to assess the project's overall implementation. The purpose of group discussion is to evaluate how a weapons collection project was implemented, with more emphasis on the appraisal and implementation stages of the project.

Monitoring form approach

This technique is useful in order to gain a detailed understanding of the community's experiences with weapons collection. Participants are asked to list all the activities undertaken during a weapons collection project, to indicate details such as when weapons had been collected (for example, during a particular season) and to identify the motivations behind the surrender of weapons.

Evaluating performance using the three star game

This technique uses three stars of increasing size—from small ("good"), to medium ("very good"), to large ("excellent")—to evaluate performance in weapons collection. The negative side of the scale is not represented because participants could be sensitive to not overly criticize individuals or the project as a whole. In this exercise, participants are asked to list all the activities and agencies in a weapons collection project, and to place the stars on activities and agencies in accordance with their performance. This exercise enabled the participants to visualize which activities and agencies were preferred by communities based on their relevance, effectiveness and sustainability.

Testimonials

Testimonials are essentially the unedited voices of participants and stakeholders. Testimonials allow the evaluators to “open the process” and provide an opportunity for local community members to speak in their own voice about sensitive subjects, such as the distribution of development benefits or the hierarchy of decision-making processes. Testimonials can help corroborate information gleaned elsewhere, as well as provide more personal insights into a project’s achievements.