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Listening for Change
Participatory Evaluations of DDR and
Arms Reduction in Mali, Cambodia and Albania

Robert Muggah



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United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
Geneva, Switzerland



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PREFACE

This paper by Robert Muggah of the Small Arms Survey follows the series of studies produced by UNIDIR's Weapons for Development project on Mali, Albania and Cambodia, with the support of the Government of Japan. On the strength of his own expertise in matters related to small arms and light weapons (SALW) and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, Muggah's own reading of these case studies seeks to draw out some of their central threads-in terms of methodology, analysis and guidelines for future policy and research.

Different authors might have drawn different impressions and lessons, but Muggah's interpretation stands as a constructive contribution to an ongoing debate on understanding and refining weapons for development activities. In this sense, this is neither an introduction nor a sequel to the case studies-though it could be read as either-but rather it should be seen as a stimulating companion to these, offering a series of perceptive observations against which readers can match or contrast their own, and which I hope will prompt further thought and research.

Our attention is drawn to the central importance of listening and being attentive to the security concerns of the people in the communities directly affected by the spread and misuse of SALW, and to the challenge of devising effective means for doing so. Participatory methods can shed useful light on how to address such challenges whether in the design, planning, implementation or post facto analysis of weapons for development activities. Notably, by assisting in the accurate identification of needs and opportunities, they can help donor states and institutions to spend any given amount of resources as effectively as possible.

Muggah is surely right in pointing out that neither UNIDIR's project, nor indeed his own paper, are by any means the last word on weapons for development programmes. This is a complex and continuing effort, in which Japan will remain attentive and active, and in which research has a key role to play. Not only are the stakes painfully high for the war-torn

people to whom we are urged to listen, but ultimately, their security and ours are one and the same.

Yoshiki MINE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Japan
to the Conference on Disarmament

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The fact that communities and individuals are often best positioned to take decisions about their day-to-day security and livelihood needs is firmly recognized by development practitioners. Development planners regularly advance so-called “participatory” approaches in all aspects of the project cycle. Oddly, the role and potential of “participation” in the design, implementation and evaluation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and arms reduction schemes continues to be underappreciated by security and disarmament specialists, implementing agencies and donors. Fortunately, recent evidence demonstrates the potential dividends of engendering participatory approaches to the design, implementation and evaluation of DDR and arms reduction activities.¹ Specifically, this research highlights the considerable gains to be reaped in applying participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) to assessing outcomes.

This report summarizes the findings of a large-scale comparative research project undertaken by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). Funded by the Government of Japan, the UNIDIR research project (hereafter, the UNIDIR project) sought to test the applicability of PM&E and the relevance of participation to strengthening DDR and arms reduction schemes, particularly where weapons collection activities were premised on an “exchange” for community development projects.² Carried out over a two-year period (2002–2004) in Mali, Cambodia and Albania, the UNIDIR project generated an array of findings, many of which have far-reaching implications for donors and policy makers interested in supporting DDR and arms reduction. Among these findings are:

DDR and arms reduction, in particular “weapons in exchange for development” programmes, can yield positive dividends in terms of perceived security and fostering peace. Evidence garnered by the UNIDIR project indicates that DDR and weapons reduction initiatives can, and often do, contribute to improved security and perceptions of safety.

The importance of registering perception and subjective experience of project beneficiaries and affected communities, and tailoring projects and incentives to reflect local norms and values, is explicitly acknowledged where participatory approaches are adopted.

Approaches to designing and evaluating DDR and arms reduction schemes are frequently top-down and formulaic. Evidence gathered by the UNIDIR project from communities in Mali, Cambodia and Albania reveals that DDR and arms reduction programmes often advance top-down and “one-size-fits-all” approaches. Despite the best intentions of host governments, multilateral agencies and development organizations supporting such programmes, these initiatives persistently reflect external biases, advance inappropriate incentive schemes, measure inappropriate indicators of success, and seldom take into consideration the voice and agency of prospective beneficiaries and affected communities—particularly women.

Ensuring the participation of primary stakeholders in DDR and arms reduction is a vital and cost-effective strategy. The UNIDIR project finds that advancing a participatory approach to DDR and arms reduction can strengthen the prospects for successful outcomes—whether success is measured narrowly as a function of weapons collected or broadly in terms of real and perceived improvements in human security. Moreover, inculcating genuinely participatory mechanisms for the involvement of beneficiaries in the design, implementation and monitoring of such schemes can potentially engender local ownership, contribute to confidence- and trust-building, and strengthen social capital amongst beneficiaries where dissension, distrust and fear predominate. All of these factors can reduce the overall capital costs of DDR and arms reduction.

Genuinely participatory strategies must involve primary stakeholders from the outset. According to the UNIDIR project, for genuinely participatory approaches to DDR and arms reduction to be effective, they must ensure primary stakeholder involvement from the beginning of the process. A balance must be struck between the interests of donors and project implementers (e.g. collection and destruction of weapons, demobilization of a certain number of ex-combatants, reintegration into civilian livelihoods) and those of the so-called beneficiaries or host communities (e.g. improvements in safety and security, generation of trust and confidence, re-articulation of positive social capital

and visible economic development). Furthermore, checks and balances should be introduced throughout the project cycle to ensure genuine participation of all stakeholders.

PM&E should be integrated early on in DDR and arms reduction initiatives. Importantly, the UNIDIR project finds that PM&E, a comparatively well-established instrument in the development sector, can effectively and efficiently measure the progress and outcomes of DDR and arms reduction programmes. The inclusion and funding of strategies to involve beneficiaries in the definition of programme objectives, promote the definition of simple and realistic indicators and benchmarks of achievement, and the provision of training in the measurement of progress and appraisal of outcomes, can be both empowering and cost-effective. Particularly in societies where large-scale monitoring and surveillance systems are inadequate or non-existent, PM&E represents a compelling tool to ensure improved accountability and transparency in DDR and arms reduction activities.

The application of PM&E in DDR and arms reduction should be balanced against other approaches to measuring the effectiveness of interventions. PM&E should, at the very least, be balanced by a range of complementary monitoring and assessment instruments to assess the effectiveness of interventions. PM&E privileges the qualitative domain of individual and collective experience and gives expression to local interpretations of success and failure. It allows for a decidedly subjective reading of the effectiveness of DDR and arms reduction. While it is true that primary beneficiaries at the grass roots are seldom heard, interventions need to also acknowledge the interests of a broad band of stakeholders, including project donors and implementers. Thus, additional tools such as cost-benefit analysis, rate of return on investment and more conventional evaluation methods should also be applied to measure project outcomes.

The UNIDIR project indirectly reveals a host of constraints associated with the application of PM&E in the context of DDR and arms reduction schemes. Any introduction of participatory approaches must also recognize the tremendous requirements in terms of embracing flexibility, genuine openness to change, and human and financial investment. Because considerable power asymmetries often linger in post-conflict contexts and legitimate sensitivities persist, PM&E may not always be appropriate. Moreover, there are real ethical implications in applying

PM&E in relation to unearthing traumatic experiences—particularly amongst women and children. The UNIDIR project also underlines well-known obstacles associated with the security risks that accompany research in conflict-affected societies, the need to manage expectations of participants, the importance of cultural sensitivity and of the imperative of having a sound grasp of local context.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) schemes and arms reduction programmes are today considered integral components of post-conflict recovery and peace-building strategies. Both the development and security sectors increasingly envision such initiatives—including so-called “weapons in exchange for development” projects—as part of an emerging poverty-reduction and reconstruction orthodoxy.

DDR is a process often introduced after a conflict and focuses on collecting weapons and ensuring the transition and reintegration of *combatants* (from standing armies, police and militia forces, or insurgent factions) into civilian life.³ While a single doctrine has yet to be generated for DDR, a considerable literature has emerged in recent years.⁴ By contrast, weapons reduction is a generic term encapsulating a diverse cluster of programmes that seek to reduce the number of armaments in principally *civilian* hands. Essentially filling the lacunae left by DDR, weapons reduction initiatives often fall outside peace agreements and tend to adopt a more holistic approach than does DDR. They emphasize everything from legislation and regional border agreements to practical activities designed to remove weapons and reduce incentives for arms possession.

Despite their ready adoption by the international community, a small but lively clutch of policy makers, practitioners and academics remain sceptical about whether DDR and arms reduction actually succeed to any significant extent.⁵ Part of their incredulity relates to conflicting interpretations of success. Disarmament specialists, for example, have traditionally measured success as a function of the numbers of weapons collected and combatants or civilians demobilized.⁶ Development practitioners often extend their barometer of success to the sustainability of reintegration. Thus, success is often gauged by the (socio-economic) parity of project beneficiaries to other residents. A growing minority of

practitioners in the fields of disarmament and development, however, emphasize the importance of gauging success as a function of real and perceived improvements in safety and security. In other words, are fewer people being victimized, and do people themselves feel more secure?

These various determinations of success need not be contradictory, though they are often treated as such. Disagreement persists because empirical evidence to determine whether such initiatives achieved even their narrowly defined objectives is often lacking. In fact, some critics are concerned that the original goals set for DDR and arms reduction, however defined, are not even the right ones to begin with.

Evidence generated by the UNIDIR project indicates that DDR and weapons reduction initiatives—particularly weapons in exchange for development projects—can and often do realize their stated objectives, including improved security and perceptions of safety. The UNIDIR project finds that the achievement of these objectives is most convincing when such initiatives are viewed as benefiting entire communities as opposed to rewarding specific individuals. Thus, success is often predicated on the active participation of primary stakeholders in all aspects of the intervention. Effective interventions therefore require a concerted shift from consultation and information-sharing of prospective beneficiaries to an approach that endorses wholesale community participation and ownership.

Importantly, the UNIDIR research project (hereafter, the UNIDIR project) highlights some of the gaps and shortcomings of more conventional approaches to implementing and evaluating DDR and arms reduction. Indeed, such interventions are currently heralded as something of a magic bullet for post-conflict recovery and reconstruction (Muggah, 2005). But a fundamental weakness of these initiatives, the UNIDIR project notes, is their comparatively limited involvement of affected communities and primary stakeholders in the design, implementation and evaluation of such activities.

Finally, the UNIDIR project demonstrates convincingly the viability of participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) as a tool to assess the effectiveness of DDR and arms reduction schemes. It highlights the valuable contribution of PM&E in giving a voice to the intended beneficiaries of such interventions. By testing out specific tools and methodologies, the project

makes a convincing case for expanding the monitoring and evaluation lens, and bringing affected communities more actively into the process.

This report summarizes the findings and lessons learned from the UNIDIR project. It is divided into three sections: project background; project reflections; and project findings in the form of lessons learned. It synthesizes three ambitious case studies that sought to evaluate the outcomes of specific DDR and arms reduction schemes in Mali, Cambodia and Albania. The report reflects on the utility of, and challenges associated with, applying PM&E in the context of DDR and arms reduction initiatives. Unsurprisingly, the report raises many more questions than it answers. The generation of meaningful questions is, however, precisely what PM&E intends to achieve in the first place.

CHAPTER 2

PROJECT BACKGROUND

ANTECEDENT

DDR and arms reduction schemes are now part and parcel of a post-conflict recovery orthodoxy. The World Bank has undertaken no fewer than sixteen DDR programmes in countries emerging from war since 2000 (World Bank, 2003). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has initiated over forty arms reduction projects—including voluntary collection schemes, weapons in exchange for development projects, and an assortment of capacity-building initiatives—over the same period (UNDP, 2005; SAS, 2005a and b). High-profile DDR and arms reduction projects administered by the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the UNDP, the World Bank, multilateral and bilateral agencies, and host governments are currently underway in a range of post-conflict contexts—including in Afghanistan, Iraq, DRC, Sudan, Liberia, Haiti and elsewhere. Literally thousands of national and local arms reduction activities continue to take place around the world.

Alarming, there is little empirical evidence of their success or failure. Instead, DDR and arms reduction activities are frequently replicated regardless of their perceived or documented outcomes. Worryingly, it appears that some donors have not learned the lessons of their previous attempts. For example, a 2004 survey of over a dozen DDR and arms reduction projects observes that none of the interventions could “claim [to have had] a statistically significant impact on security ... [despite] many observed changes in individual and community perceptions of security” (CICS, 2004). The World Bank (2003, p. 149) also remarks in the case of DDR that “no statistical analyses of the effects of military integration on the likelihood of war recurrence are available, [although] in several cases military integration [is] associated with a lowered rate of war recurrence”. There is clearly a pressing need for more and better evaluations of such initiatives, including weapons in exchange for development schemes.

More fundamentally, there is also a growing concern amongst donors and programme implementers that the indicators of achievement are not being appropriately identified or measured. Should the success of DDR and arms reduction be measured by the number of arms collected, or rather real and perceived improvements in safety and security? Predictably, amongst some development donors and practitioners, there is a marked suspicion that affected communities and beneficiaries are not adequately involved the design, implementation or evaluation of DDR and arms reduction schemes. This is hardly surprising: participation is a fixture of the development sector, but remains something of a novelty in the security and disarmament fields.

Recognizing this research lacuna, UNIDIR, with support from the Japanese government, undertook a large-scale comparative study of DDR and arms reduction initiatives. The aim of the research project was to review specific weapons collection projects using PM&E techniques. Thus, PM&E was essentially “piloted” in order to demonstrate its utility as an evaluation tool, but also as an inducement to incorporating this technique into actual programme design and execution. Thus, an expectation was that by applying PM&E the project might generate constructive lessons to assist donors, policy makers from affected countries, specialized agencies within the United Nations and other implementing partners to devise more appropriate strategies for the design, implementation and evaluation of DDR and weapons reduction schemes. Recognizing that many of the more recent high-profile weapons reduction interventions advanced by the international community were not amenable to a comprehensive real-time evaluation, the UNIDIR project focused instead on three countries where DDR or arms reduction activities took place during the 1990s.

The UNIDIR project applied PM&E to assess local perceptions of interventions undertaken in Mali, Cambodia and Albania. Each of the projects identified by the UNIDIR team involved a public awareness campaign, a process of identifying incentives for disarmament, weapons collection, storage and destruction, and the provision of development investment. Table 1 highlights a number of the activities taking place in each country, the type of intervention evaluated by the UNIDIR project team, the implementing agency responsible for the intervention, the timeline of the intervention and their respective outcomes. The table illustrates the size and scale of the distinct case studies, and the dates of the visits undertaken by the UNIDIR team.

A combination of DDR and arms reduction activities took place in Mali starting in the early 1990s. Following a Malian government and civil society-led peace process and weapons destruction in 1994, Coopération Technique Belge (CTB) launched weapons in exchange for development projects in Timbuktu. Under the auspices of UNDP and, later, the Consolidation des acquis de la réinsertion des ex-combattants, the town of Gao was targeted for DDR and a community-based weapons collection process, in which at least 3,000 weapons were destroyed and 11,000 former soldiers reintegrated.

In Cambodia, the European Union's Assistance on Curbing Small Arms and Light Weapons in Cambodia (EU ASAC) arms reduction project began in 2000. The project operated primarily in central and southern Cambodia, and collected over 112,000 weapons. In 2003, the Japan Assistance Team for Small Arms Management in Cambodia started a parallel initiative, focusing additionally on institutional reform, capacity-building of law enforcement entities, as well as peace-building and development.

Numerous arms reduction schemes were launched in Albania between 1997 and 2004. The first, the "Gramsch pilot project", was implemented in Albania between 1997 and 2000 with support from several EU countries, UNDP and the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs (UNDDA). Some 5,981 weapons were collected. This project was rapidly followed by a weapons in exchange for development project in Gramsch, Elbasan and Diber between 2000 and 2002 in which over 23,079 weapons were collected and destroyed. Between 2002 and 2004, UNDP launched another "small arms and light weapons control" initiative in Tirana, Kukes, Shkodra, Lezna and Vhlorë and over 17,065 small arms were gathered.

APPROACH

The application of PM&E as a means of evaluating DDR and arms reduction *ex post*, several years after the completion of a given intervention, yields fundamental concerns about the genuinely participatory nature of the UNIDIR project itself. In fact, the UNIDIR project actually embraced a more *consultative* approach in evaluating DDR and arms reduction activities in Mali, Cambodia and Albania, even if using various instruments common to PM&E. What is more, because most DDR and arms reduction programmes undertaken in the 1990s did not implicitly or explicitly draw on participatory approaches,⁷ measuring their effectiveness on the basis of

Table 1. A summary of DDR and arms reduction in Mali, Cambodia and Albania

	Mali	Cambodia	Albania
General context	Civil war officially ended in 1992 with a peace agreement and a fragile settlement. ^a At least 320,000 small arms and light weapons estimated in circulation and escalating crime widely reported.	Civil war between 1969–1999 that resulted in between 500,000 to 1 million small arms and light weapons in circulation amongst the civilian population.	1997 outbreak of armed violence following collapse of pyramid schemes: 650,000 weapons and over 1.5 billion rounds of ammunition looted from state armouries by civilians.
Intervention	DDR and weapons in exchange for development projects in selected regions	Weapons in exchange for development projects in selected regions	Weapons in exchange for development projects in districts of Gramsch (pilot), Elbasan and Diber
Implementing agencies	Government, UNDP	Government, EU ASAC project	Government, UNDP, UNOPS and UNDDA
Timeline	1995–2003 ^b	2000–2003 ^c	1998–2003 ^d
Results	Over 3,000 weapons destroyed and 11,000 ex-combatants demobilized	At least 150,000 weapons destroyed	23,079 weapons recovered ^e
Date of UNIDIR visit	1–30 March 2003 to Bamako, Lere, Gao and Menaka	18 April–7 May 2004 to Snoul, Angkor Thom and Pailin	19 October–17 November 2003 to Elbasan, Shokoda and Gramsch
Report	Mugumya, 2004a	Mugumya, 2004b	Mugumya, 2005

^a The 1992 peace agreement was followed by the worst fighting period in 1994 that involved inter-ethnic killings; most fighting had ceased by 1995. The war officially ended with the flame of peace in Timbuktu in 1996. For a more thorough review of the history of the Malian peace process, consult Poulton and Youssef (1998) and SAS (2005b).

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- b The UNIDIR project recognized that there were a range of interventions undertaken in Mali between 1995 and 2003. These include DDR (1995–1996), the PAREM efforts (1996–1997) and CTB (1997–2003). Specifically, throughout the 1990s, CTB implemented weapons collection and weapons in exchange for development initiatives, primarily in the Timbuktu region, and these appear to be the focus of the UNIDIR project.
 - c The EU ASAC project ran between 2000 and 2001, collecting some 112,562 weapons. In 2003, the Japan Assistance Team launched a Cambodian small arms control project in Northern Cambodia. Prior to the EU ASAC and Japanese efforts, national weapons buy-backs and weapons amnesties were also quite common. Neither of these two types of interventions was reviewed by the UNIDIR project.
 - d Between 2002 and 2004, UNDP launched the Small Arms and Light Weapons Control (SALWC) project in Tirana, Kukes, Shkodra, Lezna and Vhlorë. The outcome of this project was not reviewed by the UNIDIR project.
 - e The Gramsch pilot project alone collected 5,980 weapons and 137 million tons of ammunition between 1997 and 1998. According to UNDP, the recent SALWC project had collected 17,065 items, including as many as 8,000 weapons, by October 2004.

their adoption of “participation” amounts to causal fallacy. These caveats notwithstanding, the project nevertheless generated a host of important questions and lessons for DDR and arms reduction schemes more generally.

Traditional approaches to measuring the outcomes of DDR and arms reduction schemes have been elaborated by independent consultants contracted to measure performance against pre-assigned indicators, using standardized procedures and tools.⁸ Research questions and methodologies are often externally derived, and rarely emphasize the views and concerns of affected populations. By way of contrast, PM&E is comprised of a wide collection of approaches and involves local people, external agencies and policy makers deciding together how progress should be measured, and results acted upon (see Box 1). It can generate an enormous amount of both quantitative and qualitative data from affected communities themselves that can assist in prioritizing interventions, ranking the “right” indicators of success, and measuring the effectiveness of programmes.⁹ Thus, the application of PM&E in relation to DDR and arms reduction represents a radical shift in approach. In order to gauge the outcomes of DDR and arms reduction schemes, the UNIDIR team developed a range of participatory and rapid rural appraisal (RRA) tools and administered focus group sessions with a wide spectrum of respondents.¹⁰

Box 1. What is PM&E?

PM&E is a long-standing approach drawn from the development sector. Initiated in the 1970s, it emerged in direct response to demonstrated limitations in conventional approaches to measuring the success or failure of large-scale agricultural, infrastructure and community-based development interventions. PM&E is not simply a set of participatory techniques within a conventional monitoring and evaluation (CM&E) setting: rather, it is about radically rethinking who initiates and undertakes an intervention, and who benefits from the findings.

	CM&E	PM&E
Planning and management	Senior managers, outside experts	Local people, project staff, managers, other stakeholders
Role of primary stakeholders	Providers of information	Design and adaptation of methodologies, collection and analysis of data, sharing of findings and linkages with action
Measurement of success	Externally defined indicators of success, primarily quantitative indicators	Locally defined indicators of success, quantitative and qualitative determinations
Approach	Predetermined	Adaptive

Source: Adapted from IDS (1998).

PM&E has evolved in many ways—from community-based approaches where locals are the primary focus, to institutional-based approaches addressing organizational effectiveness (Abbot and Guijt, 1998; ALNAP, 2005). Regardless of the tools that are ultimately used, there are four basic pillars of PM&E: participation, negotiation, learning and flexibility. Methods of undertaking PM&E are varied, ranging from small-scale surveys and cohort studies drawing on scientific measurement techniques adapted for local use, to oral histories, and the use of images, photos, video and theatre. The important point is that PM&E enables people to do their own monitoring, data collection and evaluation, analysis, reporting and to teach donors and implementing agencies by sharing their knowledge. The Small Arms Survey,¹¹ for example, has emphasized that “participatory workshops and techniques provide a forum for affected people to explore their own situation, develop their own criteria of risks and elaborate their own ideas about what appropriate interventions might look like” (Banerjee and Muggah, 2002, p. 18).

The UNIDIR project adopted a range of tools common to PM&E in Mali, Cambodia and Albania. Each country was visited for approximately a month, and local facilitators were identified in areas where DDR and arms reduction activities had taken place.¹² Special emphasis was placed on ensuring that assessments took place in urban, rural and border communities of all three countries. The UNIDIR project team then drew together between five and twenty-five participants in pre-selected sites, and separated groups according to their gender and age.¹³ PM&E techniques included force-field analysis, in which contrasting images of “before” and “after” were presented to participants to stimulate a dialogue. Other instruments included decision-making analysis, focus group discussions, monitoring form approach, the three star game and testimonials (see Annex).

CHAPTER 3

PROJECT REFLECTIONS

The UNIDIR project raised a number of important issues for donors, policy makers and practitioners considering DDR and arms reduction activities. Because it is increasingly acknowledged that neither DDR nor arms reduction schemes are shaped by a universal doctrine or set of guidelines,¹⁴ the findings of the UNIDIR project are potentially quite influential. For example, they highlight the potential limitations of relying on externally contrived indicators of “success” in measuring the outcomes of DDR and arms reduction. These indicators, while important, are incomplete. Importantly, the UNIDIR project documents how PM&E allows for a bottom-up articulation of benchmarks that are more closely aligned to local interests and expectations. The project makes a useful contribution to setting the shape and parameters of “incentive schemes” for DDR and arms reduction interventions. It provides a range of ideas to identify, tailor and refine incentives in a more grounded fashion. Finally, the UNIDIR project emphasizes the critical role of “agency” in enriching the prospects of DDR and arms reduction schemes.

INDICATORS

DDR and arms reduction schemes often adopt standardized and foreign-defined indicators of success to measure the effectiveness of interventions.

Process indicators include, inter alia:

- the establishment of legal institutions to regulate firearms and oversee DDR;
- the installation of arms depots and disarmament sites;
- the setting-up of field offices and disbursement mechanisms;

- the introduction of management information, counselling and referral systems; and
- the launching of quick-impact projects and longer-term livelihood programmes.

Performance indicators are usually restricted to:

- the number and quality of weapons collected (or a unit cost per weapons ratio);
- the number of “beneficiaries” and “affected communities” successfully targeted;
- the number of sensitization sessions and information campaigns undertaken;
- the proportion of women and children included; and
- in rare cases, victimization rates and the incidence of conflict or violence resurgence.

By drawing on PM&E techniques, the UNIDIR project identified a range of locally defined indicators of the success of DDR and arms reduction schemes. Importantly, the UNIDIR project moved well beyond static indicators such as the numbers of weapons collected or the “collection cost” (i.e. cost per weapon) of interventions. Rather, indicators identified by UNIDIR focused primarily on the short- and long-term “impacts” of the related programmes.¹⁵ In all three case studies, for example, real and perceived improvements in safety and security were identified as critical marks of success.¹⁶ These can be divided into short- and long-term indicators.

For example, *short-term* indicators identified in all three countries related to, *inter alia*:

- increased personal mobility;
- the reduced use of armed escorts;
- levels of (economic) cooperation between neighbours, merchants and competing tribes;
- reduction in levels of banditry;
- the resumption of agricultural and fishing activities; and
- the marked reduction and reduced visibility of weapons.¹⁷

Each of these short-term indicators are seldom seriously considered in conventional monitoring and evaluation exercises.

Longer-term indicators, which revealed themselves well after the completion of DDR or arms reduction programmes, related to:

- the emergence of (self-declared) personal self-confidence, courage and trust—often identified as core elements of social capital;
- the (re)establishment of settlements and infrastructure—including telecommunications columns and renewed development-related investment;
- successful restocking and livestock husbandry programmes;
- the return of local administrators and public services;
- increased credibility of government extension officers;
- devolution and administrative reforms;
- reductions in customs duties; and
- the presence of development-oriented community-based or non-governmental organizations.¹⁸

INCENTIVES

DDR and arms reduction schemes typically employ a range of pre-determined incentives to collect weapons and encourage a return to ostensibly civilian life. In recent years, incentives for DDR and arms reduction have broadened to include not just cash incentives but a host of other “carrots” to tempt individuals into relinquishing weapons and to re-engineer their preferences (UNDP, 2005). In the case of DDR, monetary incentives persist—but usually in separate instalments or provided as a combination of credit, grants and loans. By way of contrast, arms reduction schemes have expanded from classic voluntary “buy-back” schemes, which concentrate on influencing an individual’s choices, to voluntary weapons in exchange for development programmes, which centre on introducing non-monetary incentives to communities (as opposed to individuals) and simultaneously modifying group preferences for arms.¹⁹

In applying PM&E approaches, the UNIDIR project focused on identifying which incentives were perceived to be most effective for achieving successful DDR and arms reduction initiatives. Specifically, through a process of dialogue, it aimed first to identify which incentives

were made available to “beneficiaries” in Mali, Cambodia and Albania, and isolate those that yielded positive dividends *in situ*. In all three case studies the UNIDIR approach combined focus groups and semi-structured interviews, reviews of project documents, informant interviews with project planners and a range of discrete tools (see Annex).

In the case of Mali, for example, respondents identified “geographic”, “seasonal” and “demographic” contexts as important factors in determining the shape of incentive schemes for DDR and weapons in exchange for development projects. For example, pastoral and nomadic groups exhibit a preference for wells and water sources while urban-dwelling residents emphasized income-generating schemes. The project also found that the introduction of specific incentives should be tailored to dry and rainy seasons, as well as crop and animal husbandry cycles. Recognition of the heterogeneous demographic features of particular communities was also considered vital: men in rural areas highlighted the value of livestock initiatives (e.g. husbandry) while those in urban regions emphasized trade. By way of contrast, women respondents emphasized projects providing direct services, including health centres, cereal banks, grinding mills and small-scale informal trade-related projects (loans and credit schemes)—incentives that were not equally valued by men.²⁰ Many of these factors are established best practice in the development sector, even if they are still under-appreciated by disarmament practitioners.

AGENCY

Conventional approaches to DDR and arms reduction often adopt a disproportionate focus on the creation of legal and normative institutions, programmatic and disbursement mechanisms and clear exit strategies. Thus, at the very least, an effective DDR or arms reduction project prioritizes the establishment of enabling commissions and committees, effective screening mechanisms for identifying beneficiaries, early-warning systems to mitigate risks, the design of carefully tailored incentive schemes, up-front funding and disbursement guarantees, a clear checklist to measure project effectiveness, and a process to “hand over” the project to national or local authorities. In the rush to install a comprehensive and integrated plan, project implementers often overlook an essential resource: the so-called “beneficiaries” and “affected communities”. The UNIDIR project

found that recognizing, supporting and strengthening the “agency”²¹ of primary stakeholders is ultimately a crucial ingredient of success.

The UNIDIR project repeatedly highlighted the integral role played by national and local leaders, elder and tribal councils, religious and customary institutions, women’s groups and individuals working in concert with project implementers, as pivotal to the success of DDR and arms reduction schemes. An especially salient finding relates to the role of women—as mothers, caretakers, wives, mothers-in-law, sisters and networks—in terms of influencing successful disarmament.²² In Mali, for example, elderly women threatened to strip naked—considered an unbearable insult—unless those in possession of weapons turned in their arms. In Albania, village leaders noted that “women took very responsible roles because of their children. Fathers were abroad, so they [women] felt responsible for their children. Sensitization was done by teachers and mothers”.

The project also highlighted the critical and potentially destabilizing role of power dynamics in communities, how power is or is not shared, the factors conditioning local authority, individual and collective approaches to security management, local resilience and coping strategies and the critical role of local knowledge in designing appropriate interventions. Importantly, the project emphasized the role of individual and collective agency in influencing, supporting and hindering DDR and arms reduction initiatives.²³ In the case of Cambodia, for example, village chiefs were successfully mobilized to ensure high levels of “village” participation in decisions associated with surrendering weapons. Though women were not always adequately represented in such meetings, the UNIDIR project noted that men and women together made decisions about setting up medical centres, educational facilities, wells, roads and sanitation systems in exchange for returning arms.

LEARNING BY DOING

Though it generated a tremendous quantity of information, the UNIDIR project does not provide the final word on participatory approaches to monitoring and evaluating DDR and arms reduction schemes. In fact, as an externally driven and short-term initiative, it represents the tip of the iceberg. Ultimately, the UNIDIR project demonstrates that PM&E, if it is to be truly participatory, must be designed

and executed by the primary stakeholders themselves, and data collection activities must be predicated on their needs and expectations. The challenge with mainstreaming PM&E in DDR and arms reduction efforts will be to balance the interests of the primary stakeholders with those of donors and project implementers—something that in practice is extremely difficult to achieve.

It is worth noting a number of lessons emerging from the UNIDIR project to highlight the challenges associated with PM&E more generally. Paradoxically, despite its intention to adopt a participatory approach, the UNIDIR team advanced what by its own standards was a top-down and arbitrary methodology to selecting project sites, identifying and training local facilitators, and undertaking much of its research. Due to the sheer scope of the research endeavour, the UNIDIR project ultimately drew more from the traditions of RRA.²⁴ Because the project was exogenously driven, its tools externally created and the results published for an external audience, it could not be as genuinely participatory as its own authors would have liked. Issues of unresolved power asymmetries arising from the DDR or arms reduction process were only superficially addressed. Indeed, the question of “power”, and the perceptions of “winners” and “losers” is central to participatory research more generally (Abbot and Guijt, 1998). Moreover, the UNIDIR project was constrained by an externally imposed deadline. Though the UNIDIR project drew on the expertise of indigenous NGOs in all three cases, the comparatively limited experience of the facilitators with participatory methodologies²⁵ and their restricted understanding of the local context, constrained their activities.²⁶ These are issues that must be anticipated and addressed in subsequent studies of this nature.

Even so, the aforementioned limitations and weaknesses are all too common in so-called participatory assessments. If they are to be avoided in the future, certain steps must be taken. For one, just as participation entails more than consultation, PM&E cannot be construed narrowly as a collection of conceptual tools. Participation takes time, requires a shift in the mentality of outsiders (including donors) and requires adequate human, capital and social resources to be effective. An attitude embracing flexibility, opportunism and humility among donors and project planners is essential. In some cases, participatory approaches may not even be appropriate—and this should be recognized at the outset. Where tensions are still simmering, or facilitators not adequately prepared in advance, PM&E may not be a

desirable or effective approach to measuring, much less designing, specific DDR and arms reduction interventions. In fact, given the tremendous fragility and sensitivities that accompany post-conflict contexts, any intervention designed to monitor and evaluate outcomes must be treated with the utmost caution.

CHAPTER 4

LESSONS LEARNED

The UNIDIR project generated a rich array of descriptive findings and lessons learned. Many of these challenge conventional and established assumptions within the disarmament sector. For example, the UNIDIR project observes that disarmament and security practitioners should learn from the development community and adopt participatory approaches in DDR and arms reduction schemes.²⁷ This requires a dramatic shift in mentality amongst donors and project implementers: to effectively hand over more control to primary stakeholders. Moreover, the UNIDIR project calls for the integration of PM&E into the planning and design of DDR and arms reduction. The resource implications of introducing PM&E are relatively minor, even if the dividends are potentially tremendous.

Acknowledge and harness the agency of primary stakeholders when designing DDR and arms reduction initiatives. Ex-combatants, previously armed civilians and affected communities have considerable expertise and skills that should be harnessed in any intervention. Moreover, the UNIDIR project found that community-generated “solutions” to armed violence reduction (including DDR and arms reduction) are compelling and realistic—focusing on reform of the military (particularly recruitment), strengthening civilian law enforcement mechanisms, generating awareness amongst civilians of the pernicious effects of small arms, and multilateral cooperation to curb production and flows.

Donors, policy makers, project implementers and primary stakeholders must establish PM&E systems early on in DDR and arms reduction in order to increase programme effectiveness. Where regional, national and municipal surveillance systems are weak, the UNIDIR project finds that the introduction of PM&E into the project cycle of DDR and arms reduction efforts could significantly bolster accountability, the appropriateness of interventions, and lower financial and transaction costs.

PM&E systems can raise new and fundamentally important perspectives, expand and re-direct priorities and interventions, and allow for opportunistic and dynamic responses. Post-conflict environments are notoriously unpredictable, and interventions aiming to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate ex-combatants or to collect weapons from civilians should allow for flexible and opportunistic responses. The adoption of PM&E at the outset can allow for the identification of previously hidden (local) priorities, highlight appropriate and meaningful performance indicators, engender local ownership and, in some cases, empower primary stakeholders to innovate and take control of their own safety and security.

PM&E systems for DDR and arms reduction should aim to develop simple, measurable and locally appropriate indicators to measure progress. As the UNIDIR project shows, indicators can be developed, inter alia, to: *cost the impacts of weapons on real and perceived security; list appropriate types of weapons to be collected; identify motivations for firearm acquisition and use; and select appropriate incentives for voluntary surrender.* It is important that such systems are straightforward, simple to execute and responsive to the needs of primary stakeholders.

DDR and arms reduction initiatives should ensure that carefully designed public awareness and sensitization campaigns reflect local understandings and priorities. The UNIDIR project highlights the fundamental importance attached to awareness-raising efforts in facilitating the surrender and destruction of weapons. These should focus on identifying underlying tensions between various armed (and unarmed) groups, the attendant risks associated with unregulated weapons possession, the terms and conditions associated with weapons surrender, and the security guarantees provided throughout the process. Awareness and sensitization campaigns should be designed and executed with primary stakeholders and offer an important entry point for establishing positive and symmetrical relations between stakeholders.

DDR and arms reduction efforts should prioritize the destruction of collected small arms and light weapons and encourage an approach that advocates for reductions in armed violence. In all three countries, the UNIDIR team observed the importance attached to public destruction (by primary stakeholders) as a critical feature in restoring security and safety. Though many governments continue to insist on retaining weapons after they are collected for military and policing purposes, the symbolic

dividends of public destruction ceremonies were regarded as critical in promoting collective trust and positive multipliers amongst primary stakeholders. Moreover, the UNIDIR project observes that interventions should be measured according to the extent that they reduce real and perceived levels of armed violence and improve safety, rather than relying solely on the number of arms collected.

Notes

- ¹ DDR and arms reduction are regularly introduced in the post-conflict period. Each of these programmes can adopt approaches that use “community development projects” as incentives in exchange for small arms and light weapons. These programmes—often referred to as weapons in exchange for development—were the primary focus of the UNIDIR project.
- ² Geoffrey Mugumya was the project manager, while Shukuko Koyama provided research assistance and Isabelle Roger and Nicolas Gérard provided administrative and logistical support. A directional support group, composed of independent consultants, practitioners and academics, was consulted. The UNIDIR team also drew extensively on local facilitators in all three case studies to undertake their pre-determined exercises. See, for example, Mugumya (2004a and b; 2005).
- ³ According to the World Bank (2003), where armed conflicts end with a negotiated settlement, rebel reintegration occurs in about 50% of cases. Without a treaty, reintegration is rarer, taking place in approximately 14% of cases.
- ⁴ Much of this literature continues to analyse DDR in terms of its constituent parts rather than as an overarching concept. See, for example, SAS (2005a); Pouligny (2004); Kingma (2000; 2002); GTZ (1996; 2001; 2003); Jensen and Stepputat (2001); Berdal (1996); and Ginifer, Bourne and Greene (2004).
- ⁵ See, for example, SAS (2005a) and the chapter on post-conflict, DDR and arms reduction for a review of the literature and current debates.
- ⁶ In some cases, they also measure the extent to which DDR or arms reduction prevents the outbreak of renewed conflict. See, for example, World Bank (2003).

- ⁷ Even so, there are examples of DDR and arms reduction activities that did adopt elements of participation. For example, the PAREM approach in Mali adopted participatory approaches to design and execution—as ex-combatants were drawn in as designers, organizers, inspectors and project animators throughout the process. The EU ASAC approach was also participatory to the extent the preconditions for selecting weapons in exchange for development sites was a legitimate development organization to undertake the disarmament activity. For example, in Kracheh, participatory rural appraisal maps and surveys, together with community project priority lists were established by an NGO over a period of seven years. In Pursat, there were similar arrangements organized by another NGO under the auspices of UNDP and the government. Conversations with Robin Poulton, March 2005.
- ⁸ See, for example, CICS (2004), World Bank (2003) and others.
- ⁹ This finding was also noted by Willett (2003) in her review of PM&E of landmine clearance in Nicaragua, Mozambique and Cambodia.
- ¹⁰ In Mali, for example, the UNIDIR team carried out focus group interviews with an array of individuals, from bureaucrats and line agency workers, to older, middle-aged, and young men and women.
- ¹¹ The Small Arms Survey has pioneered a range of participatory and rapid appraisal tools and techniques to assess the impacts of firearms on communities and individuals as well as interventions (including DDR and arms reduction projects) to reduce armed violence. Field research has been undertaken between 2001 and 2005.
- ¹² In all three countries, two UNIDIR facilitators coordinated the PM&E process. In Mali, ten local facilitators were contracted (one female, nine males), in Cambodia twenty-two locals supported the process (ten females and twelve males), while in Albania twenty nationals were involved (ten females and ten males).
- ¹³ The UNIDIR facilitators sought to ensure that the timing of the sessions respected the schedules of individual participants—particularly women who “were often too occupied with their household during daytime to participate in workshops” (Koyama, forthcoming).
- ¹⁴ See, for example, Muggah (2005) for a critique of DDR and arms reduction programmes.
- ¹⁵ As previously mentioned, a growing number of disarmament and development specialists have advocated for the use of indicators highlighting changes in safety and security arising from DDR and arms reduction. Thus, some DDR and arms reduction programmes now

consider indicators such as the distribution and profile of intentional injuries, the frequency of psychosocial and psychological trauma and disability, patterns of criminality and victimization, and other factors in the catchment areas of such interventions (SAS, 2005a; Muggah, 2005). While the UNIDIR project did not intentionally explore these variables, they were nevertheless treated briefly in all three case studies.

- 16 In Albania, for example, participants emphasized that “the basic measure of success [of arms reduction projects] would be an improvement in the security situation, indicated by a reduction of armed violence”. See Mugumya, 2005, p. 29.
- 17 Focus group discussions in Albania, for example, revealed that they could “take their animals to graze in the field”, and that they are “not afraid of letting their daughters go out freely”. See Mugumya, 2005, p. 43.
- 18 The extent to which these outcomes can be causally linked with either DDR and arms reduction requires additional investigation. The important factor, however, is that beneficiaries perceive there to be a causal relationship—thus the importance of recognizing perception-based assessments of success or failure.
- 19 A concerted attempt to shape perceptions of weapon ownership—through stigmatization and public awareness campaigns—is central to weapons reduction efforts. Negative incentives (deterrents) are also common—including random “stop-and-search” interventions (which are involuntary and primarily target individuals) and “community searches” (sometimes coercive, and which focus on building confidence among residents and are often conducted in tandem with community policing). See SAS, 2005a.
- 20 See Mugumya, 2004a, p. 43.
- 21 The concept of individual and collective agency derives from social and economic theory. *Individual agency* refers to the preferences and actions of autonomous “agents” and their attempts to exercise and validate a sense of control over their external environments. *Collective agency* refers to the inter-dependency of preferences and actions among agents, and the social and cultural dynamics that influence and condition human behaviour.
- 22 See Koyama (forthcoming) for a more nuanced discussion of the role of women and girls in relation to PM&E.
- 23 The importance of acknowledging the agency of both reintegrated ex-combatants as well as that of the community into which they are

reintegrated has been observed by Robin Poulton. In his view, the “western post-industrialization focus on ‘individual rights and liberties’ doesn’t fit most cultures, where community values often take precedence over individual rights”. Communication with Robin Poulton, March 2005.

- ²⁴ RRA consists of a series of techniques for “quick and dirty” research that are claimed to generate results of less apparent precision, but greater evidential value, than classic quantitative survey techniques. The method does not need to be exclusively rural nor rapid, but it is economical of the researcher’s time. It is essentially extractive as a process: the agenda is still that of the outside researcher. See, for example, IISD (2000).
- ²⁵ “Participatory research requires a degree of self-awareness and training in basic skills. The trainers identified three key factors that are essential to participatory research: (i) transformation of attitudes/behaviour; (ii) awareness of core methods and (iii) a commitment to sharing and action”. See, for example, Samaranayeka and Muggah, 2004, p. 11.
- ²⁶ UNIDIR also recognized the wide array of physical security risks presented by undertaking ostensibly participatory research in post-conflict environments. There is a considerable literature on the risks associated with participatory studies in conflict and post-conflict contexts. See, for example, People in Aid (www.peopleinaid.org/code/code11.htm), the work of the Institute for Development Studies (www.ids.ac.uk), and World Bank poverty assessments in Colombia and Jamaica (poverty.worldbank.org/library/view/6267/).
- ²⁷ It is important to recall, however, that in the case of DDR, “disarmament” and “demobilization” are often not genuinely participatory due to their focus on ex-combatants, and a lesser extent, the broader community. Even so, “reintegration” must absolutely be participatory, given the critical role played by host communities and others in facilitating the re-entry of former combatants into civilian life. In the case of arms reduction projects, however, participatory approaches are more common due to the integral role of community incentives and appropriate communication strategies.

ANNEX

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Decision-making analysis

This technique is designed to appraise and evaluate decision-making strategies in the community. Cards representing different “community members”, including community leaders, outside agencies, men, women and children, are passed to participants. Facilitators then explore the relationships between actors and their relative involvement in DDR and arms reduction.

Focus group discussions

This technique aims to generate a semi-structured dialogue, involving all participants, around particular questions. Facilitators separate groups by gender and age and review how weapons collection projects are implemented and evaluated.

Force-field analysis

This technique uses images to highlight “before” and “after” situations. Participants are asked by facilitators to identify steps and resources required to move from the “before” to the “after” scenario—and the influence of the DDR or arms reduction scheme in either helping or hindering the process. Conversations and responses are documented.

Monitoring form approach

This technique requires participants to brainstorm and list all activities associated with DDR and weapons reduction. The purpose is to understand the sequencing of the process, the motivations associated with community participation, and the effectiveness of existing monitoring mechanisms.

Testimonials

This technique is usually carried out with a single individual, often purposively chosen to represent a particular stratum of a given community. Testimonials are especially relevant in as much as they allow facilitators to explore how decisions are made and how households respond to exogenous shocks.

Three star game

This technique involves the use of three stars of different sizes (in the case of the UNIDIR project, these were assigned a value of “excellent”, “fairly excellent” and “good”) to rank preferred activities and interventions. Facilitators then follow up with participants to better understand the reasons behind the responses of participants.

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ACRONYMS

CICS	Centre for International Cooperation and Security
CM&E	conventional monitoring and evaluation
CTB	Coopération Technique Belge
DDR	disarmament, demobilization and reintegration
EU ASAC	European Union's Assistance on Curbing Small Arms and Light Weapons in Cambodia
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
NGO	non-governmental organization
PAREM	Programme d'Appui à la Réinsertion Socio-économique des Ex-combattants du Nord Mali
PM&E	participatory monitoring and evaluation
RRA	rapid rural appraisal
SALWC	Small Arms and Light Weapons Control
SAS	Small Arms Survey
UNDDA	United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services

