From Exchanging Weapons for Development to Security Sector Reform in Albania
Gaps and Grey Areas in Weapon Collection Programmes Assessed by Local People

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CAUTION

This publication (Sales No. GV.E.05.0.15) supersedes in its entirety an earlier publication issued under the same title (Sales No. GV.E.04.0.19), originally published in 2004. Errors in the first publication necessitated its recall. The Institue wishes to apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

NOTE

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CONTENTS

PREFACE

The devastating effect of small arms and light weapons on people's livelihoods, as well as their long-term effects on the economic and social sustainability of local communities, have prompted a wide range of international responses. Increasingly, micro-disarmament efforts to reduce the presence of small arms favour weapon collection programmes as a means to break the cycle of violence fuelled by the availability of weapons. Communities and individuals are encouraged to hand over their guns, often in exchange for individual or collective incentives.

UNIDIR undertook a two-year assessment of weapons collection programmes in exchange for community-based development projects. The project used Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) techniques to harness the analysis and perceptions of affected communities directly, thus offering both innovative and more efficient lessons for designing and implementing post-conflict disarmament programmes.

UNIDIR is grateful for the generous financial support offered by the Government of Japan as well as for the personal support it received from members of the Japanese Government. UNIDIR is also particularly indebted to the people of the Albanian cities of Bajza, Pishaj and Shushica; NGOs; local authorities; and the Government of Albania without whose contribution and assistance this research would not have been possible.

This volume presents the results from the research carried out in Albania in November 2003. These findings serve to underscore the necessity for deeper and wider involvement of local people in all aspects of weapon collection, as a more direct and accurate path to understanding the root causes of violence and identifying solutions. The study suggests that the best means of ensuring successful weapon collection programmes is to place local communities at the centre of the design and implementation of these programmes. In particular, the differing perspective of key sections of the communities—women, men, youths and children—need to be factored into decision making for conflict prevention.

We have learned that participatory approaches can provide impetus for sustainable peace and security through inventive and better targeted disarmament programmes, for the welfare and security of people worldwide.

Patricia Lewis
Director
UNIDIR

ACRONYMS

AU — African Union
BANSA — Before And Now Situations Analysis
BICS — Basic Inter-personal Communication Skills
CCA — Community Calendar Approach
CoC — Code of Conduct
DDMP — Determining Decision-Making Process
DSG — Direction Support Group
DRC — Democratic Republic of Congo
IDS — Institute for Development Studies
IGO — Inter-governmental organization
NGO — Non-governmental organization
OSCE — Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PM&E — Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation methodology
SALW — Small arms and light weapons
SAS — Small Arms Survey
SSR — Security Sector Reform methodology
SWOT — Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats methodology
TOR — Terms of Reference
UN DDA — United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs
UNPoA — United Nations Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects
UNDP — United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR — United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIDIR — United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
VCA — Vulnerability and Capability Analysis
WfD — Weapons for Development approach

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Availability and misuse of weapons in post-conflict situations often re-intensify armed violence and hinder post-war reconstruction efforts. Despite various weapon collection initiatives undertaken in post-conflict situations, many gaps and grey areas remain, especially concerning base-line data on community participation. Bearing this in mind, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) undertook an evaluative study to review both past and current weapon collection schemes in selected post-conflict countries and to determine how the affected communities may be better integrated into post-conflict weapon collection programmes.

This study presents UNIDIR research findings from Albania. The findings indicate that the use of inclusive participatory approaches can increase communities' confidence and thereby lead to better results in retrieving illegally held weapons from post-conflict societies. In the light of practical experience, it seems that at present, the majority of the local people are hardly given the opportunity to participate in determining the future of their communities, particularly in the field of local and community level disarmament.

BACKGROUND

The government of Albania collapsed in the onset of a devastating political crisis in 1997. The changed security situation led ordinary people to raid the country's arms depots: within months, 500,000 to 600,000 military weapons were dispensed throughout communities. In the aftermath of the crisis, the new government appealed to the international community to provide support in retrieving these weapons. Assistance was also requested from the United Nations Secretary-General to develop a national strategy and programme to recover the looted weaponry. A United

Nations assessment mission visited Albania in June 1998 and made a preliminary estimate of the options for assistance.[1] The mission concluded that strategies incorporating a "buy-back" scheme would not be suitable for Albania, because such a strategy would prove costly because of the large number of illegal weapons in circulation. In addition, it was noted that this kind of approach would also have a strong inflationary impact on an already fragile economy; and that it would not be supported by donors because buy-back programmes could be seen as rewarding illegal activities of the communities. The mission recommended the development of a programme that would link development aid to weapon surrender. This approach, later supported by several organizations, came to be formally known as "Weapons for Development" (WfD).[2] Although the WfD approach had previously been applied in weapon collection programmes in Mali, Nicaragua and other countries, the term "Weapons for Development" was for the first time formally used in disarmament literature in the wake of the Albanian political crisis of early 1997. It was envisaged that this approach would improve the local security environment, promote social and economic development, and enhance the more traditional weapon collection approaches such as "guns for goods" or buy-back programmes.

Early projects in Albania were implemented in districts of Gramsh, Elbasan and Diber, mainly through voluntary surrender of weapons that were collected and destroyed in exchange for public works, such as road-building, rehabilitation of schools, or installation of streetlights and public telephones. Aid agencies noted that owing to difficulties faced in these programmes, the approach was to be changed from Weapons in Exchange for Community-based developmental projects to supporting Security Sector Reforms (SSR). Despite millions of US dollars spent on community-based projects, it is estimated that only one third of the weapons looted from the government arsenals in 1997 have been retrieved, leaving hundreds of thousands of military arms and a thousand tons of explosives still unaccounted for.

It has been argued that since Albanians—especially northern Albanians—have a long history of possessing weapons, all illegally held arms will never be retrieved.[3] According to UNDP, this has necessitated a shift from a Weapons for Development approach to a more pragmatic arms control one including weapon amnesties, where owners of illegal weapons can take their arms for registration without penal consequences.

UNIDIR's WfD projects should be viewed in the wider context of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects (UNPoA). The UNPoA has prompted implementation of a range of measures aimed at controlling the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons (SALW), including practical disarmament measures. Like the other UNIDIR case studies of Mali and Cambodia, this Albania study stems from the recommended follow-up actions of the UNPoA; more specifically, it recognizes the need to develop and support action-oriented research aimed at facilitating greater awareness and better understanding of the nature and scope of problems associated with illicit small arms trade.[4] In addition, it follows the notion that arms reduction measures involving different types of incentive schemes given to communities in exchange for voluntary surrender of weapons cannot be successfully implemented without first introducing mechanisms for engaging the local community.

NEW EVALUATION TECHNIQUES

The present UNIDIR project aims at evaluating weapon collection and Weapons for Development programmes by applying Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) methodology. This methodology was developed by UNIDIR to improve the previous evaluative efforts for small arms collection by involving stakeholders at all levels in the evaluation and monitoring of the programmes. The aim of the project, as well as the PM&E methodology, is explained in detail in the next part of this report. In brief, different techniques, which included round-table and focus group discussions and incorporated the use of visual symbols, were applied with a view to reviewing the principal aspects of the weapon collection cycle as well as its incentive schemes. Earlier, the results from the Mali case study had revealed that the PM&E approach can unravel various salient issues surrounding the proliferation and misuse of SALW and create durable solutions for weapon collection programmes through better integration of the local people in these efforts. Hence, the Albania study was evaluated by using the same techniques that had earlier been used in the Mali study:

- For goals and purposes, the main technique applied was Before and Now Situations Analysis (BANSA);
- For identification and design, the main technique applied was Determining Decision-Making Process (DDMP);

- For appraisal and implementation, the main technique applied was Conversational Interviews;
- For monitoring, the main technique applied was Community Calendar Approach (CCA);
- For performance, the main technique applied was the Three Star Game.

To compile results from the three country studies undertaken as part of the current project, UNIDIR will also prepare a synthesizing publication about its experiences on weapon collection and Weapons for Development programmes. It is hoped that this publication will offer policy guidance to policy makers, programme planners, directors and researchers. This report serves as a basis for the final publication, describing the results from Albania. In the future, UNIDIR intends to continue using these or similar techniques to evaluate weapon collection projects in various countries.

UNDERTAKING THE STUDY

Preparation Phase

The Albania study is part of UNIDIR Weapons for Development Programme, which was started in September 2002. The extensive research experience of UNIDIR has helped in realizing that local ownership of the research process is as important as the outcome of the research itself. Furthermore, it is crucial for action-oriented research such as WfD, which intends to generate policy recommendations, to include all concerned stakeholders effectively from the outset.

Specific measures were pursued to build a sense of project ownership among the stakeholders. First, a database of possible stakeholders at the national and international levels was established, including governments, donors, the United Nations and other inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), research institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Consultations were undertaken, during which UNIDIR explained and discussed ideas with individual stakeholders, who were able to present their views on the project. UNIDIR also visited several organizations in Geneva and in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

In order to ensure sufficient policy direction to the project, a Direction Support Group (DSG) was formed, comprising members from the Government of Japan, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNDP, the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA), the African Union (AU), the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva, the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) of the University of Sussex and the Small Arms Survey (SAS). In Tirana, Albania, the team was constantly in contact with its focal points, including two local NGOs, Safer Albania and Movement for Disarmament, as well as the UNDP Country Office. The team also contacted and exchanged information with several other international organizations, which were implementing SALW programmes in the region.

An International Stakeholders' Workshop was held in Geneva on 9 December 2002, attended by 53 delegations from countries such as Albania, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mali, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka. At the meeting, the proposed research methodology was introduced, and participants presented opinions and gave feedback on various aspects of the project. Workshop recommendations included limiting the project to three case study countries: Albania, Cambodia and Mali.[5] The draft conference report was sent to participants for their comments before it was finalized and published.

Initially, PM&E techniques developed and tested by the Geneva-based WfD Management team were meant to be used in the Mali case study. The process involved consultations and information sharing with practitioners in Mali, Cambodia and Albania. These practitioners provided valuable input to the development of the project methodology. The DSG was updated and kept informed throughout the process. The techniques developed can be applied at community, subnational and national levels.

Preparatory Week in Tirana

Based on the experience in Mali, the team undertook a one-week preparatory mission in Tirana with the aim of assessing the situation on the ground before conducting the research. This mission proved very important and added precious value to the research. The main achievements of the mission were:

- Meeting and briefing different national stakeholders as well as soliciting their views on the intended research, including the UNDP Representative and her senior staff managing the Support to Security Sector Reform (SSSR) Project, the Government official responsible for SALW, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), leaders of the communities which participated in weapon collection and several local NGOs.
- Formalizing consultants and their conditions of service as well as terms of reference (TOR).
- Setting procedures for selecting translators and trainee facilitators and drawing-up their TOR.
- Visiting sample communities, where WfD projects had been implemented.
- Selecting field research sites and drawing the draft research programme, in consultation with national stakeholders.

When the team returned to Geneva, a proper plan based on the factual issues on the ground was formulated. All the financial and logistical questions were finalized, including the preparation of training materials and TOR for consultants, translators and trainee facilitators.

Selecting the Areas of Field Research

During the preparatory week, the team, together with local stakeholders selected Gramsh, Elbasan and Shkodra as the regions for field research. The criteria for selection were mainly based on the evolvement of weapons for development programmes. To have a comparison with the Mali case study, research followed the criteria of looking at urban, rural and border areas, as well as gender, age and other differences existing in the society. The exception was that unlike in Mali, because there has not been a war in Albania, it was not possible to conduct focus group research on ex-combatants.

Gramsh and Elbasan districts are located in Central Albania. Gramsh is where Albanian weapon collection projects originated. Within Gramsh, Pishaj was selected to represent an urban population. In Elbasan, Shushica was chosen to represent a rural area.[6] The Shkodra district is located in the northern part of the country. Here, Baija was chosen to represent border communities, since it is located at the frontier with Montenegro.

Based on these characteristics, it was felt that the results from these areas would not only be comparable with those from Mali, but would also provide a comprehensive review of evolvement of different strategies, applied in Weapons for Development and Security Sector Reform programmes.

From Tirana to the Field

The Field Core team[7] included:

Mr Geofrey Mugumya, Team Leader and Lead Researcher, Geneva;
Miss Shukuko Koyama, Project Assistant, Geneva;
Mr Ramanzan Beka, Consultant on Community Disarmament, Driver;
Miss Arlinder Budo, Translator;
Mr Besnik Gijni, Translator.

The team arrived in Tirana on 19 November 2003, and found that everything necessary was in place, including a detailed itinerary. Local authorities and organizations in the field had already been contacted, and the logistics such as transport had been arranged. As with the Mali case study, before commencing the actual research, the team met with and introduced itself to the local authorities. This was done in order to avoid possible suspicion and security concerns, likely to have occurred since the research dealt with a sensitive subject.

In order to raise the feeling of project ownership at the local level, local authorities were asked to identify and select local residents during the preparatory week to be trained in PM&E methodology, and to be offered short-term contracts by UNIDIR as trainee facilitators. In addition, local authorities and organizations were to arrange general community meetings at suitable venues.[8] In general, the community meeting participants were briefed on the purpose of the research. The focus groups were also formed in these meetings.

Feedback Strategy

Following the experience in Mali, a similar bottom-up feedback process was instituted to ensure that the preliminary research findings would be adequately shared between different stakeholders at all levels. At the community level, this process meant that at the end of each exercise,

records of the proceedings were read out to the participants to enable them to confirm that the records reflected what had actually been agreed. At the district and municipal levels, local administrators were debriefed on the findings of the focus group meetings. At the regional level, heads of government departments, other agencies and the press were briefed on the preliminary research findings, so that they had the opportunity to clarify certain aspects. The original plan was to gather national stakeholders to a debriefing meeting. Unfortunately, due to coinciding conferences of similar nature in Tirana, no special debriefing meeting could be organized at the national level. However, the team took part in a related conference in Tirana, and debriefed individually those stakeholders, who had attended this conference.

The feedback strategy enabled virtually all interested stakeholders to comment on both the process and its final outcome. The strategy can be applied to any project, at international, national, regional and community levels.

CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES TO BE AVOIDED

Experiences from the Mali case study proved extremely useful in conducting field research in Albania, where the challenges were largely similar to those confronted in Mali. However, some additional obstacles arose from the fact that the subject for research was not new to Albanians, since WfD programmes have been ongoing in the country since 1998. It turned out that as a result of these various projects, there was an abundance of data from different researchers with different motives. Every time a researcher appeared, the local leaders were expecting more projects with higher expectations. The specific challenges can be summarized in the following issues:

Problems related to the type of research
- Expectations should not be disproportionately raised: the researchers need to be clear about what will follow after the research is completed. This is crucial especially in contexts such as Albania, where assessment missions have always been followed by projects.
- Attention is to be paid to the purpose of the research: people often prefer programmes that offer immediate benefits instead of academic results with longer-term goals.

Taking all related aspects into account
- For successful research on any subject, environmental issues that led to the conflict or made people resort to violence, must be understood.
- People's norms, cultures, values and traditions are to be considered when carrying out the research.
- Research should also take into account the power relations within a community: Who controls what? What is the role of women? With whom should the researcher(s) (not) speak directly?

Preparations before going into the field
- The gap between planning and reality: No plan, however genius, survives the reality of the field. Once in the field, the researchers will need to clarify the research objectives and adjust the plans to local conditions, even if time constraints may make such adjustments nearly impossible.
- Issues of personal safety are essential: inter alia, the team needs to remain together at all times (i.e. this requires that local consultants stay at the same hotels as the international consultants, which may be expensive for them).

In the field
- Some research team members may have little and/or no previous experience in field research or teamwork, and might therefore not be resilient enough to manage all the realities of conducting research. Cultural and personal differences have to be taken into account in order to avoid unwanted surprises, or risking delays in the project.
- Inadequate understanding of the United Nations Field Safety rules or other similar guidelines may expose the whole research team to danger. For example techniques like "defensive" driving are important in insecure areas; however, it might prove difficult to find a driver who has the required experience.
- Persons working with the research team might at times be distracted from the agreed methods and aims of the research. The researchers should be aware of the role of such collaborators in the research and ensure that participating people do not deviate from their agreed roles.

GENERAL LESSONS LEARNED

Field research findings revealed most of the lessons learned from the Mali case study. These include:

- There is clearly a need to apply participatory approaches in weapon collection and WfD programmes;
- Weapon collection and WfD programmes must take into account the experiences and perspectives of different social groups in the community regarding the causes of proliferation of small arms and light weapons;
- Community-based indicators are important criteria (impact and performance indicators) for determining success or failure of weapon collection and WfD programmes;
- Before commencing weapon collection and WfD projects, it is important to contemplate what drives weapon holders to voluntarily surrender their weapons, and what incentive schemes would work best in the particular society;
- Best practices for implementing weapon collection and WfD programmes need to be decided upon;
- Based on the data gathered from the PM&E research, appropriate policy recommendations could be drawn and made to the various actors and stakeholders, including donors who support weapon collection programmes.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The next chapter of this report presents the detailed development and application of the methodology used. It is followed by an overview of weapon collection projects as perceived by government officials, the United Nations and other inter-governmental organizations, as well as representatives of NGOs. Chapters four, five and six present the research findings from men's, women's and youth focus groups, comparing their experiences and perspectives. Chapter seven analyses the general lessons learned, and Chapter eight provides policy recommendations for further weapon collection and WfD applications.

Based on the findings in Albania, the study makes seven global recommendations, aimed at policy makers in countries that fund weapon collection and WfD programmes. Also, some "mutual" conditions are suggested for recipient countries:

Funding Weapons for Development Programmes

The findings of this study indicate that principal stakeholders strongly support WfD projects. It is therefore recommended that donors continue to fund such programmes, provided that individual projects target the factors that drive demand for armed violence.

Need for Decentralized but Coordinated Programme Implementation Arrangements

From the analysis of the data, it is evident that significant progress in implementing weapon collection programmes has been made in cases where there has been local participation. Indeed, all focus groups expressed the need for full participation of all stakeholders. It is therefore recommended that decentralized but well coordinated structures to ensure involvement at national, provincial and community levels be assessed and established prior to arranging funding for programmes. In addition, it should be ensured that projects employ "bottom-up" approaches to determine the types of incentives to be offered, and that they are implemented at local and community levels with local structures and institutions taking a lead role. It is also important for projects to recognize that the incentives are not an alternative to existing traditional mechanisms for voluntary surrender of weapons. Such mechanisms must not be ignored but rather complemented. Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation techniques are recommended for use in reviewing the projects.

Women and Informal Institutions

From the research findings it is also clear, that the participation of women and informal institutions is vital in the successful implementation of armed violence reduction programmes. It is therefore recommended that those intending to fund WfD programmes assess whether the programmes are giving voice to, and addressing the security concerns of women and whether women organizations are given priority when distributing resources for capacity-building. It would be essential for any WfD

programme design to take into account also the special needs of children. In addition, traditional and religious groups, elders and other community-based institutions are to be involved as entry points, encouraging the implementation of a gun-free culture.

Security Sector Reform (SSR)

It emerges from the study that programmes to address security issues should be driven by community needs rather than mere political motives. It is therefore recommended that thorough technical assessments be undertaken to ascertain what types of programmes address real security threats as opposed to perceived threats. This is crucial especially for SSR programmes, which should aim at filling security gaps created whenever communities hand over their weapons, and should concentrate as effectively as possible on building the capacity of alternative security arrangements, such as community policing. In addition, it is important to ensure a linkage between weapon collection and the subsequent SSR, rather than simply following a continuum from weapon collection to SSR.

Regionally Integrated Programmes

Research has revealed that the problem of SALW proliferation does not respect country borders but spans regions. Because of this, national efforts without regional and international cooperation cannot be sufficient. It is important to include regional and international dimensions to WfD programmes whenever possible, to ensure the greatest possible benefits to neighbouring communities as well. However, such programmes require unwavering political and financial commitments from the authorities of the benefiting countries. In addition, there must be concerted efforts in the region to harmonize national policies to fight the proliferation of SALW and in addressing crime-related issues.

Community and Childhood Peace Education

From the study findings it is evident that sensitization and awareness-raising campaigns about the dangers of weapon possession are very important to communities. Hence it is recommended that programmes promoting social deterrents against gun use would include also measures addressing education and childhood development, as well as promotion of social cohesion and support for high-risk groups. These programmes could

be integrated into general school education curricula, while sensitization and awareness campaigns on the dangers of weapons possession could be part of national community-based literacy education and other social mobilization programmes.

Regarding Research and Advocacy on SALW

It emerged from the research that data on SALW and armed violence reduction are still largely lacking. In order to gather relevant and updated data as well as to develop necessary tools for the fight against SALW proliferation, it would be crucial to ensure continuing donor support for disarmament research. Combining effective resources with vigorous advocacy is essential in keeping the campaign against the proliferation of illicit SALW on the agenda.

CHAPTER 2

DEVELOPMENT AND
APPLICATION OF THE METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains how Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) techniques, previously developed and applied to review community involvement in weapon collection programmes in Mali, were replicated in Albania. The study in Albania followed the same process as the one in Mali: it begun with the formulation of project objectives and research questions, and proceeded with the establishment of contacts with country and local level organizations. In the first phases, field facilitators were selected and trained. The actual field research phase included general community meetings and the formation of focus groups. Beyond the Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) technique, which has been found necessary for all participatory research, the Albania study applied the same five techniques that were originally developed for Mali. Country-relevant questions were used as part of the techniques.

KEY EVALUATION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The achievement of the research goals entailed reviewing all phases of weapon collection programmes as well as answering the key questions of each phase; specific questions were addressed to evaluate weapon collection programmes and other relevant interventions:

- What were the goal(s) and purpose(s) of the weapon collection projects?
- How were the various activities and projects identified and designed, and whose initiatives were they?
- How were the projects appraised and implemented?
- How was the monitoring carried out, and what was monitored? What indicators were used?

15

- How was the performance evaluated (with respect to such aspects as effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and relevancy) for the various activities and the institutions that were involved?
- What about cross-cutting issues, such as weapons storage, or perceptions about the "sufficient" number of weapons in the society?

SELECTION AND TRAINING OF TRAINEE FACILITATORS

During the preliminary preparatory week in Tirana, local leaders and authorities of the selected communities were contacted and asked to help in identifying six people from each area to be trained in the PM&E methodology. As occurred in Mali, the selected individuals were offered short-term contracts with the prospect of staying on as trainee facilitators for the duration of the research. The local authorities were also asked to arrange community meetings.

In collaboration with the mayor of Gramsh, Ms Luljeta Dollani and the head of Pishaj commune, Mr Mustafa Zogu, the following people were selected for training: Ledi Shqiponja from the civil society; Hajdar Sejdini, Diamanta Vito, Andi Gryclui and Lylowhola Suvoria from Shushica commune; teachers Rushe Gjoni, Alban Bekteshi and Lindita Lasaj; and mechanic Rrok Lumaj from Baija. To ensure gender balance in accordance with the UNIDIR principle of giving equal opportunities, half of the selected trainees were men and half were women.

The mayor of Gramsh allowed training sessions to be held in her office, while in Elbasan and Shkodra authorities organized venues in local restaurants giving the research a sense of local ownership. The training sessions began by explaining the research mission, the PM&E approach, the project's objectives, the topic of small arms and light weapons, and the reasons that these weapons have become an international concern.

THE NEW EVALUATION METHODOLOGY: PM&E AND THE FIVE EVALUATION TECHNIQUES

Similar to the Mali case study, UNIDIR decided to apply the PM&E approach in Albania because of its well-established status as a research

method for project evaluation. Defined as "collaborative problem-solving through the generation and use of knowledge" and "a process that leads to corrective action by involving all levels of stakeholders in a shared decision-making process", PM&E has the merit of involving and engaging people at grass-roots level to actively participate in all stages of weapon collection. By selecting PM&E evaluation methodology for the Albania case study UNIDIR wanted particularly to learn from the experiences of grass-roots participants and to assess the suitability of this inclusive methodology in understanding community involvement in weapon collection.

In Albania, local communities were engaged in the review of all the principal aspects of weapon collection and Weapons for Development - project processes: they participated in the overall goal setting, identification and design, as well as appraisal, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Different visual participatory tools such as symbols and diagrams (e.g. a picture representing an ordinary woman in community-level decision-making) had been used already in Mali, and had been found appropriate. Boxes representing "before" and "now" situations in the community were applied to encourage participation of all community members.

As discovered in Mali, research findings from Albania reveal that the application of PM&E techniques can unravel a multitude of salient issues that would not be comprehended through traditional ("clipboard") methods. Hence, PM&E is a promising tool that can contribute to better understanding of the causes of armed violence, as well as to see how communities can become more directly involved in stamping out the root causes of armed violence.

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

The trainee facilitators had not previously worked in community participation. Therefore they were first introduced to BICS methodology, a prerequisite technique for participatory research, used in teaching facilitators how to communicate at the local level. To familiarize the trainee facilitators with participatory working methods, pictures were used to show how to establish basic inter-personal communication skills. The exercise involves showing pictures of a village woman and a female community worker, depicted in different positions: in one picture there is communication between the two; another picture illustrates a breakdown

in the communication, and the last one shows how communication between the two women has been restored. Whenever applied, this technique stimulates discussion, reviews and reflections among the trainees about their day-to-day interpersonal communication. Because pictures can be understood and interpreted differently, questions are to be allowed and clarifications made to ensure that everybody understands the aim of the exercise. The facilitator should always ascertain whether the meaning and implications of the exercise have been understood. Trainees' responses should always be recorded. The latter steps are important to the eventual formulation of the Field Code of Conduct.

The exercise stimulated discussion among the trainees, who appreciated the power of using pictures in communication. Those who did not immediately understand were encouraged to ask questions. In general, when the trainees were asked the implications of the exercise, their responses indicated that they had understood its message, including inter alia the following response: "we shall be able to practise, what we have learned during the data gathering". Indeed, the trainee facilitators' application of field techniques was excellent, and most participants felt encouraged to respond to issues relevant to their own situation.
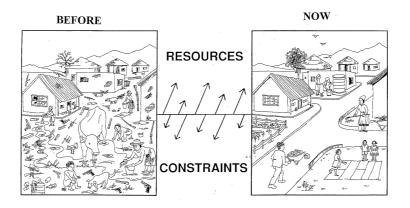
Before and Now Situations Analysis:
Evaluating Project Goals and Purposes

The BANSA technique is a participatory tool to be applied in evaluating how the overall goals and purposes of weapon collection and WfD projects are set and achieved. In the context of evaluating the projects, BANSA involves comparison of the "now" situation (improved circumstances after interventions have been implemented) to the "before" situation (prior to the implementation of various interventions).

Trainees were introduced to this technique by using pictures symbolizing these two situations. Symbols in the "before" situation box depicted a community filled with armed violence: guns everywhere, killing and deaths, water and sanitary problems, and unplanned infrastructure. Trainees were asked to look at the boxes and interpret the symbols with respect to situations in their own communities prior to the implementation of weapon collection and WfD projects. Trainees looked at the "before" situation box and added other elements, which were even worse than those already depicted, such as children playing with guns in the streets.

The "now" situation box depicted an improved community, with people going freely about their business in a well-planned village with good water and sanitary conditions and no guns. The trainees agreed that the "now" situation box corresponded to the current situations in their respective areas. Additional symbols were added indicating further perceived improvements, such as installed street lighting. Facilitators were told that their task would be to engage the communities in analysing the boxes: to facilitate the drawing of alternative boxes that reflect actual situations in those communities, and to discuss what steps had been taken to change the situation from the "before" to "now" condition. Facilitators heard that they would also be responsible for uncovering the types of encountered resources and constraints, as well as other issues that were of importance to community members. When the BANSA technique was applied among the communities in the field, more symbols depicting actual circumstances were added to both the "before" and "now" boxes.

Before and Now Situations Analysis (BANSA)

Specifically, the guidance given to trainees instructed them to encourage participation using open-ended questions which would encourage conversation. This is in contrast to a direct "question and answer"-type approach, which can generate dead-end questions that elicit simple "yes" or "no" responses. The following questions were set and used in order to understand the overall goals and purposes of weapon collection and WfD projects:

For local leaders and other stakeholders:
a) How did SALW come into the hands of the people? Why do people want arms?
b) What prompted weapon collection?
c) What processes were involved in weapon collection (from when the weapon is collected to when it is destroyed)?
d) What processes are involved in implementing the incentive schemes?
e) What challenges were met in collecting weapons?
f) How were the challenges overcome?
g) What strategies were pursued to curb the proliferation of SALW?
h) How can community-level disarmament be achieved?
i) How can success or failure of weapon collection programmes be measured?
j) What are the common characteristics of the preferred incentives schemes and why?
k) What implementation arrangements were followed and why?

For men's focus groups:
a) What was the situation before and why?
b) What is the situation now and why?
c) What is "insecurity"?
d) What was the aim of weapon collection and WfD projects?
e) What strategies were pursued to achieve the goal and why?
f) How does the focus group assess the impact of weapon collection and why?
g) What constraints were met in weapon collection?
h) How were those constraints overcome?

For women's focus groups:
a) What was the situation before and why?
b) What is the situation now and why?
c) What is "insecurity"?
d) What was the aim of weapon collection?
e) What strategies were pursued to achieve the goal and why?
f) What were the indicators for success/failure?
g) Under what conditions can weapon collection take place and why?
h) What difficulties were faced and why?

For youth focus groups:
a) What was the situation before weapon collection?

b) What is the current situation?
c) What was the overall goal of the weapon collection?
d) How does the focus group assess the impact of weapon collection in immediate, medium and long term?

The above questions were given merely to guide the trainee facilitators; they were not meant to be asked in a direct question and answer format, but to stimulate and facilitate discussion among the community participants. In fact, the community participants themselves posed questions similar to those listed above to fellow participants, when responding to some of the issues. Trainee facilitators were taught to always apply the six "helpers": Who, What, When, Where, Why and How. Their responses indicated that they had fully understood the method and would be able to apply the technique in the field. The BANSA technique, including the process and questions enumerated above, were applied to all the field exercises. The trainee facilitators' performance in the field exercises confirmed that they had fully comprehended the BANSA technique as presented.

Trainees were trained also in the other PM&E techniques. Training sessions for these other techniques took place during the mornings, while afternoons were reserved for application of the techniques in the field. The additional techniques included Determining Decision-Making Process, Conversational Interviews, Community Calendar Approach, and the Three Star Game. The techniques, including the full process and the questions enumerated above, were applied to all field exercises.

Determining Decision-Making Process: Evaluating Project Identification and Design

The technique represents a tool to evaluate the identification and design of weapon collection and WfD programmes. It enables participants to understand and evaluate within the community those decision-making processes that characterize community involvement in weapon collection and WfD programmes. The technique utilizes pictorial diagrams that contain institutions and individuals responsible for decision-making in a community. Depending on the community being studied, these institutions and individuals may include pictures of a village official, village chief, village committee (elders, religious and other leaders), external agent, local ordinary woman, local ordinary man, village artist, and/or local ordinary

youth. When undertaking the research, participants are asked to compare the pictures with their own situations. They are given small cards on which they may vote for those pictures representing the institutions or individuals that they feel made the decisions for the various activities that had been identified. During the exercise, project identification and design questions are posed to the participants.

Guide questions for men's focus groups were:
a) What is "participation"?
b) Who makes decisions in the communities and why?
c) What were the activities involved in weapon collection?
d) How were the decisions made regarding the above activities?
e) Who got involved and who did not and why?
f) What is the general view regarding how activities were implemented?

Guide questions for women's focus groups were:
a) What is "participation"?
b) Who makes decisions in the communities and why?
c) What were the activities involved in weapon collection?
d) Who made the decisions regarding the various schemes and why?
e) Who should be involved in decision-making and why?

Guide questions for youth focus groups were:
a) What is "participation"?
b) Who makes decisions in the communities and why?
c) What were the activities involved in weapon collection?
d) Who determined which of the above activities and why?

As with the BANSA technique, these questions were given merely to guide the trainee facilitators; they were not meant to be asked in a strict question and answer format.

Conversational Interviews:
Evaluating Project Appraisal and Implementation

The purpose of the conversational interviews technique is to enable evaluation of how weapon collection and WfD programmes were implemented. This exercise helps the trainees to facilitate conversational discussion in a group. The discussed issues cover questions of project appraisal and implementation.

Guide questions for men's focus groups were:
a) Had there been any previous mechanisms for weapon collection?
b) What were their mechanisms and why?
c) How do the previously used mechanisms compare with WfD approach?
d) What encouraged those having weapons to surrender them and why?
e) What types of weapons were handed in first and why?
f) What types of weapons were surrendered in large numbers and why?
g) What processes are involved in weapon collection (from when it is surrendered to when it is destroyed)?
h) What should be done to the weapons handed in?
i) Where were the weapons kept and why?
j) What places do the core group participants consider safe for weapons storage and why?

Guide questions for women's focus groups were:
a) Were there other mechanisms for weapon collection?
b) What were these mechanisms?
c) How were they compared to the WfD approach and why?
d) What are the strengths or weaknesses of WfD approach and why?
e) What was done to convince weapon holders to hand over their weapons?
f) What types of weapons were handed in first and why?
g) What types of weapons were handed over in large numbers and why?
h) When should weapon collection in a community stop and why?
i) Who was involved in previous weapon collection programmes and who was not? Why?

Guide questions for youth focus groups were:
a) Were there any previous weapon collections?
b) What kinds of incentives were applied?
c) Did the WfD approach take them into consideration?
d) What convinced weapon holders to hand over their weapons?
e) What was the whole process in weapon collection?
f) How were the benefits distributed to the whole community?

As with the previous techniques, these questions were given merely to guide the trainee facilitators, and to stimulate and facilitate discussion among community participants.

Community Calendar Approach: Evaluating Project Monitoring

CCA represents a tool to evaluate how project monitoring was carried out. This technique enables better understanding of a community's perspectives on how the monitoring of weapon collection and Weapons for Development projects was conducted. In the approach, participants are asked to list all activities and projects undertaken in their community. When answering, participants use calendar-oriented monitoring forms, indicating the time of year when they feel individual collection activities and projects attracted more weapons, as well as the reasons why this was the case. Trainee facilitators were given questions specifically developed for this particular exercise.

Guide questions for men's focus groups were:
a) What has been taking place in weapon collection activities and WfD projects?
b) What is the best timing for weapon collection programmes and why?
c) What type of incentives attracted the largest number of weapons and why?
d) What type of incentives would the focus group participants prefer and why?
e) What aspects of the weapon collection had required critical monitoring and why?
f) How did the focus group participants ascertain whether weapon collection was reducing the number of weapons in the community?
g) Who participated and who did not and why?
h) How were the benefits monitored?
i) Did the focus group participants consider that the interventions addressed the root causes?
j) What lessons did the men learn by participating in weapon collection?

Guide questions for women's focus groups were:
a) What has been taking place in weapon collection activities and WfD projects?
b) What is the best timing for weapon collection programmes and why?
c) What were the implementation arrangements and why they were selected?
d) Did the focus group participants consider that the interventions addressed the root causes?

e)   What type of incentives attracted the largest number of weapons and why?
f)   What constraints were met and how could these be overcome?
g)   What were the indicators for success or failure and why?

Guide questions for youth focus groups were:
a)   What is the best timing for weapon collection programmes?
b)   How were the various activities monitored?
c)   What aspects required critical monitoring?
d)   Were there any benchmarks for monitoring?
e)   What indicators show positive or negative changes and why?
f)   Who was involved in the monitoring and why?
g)   Where were the collected weapons kept and why?
h)   How was the information shared?

As with the previous techniques, these questions were given merely to guide the trainee facilitators.

Three Star Game:
Evaluating Project Performance

The Three Star Game technique represents a tool to evaluate the performance of individuals, institutions and activities or specific components of the weapon collection and WfD projects. The technique uses three stars, the biggest representing "very excellent" performance, the middle-sized representing "fairly excellent" performance and the smallest representing "good" performance. The terms "fair" and "bad" were not used because people generally feel uncomfortable using them, and view them as overly critical and offensive to the people involved.

★	Very excellent
★	Fairly excellent
★	Good

In the Three Star Game, participants are asked to list all weapon collection or WfD activities and projects that were undertaken, as well as all

individuals and institutions that were involved in these activities and projects. Based on their own experience, they are then asked to associate one of the three sized stars with an activity/project or individual/institution. The exercise enables understanding of the kinds of activities and projects that are preferred by the community, based on the projects' relevance, sustainability and effectiveness in terms of attracting greater numbers of weapons and reduction of armed violence. The technique also helps to deduce which institutions or individuals should be involved in future project implementation.

Trainee facilitators were presented with the questions that had been developed for this particular technique.

Guide questions for men's focus groups were:
a) How did the focus group participants rate the performance of the various actors as well the activities and why?
b) What was the major contribution by the community and why?
c) What are the main characteristics of incentives that they consider more important and why?
d) What were the indicators for success or failure and why?
e) What did the focus group participants consider to have been the main failure and why?
f) Did they consider the WfD approach sustainable?
g) How many guns are enough for the community and why?
h) How do the focus group participants evaluate the long-term benefits of weapon collection and why?

Guide questions for women's focus groups were:
a) How did the focus group participants rate the overall performance of institutions/activities and why?
b) How do they evaluate the impact and why?
c) Which incentives schemes are most preferred and why?
d) What did the focus group participants learn by participating in weapon collection?

Guide questions for youth focus groups were:
a) How do the focus group participants rate the overall performance of institutions/activities and individuals?
b) What is their criteria for rating and why?

As with the previous techniques, these questions were given merely to guide the trainee facilitators.

The trainee facilitators understood all of the techniques presented. The community representatives appreciated the power that these techniques wielded in engaging different people in discussion and in enabling them to reach consensus.

ARRANGEMENTS BEFORE PROCEEDING TO THE FOCUS GROUPS

Field Operation Arrangement

The communities, which were selected to be studied, were divided into three groups according to gender and age. Two trainee facilitators were assigned to each group: one trainee was responsible for note taking, while the other facilitated the discussion. However, in general, both facilitators worked together to ensure teamwork.

Code of Conduct (CoC)

The project team formulated an operational Code of Conduct. Reflecting on what they had learned in the BICS exercise, the facilitators were quick to contribute to the formulation of this tool. The Code of Conduct was prepared to include the following guidelines: (a) strict time management; (b) effective participation by everyone; (c) equal treatment of all participants in the groups; (d) value of every question or answer from the community; (e) significance of being good listeners and (f) importance of not being defensive.

Field Terms of Reference for the groups

As in Mali, the Field Terms of Reference established three focus groups—men, women and youth. The questions and answers from the community were to be recorded to the greatest possible extent. After each exercise, whenever possible, the conclusions reached by the groups were to be read aloud to ensure that they were accurate reflection of the issues the communities had raised. The PM&E team met every afternoon to receive the groups' findings and to prepare training for the next exercises. During the exercises, the main facilitators were to provide support and assistance whenever needed. Each focus group could individually decide at what time to hold their meetings, keeping in mind the daily morning training times.

GENERAL COMMUNITY MEETING AND
FORMING THE FOCUS GROUPS

The first general community meeting held in Pishaj Community Hall, was expected to be attended by all communities from the village. However, it was discovered that very few opinion leaders had been invited. The reason given was that the local administration had asked each Pishaj community village to send one representative. The PM&E Team Leader began the meeting by explaining the purpose of the UNIDIR WfD project and why there was need to listen to the views of the ordinary community members in addition to those of opinion leaders. Following this explanation, the members understood that they were not the actual people with whom UNIDIR was meant to meet. It was decided that exercises be conducted in the nearby residence quarters, where ordinary citizens would be able to participate. Nonetheless, those present in the meeting presented their views and the meeting resulted in a lively debate about including people in weapon collection. The exchange of arguments, which is a regular occurrence in PM&E exercises, shows that people have different opinions about weapon collection efforts and are thinking about critical matters. The PM&E team welcomed this type of impassioned expression of opinions, for it is the core of what PM&E aims to accomplish.

After having met with opinion leaders, the team proceeded to select the research focus groups. On arrival in the residential quarters, each facilitator, assisted by the local people, organized focus group meetings. As planned, the three focus groups, consisting of men, women and youth, were formed. Together with trainee facilitators, each group decided on the place and time that would be most convenient for conducting the field exercises. No criteria were established for age ranges within the groups, but judging from informal sample interviews that were conducted by the team, the ages of youth ranged from 15 to 20 years (mostly school students), men were aged 30 years and up, while the ages of women ranged from around 20 to 50 years. No criteria were set for other group characteristics. However, each community member seemed to automatically know where he/she belonged, according to gender and age.

After the focus groups had agreed on their timetables and meeting locations, they proceeded with the BANSA and DDMP exercises. Despite a few minor hold-ups, the whole process worked very well. The team is

convinced that these types of exercises can be adapted as a prototype procedure for conducting participatory research on a range of sensitive subjects, including weapon collection, armed violence, the illicit trade in SALW or other substances and/or in post-conflict situations.

The following chapters describe how the PM&E techniques were applied in the field to evaluate WfD projects. Alongside the PM&E, other conventional evaluative research methods were also applied, such as Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats methodology (SWOT) and Vulnerability and Capability Analysis (VCA). Field exercises were conducted within the three focus groups, revealing that armed violence influenced them in different ways and to different magnitudes.

CHAPTER 3

OVERVIEW OF WEAPON COLLECTION: EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES OF SECONDARY STAKEHOLDERS

During both the preparatory week and the field research mission, researchers held discussions with various secondary stakeholders[9] with the aim of seeking their experiences and perspectives on weapon collection programmes. The discussions touched on various aspects of the weapon collection and WfD projects, as well as the causes of armed violence in Albania.

The research team met with several governmental representatives. Discussions were held with the head of the weapon collection police in Tirana, the deputy prefect of Gramsh region, the mayor of Gramsh town, the head of Pishaj commune, the prefect of Elbasan region, the head of Shushica commune, the regional administrator for Shkodra and the head of Baija commune. In addition, the team met various heads of government departments at various levels. Discussions were also held with the UNDP Resident Representative, the head of UNDP SSSR programme, the head of UNDP human security, and the head of UNDP Shkodra region. For the IGOs, discussions were held with the head of security at OSCE, and the head of OSCE Shkodra office. Two local NGOs, Safer-Albania and the Movement for Disarmament coordinated the research team. In addition, the team had discussions with another local NGO, the Centre for Rural Development, as well as a couple of other institutions involved in disarmament education.

CAUSES OF SALW PROLIFERATION IN ALBANIA

Secondary stakeholders gave different explanations for the illicit SALW proliferation into and within Albania. Even though their experiences varied mainly according to areas where they worked, perspectives generally reflected mandates of their respective organizations. For example, most of

those based in central Albania attributed the need for weapons as a result of the so-called culture of "blood feud" in the North. This view was, however, dispelled by people from the north, who argued that weapons are currently needed more for self-defence and property protection than blood feuds. This view is reinforced by the fact that the majority of insecurity incidents where SALW have been involved have been property wrangles.[10]

Despite the moderate regional differences, the circumstances that led people to acquire weapons were quite constant throughout regions, especially when compared to countries like Mali: in Albania, there is neither an ongoing conflict, a target group (ex-combatants) nor a geographical area that one could have claimed to hold weapons – the problem touches the whole country. All secondary stakeholders seemed to agree on the following explanations regarding the causes of the illicit proliferation of SALW in Albania:

- Communist era
- Communist laws
- The collapse of communism
- Loss of means of livelihoods
- The collapse of pyramid schemes and the failure of the government
- Criminal purposes
- The "Greater Albania" interests
- Regional developmental differences
- International gun and commodity trafficking

Communist era

Although a communist state, apart from a brief period of Soviet alignment when Yugoslavia was expelled from the Cominform in June 1948 until the death of Stalin in 1953, and of a loose alliance with China in the mid-1960s, Albania followed a policy of complete isolation. In terms of defence policy, this seclusion translated into a strategy of territorial defence manned by a citizen militia supported by a network of substantial stocks of light arms and ammunition to be distributed to the citizenry in case of conflict emplaced in communities throughout the country.

The communist laws

During the communist rule, there was a law that allowed border communities especially in the northern regions, to keep their own arms,

including automatic weapons. This added to the proliferation of weapons in the community.

The collapse of communism

During the communist era, arms industries were established in many parts of Albania, including Gramsh. For example, it was mentioned that for over 20 years, the Gramsh arms factory produced over 2,000 AK-47s assault rifles annually and employed over 15,000 people. The manufactured guns were stored in various local warehouses. The collapse of communism led the industry to bankruptcy and many people lost their means of livelihood.

Loss of means of livelihoods

The collapse of the country's communist economy also affected peoples' livelihoods outside the arms industry. Especially in the northern parts, many people who depended on agriculture lost employment. This, coupled with the intense demand for arms during the Kosovo War (1998-1999), fuelled an appetite for weapons among Albanians who came to regard these as valuable economic goods.

The collapse of pyramid schemes and the failure of the government

During the period 1995-1997, the so-called pyramid schemes sprang up: money was collected from people on the promise that investment in these pyramid schemes would prove beneficial. However, the schemes turned out to be scams and many people lost their money. The then government was unable to protect people from these schemes, causing unrest and ultimately leading to the collapse of the government in 1997. This was said to have led to the looting of government installations, including weaponry depots.

Criminal and other causes

After the collapse of the government, people began to raid government arms depots.[11] The start of the war in Kosovo subsequently provided a market into which these could be sold.

The "Greater Albania" interests

In the interviews, some secondary stakeholders pointed out the use of weapons in the interests of the "Greater Albania" cause, such as Macedonia and Kosovo. It was mentioned that up to 200,000 of the estimated 500,000-600,000 looted weapons were acquired for this purpose.

Regional developmental differences

Because of the very poor infrastructure, especially the bad condition of the roads, the northern parts of Albania are rather separated from the rest of the country.   This has led to under representation of inter alia police forces. In addition, cultural differences and distance from the capital have led people in the north to see the police as more of an occupying force than a provider of national security. A major factor in understanding this attitude towards the police in northern Albania is that the majority of the northern population do not support the post 1997 Socialist-led government in Tirana. The north has traditionally (since the beginning of pluralist politics in 1991) supported the right-wing Democratic Party of ex-president Sali Berisha—himself a Gheg from the Tropoja district bordering Kosovo. When Berisha's government collapsed following the March 1997 uprising, many northerners refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the new Socialist government. Indeed, Berisha managed to rally tremendous support from the north, particularly from Shkodra/Shkoder district, for his disastrous attempted coup d'état in September 1998. Six years later there is still deep suspicion of the Socialist-led government amongst northerners. Also many southerners, who largely support the Socialists, remain distrustful of northern people in general.

International illicit trafficking in arms and illegal commodities

In Albania, there also exist mafia groups that are known to be involved in international drug trafficking and illegal immigration. It is also known that these groups are involved in illegal gun trafficking.

REASONS FOR STARTING WEAPON COLLECTION PROGRAMMES

Secondary stakeholders who were interviewed gave different explanations as to what prompted the weapon collection programmes in Albania. The main reason was said to have been the need of the new government to consolidate its political legitimacy in the wake of the failed attempted coup by supporters of the ex-president Sali Berisha, which coming just so soon after the violence of March 1997 in which more than 2,000 people had died, had left the population of Albania deeply traumatised and desperately longing for the rule of law to be re-established.

There also seemed to be consensus that the provision of goods and services in exchange for weapons should be considered more of an accelerating factor than a major driving force behind the voluntary surrender. In general, the following factors were mentioned by the secondary stakeholders as key driving forces encouraging the surrender of weapons:

The Dhanapala Mission

In the wake of the Albanian crisis, a large amount of weaponry was looted from the government depots. In the aftermath of the collapse of the government, Albania requested assistance from the United Nations Secretary-General to develop a national strategy and programme to recover the looted weaponry. A United Nations assessment mission, led by the former Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Jayantha Dhanapala, visited Albania in June 1998 to make a preliminary estimate of the options to assist the country. The mission concluded that a "buy-back" scheme would not be suitable for Albania because of to the following reasons:

a) It would be very expensive because of the number of illegal weapons in circulation;
b) It would have a major inflationary impact on an already fragile economy and
c) Donors would not support a programme that rewarded illegal actions of the population.

The mission recommended the development of a programme linking development aid to weapons surrender. This highly inventive approach later came to be known as Weapons for Development. According to Mr Dhanapala and his team, it was envisaged that this kind of approach would create a better local security environment promoting social and economic development, as compared to traditional approaches such as "guns for goods", "buy-back" or a directly directed programme. It was noted, however, that the initiative had political connotations right from the beginning, which was seen as a major disadvantage. Therefore, all projects that followed were top-down rather than addressing the real threats confronting people.

Avoiding buy-backs

The issue of avoiding the buy-back approach was reinforced by the head of the police responsible for weapon collection, Col. Grazmdan: "Whereas buy-back schemes such as paying US$ 100 per weapon would have worked, it would have had severe consequences, such as triggering weapons trade, especially given the fact that the whole region, including the neighbouring countries, are awash with weapons". The buy-back scheme would also have led to an increase in people stealing other people's weapons in order to collect the offered reward. This in turn would have triggered blood feud vendettas in the north of the country.

Keeping weapons had become a hazard

With the opening of the weaponry depots, there was a "human wave" to loot all sorts of weapons and ammunitions. Soon every home became swamped with these lethal instruments. As the administrator of Elbasan described it: "I had a pistol and an AK-47 while my wife also had an AK-47, and we wondered why we needed all these guns". Also the UNDP Representative noted: "… during this time people were afraid of the hazards of keeping weapons and ammunitions".

Decreasing price of weapons

With the end of the war in Kosovo in summer 1999, the demand for weapons plummeted and so did their value. Without a means of drawing benefit by selling them, people began looking for ways to dispose of their stashes, which now seemed more dangerous than valuable.

Rising crime

Using SALW in crime had increased sharply in the aftermath of the events of 1997. Concerned about the increase of violence, many people were willing to get rid of their weapons.

Strategy and Process of Weapon Collection

The key driving forces for the surrender of weapons also led to the need to create an encouraging environment for weapon collection. When asked about this, the secondary stakeholders who were interviewed mentioned the following reasons for creating such an environment:

a) Recognition that no meaningful development could be achieved under existing conditions;
b) The weapons were widespread and therefore efforts could not be limited to a single social target group or region;
c) Assumptions that less weapons would lead to more development;
d) Need to create social cohesion;
e) Recognition that individual security will lead to community security;
f) Practical examples that demonstrated visible benefits to convince weapon holders to surrender their arms.

Different secondary stakeholders gave differing explanations concerning the most profitable strategies and processes to collect weapons, depending on their location, mandate of their respective organizations as well as specific interests. For instance, some techniques, such as weapon collection booths, tended to work better in urban areas, while community projects, such as building roads and enhancing water supply, were more attractive in rural and border regions. In the same vein, agencies such as UNDP pointed out that the disadvantage of the WfD approach is that it requires plenty of resources, which are not easy to mobilize. For instance, UNDP had to shift to SSR programmes, because they seemed to be more easily supported by donors. On the other hand, some governmental officials and NGOs continued to advocate for the WfD approach.

The following strategies and processes were cited to have facilitated weapon collection in general:

a) The law for voluntary surrender of weapons, enacted in 1998, which enabled those had weapons to surrender them without any reprisals;
b) The establishment of an inter-ministerial committee (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Defence, police and local government). This structure is replicated at the communal, city and prefectural levels;[12]
c) Sensitization of communities on the new law, mostly through TV and radio;
d) Urging people to control weapons at home;
e) Collecting arms by force as a last resort, after exhausting all other venues.

The general research findings reveal that at the community level, only few people had witnessed these events and were aware that these processes did take place.

CHALLENGES IN
IMPLEMENTING WEAPON COLLECTION PROGRAMMES

The government officials and other secondary stakeholders described a number of challenges faced when implementing the weapon collection programmes. From their experience, priority in incentive offers had been given to those who handed over the largest numbers of weapons, resulting in complaints from those who had handed in fewer guns. Additionally, the lack of technical expertise in handling weapons was described as a significant concern, especially for those turning in or collecting weapons. Particularly noted was the danger raised by the lack of knowledge of how to handle firearms, ammunition and other potentially dangerous objects, of those participating in the collection.

The local leaders and other secondary stakeholders pointed out also other challenges to implementing weapon collection programmes:

- It was noted that with time, new development needs had arisen and the government had started to pay less attention to weapons issues;
- The state was still considered weak and people do not fear breaking the law;
- Previous projects had not been tied to the number of weapons returned, although it was assumed that each family would hand in at least one gun. For example according to UNDP, in Gramsh, out of 50,000 households, the weapon collection programme had gathered only 6,000 guns;
- Of the estimated 500,000 to 600,000 weapons looted, 200,000 were believed to have found their way into the hands of Albanian guerrillas fighting in neighbouring countries, and 200,000 to be still in circulation. In the spring of 2001, there was a new demand for weapons caused by the conflict in Macedonia between ethnic Albanian rebels and government forces;
- The law on weapons surrender had expired, and there were reported difficulties in interpreting the new law;
- There were difficulties in finding the most suitable method to approach the community;
- There were failures in implementing projects in areas that had handed in weapons, arguably due to the inefficiency of the officials sensitizing the communities on the new law;

- Some secondary stakeholders noted even apathy in the communities: according to them, people did not bother about what the government says, or whether the laws will ever be implemented. They also knew that the amnesty could always be extended;
- Situations were said to be exaggerated by special interests, such as those of some NGOs;
- There had been no strong attempt to link the interventions with people's daily needs and problems;
- There were difficulties in convincing people who were opposed to weapon collection programmes.

MEASURES TO CURB SMALL ARMS PROLIFERATION AND ARMED VIOLENCE

When asked about the optimal methods to solve problems of illicit proliferation of SALW and armed violence, government officials and other secondary stakeholders were strongly in support of a strong law on gun control. According to them, this should go hand in hand with economic empowerment of the people. As an official of the OSCE Shkodra office noted: "economic development will disengage people from guns". According to UNDP, the following strategies were undertaken to address the problem of SALW in Albania:[13]

a) Establishing Community Problem-Solving Groups, which enable weapon collection in rural areas to be more successful, especially by bringing out the voice of the people;

b) Starting Community Policing programmes to give confidence to communities that have handed over their weapons, through providing alternative means of communal security;

c) Organizing weapon collection competitions, in which many communities are involved and all are proportionately rewarded. This has injected a sense of reality in the disarmament process, because the previous projects had created a lot of expectations, which have been overcome by organizing these competitions. Preliminary arrangements for the competitions had included setting the rules of the game (120,000 quarters were selected in 50,000 communes), which were followed by a massive information campaign;

d)   Supporting a SALW control initiative that gives blanket amnesty and also legalizes weapons already in possession, as long as those possessing the weapons voluntarily declare them.

When asked how the total removal of illicit weapons from communities could best be accomplished, the secondary stakeholders stressed the need for introducing alternatives to the possession of arms, such as creating employment opportunities. At the moment, unemployment is so high everywhere in Albania, that the smuggling of weapons represents a means of making a living. As some of the secondary stakeholders who were interviewed put it, "when people are busy with economic activities, they will not think of using guns".

They all also supported strong gun control laws as well as strict enforcement measures. The burden of ensuring that the laws are in place, as well as their enforcement, falls under the responsibility of the government. The secondary stakeholders also noted that the government should ensure that official weaponry stockpiles are well protected. This could be done by constructing proper storage facilities to prevent flows of weapons to illicit arms market or to the civilian community.

Local leaders and other secondary stakeholders highlighted the regional and international dynamics associated with Albania's problems with SALW proliferation, and thus identified a need for international cooperation. In their opinion, national, regional and international disarmament efforts are interconnected. The total community disarmament has to be therefore linked with efforts at curbing the problem at all these different levels. All secondary stakeholders interviewed seemed to agree with the view that as long as Kosovo remains in a state of political limbo, the border communities will continue to fear that war could again break out in the region, and thus will continue to hold on to their weapons.

MEASURING "SUCCESS" OR "FAILURE" OF WEAPON COLLECTION PROGRAMMES

When asked how communities can assess the success of weapon collection efforts, all secondary stakeholders seemed to agree that the basic measure of success would be an improvement in the security situation,

indicated by the reduction of armed violence.[14] One indicator of improvement would, according to the secondary stakeholders, be the number of weapons collected. Concerns, however, were raised about using that as the only indicator to measure the success of weapon collection programmes. The secondary stakeholders referred to the improved rapport between the police and ordinary people, and mentioned that as another possible measure of success for weapon collection programmes. Whereas people had previously feared the police, it was noted by one interviewed: "for the first time, people talk to the police and other security forces in a non-threatening manner." Other indicators mentioned in interviews included the reduction in crime rates, as well as the resumption of economic activities, such as construction of water supply systems, street lighting, roads, schools and other communal infrastructures.

When asked about the optimal characteristics of the incentive schemes, which had been provided to the community to encourage the surrender of illegal weapons, mixed explanations were given. The majority of civil leaders and OSCE officials tended to prefer incentives, which provide basic needs and economic empowerment to the people, such as micro-credit schemes. On the other hand, political leaders and UNDP seemed to prefer public works as the most effective incentives to encourage the surrender of weapons.

Despite the differences, there were also a number of common elements in the answers. All interviewed secondary stakeholders were of the view that projects should be made sustainable, address the basic needs of the community and demonstrate continuity and compatibility with the overall situation. Further, projects should address community-wide needs, rather than offering rewards to single individuals. They should be accessible to everyone in the community at the same time, so that no one is excluded from the benefits of projects. Finally, according to those interviewed, incentive projects should foster reconciliation and unity among all social groups. These could follow on from the success of the Blood Feud Reconciliation Projects, which were set up in 1999 by the government with international funding, and have contributed to a decrease of revenge killings in the northwest of Albania.

Consensus seemed to emerge from all the secondary stakeholders interviewed that the most desirable implementation arrangement would be the one in which local people or primary stakeholders could play a leading

role. Having reviewed (by applying PM&E) how the current programmes were implemented, all secondary stakeholders recognized the need for further improvement in this area.

CONCLUSIONS

All local leaders and other secondary stakeholders were of the view that the best incentive to curb the spread of illicit small arms and light weapons remains the strict enforcement of laws and regulations. According to them, this legislative enforcement should be implemented in tandem with durable solutions addressing factors, which are driving demand for the acquisition of weapons, including poverty reduction measures. The secondary stakeholders were of the view that ordinary citizens had resorted to the acquisition of arms and violence in Albania as a direct consequence of the state's failure to provide security and to control the proliferation of SALW. Overall, the meetings that the team held with the government officials and other secondary stakeholders gave great insight into the mechanics of weapon collection and WfD projects, and proved to be a central factor in assessing the situation.

CHAPTER 4

MEN'S FOCUS GROUPS:
EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES OF RURAL-BASED, URBAN-BASED AND BORDER-BASED MEN

The men's focus groups completed 15 PM&E field exercises, using the five techniques presented in Chapter 2 of this report. Five exercises were conducted with urban-based men in Gramsh (at a local shop within Pishaj community), five with rural-based men in Shushica, (at a café), and five with border-based men in Baija (under a tree in front of a house of a local resident).

BEFORE AND NOW SITUATIONS ANALYSIS (BANSA): EVALUATING PROJECT GOALS AND PURPOSES

The discussions arising during the analysis of the BANSA diagram and the subsequent session for questions and answers invoked lively discussion and debate in all men's focus groups.

"BEFORE" AND "NOW" SITUATIONS

The participants described the "before" situation in their communities with the remarks contained in Table 1. As can be seen in this Table, there were both similarities and differences in how the men experienced the "before" situation. As far as the similarities are concerned, all groups agreed that the previous situation had undermined the long cherished tradition, whereby every Albanian home used to keep a gun for prestige and to protect the home. Instead, during the upheaval, guns were acquired for different motives. Fear, robberies and shootings became the order of the day. One man described the aimless shootings by noting, "the sky became an enemy".

Table 1: "Before" Situations

Urban-based men	Rural-based men	Border-based men
• "We were in the middle of bombs" • Many youngsters were injured • People could not go into the streets • Stray bullets were fired everywhere • Criminals had become powerful • Both good and bad people became armed • Guns were being sold openly in the city markets • No state authority could be felt at the community level • People were leaving the city because of insecurity • The state machinery had collapsed • There were high numbers of robbery • The tradition of keeping guns for protection was undermined	• "The situation was fatal" • "It was not like food depots, but death depots" • "Communities were wounded beyond repair" • A period which had never been witnessed before • Robbery of livestock • The tradition of keeping guns for protection was undermined	• There was a fear of people from Serbia • Most guns were bought rather than stolen as there were no arms depots in the region • People were afraid to travel • Robbers acquired guns • There were increases in abductions • There was a "human wave" movements to have guns, because everybody was doing so: "if my neighbour has a gun, then I should also have one"

While rural and urban-based men's focus groups noted that people in their areas had acquired weapons by raiding government depots, the border-based focus group said that because there were no arms depots in the area, people had acquired their weapons indirectly by buying them from those who had raided depots. In addition, results from the border-based men's focus group suggest that border communities wanted arms also because of the fear of Kosovan Serbs. This differs from the communities in central Albania, where it was generally argued that weapons were needed because the state had failed to provide the necessary personal and property protection. However, beside the above arguments, all of those communities interviewed agreed that circumstances leading to 1997 situation can be explained by a combination of several factors, most of

which have been discussed in Chapter 3, inter alia the collapse of pyramid schemes. Generally, men's focus groups justified the raiding of state armoury depots by noting, "every home is protected by its owner. When the owner (meaning the state) did not protect its depots, they were raided". In the event, the looting of state armouries coincided with the raiding and trashing of a considerable amount of state property, including border posts, schools, hospitals and government buildings.

There were also similarities and differences in how the men experienced the "now" situation. All focus groups generally agreed that the "now" situation represents significant "normality and peace", illustrated by specific positive developments. They mentioned that after the weapon collection people have refocused their minds on work, and usually there is anxiety whenever a gunshot is heard. As one participant put it: "Today we feel as if yesterday was a dream…There is no fear that anybody can rob us again". In particular, the urban group emphasized that the beginning of government projects was ushered in with confidence and culminated in increasing private investment. In addition, rural-based communities mentioned how the number of people suspected of still possessing stolen weapons has substantially diminished. They estimated that only two to three per cent of people would still possess stolen guns. This, however, contradicts with the perceptions of the local leadership, who claimed that a large percentage of stolen weapons still remain within the population.[15] On a further justification, rural-based men pointed out that they had to get rid of weapons so that their children could live a normal life, free of guns and ammunition. Border-based men pointed out that before, guns had caused even small quarrels to result in deaths. Every home acquired a gun for self-defence. Now, the situation no longer warranted the need for guns, and their number could therefore be decreased.

Definition of "Insecurity"

All men's focus groups mentioned "insecurity" or a lack of security as the main reason for acquiring arms. In order to find out what was meant by this, the facilitators asked the men to describe what they considered to be "insecurity". All focus groups associated a lack of security with limiting free movement and increasing abductions, especially of their daughters. However, while according to border-based men the major meaning is "fear to travel because of robbers", the urban-based men mentioned the fear of being attacked at home, as well as the disincentive to invest. The urban

focus group considered this type of situation as also involving the absence of government, breakdown of law and order and the lack of institutions to enforce the law. During communist times, there were strict laws on weapon possession. As the men stated: "if the state is powerful in implementing the law, lack of security is minimized". Following this argument, all men's focus groups seemed to suggest that the best incentive against proliferation of illegal SALW is a strong legislation combined with effective law enforcement.

Overall Goals and Purposes, and Strategies to Achieve Them

Men's focus groups gave varying responses concerning the overall goals of weapon collection and Weapons for Development projects. While urban-based men described the goal of weapon collection and WfD programmes to be "community's need to enable people to reorganize, to start new lives, previously paralysed by lack of security", rural-based men viewed the programmes as having been initiated because "the communities wanted to protect their children as well as get rid of robberies, especially of livestock raids". In the same vein, border-based men described the programmes as bringing development to their region, as in other regions where programmes were implemented". While differences between men's portrayal of the situation could be owing to many reasons, for example geographical location, there nonetheless existed common denominators in their responses, such as stopping insecurity, removing the nightmares that guns had wrought, as well as reducing murders and injuries resulting from the misuse of arms.

In describing their experience on the pursued strategies, all men's focus groups recognized the effectiveness of sensitization and awareness-raising activities in informing the population about the dangers of small arms and light weapons, and armed violence. Youth focus groups, discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, pointed out the same strategy. Table 2 summarizes the strategies mentioned by men's focus groups:

All men's focus groups recognized the significant role played by traditional leaders and institutions, such as village chiefs, religious and tribal elders, and local committees. However, they feigned ignorance about what happened to the weapons after they had been collected.

<div align="center">**Table 2**: Strategies Mentioned by Men's Focus Groups</div>

Urban-based men	Rural-based men	Border-based men
• The use of influential people within the community • Active participation of the community, discussion and information exchange • Police support to community initiatives • Direct community participation in the implementation phase, for example by removing shells from the streets. • TV shows to sensitize people • Student competitions related to sensitization on SALW	• More information about the practicalities of handing in weapons • Enhancing community understanding of the problem • Raising awareness about the dangers of gun possession	• Communal efforts • Sensitization and awareness-raising programmes shown on TV • Supporting a strong spirit of voluntarism • Setting public weapons surrender days, when everyone can hand their weapons to the police

Assessing the Impact and Constraints of WfD Programmes

Men's focus groups gave several suggestions about how to measure the impact of weapon collection and Weapons for Development projects in communities. For example, urban-based men mentioned that gun-related murders had decreased after the weapon collection programme, and that the attitudes of former gunmen had changed. They also mentioned an increase in the hatred of guns, free movement of people, and smoother functioning of state institutions. These conditions had permitted the resumption of normal life and economic development in their area. Rural-based men pointed out that in addition to the calm and a sense of security, which the weapon collection programmes have ushered in, the fact that people are willing to give up their guns for the sake of the community is itself an indicator of increased unity of the whole society. According to the rural focus group, this has set a precedent for other programmes to enhance societal welfare. In addition, border-based men's focus group noted that the successful voluntary surrender of weapons in pilot collection areas

created a precedent for other communities to follow. They also noted that because of the benefits of WfD, areas that were not piloted had to withhold their weapons until development projects were started. This seemed to have jeopardized the spirit of voluntarism, and has been identified as one of the shortfalls of WfD approach.

In relation to the impact of weapon collection programmes on improved human security, general experiences of the focus group participants showed that the WfD would have had a more profound impact if it had targeted the vulnerabilities within the communities, mainly issues that would have provided people income-generating activities. However, the participants of men's focus groups quickly argued that even the little they got was positive and appreciated, since people were now more interested in getting rid of their weapons than before. They also pointed to the importance of the removal of weapons from the society through weapon collection projects. Other indicators listed by the men further embodied the general security situation following the collection activities and WfD projects. Among these indicators, the disappearance of banditry activities was noted: "most of those who raided the armouries have moved to Western Europe".

Men's focus groups highlighted several constraints faced in implementing weapon collection and WfD programmes. Four major derailing factors were pointed out in particular:

a) the impact of those actors who wanted to get rid of weapons;
b) the influence of actors who wanted to keep weapons as symbols of security;
c) the resistance of those who traditionally felt that they had to keep guns and
d) the pressure of those who had purchased their weapons and thus wanted their money back.[16]

Other derailing factors included issues such as the lack of trust in state institutions coupled with rumours that the police were reselling weapons they had collected from ordinary people. Distrust of the WfD scheme was also mentioned as a derailing factor. In addition, it was noted that those who possessed multiple guns wanted to surrender the oldest ones first. In rural areas, it was pointed out that weapon holders were hesitant to surrender their weapons because they did not trust the police. Those who

had purchased their guns would have wanted personal reimbursement instead of having compensation going to the whole community. Stories of people being arrested when surrendering their guns were also described as rife and having played a crucial role in preventing many weapon holders from coming forward. It was also feared that if one village had surrendered all its weapons, it would have become vulnerable to attacks by other, non-disarmed villages. This was further exacerbated by the lucrative smuggling of guns to Kosovo taken up by some youth who therefore did not want to give up their weapons and by the prestige that owning a gun gives to a young, uneducated, unemployed young man in Albania.

Men's suggestions of how the constraints could be overcome differed from area to area. According to the urban-based Gramsh men, the fact that there was no blood feud issue was a major contributory factor in getting rid of weapons. This was further complemented by people's obedience to the new government, and by mothers who urged people to hand over their weapons.[17] Gramsh focus group also mentioned that people had got tired of hearing gunshots and stories about people getting killed by criminals. They were of the view that in general, the good examples set by elders are crucial in overcoming the constraints to voluntary weapon collection. Border-based men mentioned that the main way to overcome constraints was the assembling of the entire community to hand over their weapons simultaneously. In this way, the fears of individuals who had weapons and who feared to be arrested, could be avoided.

In assessing the facilitating factors to weapon collection and WfD, the following common elements were identified:

a)   Vigorous sensitization activities and awareness-raising campaigns among the communities about the dangers of keeping weapons;
b)   the precedents set by community leaders, who were the first to hand in their weapons and
c)   the changing attitude of the police.

All focus groups concurred that even if the WfD programme had not addressed all problems faced by the communities, it had given impetus to the surrender of weapons.

DETERMINING DECISION-MAKING PROCESS:
EVALUATING PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND DESIGN

Before getting into reviewing project identification and design, the research team wanted to make sure that all participants had a similar understanding of the core concepts. Especially, in order to develop a better understanding of participants' conception of "participation", facilitators asked the men to define the term. After lengthy exchange of views, the general consensus among the urban-based group was that participation means "involvement in all stages of weapon collections and implementing incentive projects". Rural-based men defined participation to include a range of issues: a) discussions between and among men especially fathers and their sons, b) consulting village leaders, c) putting posters in strategic places and d) the willingness of weapon holders to surrender their weapons. In the same vein, border-based men considered participation as "involving all political, social, economic and civil groups in a community". After agreeing on the definition of participation, all focus groups noted that previous weapon collection implementers had not given them enough opportunities to participate in designing the projects.

After agreeing on the central concepts, focus groups proceeded to name the various categories of participants in weapon collection programmes. Urban-based men mentioned community leaders, ordinary men, students and pupils. Rural-based men listed village women, men, village committees, the police and NGOs, while the border-based men's focus group mentioned elected officials, elders, village disarmament committee and the heads of communes.

Participants were also asked to list the various activities undertaken in communities to support weapon collection, and to ascertain which actors and institutions had made which decisions. Nine general activities identified by the men are presented in the Table 3.

Table 3: Activities Undertaken to Support Weapon Collection

Weapon collection activities	Weapons for Development projects
• Sensitizations and awareness • Drama and poetry • Community meetings • TV Shows	• Water supply • Road construction • Street lighting • Establishment of a health centre • Construction of bridges

In general, men's focus groups identified the same decision makers as the other groups. Differences, however, occurred in the extent to which men felt these decision makers were involved in the projects. All in all, the following actors were identified: ordinary men, ordinary women, NGOs/external agencies/donors, local committees/village committees, the police, local government, pupils/students, village chiefs, and the family. However, when asked to vote on who made the above decisions, the results were as summarized in the Table 4.

Table 4: Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation—
Evaluating decision-making and influence using pictorial diagrams: men's focus groups, Albania

Decision Maker	No. of Decisions
Ordinary village man	10
Village committee/chief	8
Local government	5
NGOs/external agents	4
Ordinary village woman	3
Total	**30**

Urban-based men pointed out eight activities and projects in which major decisions concerning weapon collection and WfD projects had been made. Of these, two had been made by ordinary men, five by local governments, and one by the local committee/village officials. According to the urban-based men, ordinary women had had no role in decision-making

over these activities. The results correspond with Gramsh findings, where the research team found that most of the major decisions had been undertaken by municipal authorities. Also women confided that although they were active participants in the efforts to collect weapons, they had hardly been given an adequate opportunity to decide on the implemented projects. The rural-based men mentioned eleven activities and projects in which major decisions had been made. Of these, one had been made by the ordinary woman, five by ordinary men, two by local NGOs/donors, and three by the local village officials. Local government had played no role in undertaking these activities. Also the border-based men mentioned eleven activities and projects, in which major decisions had been made. Out of these, two were attributed to the ordinary village woman, three to the ordinary village man, four to the village chief, and two to the local NGOs/ donors. As in the rural focus group, local government was said to have played no role in weapon collection and WfD activities.[18]

According to all men's focus groups, while the roles played by students as well as the police were crucial, the most important decisions were attributed to the family. In general, men's focus groups explained the reasoning underlying their attributions of influence in decision-making as follows:

Ordinary village man—All men's focus groups seemed to concur that decisions regarding guns are made by the male heads of families. In their absence, their sons become responsible for this role.

Village committee—Village committees were mostly credited with organizing the developmental projects that were brought in the area in exchange for the surrender of weapons.

Local government—In Gramsh, where the scheme had started, the local administration was credited for its role in initiating the programme. The reason given was that originally donors wanted to support the new government and hence all the initial support was targeted through government institutions.

NGOs/donors—NGOs and donors were also credited for bringing developmental projects to the area.

Ordinary village woman—For the rural and border-based societies, where women are cited to have played a role in the decision-making, one issue that was highlighted was that their husbands had been absent during the weapon collection, because they had left their homes to work in the neighbouring countries.

There seemed to be general consensus among men's focus groups that all institutions and individuals listed above are very important in any weapon collection programmes. According to the focus groups interviewed, planners of weapon collection programmes should always first make a situation analysis with a view to identifying the communities, as well as finding out how communal actors relate to each other. Only after this evaluation process has been carried out can a weapon collection programme successfully proceed. It was also noted that irrespective of whether the participation of different actors is visible or not, it is important to encourage the general desire to hand over weapons.

CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEWS: EVALUATING PROJECT APPRAISAL AND IMPLEMENTATION

This section describes men's experiences with weapon collection and WfD projects, as revealed through the Conversational Interviews exercises. The exercises were conducted in an atmosphere that enabled most participants to contribute to the discussion.

Comparison of WfD Approach and Previous Incentives

When asked about previous mechanisms for the collection of weapons and whether the new approach had taken them into account, all men's focus groups pointed out that no weapon collection programmes were implemented in former communist Albania. During this era, laws and regulations on guns were very strict, and all who possessed illegal weapons were severely punished. The men recalled how the police had applied violent means to deal with those suspected to possess illegal weapons, and of government undercover agents trailing suspects. The general consensus seemed to be that the only incentive to control weapon possession during this time had been the law, vigorously enforced by the police. It was, however, also pointed out that during the communist era, border

communities were allowed by the law to keep guns for self-defence, an incentive not considered by the current arrangement.

In comparing the new approach of voluntary weapons surrender in exchange for development with previous mechanisms of gun control, urban-based men highlighted that in the past, people wanted guns but did nether get them nor understand their dangers. According to them, people today have got as many weapons as they want, but after having understood the dangers associated with keeping them, they have come up to voluntarily surrender them. This view was shared by both the rural- and urban-based focus groups, both of who argued in favour of the continuation of the previous arrangement of strict gun laws, at the same time advocating for WfD projects. According to the participants, "both can work for the benefit of the community".

The above responses reveal that the desire of communities to possess weapons has declined after people have realized the dangers posed by the large-scale proliferation of SALW. This confirms the earlier lesson learned from Mali, which revealed that as long as almost everybody in a community is affected by the level of armed violence, the propensity for the community to come together to end the violence will be higher.

Convincing Weapon Holders to Turn in Their Arms

While discussing what encouraged weapon holders to surrender their weapons, men concluded that the general reason was the desire to restore security, combined with confidence-building measures and pressure for those whose survival depended on weapons trade. Cross-cutting factors that encouraged weapons to be handed over comprised:

a)   keeping a gun at home had become a risk in itself; as one participant shouted "… it was associated with all bad things";
b)   there were weapon accidents in homes, sometimes even resulting in deaths;
c)   children were vulnerable to weapons;
d)   gun violence had escalated, since any small quarrel could result in shootings;
e)   elders set precedents by handing in the weapons first;
f)   sensitization activities were continued;

g) women and local leaders exerted pressure, intensified by searches by the police;

h) developmental projects that were promised to the communities by the government were started;

i) the strategy of reaching out to almost everyone for consultation was adopted;

j) there was a transparent process of reaching decisions through consensus in general community meetings;

k) the government was eager to provide adequate security to the communities—evidenced by the improved attitude by the police towards the population and

l) border communities in particular were categorical when describing what had motivated them to surrender weapons, citing developmental projects undertaken in the regions where WfD schemes were being piloted, such as Gramsh.

Men's views regarding weapon collection varied from region to region. However, all men's focus groups had similar views about the timing of such processes: the best time was seen to be summer, when roads are passable and schoolchildren are at home during holidays. They preferred door-to-door campaigns, police appealing to the communities to bring in guns, and booths constructed in strategic places where those who had weapons could discretely drop them. In some instances, it was noted that one day in the week could be set aside whereby all those in the community who wanted to hand over guns could do it as a community, rather than individually. In some cases, deadlines could be set by which communities had to surrender their weapons.

When discussing what types of weapons were turned in first, men's focus groups' answers reflected that weapons considered most invaluable such as anti-tank weapons, machine guns, mines, grenades and tons of bullets were handed in first. AK-47 and AK-56 assaut rifles and pistols were handed in later, especially when the WfD schemes began. The reason given was that in Albania, unlike for example in Mali, there was no internal conflict that would have required the use of big guns and ammunition. Therefore, since they were of no particular use, the bigger guns were handed in first because they were not easy to store in individual homes nor easy to sell in the local market. Hence, as an old man pointed out, "whoever had them wanted to get rid of them whenever any opportunity availed itself".

When asked about what happened to the collected weaponry, the general response was that usually a police or a military car would come to the village and collect weapons from either special weapon collection places or the police post. Men did not seem to worry about what happened to the weapons after they were collected, although most said they would have preferred such weapons to have been publicly destroyed.[19]

COMMUNITY CALENDAR APPROACH: EVALUATING PROJECT MONITORING

The Community Calendar exercises took place in the same venues as the previous exercises. The exercises began with the facilitators explaining the purpose of the technique. As was done with youth focus groups, the facilitators asked participants to recall the major weapon collection activities and WfD projects, as identified in the previous exercises. Here, men's focus groups identified essentially the same weapon collection activities and WfD projects as those identified in DDMP exercises.

Weapon Collection Activities and Their Timing

When discussing the most effective specific weapon collection activities, each men's focus group selected four different activities, depending on what they considered important for their specific areas. For example, urban-based men selected media shows, school competitions (drama/poetry), sensitization and weapon handling, while rural-based men selected sensitization, inter-community meetings, weapon handling and storage. For border-based men, the most important activities were sensitization, actual weapon collection, competitions and dealing with family issues on arms. These activities reflect the different extents of weapon collection in Albania. For example, in the border areas, where there were no weaponry depots, the actual gathering of weapons was important for the communities to attract projects. Indeed, WfD project leaders had to discuss with families before they families could release their weapons. This is, however, different from areas such as Gramsh, where there were already enough weapons and thus arms' gathering was considered a crucial activity.

All men's focus group participants agreed that sensitization of communities on the dangers of keeping weapons is a very important element of weapon collection. It also reflects that while some activities might be important to one region, they might not be so to another. For example, in the urban and border areas where the police and other security agents are easily available, the issue of storage is less important than in the rural areas, there weapon collectors have to consider more carefully where to keep the weapons prior to them being collected by the police. Also in rural areas where there is a strong sense of belonging to the community, inter-community meetings are important. The differing importance given to the media shows suggests that these initiatives are more important in urban areas, probably because of better access to electricity and TV.

All focus groups stressed the importance of implementing most of these activities during spring and summer, more specifically, during a period ranging from March to September. The following reasons were cited: days are longer, weather is more favourable, roads are not flooding, and children are on holidays. On the other hand, some participants favoured precisely the period when children are at school, because of undertaking youth competition programmes.

Weapons for Development Projects and Their Timing

When asked about the specific WfD projects that were seen as the most important to the communities and which hence should be emphasized when assigning WfD projects, rural-based men selected one project, urban-based men six, and border-based men chose four projects, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Projects Important to the Community

Rural-based men	Border-based men	Urban-based men
• Water supply	• Water supply • Repair of the health centre • Roads • Kindergarten, ambulance services	• Repair of the health centre • Roads • Repair of the health centre • Street lighting • Embankments • Telephone

As can be seen from the Table 5, the project selected by rural-based men, water supply, was mentioned also by border-based men. Only two types of projects, namely the repair of the health centre and roads, were mentioned by both border- and urban-based men. In addition, the following similarities were highlighted:

Health—Both the urban and border-based men stressed the need for health care. The PM&E team discovered that both existing health centres in Gramsh and Baija are located at a distance from the villages where the research was conducted, whereas in Shushica the health centre is located almost in the centre of the village.

Neighbourhood hygiene—In Pishaj commune, Gramsh district, there is a problem of sanitation due to congestion; probably because of this, neighbourhood hygiene was stressed as a preferable WfD project there. In Shushica, where there is no congestion and garbage collection is not a problem, enhancing neighbourhood hygiene was not mentioned as a desirable project.

Street lighting—Because of lack of security, neighbourhood lighting was considered important in Shushica, especially in corridors separating homes.

Building embankments—Pishaj commune is located on a riverbank, on the slopes of a mountain. Because of this, embankments to prevent soil erosion was considered as crucial.

Water supply—Both rural and border-based men stressed the importance of water supply, because of their desire to have access to piped water.

Roads—Road construction and repair was considered as important by both the urban and border communities. The reason for this was that it was foreseen that roads would stimulate development for the areas by promoting trade. For the rural area, road building was not a priority, as the road from Elbasan to Shushica is in good condition, the rest of the area is mountainous and people have to use donkeys.

Ambulance and kindergarten—Border-based men mentioned the need for an ambulance and a kindergarten in the area, because there were none at the moment.

Telephone services—Telephone services were noted as important by the urban communities, because they make reporting crime easier.

The analysis indicates how designing Weapons for Development projects requires a thorough study of different social and economic groups that takes into account the different needs of rural, urban and border-based societies. For example, project successes in rural areas will not likely be replicable in an urban setting and vice-versa. In addition, local conditions may crucially affect project performance. Unfortunately, according to the local communities in Albania, agencies implementing WfD programmes have hardly taken these issues into consideration. Men's focus groups concluded that as a result, most interventions have proved unsuccessful in addressing the root causes of SALW proliferation.

General Findings Concerning Activity and Project Monitoring

In general, from the conclusion of findings, men expressed the view that the most successful projects in collecting weapons had been those that had addressed the immediate human needs in the communities, rejuvenated economic activities and created opportunities for survival, whilst at the same time enhancing physical security. Hence it was a general recommendation that interventions in WfD would always attempt to effectively address the root causes of small arms proliferation.

Men's focus groups identified the following indicators, beyond those named in the previous sections, as important in monitoring whether the numbers of illegally held weapons were increasing or decreasing in their communities: (a) domestic violence; (b) incidents where arms are used and (c) abductions/kidnappings of girls for trafficking.

When discussing the lessons learned from WfD programmes, men reflected on the period before: "the times when we had guns now look like a dream... those times will continue to haunt us". It was their general conclusion that the removal of weapons from the societies was to the benefit of their children.

THREE STAR GAME: EVALUATING PROJECT PERFORMANCE

Facilitators began the Three Star Game exercises by asking men to recall the major weapon collection activities and WfD projects, as identified in the previous exercises. Those who had attended all the previous meetings remembered quickly what was being referred to and the others were briefed. Participants were also asked to list the institutions and individuals associated with the implementation of the identified activities and projects.

The contribution of weapon collection activities, WfD projects and participating institutions and individuals was assessed with a view to studying which of these performed better than the others and why. In general, men's focus groups assessed the performance of the implemented weapon collection activities and Weapons for Development projects, as well as the individual actors and institutions that were associated with implementation, as follows:

Men's focus groups held that the main overall contribution of the community and other institutions and individuals had been their willingness to contribute to the success of weapon collection projects. According to the men, this cooperative attitude was manifested through: (a) the acceptance by the community of its role as a participant in weapon collection; (b) the precedent-setting role played by those individuals in the community, who were first to hand in their weapons and, most importantly, (c) agreements at the family level to participate in these activities.

When considering those project characteristics that had led to the surrender of most weapons, men's general experience was that the most successful projects were those, whose benefits solved people's basic everyday needs. This seemed to depend on the most pressing needs in particular communities: for example, while the urban-based men gave the priority to enhancing telephone services, rural-based men emphasized water supply, and border-based men mentioned roads, ambulance and schools. This reveals that differences between communities do exist, and therefore critical and inclusive needs-assessment should always be undertaken prior to designing WfD programmes.

The men's focus groups assessed and ranked the weapon collection activities and WfD programmes as shown in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6: Assessing the Performance of Weapon Collection Activities—
The Three Star Game, men's focus groups

Weapon collection activity	Rating			Rating criteria
	Urban	Border	Rural	
Concerts/shows	★			Rated as "very excellent" by urban-based men citing the mobilization role that concerts and shows played in the success of weapon collections. Other focus groups did not rate this activity.
Competitions/contests	★	★		Rated as "fairly excellent" by both urban and border-based men, because of the success of competitions in encouraging communities to hand in weapons.
Sensitizations			★	Rated as "very excellent" by rural-based men citing that many people, including those who purchased their own weapons and had been convinced. Other focus groups did not rate this activity.
Surrender			★	Rated as "very excellent" by rural-based men citing that weapon surrender had changed the mentality of many people and thus reduced the number of arms in circulation. Other focus groups did not rate this activity.
Collaboration			★	Rated as "fairly excellent" by rural-based men, because it was only partially implemented, as some actors did not want to cooperate. Other focus groups did not rate this activity.
Destruction			★	Rated as only "good" by rural-based men, because they did not witness any destruction ceremony. Other focus groups did not rate this activity.

(The criteria for the ratings in the table are based upon the success of the weapon collection activity in attracting weapon surrender.)

Table 7: Assessing the Performance of WfD Projects—
The Three Star Game; men's focus groups

Weapons for Development Project	Rating			Rating criteria
	Urban	Border	Rural	
Telephone services	★			This project was ranked as "very excellent" by urban-based men; it was not mentioned by the rest of the focus groups.
Water supply			★	Rated as "very excellent" by rural-based men citing the presence of piped water in the village. The other focus groups did not rate this activity.
Roads, school and ambulance		★		Although these projects have not yet been implemented, border-based men considered these as "very excellent", being of utmost importance to the communities in encouraging the community to hand over weapons.

(The criteria for the ratings in the table are based upon the success of the WfD project in attracting weapon surrender.)

Men assessed the performance of the institutions and individuals involved in weapon collection activities and Weapons for Development projects as shown in Table 8:

Table 8: Assessing the Performance of Institutions and Individuals—
The Three Star Game, men's focus groups

Institution/Individual	Rating			Rating criteria
	Urban	Border	Rural	
Ordinary village man	★		★	Rated as "fairly excellent" by urban-based men citing that they used to monitor information on what was happening with disarmament in other communities. Rated as "very excellent" by rural-based men citing that ordinary village men made the final decision regarding handing over the weapons. Border-based men did not rate this activity.

Actor				Description
Ordinary village woman	★	★	★	Rated as "very excellent" by all three focus groups citing reasons as rural-based men: women were the custodians of weapons in homes while men were always away. Urban men noted that women had convinced sons and husbands to hand over the weapons, while border-based men said that women kept the issue of disarmament buoyant.
Youth	★	★	★	The performance of youth was rated as "good" by urban-based men, because" they perpetuated the use of weapons". Rural-based and Border-based men rated the role of youth as "fairly excellent", because of participating in activities that promoted disarmament especially at school.
Police	★		★	Rated as "very excellent" by both urban and rural-based men, with the urban group citing that the police did not use force while collecting weapons, they made appeals to weapon holders, and were always at the disposal to help the communities. Rural-based men said that the police hade made weapon surrender easier. Border-based men did not rate this actor.
External organization	★			Rated as "good" by urban-based men citing the publicity brought by Jayantha Dhanapala and Michel Douglas. The other men's focus groups did not rate these actors.
Religious leaders (priest), institutions (church) and elders		★	★	They were rated as "very excellent" by both border and rural-based men. Border-based men cited the trust and confidence in religious leaders and the active role played by the church, while rural-based men also mentioned the trust from elders.
Local committees	★		★	They were rated "fairly excellent" by urban-based men, because they handled the work well which made people to trust the government. Rural-based men rated local committees as "very excellent" citing that they made the surrender of weapons easier. Border-based men not rate this actor.

CONCLUSIONS

Responses from communities reveal that people's desire to possess weapons has declined after they have realized the dangers posed by the large-scale proliferation of SALW. According to men's focus groups, lack of security is often the main reason for acquiring weapons. All participants were of the view that the situation in their communities has significantly improved after weapon collection programmes. Indeed, as some participants pointed out, in addition to the calm and a sense of security, which the weapon collection programmes have ushered in, the fact that people are willing to give up their guns for the sake of the community is itself an indicator of increased unity of the entire society. The best incentive against proliferation of SALW would be a strong legislation combined with effective law enforcement.

Sensitization and awareness-raising were mentioned as important tools in informing people about the dangers of small arms and armed violence. Ordinary men, traditional leaders and institutions, such as village chiefs, as well as local governments were considered as the core actors in weapon collection programmes. The precedent set by community leaders, who in previous projects had been the first to hand in their weapons, was recognized as an important facilitating factor. Also the changed attitude of the police was noted as having contributed positively to previous programmes.

Men's focus groups had varying opinions about the most effective specific weapon collection incentives, depending on the area where they lived: rural-based men preferred water supply, border-based men mentioned inter alia the repair of the health centre, roads, and ambulance services, while urban-based men pointed out neighbourhood hygiene, street lighting, roads and telephone services. All focus groups were of the view that the best time to undertake weapon collection programmes is summer, when roads are passable and schoolchildren are at home. Weapons likely to be turned in first are the ones considered being of less value, such as mines and grenades, which are difficult to use or to store.

According to the men, the main overall contribution of the community and other institutions in weapon collection has been their willingness to contribute to the success of the programmes, manifested in the acceptance by the community of its role as a participant in weapon collection, the

precedent-setting role played by leading individuals, and agreements at the family level.

Men's general experience was that the most successful projects were those, the benefits of which solved people's basic everyday needs. This reveals that differences between communities do exist, and therefore critical and inclusive needs-assessment should always be undertaken prior to designing WfD programmes.

CHAPTER 5

WOMEN'S FOCUS GROUPS:
EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES OF RURAL-BASED,
URBAN-BASED AND BORDER-BASED WOMEN

Like the men's group, the women's focus groups did 15 PM&E field exercises, using the five techniques presented in Chapter 2 of this report. Five exercises were conducted with urban-based women in Gramsh (in a home of a local resident), five with rural-based women in Shushica, (at an uncompleted building), and five with border-based women in Baija (in the home of a local resident).

As with men's focus groups, the women also appreciated the use of visual aids in exercises, since pictures encouraged almost everyone to contribute to the discussions. The sessions invoked lively conversation, and meetings were sometimes extended beyond the usual schedule, when women decided to reconvene to finish the exercises. Some mothers also brought their children along to the meetings.

BEFORE AND NOW SITUATIONS ANALYSIS (BANSA):
EVALUATING PROJECT GOALS AND PURPOSES

After having introduced themselves, the facilitators begun the work with the BANSA exercise. The discussions arising from the questions and answers, as well as from the analysis of the BANSA diagram, produced the following input from the women's focus groups:

"Before" and "Now" Situations

All three women's focus groups—rural, urban and border-based— concurred that "before" situation had been marked by difficulties in their

daily lives, as well as by general fear and violence. Some of the responses are described in the Table 9.

Table 9: "Before" Situations

Urban-based women	Rural-based women	Border-based women
• "There was scare and fear" • "We were living in an anxiety for peace" • "We did not sleep during the night because of fear" • "Some people slept under the bed to avoid bullets coming through the window" • "A 29-year-old woman was killed" • "There was fear that a family member would be killed" • "We were afraid that our daughters would be abducted" • "Masked people used to move freely in the area" • "We were afraid that ammunitions kept in homes would explode as it happened in some areas" • "There was fear of bullets aimlessly fired in the air"	• "The situation was messy" • "Robberies were so common" • "Killings were common" • "Women would not go to the field because of fear of being abducted" • People lost trust in each other	• "Stateless society" • "Fear and sleepless nights" • "Destruction of property" • "Aimless shooting in the air" • Children moving around with guns • The youth had to leave the village • "Loss of complete trust among the people" • "Revival of blood feuds and revenge" • "Mothers were always wailing because of the fear for the children" • Unemployment • "Wives were never sure whether their husbands would return home"

Based on the women's responses, it seems that differences between their experiences of the "before" situation depended upon the extent to which women were affected by armed violence. In general, however, because women are treated in almost similar manner throughout Albania, the "before" situation had had almost the same impact on all the women. Traditionally, women's main role is to be confined at home, while men go out to either work or to chat in the neighbourhood cafés and bars. Therefore, it can almost be said that women suffered the most during the "before" situation. Because they were the custodians of children, they had

to ensure that the weapons and ammunitions kept in homes would not harm the children, and that the weapons would be stored in a safe place. All women's focus groups saw the collapse of the pyramid schemes in the wake of the 1997 crisis as a major factor causing insecurity, since, according to them, it led the "bad boys" to open the weapons depots.

When speaking about the situation after the implementation of weapon collection programmes, women generally expressed the view that the situation had fundamentally changed: there had been significant reduction in the level of armed violence, which had attributed to the resumption of normal life as well as to the re-establishment of social capital. Despite of some differences in explanations, the women generally pointed out the improved situation, manifested through the following notions:

a)   "There is calm, confidence and trust among the people";
b)   "we can send our children to school unaccompanied";
c)   "we are not afraid of letting our daughters to go out freely";
d)   "children can no longer draw guns to shoot at each other";
e)   "people fear to keep guns in homes because they are of no use";
f)   "we can now take our animals to graze in the field";
g)   "villages are more organized";
h)   "the schools are now functioning normally" and
i)   "there are less murders and killings reported".

All women pointed out that despite these improvements, there still remains a high level of unemployment in the society. According to the women, this is a major factor causing the few firearm crimes reported, because "people lost their money and jobs". Others, especially the border-based women, voiced the need for water supply, more health-care centres and kindergartens.

Definition of Insecurity

As was done with men's focus groups, the women were asked to define "insecurity" perpetuated by the proliferation of SALW in their communities. Women illustrated insecurity in the form of different descriptive statements such as "it is when a devil puts bullets in the gun", or "being accidentally killed", or through examples "… a girl killed her mother accidentally… while a village boy also killed himself". Others defined it with reference to the specific threats that SALW pose, such as…"causing

sleepless nights and fear that children might get killed and/or their daughters get kidnapped by gunmen and sent out for prostitution". Others, especially the border-based women, considered insecurity to include the lack of basic human needs, such as employment, electricity and water supplies. Based on the above responses, the conclusion reached was that the problems wrought by the proliferation of SALW are multifaceted as they have a negative impact on all aspects of peoples' lives socially, economically and physically. Therefore, the impact of widespread proliferation and misuse of SALW needs to be observed in the wider context of human security.

Overall Goals and Purposes and Strategies to Achieve Them

Focus group discussions resulted in different explanations behind the main rationale for beginning weapon collection activities. Only few women had prior knowledge about these schemes. However, based on their experiences, the common thread was "to get rid of guns so as to live normal and peaceful lives marked by a conducive environment that enables their children to go to school". The urban-based women specifically stressed that the main goal for weapon collection was the need for peace and security, while the rural-based women described the objective "to have children safe so that they could be able to attend school normally and also to restore an environment where women could do their normal work".[20] Women in the border-based focus group were of the view that the purpose of weapon collection was "to end night gunshots". The need for medium- and long-term objectives of weapon collection were also expressed by women's focus groups through stressing "the need to remove guns, which had become an enemy of development, so as to revive economic activities".

When speaking about the strategies that were pursued to meet the objectives of weapon collection, all women's focus groups confided that sensitization and awareness-raising among the communities about the dangers of SALW and violence in general, comprised the overarching strategy. The urban-based women pointed out in particular programmes, in which village elders or other prominent people would reach out to the communities, and which would include general community meetings in the centre of the village where consensus could be reached. Women suggested also meetings with external people such as NGOs, and house-to-house campaigns as important and successful strategies. Above all, the urban-based women concluded that in their capacity as mothers, women were at the vanguard of convincing weapon holders to surrender their arms. The

rural-based women attributed success to the strategy of sensitization, especially media campaigns on television. They also considered sharing information with their husbands, for example by talking about the dangers of weapons, as an important strategy. On the hand, the border-based women attributed the strategy of involving external people, such as NGOs, to work alongside village elders, because "we trust foreigners more than the local officials". They also mentioned that setting a specific date for people to hand in their weapons as a group was an important strategy, as it dispelled fear from those who were concerned that they would be arrested upon turning in weapons.

Based on the analysis of the above information, women tended to conclude that different strategies working in tandem are crucial for the success of weapon collection programme. Women in their capacity as mothers have a significant and appealing role in convincing weapon holders to turn in their arms. Unfortunately, women were hardly encouraged to participate in previous weapon collection programmes.

When discussing the conditions, which had facilitated the success of weapon collection, the women generally agreed that it had been a combination of various factors. The general willingness and desire of the whole community to get rid of weapons was, however, considered as the overarching crucial condition. Other facilitating factors varied among the focus groups. For instance, urban-based women mentioned that the insistence of women to get weapons away from homes had been an important driving force in weapon collection and therefore the incentives given acted as catalysts for to convince people to surrender more weapons. Rural-based women mentioned that if the government is able to provide security, people have no rationale to continue keeping weapons. In addition, the border-based women stressed that the incentives promised to communities had been the main driving force: "… we would even purchase weapons, so that we may get water in our houses".

In terms of women's experiences regarding the conditions necessary for the success of weapon collection programmes, all women's focus groups seemed to agree that successful community involvement in weapon collection or any microdisarmament programme requires a multifaceted and integrated approach. In particular, participants mentioned the following conditions: (a) government cooperation (including the police), (b) full involvement of the affected communities, (c) a clear outreach strategy,

(d) transparency and the use of local institutions and (e) confidence-building measures such as anonymity of those handing in weapons.

Assessing the Impact and Constraints of WfD Programmes

Influenced by the area they inhabited, participants gave a long list of both quantitative and qualitative indicators for assessing the success of weapon collection and WfD programmes, including: (a) reduced weapons in circulation: (b) living peacefully without hearing gunshots at night, (c) projects started in the areas in exchange for weaponry surrender (d) improved rapport between the ordinary people and the police; (e) significant reduction in revenge killings and wrangles that would lead to shootings; (f) giving more power to women in handling weapons, as well as in convincing their husbands about the dangers of possessing weapons and (g) destroying weapons, thus removing them from circulation.

Women's focus groups saw the issue of handling weapons, as well as giving up the only gun available for the family, as the most crucial general problem in weapon collection programmes. In addition, urban-based women pointed out the lack of security guarantees for those bringing in weapons. It was noted that they could be mistaken as criminals by other people or security forces. The situation was overcome when the state assured everyone that there was no drive to arrest people. Another concern was that some families had so many guns that they had to sell them rather than handing them in for free. Moreover, the majority of families, who had only one gun, were thought to be reluctant to give it up because of security concerns. The rural-based women, in particular, raised the problem of handling weapons, noting that only few of them had any knowledge of weapons and yet they were handling them. The border-based women said that they had not experienced many of these problems, since weapons were not widespread in their region, and most weapon holders had bought them rather than acquired them through looting arms depots: "… those who had the weapons knew how to handle them". Border-based women, then again, raised the problem of convincing men to give up their weapons.

In general, women's experiences in weapon collection elicited a number of lessons learned. First, they highlighted the possibility that persistent fear from past experiences, such as repetitious arrests, may cause people to be reluctant in coming forward to turn in their weapons. Also, it was noted that families possessing only one gun might be reluctant to give

it up, because they consider it as a symbol of security. Because women considered weapons as being more masculine commodities, they said they had found it difficult to surrender weapons without the consent of their husbands. In fact, it was revealed that women, such as those whose husbands were working abroad, were in a dilemma.

DETERMINING DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: EVALUATING PROJECTS IDENTIFICATION AND DESIGN

Immediately after the BANSA exercise, all women's focus groups proceeded to the next exercise: DDMP. The facilitators began the exercises by asking women's groups to list the various activities that were implemented as part of weapon collection and WfD programmes. After identifying the general programmes, the women were asked which actors had determined which activities and why.

When asked to define the term "participation", the conclusion from all the groups seemed to suggest "participation means involving everybody in the society in any agreed action". For instance, the urban-based women put it as follows: "involving all from the oldest to the youngest", while both the rural and border-based women defined participation as "making decisions as one family, in which everybody's needs are reflected". All groups had reservations as to whether such kind of participation had been exhibited in the design and implementation of WfD programmes in their respective areas.

When describing how the various decisions on weapon collection activities were made, all three women's focus groups concurred that although their strong opposition to keeping weapons had been influential, especially at the household level, most of the activities and decisions regarding projects were taken by men. Although activities and decisions varied from area to area, women in general mentioned the following as being important in weapon collection programmes: (a) holding meetings in villages, (b) organizing cultural events; (c) arranging competitions in schools (poetry and drama); (d) circulating posters with a theme "one gun less - one life more"; and (e) sensitization and awareness-rising campaigns.

When talking about influential actors in weapon collection programmes, women's focus groups identified the actors contained in Table 10.

Table 10: Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation (PM&E): Evaluating Decision-making and Influence using Pictorial Diagrams: Women's focus groups

Decision Maker	No. of references
Ordinary village man	8
Village committee	7
Elders	5
Head of the commune	4
External agent	3
Ordinary village woman	2
Police	1
Municipality	1
Family	1
Total	**32**

According to the women, decisions regarding weapon collection were made by men in 8 out of 32 situations, followed by local committees, who were mentioned to have been responsible for seven decisions. Elders and village chiefs were mentioned in five cases. This seems to be a reflection of the Albanian society, which is male dominated. The results, indicating the four top decision determinants to be male dominated, were therefore no surprise to the women. Men's focus groups ranked family decisions quite high; women did not consider this to be the case. Rather, they were of the view that their views are rarely taken into account. To prove their point, they mentioned activities such as developmental projects, which would have been preferred by women, but were not considered as alternatives. Nonetheless, the results reveal several factors, which the designers of weapon collection programmes should look into prior to designing their programmes. Women's viewpoints also highlight the need for projects to be more gender sensitive.

CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEWS:
EVALUATING PROJECT APPRAISAL AND IMPLEMENTATION

This section describes women's experiences with weapon collection and WfD projects, as revealed through the Conversational Interviews exercises. The exercises were conducted in an atmosphere that enabled many of the participants to contribute. Indeed, the research team was positively surprised by the enthusiasm that the women in all focus groups showed when participating in the exercises.

Comparison of WfD Approach and Previous Incentives

When reviewing the existence of previous mechanisms for the collection of weapons, and considering whether the new approach took into account these mechanisms, women's experience was that previously there were no other mechanisms or incentives by which weapons would have been publicly collected. All seemed to conclude that the law, which the police used to strictly enforce, was the only incentive. Moreover, nobody knew who had a gun, and therefore the issue of handing over guns had never arisen.

When women discussed whether the WfD approach was more effective in attracting weapon surrender than the existing mechanism of strict gun control, all focus groups seemed to share the view that the WfD approach would have been more effective if its nature had been clear to the communities:[21] "we only used to hear about it on television or when the police came to take weapons", said one urban-based woman. The rural-based women's view was that WfD approach's added value was that weapon issues came to the public domain and were openly discussed, while according to the border-based "WfD would have been more effective if the commenced development projects had been completed".[22]

Convincing Weapon Holders to Turn in Their Arms

Even though WfD programme incentives are designed to reward the whole community rather than individuals, decisions to hand in weapons are often made individually. Therefore, programme designers need to consider, what can be done to convince individual weapon holders to turn in their arms. Reflecting on previous weapon collection programmes and the

motivating factors, rural- and urban-based women mentioned that the general desire to get rid of weapons had been a major driving force encouraging weapon surrender. As they noted: "because there was a lot of uncertainty as to why to continue to keep guns…, keeping guns made our lives insecure because a small quarrel would result in shooting…it was for our own good, not for the projects". Similarly, the border-based women stressed the need to attract development projects combined with a spirit of voluntarism. The difference in explanations was attributed to the piloting: border areas were driven more by the fact that in areas where WfD programme began, communities had developed. Therefore, they became determined to hand in as many weapons as possible to bring development to their area. One woman referred to this: "… we had sometimes to acquire weapons from our neighbouring villages".

The women cited also additional guarantees and confidence-building measures that facilitated the weapon collection process: (a) open discussion in general inter-community meetings which deliberated on issues related to armed violence; (b) parental involvement which led to a general understanding of the problem and which convinced sons and daughters to turn in their weapons and stop contributing to the violence; (c) Establishment of booths where people could secretly deposit guns, and (d) keeping secret the names of those who handed weapons in.

When discussing the question on the types of weapons that were turned in first, all focus groups concurred that AK assault rifles were handed in first. Urban-based women mentioned AK-47s and ammunition, rural-based women confirmed this, and pointed out "the older ones, which we had before raiding the depots". Border-based women's focus group concurred with the view that was earlier expressed by men, that generally, the weapons handed in first were the heavy ones citing that such weapons were either difficult to sell or store. They also agreed that many of the weapons handed in were old ones, secretly kept during the communist era.[23]

The PM&E team concluded that when weapons are exchanged for incentives, the programmes tend to attract the surrender of old guns, and/or weapons considered useless: either too dangerous to store or too difficult to sell.[24]

When asked how complete disarmament could be achieved in Albania, all women's focus groups alluded to strong legislation, in addition to giving weapons-surrender deadlines to those who may still have weapons. However, they also noted that the issue of disarmament would be best handled at the household level: "disarming the minds of the people right from home would be the best solution". As such, they called for the promotion of peace and tolerance education.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR APPROACH: EVALUATING PROJECT MONITORING

The Community Calendar exercises were held at the same venues as the previous exercises. The facilitators began exercises by explaining their purpose. As was done with the previous exercises, the facilitators then asked participants to recall the major weapon collection activities and WfD projects that had been undertaken in the communities.

While discussing the specific weapon collection activities that were most effective and, hence, most in need of critical monitoring, women's focus groups identified the following activities: (a) holding meetings in villages; (b) organizing cultural events; (c) arranging competitions in schools (poetry and drama); (d) circulating posters, with a theme "one gun less-one life more" and (e) organizing sensitization and awareness-rising campaigns.

All women's focus groups alluded to the fact that even though weapon collection programmes should go on throughout the year, whenever there are specific and deliberate interventions to entice people to hand over weapons, the best time is from summer to autumn (June-October). The reasons cited were similar to those earlier mentioned by men's focus groups: roads are passable, children are not at school, and most people are at home.

In terms of the constraints faced in project implementation, the women mentioned issues similar to those that were pointed out earlier by their male counterparts. Among these issues, some of which are similar to one another, were: (a) loss of trust by communities that had handed in weapons, because promises were either delayed or not fulfilled; (b) delays in project implementation, or even cancellations due to inadequate

resources and funding, after communities had handed in weapons; (c) distrust on the part of those possessing weapons; (d) promises that were not honoured and (f) above all, WfD programmes raised people's expectations.

When discussing whether the interventions had attempted to address the root causes of SALW problem in the communities, all women's focus groups concurred that according to them, there were no linkages between on one hand what led to the events of 1997, and on the other hand, the commencing of WfD projects. They attributed this to the general exclusion: in the process of project initiation, those who were the most affected by and familiar with the underlying causes of the problem, were not listened to. For instance, urban-based women mentioned that they would have preferred projects like building a retaining wall along the riverbank to prevent children from falling into the river. They considered the unsafe riverbank to be posing a greater safety risk than repairing, previously run-down streets. The women also noted that security lights were not put in the places where they would be most effective. On the other hand, border-based women said they would have preferred a nursery school. All women's focus groups seemed to conclude that that since there was no linkage between the causes of armed violence and the projects, the success of weapon collection can be assessed only based on people's willingness to surrender their weapons. "It was because of own wish not because of the incentives…we had to take the guns out of our homes" some women from Pishaj said. Another clear message to demonstrate the above assertion was "people on their own wanted to hand over guns irrespective of the incentives".

In reviewing performance indicators, women's focus groups offered differing indicators of potential increases or decreases in numbers of illegal weapons in circulation. However, they also pointed out that the "culture" of guns is not fully extracted from some people's minds. For example, urban-based women mentioned how a woman who had handed in her gun wanted to retrieve it after having been verbally threatened by her neighbour.

THREE STAR GAME: EVALUATING PROJECT PERFORMANCE

The Three Star Game was the last exercise conducted with women's focus groups. As in the previous exercises, the spirit in the groups remained high, as more and more women turned up each day to participate in the

exercises. Facilitators began the Three Star Game by explaining its purpose. After that, the contribution of WfD projects to the communities was assessed, with a view to study which of the programmes had performed better than others and why. As had been seen with the men, performance ratings typically differed between focus groups, even though in some cases both performance descriptions and given explanations were similar in all groups.

Rural-based women's focus group reviewed the performance of nine Weapons for Development projects, which they judged to have been among the most effective programmes implemented in the communities. The performance of each incentive was rated. In addition, the women were asked to describe reasons for their conclusions. The rating and indicated reasons are presented in Tables 11 and 12:

Table 11: Assessing the Performance of WfD Projects—
The Three Star Game, women's focus groups

WfD Project/ Activity	Rating			Assessment Criteria
	Urban	Rural	Border	
Posters		★		Rated as "good" by the rural-based women citing the reason that they had seen only few. The rest did not rate this factor.
Roads			★	Rated as "fairly excellent" by border-based women citing that it covers a small area. Yet it had raised their expectations.
Health centres	★			It was rated as "very excellent" by urban-based women, because it was the only visible project. The activity was not considered by the rest of the groups.
Water supply		★		Rated as "good" by rural-based women, because the water had not reached their homes. The rest of the groups did not rate this factor.

Table 12: Assessing the Performance of Activities and Institutions
in WfD Projects—The Three Star Game, women's focus groups

Actor/ Institution	Rating			Assessment Criteria
	Urban	Rural	Border	
Commune head			★	Rated as "good" by the rural-based women citing the reason that they had seen only few. The rest did not rate this factor.
Police	★	★	★	Rated by all groups as "very excellent", because of their vigilance in collecting weapons as well as their quick response whenever they were called upon.
Schools/ teachers	★	★	★	Rated as "fairly excellent" by both rural and urban-based women, because they had sensitized the youth and children, who told stories to the parents. The border-based women rated them as "very excellent" for the same reason.
Village woman	★	★		Mothers in particular were rated by all groups as "very excellent", because they are against weapons. They also ensured that weapons are not misused by children, and carried out sensitization at the household level.
Religious leaders/ elders	★	★	★	Rated by all women as "very excellent" because they always preached the culture of peace: "church sermons preached against guns". It was also noted: "elders are respected in the community".
Village man	★			Rated as "fairly excellent" by urban-based women, because men were "at least working alongside them".
External agent			★	NGOs were rated as "very excellent" by border-based women, because of funding projects. The rest of the groups did not rate this actor.
Committee		★	★	Rated by rural-based women as "good", citing that they were not representative enough. Border-based women ranked them as "very excellent" because of reaching out to people.

Youth/chil-dren	★		★	Rated as "good" by urban-based women, because at least they had listened to their parents. The border-based women ranked them "very excellent" citing that they also sensitized the parents on what they learned from school.
Cultural Centre	★			Rated as "very excellent" by urban-based women because of educative concerts. The rest of the groups did not rate this activity.
Sensitisa-tion/TV	★	★	★	TV was rated by all women's focus groups as "very excellent" because of showing vivid images, which appealed to the people. Also sensitization and awareness was described as the bedrock of weapon collection.

CONCLUSIONS

All three women's focus groups concurred that the situation in their communities before weapon collection programmes had been marked by difficulties and violence. They saw the collapse of the pyramid schemes in the wake of the 1997 crisis as a major factor that caused insecurity, and was linked to the looting of arms depots. Generally, women were of the view that the situation has changed after the implementation of weapon collection programmes.

Focus group discussions resulted in different explanations for the main rationale behind weapon collection activities. Insecurity, however, was mentioned by all as an underlying factor, and improving security was seen as an important goal for weapon collection programmes. Women also talked about medium- and long-term objectives, linking security with enhanced economic development.

Just like the men's focus groups, the women confided that sensitization and awareness-raising among the communities about the dangers of SALW comprises the overarching strategy to meet the objectives of weapon collection programmes. In addition, women noted the importance of introducing different strategies simultaneously to ensure their utmost effectiveness. After all, the success of weapon collection programmes

depends on people's attitudes and willingness to participate in the programmes. Like the men, also the women participants stressed the importance of strong weapon laws in striving for general disarmament in Albania. Also peace and tolerance education was pointed out as an effective strategy.

Women have a significant role in convincing weapon holders to turn in their weapons. However, based on the focus group interviews, it 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.

Overall, results from women's focus groups highlight the need for weapon collection and WfD projects to be more gender sensitive, and take better into account the different needs and capabilities of different societal groups.

CHAPTER 6

FOCUS GROUPS OF YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN: EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES OF RURAL-BASED, URBAN-BASED AND BORDER-BASED YOUTH

This chapter presents the field findings from the focus groups comprising young men and women, hereinafter referred to as the youth. A total of 13 PM&E field exercises were conducted. Both the rural-based youth in Elbasan's Shushica commune and the border-based youth in Baija commune, Shkodra, completed five exercises. Owing to the low turnout, the last two exercises were not conducted with the urban-based youth in Pishaj commune, Gramsh, who therefore did only three exercises. The team also conducted informal interviews with children from 5 to 11 years of age. The youth focus groups were studied following the same five PM&E techniques that were applied in men's and women's focus groups.

BEFORE AND NOW SITUATIONS ANALYSIS (BANSA): EVALUATING PROJECT GOALS AND PURPOSES

Upon arrival at the centre of the first village where exercises were conducted, Pishaj, the PM&E team found no youth, as most children were still at school. The few that were available told the team to wait until the early evening hours. Indeed, after a while, a large number of youth managed to assemble and the facilitators proceeded with the BANSA and later DDMP exercises. The PM&E team chose an open place in the centre of the village as the place of the meeting, with a gate of one of the resident's houses being used for pinning up flipcharts. After the first two exercises, the youth planned their schedule for the next two days. They took into account that they had to attend school from morning until the early afternoon, thus they decided to begin all exercises at 3pm each day.[25] Again, following the experience in Mali, the major lesson learnt from this was that the PM&E

approach gives participants flexibility to plan the evaluation exercises to fit their regular daily activities.

The age of the youth who participated averaged between 15 and 22. Only in Shkodra, where the schools were co-educational, did girls participate in youth focus group work. The reason for the non-participation of girls in Gramsh and Elbasan might be attributed to the local culture, in which girls do not usually mix with boys in public places, although they can do so in classes at school.[26]

"Before" and "Now" Situations

In the discussions that arose during the analysis of the BANSA diagram and the subsequent session for questions and answers, the youth focus groups identified a number of elements that characterized the "before" situation in their societies. The situation was described as "chaotic, with fear, killing and aimless shootings day and night, and guns being sold openly and destruction of property". For example, in Gramsh, the situation was described as a chaos, characterized by the absence of the police from the streets, with gunshots, killing and bullet-pierced houses. Armed violence was described to have an impact on virtually every member of the community, as indicated by one participant: "I remember a war without an enemy, the enemy was the sky". In another occasion, a 17-year-old young man narrated how he at the age of 13 had gone to the arms depot, got some guns and sold them in the street, "because everybody was doing so". Additionally, another youngster told about having used hand grenades for fishing. In Baija, Shkodra region, one young student described how a house was destroyed by the same explosives that had previously been stored there.

All youth focus groups described the situation as having significantly improved. For instance, the urban-based youth described the "now" situation by noting that life has become calmer and better, the government functions and there is law and order in the society. Furthermore, it was noted that children could play with less fear that they would accidentally pick up bullets or bombs. One student pointed out that "because the government functions, people handed over guns and the people are happy". However, one schoolgirl in Baija noted that deep in the villages the situation is still not safe. The youth also noted "the situation is not yet fully

normal as some incidents of sporadic shooting still occur at night". All youth groups concurred that only few projects that were implemented attributed to the current improved situation.

Overall Goals and Purposes

With regard to the overall goals and purposes of weapon collection, all youth focus groups concurred that the community wanted to restore normality. Rural youth from Shushica commune noted: "we did not want any more killings and therefore it was for our own good", while students living in Baija border community mentioned that weapon collection programmes were undertaken because of the need for peace, better future, the desire to live normal life without guns, and to stop the killing of innocent people. According to the urban youth from Gramsh "the government had changed and the new government wanted to collect illegal arms". Deducing from the above remarks and the openness in which discussions were held, the PM&E team concluded that the youth understood the dangers that the looting of weapon depots had brought to the community.

Assessing the Impact and Constraints of WfD Programmes

Based on their experience with weapon collection and WfD projects, the youth identified different effects observed by the community as measures of the projects' impact. For example, both rural and border-based youth were of the view that the improved situation did not warrant the need to keep weapons anymore. In particular, the youth concurred that immediate impacts of the projects such as road repairs, street lighting and water supply, had increased the security of the community and diminished levels of violence. This, then again, was seen as resulting in peace and the resumption of economic activities. The rural-based youth pointed out that with piped water in the village, women no longer feared being waylaid by gunmen at the riverside when carrying water. On the other hand, according to the border-based youth, the project impacts were experienced in reduced blood feuds and suicides, which were attributed to limited accessibility to a gun.[27] Border-based youth also observed that people are freer now that "the killings have stopped". These were the only instances in which WfD projects were cited to have had an impact on the reduction of armed violence.

Children aged 5 to 11 were also asked to share their experience on SALW and possible changes in the security situation. The following shows their responses:

- There are no more shootings because the number of guns has dramatically decreased.
- Before the weapon collection, there used to be AK-47 rifles and pistols on streets.
- There are no more sporadic shootings.
- Weapons are surrendered either voluntarily, or owing to police pressure.
- Some children noted they think their parents handed in guns because the children do not need them.
- Children had seen weapons on Italian TV shows.
- They noted that they also want to be entertained.
- "Nothing scares us now except dog barks—there are no more gunshots"
- The police collected weapons, and the military also participated.
- The Italians are building a children's park in Gramsh.
- When asked, who had performed best, children mentioned the police, parents and elders

DETERMINING DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: EVALUATING PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND DESIGN

In the exercise aimed at reviewing how decisions were made, the youth participants were first asked to define the term 'participation'. Different understandings of the term were expressed, but in common participants pointed out that participation means involvement as well contribution by everybody in the community. It was described as "involvement of all political, social and economic forces", "making decisions as a family", and "taking responsibility". For instance, one rural-based youth demonstrated it as follows: "I found a mortar shell in the river and I reported it to the police—thus I participated".

Next, the students were asked to list the various activities and projects that were undertaken as part of weapon collection and WfD projects, and to ascertain which actors and institutions had made which decisions. Participants in the different focus groups identified a total of 61 activities and projects, differing from area to area. For instance, the urban youth in Gramsh recalled road repairs and installation of telephone lines, while the rural-based youth from Shushica mentioned water supplies. Border-based youth from Shkodra mentioned a road that was partially repaired and a health centre that had recently been built. Some of the activities and projects that were mentioned by the youth focus groups are presented in Table 13:[28]

Table 13: Activities and Projects Undertaken
as Part of Weapon Collection and WfD Projects

Weapon collection activities	Weapons for Development projects
• Inter-class meetings • Community meetings • Poetry competitions, such as "peace without a weapon" • Drama • Sensitization • Police campaigns • Door–to-door campaigns • TV shows on how to handle a weapon • Actual weapon collection • Weapon handling & storage	• Road repairs • Telephone lines • Water supplies • Health centres

In terms of the primary decision makers in the community, all youth focus groups seemed to concur that most decisions were taken in village meetings by village representatives and/or elected officials. Many decisions were attributed also to religious leaders and ordinary village women.

Table 14: Evaluating Decision-Making Process and Influence
Using Pictorial Diagrams: Youth Focus Groups

Decision Maker	No. of decisions
Village committee	16
Religious leaders	8
Ordinary village woman	8
Ordinary village man	7
External agent	7
Village official	7
Police	4
Village elder	2
Village youth	2
Total	**61**

The perspectives on the assessment varied from area to area. For example, despite the relatively large number of references, the role of religious leaders was mentioned only in the catholic Baija commune. The reason given was that most Albanian Muslims do not practice their religion. In general, the youth explained their assessments of the decision-makers for the 61 activities and projects as follows:

Village committee (Local Commission)—The village committee initiated the whole idea of weapon collection in the community and was at the vanguard for requesting projects in exchange for the weapons surrendered. Village committees organized inter-community meetings, which were instrumental in uniting the community. According to youth focus groups, the committees usually receive the weapons handed over as part of weapon collection initiatives. The names of those turning in weapons were noted to be kept confidential by the committees, thus creating a sense of trust and leading to the hand-over of additional weapons.

Ordinary village woman—All youth focus groups pointed out that women in their capacity as mothers were heavily involved in sensitizing their sons, husbands and brothers. Their efforts helped to convince men to give up their weapons, which contributed positively to the results of weapon collection activities. The situation was described by one participant: "while women remained at home throughout the day taking care of the weapons and ammunition that used to be kept in the houses, men would usually come back at night from their drinking sprees and start shooting in the air". The youth noted that despite their vital importance at the household level, women are rarely considered when it comes to decision-making.

Ordinary village man—In the table, ordinary village men rated as exercising less influence in societies than women; however, in oral explanations men were described as more decisive actors in determining weapon collection activities than women. The major reason given was that decisions to hand over weapons depended solely on men, since weapons in most Albanian societies are considered male property.

External agent—This category of actors and institutions includes international organizations, IGOs and NGOs. They were considered to provide financial and other types of support, which make project implementation possible.

Commune Head—The commune heads, in their capacity as elected officials, were noted to display influence mainly through encouraging people to work towards peace and reconciliation.

Village youth—The youth perceived that they are hardly consulted in decision-making: "most issues are decided by our parents and old people". The male youth, for instance, said that in exchange for weapons, they would have wanted a pool table, a youth club and a playground, while the girls would have preferred projects like increasing hours for electricity power supply. A youngster from Pishaj in Gramsh noted: "generally, we are not happy with those that make decisions…whenever foreigners like you come here we are never given a chance to present our needs".

In general, the youth concluded that besides communal decision-makers, other institutions such as various NGOs, local government and the police fully collaborated to make the weapon collection schemes successful. The urban and border-based youth groups mentioned,

however, that a section of society, mainly comprising of those suspected to be gun dealers, were resistant to weapon collection. At the end of the exercise, the PM&E team felt it got into the core of how decisions regarding weapon collection and WfD projects were made. The team found no major differences in the way youth are treated by their communities: they seem to have similar views and perceptions, with the exception of the female, whose needs tend to relate to their day–to-day activities such as the need for constant power supply for cooking and ironing.

CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEWS: EVALUATING PROJECT APPRAISAL AND IMPLEMENTATION

When discussing the existence of previous mechanisms for the collection of weapons, and whether the new approach took into account these mechanisms, none of the youth focus groups seemed to recall any other mechanisms that would have been used for weapon collection.

All youth groups concurred that the driving force to surrender weapons was purely voluntary and individual, arising from the realized danger related to weapons possession. Nonetheless, the focus group participants listed a number of activities and projects that had been carried out to convince weapon holders to hand in their guns: (a) sensitization by mothers and elders, television shows and posters, (b) awareness-raising, appeals and door-to-door campaigns by the police on the negative impact of SALW and armed violence on development and (c) development projects, which encourage the disarmament of communities, including street lighting, water supply, roads and health centres.

The rural and urban youth could not recall any experiences about the way in which weapons would have been collected from the community. However, youth from the border area, where programmes have recently been implemented, recalled house visits by the police, sensitization, and a day when weapons could be handed over in groups. The explanation to the difference might lay in the fact that in Gramsh and Elbasan, the programme was so politicized that ordinary citizens did not have much to say in the way the programmes were implemented. In Baija, there was an attempt to implement programmes based on the lessons learned from Gramsh and Elbasan, and therefore community needs were better taken into account.[29]

According to the experience of the youth regarding preferable and avoidable participation of actors and institutions in weapon collection projects, all community leaders, women as well as the civil society, should be involved. However, the youth noted that in the community there were also those who did not want weapon collection, even though it was pointed out that many of these people had already left Albania for Greece and Italy.

In describing how the WfD project benefits were distributed within the community, the youth focus groups concurred that considering that almost every home had surrendered a weapon, people had also benefited. However, while the rural-based youth of Shushica were appreciative because the water supply project had benefited almost everybody, those from Gramsh and Baija complained that in their regions, the projects had benefited only few and were concentrated in limited areas. They, for example, sited a road that was only partially completed in Baija, therefore benefiting only few households.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR APPROACH: EVALUATING PROJECT MONITORING

The Community Calendar exercise took place at the same venue as the previous ones in both Shushica and Baija. However, due to the lower turnout, this exercise could not take place with urban youth in Gramsh. Again, the exercise began with the facilitators explaining the purpose of the exercise. After the practicalities, facilitators asked the youth once more to recall the major weapon collection activities and Weapons for Development projects that had been implemented in their communities. The youth had no problems in listing the recent collection efforts.

Both rural and border-based youth's experience suggest that the optimal timing for weapon collection activities is determined by two factors: the weather conditions, and the school calendar. Weapon collection programmes were estimated to be more effective when schools are closed. However, it is not to be forgotten that related activities, such as poetry competitions, could be undertaken at schools prior to or following weapon collection. Hence the period between April and December was found to be the best timing for the three main components of weapon collection

programmes: sensitization and awareness, handing over the weapons, as well as their transportation.

When the youth focus groups were asked about the aspects of weapon collections requiring critical monitoring, they named the handling of weapons because of the risk posed by them, and the need to stop aimless shooting in the sky. The rural youth also mentioned that community projects need monitoring to ensure that everybody participates in fulfilling the assigned responsibilities. It was noted that this critical monitoring would require the participation of different actors, including NGOs, as well as the police working in conjunction with the head of communes and local leaders.

When the discussion moved to indicators for monitoring weapon collection activities, the youth cited a few reference points, based upon their own general experience, according to which the success or failure of a weapon collection programme could be assessed:

a) fewer guns seen as compared to the situation before;
b) less shootings at night;
c) general calmness especially along the border; and
d) reduction in killings with arms and reduced weapon accidents.

When asked about the location of weapons stockpiles, youth focus groups estimated that collected weapons were mainly kept in public buildings before picked up by the police. They pointed out that in their experience, a secure and agreeable place should be determined before starting weapon collection.

THREE STAR GAME: EVALUATING PROJECT PERFORMANCE

The Three Star Game was the last of the PM&E exercises, conducted after the team had spent a minimum of two to three days with each focus group. Apart from those who did not turn up for the exercise, the spirit in all focus groups remained high. In Baija, the high turnout was most likely a result of cooperation of the school authorities that allowed the PM&E team to conduct the exercise during one class.

Participants in the focus groups assessed the overall performance of the activities and projects implemented as part of weapon collection and WfD programmes, as well as the individual actors and institutions that were associated with programme implementation.

All youth groups concurred that people had freely and willingly surrendered their weapons, partially because of the benefits. Some benefits, such as improved public infrastructure and community social services were singled out in particular.

At the community level, simultaneous enforcement by the police and other government institutions, with the removal of weapons from communities had, according to the youth, facilitated the general restoration of normality. In general, the projects that had demonstrated best results, i.e. led to the most weapons turned in, were those that were visible or tangible to the people. This however, depended on the area.

Tables 15 and 16 detail youth's assessment of the performance of various WfD projects, as well as the roles of individuals and institutions involved in weapon collection activities and WfD projects.

Table 15: Assessing the performance of various WfD projects—
The Three Star Game by youth focus groups

WfD Project	Rating			Assessment Criteria
	Urban	Rural	Border	
Roads			★	Rated as "fairly excellent" by the border-based youth, because although it is an important project, it was only partially implemented.
Health centres			★	Rated as "very excellent" by the border-based youth, because it is helping everybody in the community.
Water supply		★		Rated as "very excellent" by the rural-based youth, because their village now has running water.

Table 16: Assessing the Performance of Actors and Institutions
in WfD Projects—The Three Star Game by Youth Focus Groups

Actor/ Institution	Rating			Assessment Criteria
	Urban	Rural	Border	
Commune head	★	★		Rated by both as the rural and urban-based "fairly excellent".
Police	★	★	★	Rated by all groups as "very excellent" because of their vigilance in collecting weapons as well as their quick response whenever they were called upon.
Schools			★	Rated by the border-based youth as "fairly excellent" because of promoting peace education through drama and poetry competitions.
Village woman	★	★	★	Mothers in particular were rated by all groups as "very excellent" because they were against weapons.
Religious leaders/ elders			★	Rated by the border-based youth as "very excellent", because they always preached the culture of peace.
Village man	★	★	★	Rated only as "good" because they were less active and reluctant to hand over weapons— for they were afraid at the beginning.
External agent	★	★	★	NGOs like CAFORD were rated as "very excellent" because they funded projects
Village committee		★		Rated by the rural-based youth as "fairly excellent", because of mobilizing the people.

CONCLUSIONS

Like women and men, also the youth described the situation before weapon collection programmes as having been chaotic and unsafe, and noted that the circumstances have now significantly improved. Restoring normality was, according to the youth, the main goal for weapon collection. Overall, it seemed that the youth had understood the dangers that the looting of weapon depots had brought to the community, as well as the efforts taken to restore security.

According to youth, the immediate impacts of weapon collection projects such as road repairs, street lighting and water supply, had increased the security of the community and diminished levels of violence. The youth feel that they had not been consulted in decision-making, even though all youth focus groups would have had ideas about preferable incentives in exchange for weapons. There do not seem to be major differences in the way youth are treated by their communities: they have similar views and perceptions, even though there are some differences in how boys and girls rated the programme incentives.

The youth confirmed the views presented by the men's and women's focus groups about programme implementation and the problems encountered. Participation of all community members was noted as being crucial for successful weapon collection. The youth were supportive about the idea of development incentives provided in exchange for weapons, and were of the view that these incentives should be such that they would benefit the whole community instead of giving rewards to individuals.

CHAPTER 7

SYNTHESIS AND ANALYSIS
OF THE GENERAL LESSONS LEARNED

This section presents a synthesis and analysis of the general lessons learned from the Albania case study. To facilitate their comprehension to the readers of this report, including practitioners of weapon collection schemes such as planners, programme directors and researchers, the lessons have been arranged in the following seven thematic areas:

a)   Methodology
b)   Project conception, design and implementation
c)   Gender issues
d)   Assessment and performance indicators
e)   Characteristics of incentive schemes
f)   Best practices in implementation
g)   Long-term resource mobilization strategy

METHODOLOGY

Deducing from the frankness and openness of the focus group discussions, all participants seemed to appreciate the Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation methodology as applied in the study. Participants recognized that the techniques enabled those who were interested to express their views, and consensus could be reached without a situation of winners and losers. Facilitators and community participants grasped the techniques relatively easily, and in essence, no major problems were encountered during the application of the techniques. Overall, the five techniques applied in this study can be adapted to review different policy implementation programmes.

PROJECT CONCEPTION, DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Identifying the real beneficiaries

In designing the project, a prominent role was given to identifying the real beneficiaries and understanding the root causes of violence in the community. Core concepts in project design were also the study of past and present situations, the use of local institutions for implementation, and the support given to local initiatives. During the research, it became clear that it is of primary importance that project organizers get to know the real beneficiaries of weapon collection initiatives or general post-war reconstruction programmes. Experience from past weapon collection schemes dictates that unless the intended beneficiaries are fully involved, interventions are bound to fail. Indeed, the need to involve local people by asking them what they want to achieve through the projects and how they intend to reach these objectives, was found crucial. Implementers of weapon collection programmes have to listen to the affected community in order to understand the local mechanisms of dealing with weapons.

Understanding the root causes

During the research, the issue of identifying the root causes also surfaced. It was revealed that in the Albanian case there was a strong link between the loss of means of livelihoods and armed violence, following the transition from communist rule to capitalism. Unfortunately, previous programme planners have not linked the various interrelated issues resulting from the transition of Albanian economy, such as the collapse of the arms industries leading to unemployment. The core causes that drive people to arm themselves need to be identified in order to understand why people are resorting to illicit small arms and engaging in armed violence. It is essential to understand, security threats that are confronting people and the threshold threat-levels at which communities choose to resort to desperate means. Eliciting answers to such questions from the communities themselves proves crucial in coming up with appropriate interventions to solve the problems. According to female participants in Gramsh, past interventions have largely ignored such issues, thus diminishing the likelihood of success. The study also reveals that once the root causes of small arms proliferation are identified, it becomes easier to design appropriate interventions that address the underlying threats or vulnerabilities. When combined with implementation of strong legislation and other regulatory measures against the illicit trade in SALW, such

measures may bring the possibility of sustainable security. As an example, the study shed light on the economic marginalization experienced by people in Gramsh, because the same people who used to work in weapons factories and lost their jobs led the attack on weapon depots. Along the same lines, the following additional factors were identified to explain why people acquired weapons: (a) ethnic tension in Kosovo, rumours that the Serbs could extend beyond current borders; (b) poor management of government armouries;[30] (c) gun tradition in some regions, linked to blood feuds; (d) keeping of weapons to ensure home and property protection and (e) old laws permitting, for instance, border communities to have automatic weapons.

Studying past and present situations

A critical analysis of both past and current situations is a prerequisite to any project, with a view to understanding the strategies pursued to end the armed conflicts (if any) as well as the underlying development gaps and other socio-politico-economic dynamics. It was further learned that project designers should understand how these gaps and dynamics affect different age groups and people's means of livelihood, and how these factors may have played a role in driving the demand for weapons and encouraged armed violence. Communities need an opportunity to reflect on what went wrong, and how they envisage resolving the situation. The PM&E approach can facilitate this process. Analysis of the historical issues that led people to resort to arms or violence may prove useful. For example, it is important to understand how different events have affected the safety networks within the community, especially among the various age groups and/or regions. Further, the local people can help to unravel issues such as disparities in the allocation of development resources among country's different geographical areas.

Use of local institutions in implementation

All communities interviewed implied that in order to create a sense of local ownership to the project, local institutions are to be included in programme implementation. For instance, the border-based communities did not even know which organization had constructed the half-finished road in the community. All interviewed communities recognized that WfD projects should supplement local people's efforts to get rid of weapons, rather than introducing new models that are alien to the communities and/

or sometimes too expensive to sustain. In addition, the communities reflected a need to build a new, "gun-free" culture. The past programmes had no in-built mechanisms to nurture this emerging culture, which explains that whenever project funding was terminated, weapon surrenders stopped or diminished.

GENDER ISSUES

Through assessing the previous weapon collection and WfD programmes in Albania, it was learnt that even though women can play a vital role in agitating for disarmament at both household and community level, they are rarely given an opportunity when it comes to making major decisions, such as the types of projects that would best benefit the area. This trend was visible throughout Albania. Ordinary men and institutions dominated by men were found to be the core decision makers. The lesson learned is that weapon collection programmes should never assume that people's needs are similar. As revealed by the data, the proliferation of SALW impacts various regions in different scales and magnitude. The extent to which it affects urban-based groups may be different from the effects it has on rural groups or border communities. In addition, despite the fact that youth were active both in acquiring weapons and in disarmament efforts, their special needs were not taken into consideration when it came to designing weapon collection programmes. Because of this, the youth concluded that the projects did not have any significant impact in the community.

ASSESSMENT AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The study revealed that the majority of people looted arms without any clear motive or an idea of what to do with them. With the exception of few criminals, people said that they "went to weapon depots because everyone was doing so". For example, it was learned that as a result of widespread weapons and their misuse, the whole community got swamped in violence. Following the increased level of crimes and other threats, everybody had to realize the dangers weapons were causing to the community. This seems to indicate that once a community is confronted with a similar problem, the probability of people getting together to end armed violence increases.

Hence programme designers should base their assessment on people's perceptions. The use of community-based indicators, such as how the community considers whether the situation has improved or deteriorated, is crucial in assessing the success or failure of interventions.

The research revealed that in areas where weapons had been acquired by looting, irrespective of whether the projects were implemented or not, people would still turn over their weapons, claiming: "we wanted to get rid of the guns and ammunitions from our homes". This was different from areas where people had acquired their weapons through purchase, because they felt they would have needed compensation for collecting their weapons.

As a long-term impact, it was discovered that participation in weapon collection programmes resulted in greater harmony between local people and the police and other government institutions.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INCENTIVES

In the context of the Albania study, communities seemed to endorse projects that provide immediate physical security needs, such as preventing abductions, aimless shooting and robberies. Support was also shown for projects that provide alternatives to the use of a gun and protect communities from other security hazards or vulnerabilities. Programmes that stimulate economic productivity or promote women activities were also endorsed, as well as programmes that enhance the well-being of children, or aim at solving people's day-to-day needs such as employment. All the groups seemed to concur that individual benefits must be avoided, and preference is to be given to projects that benefit the whole community.

BEST PRACTISES IN WEAPON COLLECTION

All of the communities interviewed seemed to concur that successful implementation of weapon collection programmes requires the following: There should be constant cooperation between the communities and the government, including government security agencies such as the police. Community involvement should include all social groups, in order to

adequately address people's various needs based on gender, age and other differences existing in that particular community. The role of women, elderly, and religious communities must never be ignored. Also the youth should be involved in the decision-making process, because they are the determinants of future security. There should be a clear outreach strategy to ensure that all secondary stakeholders are on board. Confidence measures should be located and ensured before undertaking the projects. These include anonymity of those handing in weapons, assigning special places where people can secretly deposit weapons and devoting special days for general weapons surrender. The weapons that are handed in should be handled by professionals and deposited in secure places. There should be vigorous sensitization and awareness-raising campaigns about the dangers of keeping weapons. All media accessible to ordinary people should be used, and the awareness efforts should start from the household level, in parallel with weapon collection. Collected weapons are to be destroyed in order to stop their reuse, and incentive projects should be implemented in parallel with weapon collection. People's preoccupations need to be taken into account when planning the timing of the implementation. Whenever a law on weapons surrender is put in place, just as in Albania, it should be ensured that those who implement it are familiar with all its aspects. Whereas all the above issues emerged clearly during the field exercises, the implementation of projects in Albania seemed not to have exhibited the majority of these practices.

LONG-TERM RESOURCE MOBILIZATION STRATEGY

It was learned that owing to difficulties in fund-raising for WfD projects, agencies usually unjustifiably shift to other programmes such as SSR, which seem to be more attractive to donors. However, the feedback from the communities indicates that these programmes do not necessarily address the real security threats of people. SSR was mostly described as providing logistic support to the police and other security organizations. It seems that little emphasis was put on reforming the command and control structures of these institutions to better enable them to meet the changing security needs of communities. Therefore, the communities would encourage donors to put in place long-term strategies and commit themselves to funding weapon collection and WfD programmes.

CHAPTER 8

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the current study emphasize several ideas and propose modifications for further weapon collection and WfD programmes. This chapter introduces the general recommendations, primarily aimed at policy makers in countries that fund community-based and arms reduction schemes.

FUNDING WEAPONS FOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The study reveals that the principal stakeholders strongly support WfD programmes. It is therefore recommended that donors continue to fund such programmes, provided that project implementation aims at addressing the factors that drive demand for armed violence.

NEED FOR DECENTRALIZED BUT COORDINATED PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

From the analysis of the data gathered, it is evident that significant progress has been made, where local communities have given the opportunity to participate in the programme. All focus groups expressed the need for full participation of all stakeholders. It is therefore recommended that prior to funding any programmes, decentralized but well coordinated structures are assessed and/or established, in order to ensure the best possible involvement of all levels of the society.

In addition, it should be ensured that projects employ "bottom-up" approaches to determine the types of incentives to be offered. Projects that are to be implemented at local and community levels should give a lead role to local structures and institutions. It is important to recognize that the incentives are not an alternative to existing traditional mechanisms for

voluntary surrender of weapons. Such mechanisms must therefore not to be ignored, but rather complemented. Based on the good experience from both the Mali and Albania case studies, it is recommended that project reviews utilize Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation techniques.

WOMEN AND INFORMAL INSTITUTIONS

The research findings show that the participation of women and informal institutions is vital in the successful implementation of programmes aimed at reducing armed violence. It is therefore recommended that those intending to fund WfD programmes assess whether the programmes are also giving voice to women and addressing their security concerns. Other aspects to be taken into account are the possible priority given to women organizations when distributing resources for capacity-building, and consideration of children's needs. Local civil organizations are valuable in promoting a "gun-free culture". In addition, traditional, religious and other community-based institutions, as well as the elderly should be involved as entry points for project implementation.

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM (SSR)

It also emerges from the study that programmes to address security issues should be driven by community needs rather by mere political motives. It is recommended that thorough technical assessments be undertaken to ascertain what kinds of programmes address the real security threats as opposed to perceived threats. This is even more crucial for SSR programmes aiming at filling security gaps created whenever communities hand over their weapons. As such, SSR should concentrate on supporting alternative security arrangements, for example community policing. In addition, it must first be ascertained whether there is a linkage between weapon collection and the subsequent SSR, rather than simply following a continuum from weapon collection to SSR. This is because the research findings reveal that agencies have often based the shifting from WfD approach to SSR on the easy mobilization of resources, since according to them, SSR programmes attract more funding.

REGIONAL INTEGRATED PROGRAMMES

Research in Albania once again confirmed that the problem of SALW proliferation is not limited to political country borders, but cuts across regions. Hence national efforts without regional and international cooperation cannot be sufficient to control SALW proliferation. It is therefore recommended that WfD programmes include regional or international dimensions whenever possible, so that all neighbouring communities across borders can benefit simultaneously. However, such programmes require unwavering political and financial commitment from the authorities of the benefiting countries. In addition, concerted efforts in the region are needed to harmonize national policies against the proliferation of SALW and crime.

COMMUNITY AND CHILDHOOD PEACE EDUCATION

The study findings indicate that sensitization and awareness-raising campaigns about the dangers of weapons possession are very important to communities. Therefore, it is recommended that programmes promoting social deterrents against gun use would also include measures addressing education and childhood development, as well as promotion of social cohesion and support for high-risk groups. These programmes could be integrated into general school education curricula, while sensitization and awareness-raising campaigns on the dangers of weapons possession could be part of the national community-based literacy education and other social mobilization programmes.

REGARDING RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY ON SALW

From the research it emerged that data on SALW and armed violence reduction is still largely lacking. In order to collect relevant and updated data as well as to develop necessary tools for the fight against SALW proliferation, it would be crucial to ensure continuing donor support for disarmament research. Combining effective resources with vigorous advocacy is essential in keeping the campaign against the proliferation of illicit SALW on the agenda.

Notes

1   See Henny J. van der Graaf, *Weapons for Development: Report of the UNDP mission for Arms Collection Pilot Programme in the Gramsh district*, 4 September 1998.
2   Sometimes referred to as "Weapons in Exchange for Development".
3   It is far more of a tradition to keep weapons in the home in northern Albania than it is in the south. The social organisation of the northern Ghegs (Albanians who live north of the Shkumbi River) is traditionally based upon a tightly-knit clan system connecting various isolated homesteads. In marked contrast, the southern Tosks abandoned the tribal clan-based system sometime in the 13th century and henceforth lived in lowland village-based communities. Due to their isolated existence in remote mountainous districts, the Ghegs felt a need to possess weapons for self protection and hunting, whereas the Tosks had the protection of their larger village communities and relied upon farming rather than hunting for their existence.
4   UNPoA, section III, para. 18.
5   Originally, the project had considered the inclusion of ten countries: Albania, Angola, Brazil, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka.
6   Rural indicates an area where livelihood is drawn from agricultural activities, whereas urban indicates an area where livelihood is based on commercial and industrial activities.
7   As opposed to the Project Core team based in Geneva.
8   Although UNIDIR had planned to pay for these venues, it turned out that the organizers offered them free of charge—again something that demonstrates the local interest in the project.
9   Government, the United Nations and other inter-governmental organizations, as well as the civil society and NGOs.
10   The complete breakdown of law and order following the March 1997 uprising resulted in an increase in blood feud vendettas in the north of Albania, where there is a strong tradition of revenge politics. The re-establishment of the rule of law from October 1999 onwards occurred at a faster pace in central and southern districts of Albania. It was not until the summer of 2000 that any sense of government control and law and order could be felt in the north.
11   Some people also acquired guns simply because everybody was doing so, without any specific intention of use.

[12] For example, there is a decentralized weapon collection structure in all the municipalities. Every city has one police officer in charge of disarmament, and local authorities are empowered to collect weapons.

[13] Note that these are local and community level interventions; therefore, issues like gun licensing, which are functions of the central government rather than the local authorities, are not mentioned.

[14] Stakeholders referred to the situation inter alia by noting that there would be "no more killings, no shootings at night or robberies".

[15] The difference in explanations might be justified by expectations of the political leaders, who think that by overestimating the number of stolen weapons still remaining in the communities they would attract more developmental projects to their areas.

[16] This was especially so for the border communities, where some people had acquired their weapons by purchase rather than looting depots. Also children and youth who had purchased guns were emphasizing the need for direct reimbursement.

[17] This was claimed to be especially due to an incident, where a nine-year-old boy accidentally shot his mother.

[18] It must be noted that to a certain extent, there seemed to be discrepancy within the rural- and urban-based focus groups about the difference between local government and village chief/local committee.

[19] According to UNDP and the Albanian government, over 100,000 weapons collected have been destroyed.

[20] Due to insecurity women would no longer do their day-to-day work such as cultivating fields.

[21] According to women their objectives were never clearly explained.

[22] In reference to the half-finished road, constructed through UNDP funding.

[23] According to the UNDP official in Shkodra, one 100-year-old gun was handed in. Those who handed it over had said they used to keep it inside a wall in their house.

[24] When the team visited an ammunition site in Gramsh, they found expired ammunition, mostly Chinese made 100mm missiles.

[25] The organization of the meetings was different in Shushtca, where exercises were conducted during the weekend, as well as in Baija, where school administrators allowed exercises to be conducted during the school break times.

26   In Pishaj, girls did appear to the meeting and facilitators tried to convince them to join, but they refused.

27   The majority opinion was that generally blood feuds, unlike property feuds, are no longer an issue that leads to armed violence in northern Albania.

28   Note: According to the youth, these were the projects and activities that they had seen going on, but were not sure whether they had been undertaken in exchange for weapons surrendered.

29   The decision to start Weapons for Development Programme was initially proposed by a United Nations High Powered Mission in order to assist the new Government of Albania.

30   When the team visited one the former depots, they looked like a normal storage warehouse.

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