

Blame It on the War?



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The Gender Dimensions of Violence
in Disarmament, Demobilization
and Reintegration



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Founded in 1997, Instituto Promundo is a Brazilian NGO that seeks to promote gender equality and end violence against women, children and youth. On February 1st, 2011, Promundo-US was opened in Washington, D.C., USA. Promundo-US is a separately incorporated NGO that collaborates with Instituto Promundo on international communication, joint advocacy initiatives and technical assistance to projects outside Brazil. Promundo-US also coordinates global work for the MenEngage Alliance (www.menengage.org).



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Founded in 2006, the Sonke Gender Justice Network is a South African-based NGO that works across Africa. It strengthens government, civil society and citizen capacity to support men and boys in taking action to promote gender equality, prevent domestic and sexual violence, and reduce the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS. Sonke has an expanding presence on the African continent and a growing international profile, through its involvement with the United Nations and a range of other international networks and affiliates.

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United Nations Development Programme (www.undp.org)

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. It is on the ground in 177 countries and territories, working with governments and people on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. While developing that capacity, governments and their people draw on experts from UNDP and its wide range of results-oriented partners.

UNDP's approach to reintegration, livelihoods and economic recovery programming combines early stabilization efforts with a longer-term vision for sustainable development and inclusive growth, in line with the United Nations Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS), the United Nations Policy on Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration and the IASC Cluster Working Group Guidance on Early Recovery. In all of its efforts in crisis and post-crisis situations, UNDP seeks to help strengthen both national and local capacities.

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Acronyms

BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (UNDP)
CPR	Crisis prevention and recovery
CSSC	Community security and social cohesion
CSO	Civil society organization
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration
EPLF	Popular Front for the Liberation of Eritrea
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
GAM	Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Aceh Free Movement)
GBV	Gender-based violence
GDV	Gender dimensions of violence
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus/Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
IAWG	United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
IDDRS	United Nations Integrated DDR Standards
IMAGES	International Men and Gender Equality Survey
NGO	Non-governmental organization
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
SALW	Small arms and light weapons
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
TPLF	Tigrayan People's Liberation Front
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women (now part of UN Women)
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN SCR	United Nations Security Council resolution
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WAAFG	Women associated with armed forces and groups
WHO	World Health Organization

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DDR programmes under UN auspices

United Nations agencies, funds and programmes continue to support various aspects of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in countries across the globe, with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) taking the primary lead in disarmament and demobilization and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) taking a leading role in reintegration in peacekeeping settings. UNDP, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other actors also support DDR processes in non-peacekeeping contexts.

As of the Third Report of the Secretary-General on DDR of 21 March 2011 (A/65/741), the total number of peacekeeping operations with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration mandates rested at four: the United Nations-African Union Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). Additionally, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) is mandated to undertake related programming in community violence reduction.

UNDP supports DDR programmes in 22 countries and territories. Additionally, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) continues to support programmes for the release and reintegration of children associated with armed forces or armed groups in 15 countries and territories. The International Labour Organization (ILO),

the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) also provide specialized services in support of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes worldwide.²

In 2010, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes were supporting reintegration programmes in 18 countries and territories: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Indonesia, Kosovo, Liberia, Nepal, Nigeria, Serbia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Uganda. This list includes reintegration programmes supported by the International Organization for Migration. These reintegration programmes were providing assistance to an estimated 257,000 ex-combatants (of whom approximately 10 per cent were female), 9,000 women associated with armed forces and groups (WAAFG), as well as 11,393 children associated with armed forces and groups (8,624 male and 2,769 female). Over the five years from 2006 to 2010, the United Nations has completed reintegration programmes in four countries (Angola, Liberia, Niger and Timor-Leste), which have in turn provided reintegration support to approximately 234,000 participants. During the same period, the United Nations began supporting new reintegration processes in nine countries and territories (Afghanistan, Chad, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Nepal, Nigeria, Somalia and Sri Lanka).³

Executive summary

Background

This report responds to gaps in policy and guidance on the gender dimensions of violence (GDV) in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes. It provides a conceptual framework and DDR programmatic entry points for addressing the gender-specific causes, impacts and dynamics of violence in countries emerging from armed conflicts.

In post-conflict settings, ex-combatants form part of a high-risk group that are susceptible or prone to perpetuating violence, including gender-based (GBV) and self-directed violence and general aggression. They also run the risk of joining criminal or gang activities, being re-recruited into armed groups and spoiling peace agreements. While the majority of ex-combatants are male, and post-conflict violence among male ex-combatants is more visible, female ex-combatants are also more prone to exhibiting violent behaviour than their female civilian counterparts.

Although violence committed against civilians, particularly women, has been increasingly documented in the last decade, much less is documented about the continuation, or different manifestations of violence in the post-conflict period.

DDR supports the sustainable economic, social/psychosocial and political reintegration of former combatants and associated groups into communities. However, for both men and women, the violent norms they internalized and the effects of violence experienced during the war (either as perpetrators or victims) can negatively affect their participation in the DDR process and undermine their transition to civilian life and beyond. The DDR process itself, if not careful, can add fuel to vulnerabilities and feelings of disempowerment. Addressing sources of potential violence and vulnerabilities of ex-combatants, including those created during the DDR process, is not only essential for the effectiveness of the reintegration process and ensuring the ex-combatant's own well-being, but it is also central to violence prevention (including GBV prevention), improving the safety of communities and safeguarding peace processes.

Gender Dimensions of Violence and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Building a conceptual framework

'Gender dimensions of violence' (GDV) provides a lens for analysing the causes, impacts and dynamics of violence from a gender perspective. The approach recognizes that all forms of violence can have gender-related causes and impacts, and that a gender analysis is thus necessary to understand the dynamics of violence and to develop effective responses. The GDV framework assigns men and women shared responsibility for transforming harmful behaviours and violent norms and for promoting positive, culturally relevant and equitable gender identities.

Blame It on the War? works on the assumption that violence is largely socially learned and managed according to how identities are altered by violence as well as by the social norms that govern its use or non-use. Given there has been little work on the subject of GDV and DDR, the report draws upon the experiences of ex-combatants gathered through qualitative case studies in order to identify examples of good practices, key challenges and programmatic gaps.

Accepted social and behavioural models and theories, such as: key elements of gender identities (provide, protect, achievement of prestige and procreation); Social Learning Theory; and the Social Ecological Model help in contextualizing the qualitative nature of the case study research of this report. Through these theories and models, the results of the case studies help to explain patterns of violence in the wake of conflict and to understand the different features of the socialization process through which violent behaviours have emerged, become entrenched in identities and continue to perpetuate.

Gender identities and DDR

This section of the report explores the changes in male and female identities over the course of joining armed forces and groups through to their demobilization and reintegration. Four key elements of gender identities

can be generally ascribed, to varying degrees, across cultural settings and according to gender social norms: *provide, protect, procreate (caretaking) and the achievement of prestige*. Conflict causes temporary or permanent shifts in gender identities and norms. These shifts may not be welcomed in the post-conflict environment and adaptation to new identities and norms can be difficult.

Post-conflict settings generally lack both the infrastructure and support that promote economic opportunity and physical security, which are prominent elements often associated with masculinities. More than an income, employment brings a sense of dignity and respect (achievement of prestige) and the means to raise a family (procreate/caretaking) and lack of employment can mean the reverse. Moreover, the DDR process itself can intensify masculine vulnerabilities as, for instance, giving up weapons and demobilization can be a symbolic loss of 'manhood' and the status that the military rank afforded men and boys. Undermined masculinities at all ages can lead to profound feelings of frustration and disempowerment.

During and after conflict, women's identities often remain anchored in their expected roles and responsibilities as caretakers. During the conflict they may take on more roles as protectors and providers, which on the one hand can become a source of empowerment. On the other hand, in post-conflict settings, the social norms may re-impose limitations on these roles for women. Women's empowerment after conflict can also provoke or intensify men's feelings of resentment or disempowerment, potentially putting the woman at risk for heightened violence in the domestic sphere. The DDR process can also separate women and girls from their informal 'marriages' upon which they depended during the war, leaving them with no money, often stigmatized and with limited standing in civilian society.

Moreover, members of armed forces and groups were socialized to use violence and often undergo a militarization of their identities that can follow them through the DDR process and beyond. Many ex-combatants face PTSD, other mental issues or substance abuse as a result of their experiences in the war. Compounded by the challenges and vulnerabilities related to identities, these concerns, left unaddressed, can fuel anti-social and violent behaviours. Psychologically distressed ex-combatants and associated groups require concerted support in the post-conflict period. DDR programmes have often lacked the technical and financial resources to address psychosocial concerns. It is clear, however, that addressing these critical issues is central to the achievement of sustainable reintegration and reduction of vulnerabilities to violence.

Gender Dimensions of Violence and violence prevention

Blame in on the War? examines vulnerability factors that increase the susceptibility or risk of being affected by violence, resorting to it, or being drawn into

groups that perpetuate it. In contrast it also explores resilience, referring to "the ability to adapt, rebound, and strengthen functioning" in the face of violence, extreme adversity, or risk. For ex-combatants, this means the ability to withstand, resist and overcome the socialization of violence and traumas experienced in the armed force or group when coping with the social and environmental pressures typical of post-conflict environments and beyond.

There is no single factor responsible for why a person or group is at higher or lower risk of perpetuating or refraining to use violence. Rather, it depends on a combination of factors at play within different domains of the individual's environment. According to the Social Ecological Model, these domains exist at individual, interpersonal, community and societal levels. Although contexts and actors vary, factors of vulnerability at these different levels can be reversed and addressed as factors of resilience. It is not enough, however, to focus on core perpetrators of violence. Inner supportive groups and the wider community often have an influential role in supporting or deterring violence. In this regard, broader interventions that consider the gender realities of both men and women in community-based programmes are essential.

GDV entry points in DDR programming

Responding to the full extent of long-term psychosocial needs of ex-combatants extends beyond what can be achieved in the limited duration of DDR programmes. Nevertheless, DDR provides an opportunity for early interventions to de-escalate and transform violent identities, to identify and target vulnerabilities and to reinforce resilience that can increase the ex-combatants chances at successful reintegration. Furthermore, gender-sensitive DDR paves the way for gender-transformative interventions as a part of the wider recovery and development processes.

Part IV of this report looks at how DDR programmes can apply a gender perspective to better identify sources of male- and female-specific vulnerabilities and to help strengthen their resilience to facilitate their transition to civilian life. It explores the particular experiences and vulnerabilities of women, men, boys and girls, in relation to each step in the DDR process, and identifies key programmatic entry points, considerations and actions for DDR.

Disarmament can increase an ex-combatant's feeling of vulnerability. More than physical protection, weapons are seen as important symbols of power and status. For men, weapons embody militarized models of masculinity or manhood. For women, disarmament can threaten the gender equality and respect they may have gained through the possession of a weapon, which may have also been a significant source of self-protection while in the armed force or group.

DDR programmes should explore ways to promote alternative role models and symbols of power that are relevant to particular cultural contexts and that

promote peace dividends. This can be done through replacing the gun as a symbol of power, addressing key concerns over safety and protection and developing strategic engagement with women (particularly female dependants) in disarmament processes.

Demobilization can represent a loss of the sense of collective identity, purpose and belonging. It can also strip ex-combatants and associated groups of the 'war family' that they depended upon for economic support, protection and peer support. DDR programmes should support ex-combatants to form new social and support networks while practitioners should consider ways to gradually transform the strong social ties developed within armed forces or groups into a positive new driver of recovery and development.

Community service work, national service corps and military reserve forces, even if voluntary, can help ex-combatants retain social ties and provide a means of making a collective contribution to the recovery process. It is also important that both male and female (ex-combatants and associated groups) survivors of GBV are given the space and the encouragement to come forward to receive support and assistance.

Awareness-raising and sensitization activities undertaken as part of the demobilization phase can also provide an important entry point to address the gender dimensions of violence early in the DDR process. Particularly in contexts where demobilization and cantonment are prolonged, this can be a critical period for discussing ex-combatants' expectations for reintegration, including expectations relating to gender roles. Therefore, key entry points include:

- transforming or building new social support networks;
- screening for physical and mental health concerns;
- initiating awareness-raising and sensitization initiatives;
- building social cohesion through interim stabilization projects.

Reintegration is a longer-term process with economic, social/psychosocial and political components. Successful reintegration requires that ex-combatants form new civilian identities and (re-)learn how to face difficulties and social conflict in a non-violent manner. Support for economic reintegration must consider how gender norms shape attitudes toward employment and livelihoods.

Economic reintegration: In addition to earning income, economic reintegration is an important source of respect, status and sense of belonging, which are central to forming a non-violent civilian identity. Key entry points include:

- ensuring sensitivity to gender norms surrounding sustainable livelihood and employment options;
- inserting social and psychosocial components into economic reintegration programmes;
- creating income-generating opportunities through work with the public and private sectors;
- building a positive sense of self, purpose and respect that is not dependent upon being an economic 'provider';

- using economic reintegration as an opportunity to build social cohesion and support local economic recovery.

Social reintegration: Ex-combatants and associated groups have adapted their identities to survive the violence and harsh conditions of war and may have lost or missed out on critical civilian life skills. Children and youth can be particularly affected by the early socialization of violence. Social reintegration is also an important catalyst for employment and economic security. Moreover, it is an appropriate entry point for addressing GDV. Key entry points include:

- supporting ex-combatants to (re-)learn to manage stress, anger and inter-personal conflict non-violently;
- using health as an entry point to address GDV, including through HIV/AIDS and reproductive health interventions;
- developing parenting and interpersonal skills;
- transforming harmful gender norms and attitudes within communities through trained peer educators;
- strengthening ties between ex-combatants and communities and building social cohesion;
- strengthening local mechanisms for security, justice, governance and peacebuilding.

Psychosocial reintegration: Ex-combatants and associated groups with unaddressed trauma and mental health concerns, including anxiety and stress disorders, PTSD, drug and alcohol abuse, and exposure to GBV, are particularly vulnerable to developing anti-social behaviours. Psychologically distressed ex-combatants and associated groups require concerted support in the post-conflict period. In addition, it is also essential to provide special attention to the psychosocial needs of children associated with armed forces and groups, as well as young adult ex-combatants. Key entry points include:

- prioritizing psychosocial support to manage anxiety and stress disorders, PTSD and war-related trauma;
- providing substance abuse rehabilitation options;
- building psychosocial referral chains and training community counsellors;
- preventing intimate partner violence;
- addressing stigma associated with GBV and providing access to care for both women and men

Conclusion and Recommendations

DDR practitioners and policymakers have the opportunity to further reduce security risks and ensure programme effectiveness through a greater focus on GDV during early recovery and into the long-term peacebuilding process. Because of their focus on ex-combatants and associated groups during the transition to peace, DDR programmes are ideally placed to help women, men, boys and girls to overcome violent masculinities and femininities and form alternative, positive civilian identities. They additionally may serve as a precursor to critical development processes, paving the way for gender-transformative interventions and the formation of more equitable relationships between men and women.

To address existing gaps in policy and guidance on GDV in DDR programming, the following actions are recommended:

1. Apply a gender perspective for both male and female DDR participants and beneficiaries whether it is at the policy or programming level

The Integrated DDR Standards provide strong guidance on addressing the needs of women and girls, including women associated with armed forces and groups, in the DDR process. However, the need for a gender perspective on men and boys' experiences and their successful reintegration has been largely neglected. DDR policies and programmes should recognize and respond to the gender-related needs and vulnerabilities of men and boys as well as women and girls in order to reduce trauma and vulnerabilities and strengthen resilience of both sexes to violence.

2. Conduct pilot projects that address the gender dimensions of violence in DDR

To strengthen practice in the area of gender and respond more effectively to post-conflict violence, DDR programmes should aim to develop pilot projects and explore effective ways of scaling-up existing pilots that integrate GDV issues.

3. Increase support for the psychosocial components of reintegration

Donors have often focused their support on economic reintegration packages. However, the findings of this report suggest that psychosocial issues, particularly PTSD and trauma-related disorders, depression and alcohol and drug abuse, are key factors influencing particularly male ex-combatants' continued use of physical violence. Successful reintegration programming should therefore integrate economic, social and psychosocial components as part of a comprehensive approach. Steps must be taken to increase the UN's capacity to support psychosocial reintegration as part of DDR programming, including its gender dimensions.

4. Deepen engagement with families and communities of return

DDR programmes must target not only the individual ex-combatant and associated groups, but also their families and community of reintegration. Deeper engagement with families and communities will help all to talk about the norms, attitudes and relationships that reinforce violent behaviour and will help support initial steps towards behavioural change.

5. Strengthen partnerships with organizations working with women and men

In order to effectively address GDV, DDR programmes should strengthen partnerships with relevant organizations, particularly women and men's networks. Networks and organizations working with men, women, boys and girls on the gender dimensions of violence and gender equality can play a central role

in efforts to reach out to and provide a support base for male and female ex-combatants, their families and communities.

6. Enhance coordination within the UN system as well as with national bodies to address the gender dimensions of violence

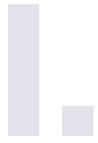
UN entities such as UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, UNFPA, IOM, WHO, UNAIDS, DPKO, and UN Women among others regularly engage on DDR and related issues within their respective mandates. DDR programmes must be coordinated and sequenced in a manner that is compatible and mutually reinforcing throughout the start, implementation and closing of the DDR process, including with those activities undertaken by partners and/or national authorities.

Transforming (violent) norms, institutions and attitudes that support violence in the wider community and society is a long-term process. The political will and financial means to reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience to violence at the community and national levels must continue long after the formal DDR programme ends and transition strategies should be coordinated among all partners and national bodies. These include programmes in security sector reform (SSR) and rule of law (RoL) among other employment, livelihoods, GBV, violence reduction and prevention, and community security programmes.

7. Build capacity of UN and partners to address the gender dimensions of violence

In order to produce more gender-responsive DDR programmes, DDR practitioners within the UN system, their partners and national and international counterparts must be provided with the knowledge, technical skills and tools to respond to gender dimensions of violence at any given stage in the DDR process. Similar skills training should also be considered for related fields that implement programmes that are post-DDR but that may include ex-combatants and associated groups as beneficiaries.

It is also useful to support capacity building and training on GDV for all related programmes such as GBV, employment, livelihoods, armed violence reduction, community security, peacebuilding and conflict prevention. International and national practitioners in these fields may have ex-combatants among their beneficiaries and training would be useful to help them understand particular gender-related sensitivities, vulnerabilities and positive attributes that can make them agents of change.



Introduction

1.1 Background

Peace agreements bring a formal end to war and enable recovery programmes such as the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants and associated groups to begin.⁴ However, high levels of violence persist and new manifestations of violence emerge in many post-conflict environments. Deaths due to armed violence in post-conflict settings can often exceed wartime levels.⁵ Almost half of civil wars relapse into conflict within the first five years of a peace agreement.⁶

In post-conflict settings, ex-combatants (particularly but not exclusively) form part of a high-risk group that are susceptible or prone to perpetuating violence, including interpersonal violence, gender-based (GBV), self-directed violence and general aggression. They also run the risk of joining criminal or gang activities, being re-recruited into armed groups and spoiling peace agreements. While the majority of ex-combatants are male, and post-conflict violence among male ex-combatants is more visible, female ex-combatants are also considered to be more prone to exhibiting violent behaviour than their female civilian counterparts.

Violence in the conflict and post-conflict period has significant gender dimensions. Men and women have very different experiences as combatants and associated members during the conflict as well as in their transitions to civilian life. As a result, they have different, albeit intersecting, needs, vulnerabilities and capacities in relation to the DDR process. In order to reduce post-conflict violence, it is important to understand their respective motivations, needs and priorities during and after the conflict, as well as understanding the impact that their socialization into the use of violence and wartime experiences has had on their identities. Doing so enables programme planners to better accommodate, factor in and address some of the social and systemic vulnerabilities to violence.

The 'gender dimensions of violence' (GDV) framework focuses on the causes, impacts and dynamics of violence in conflict-affected environments. It promotes a better understanding of how gender roles and

identities affect or are affected by violence. Applied to DDR, incorporating GDV approaches can help DDR planners and practitioners isolate and address the motivations of combatants that led them to join armed groups in the first place; pinpoint their vulnerabilities for perpetuating violence upon demobilization; and help identify appropriate reintegration interventions that will reinforce their resilience to avoid or reject future violence.

Addressing sources of potential violence and vulnerabilities of ex-combatants is not only essential for the effectiveness of the reintegration process and ensuring the ex-combatant's own well-being, but it is also central to violence prevention (including GBV prevention), improving the safety of communities and safeguarding peace processes.

1.2 Objectives

This report responds to gaps in policy and guidance related to the role and utility of GDV in DDR programming. It provides a conceptual framework for addressing the gender-specific causes, impacts and dynamics of violence in countries emerging from armed conflicts and identifies entry points for sustainable reintegration.

With a view to improving the overall effectiveness of DDR programmes and the sustainability of its results, the objective of the report is to:

1. Improve understanding of how armed conflict, membership in armed forces and groups, and the DDR process directly affect the gender identities of male and female combatants, ex-combatants, and associated groups;
2. Improve understanding of the factors that contribute to the vulnerabilities and resilience of male and female ex-combatants in post-conflict settings, including the influence of gender identities; and,
3. Make recommendations for addressing the 'gender gaps' in DDR policy and programming, integrating actions both to reduce ex-combatants' vulnerabilities and strengthen their resilience throughout the DDR process.

Applying a gender-sensitive analysis throughout, the report begins by putting forward a conceptual framework of GDV, including the key terms, concepts and commitments. It explores how changing gender norms, roles and identities as well as socialization of violence may influence or limit the ability of ex-combatants and associated groups to reintegrate. In its third section, through identifying sources of risk and vulnerability and opportunities for strengthening resilience to deter violence, the report then explores entry points where DDR could play a pivotal role in violence prevention through targeted reintegration interventions. The report concludes with a series of recommendations aimed at helping policy-makers and practitioners incorporate GDV in DDR policy, planning and programming.

1.3 Development of the report

In 2008, UNDP thus launched the Gender Dimensions of Violence (GDV) Initiative in order to increase policy and programmatic guidance for understanding and addressing the role of gender identities in violence prevention and reduction in fragile, crisis and conflict settings.

Blame It on the War? takes as a starting point that violence is largely socially learned and managed according to how identities are altered by violence as well as by the social norms that govern its use and restraint. Given there has been little work on the subject of GDV and DDR, the report draws upon the experiences of ex-combatants gathered through qualitative case studies in order to identify examples of good practices, key challenges and programmatic gaps.

The report draws on accepted social and behavioural models and theories, such as key elements of gender identities (provide, protect, achievement of prestige and procreation); Social Learning Theory; and the Social Ecological Model to help in contextualizing the qualitative nature of the case study research. Through these theories and models, the results of the case studies help to explain patterns of violence in the wake of conflict and to support understanding of the different features of the socialization process through which violent behaviours have emerged, become entrenched in identities and continue to perpetuate.

The results of this report are based on primary field research conducted in six post-conflict environments: Colombia, Croatia, the Province of Aceh (Indonesia), Liberia, Nicaragua and southern Sudan (now South Sudan). Additional desk research and consultations undertaken on Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Sudan and Timor-Leste complement the field studies and provide a broader, comparative perspective.⁷

The case studies were strategically selected in order to examine different stages of post-conflict recovery and transition (i.e. number of years post-conflict), with a specific emphasis on countries where DDR programmes or related ex-combatant reintegration took place. Experiences from US war veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan was later drawn upon in order to: 1) examine the effects of war on combatants in a country that is involved in a conflict but not considered 'post-conflict' and 2) understand new approaches to addressing GDV issues currently being undertaken with veterans.

The field missions included visits to three to four communities per country and therein conducting three to four focus group meetings (10-25 participants each). In Liberia, Indonesia, southern Sudan and Croatia the focus groups involved groups of male and female ex-combatants – both separately and jointly – as well as with women associated with armed forces and groups (WAAFG) and civilian men and women.

In addition, approximately 30-45 key informant interviews were conducted in each country using an open-ended questionnaire related to community safety, typologies of violence and socialization of violence, perceptions of gender roles and identities and social and systemic vulnerabilities and points of resilience. The interviews were conducted either on a one-to-one basis or in groups of up to three people. Respondents included male and female ex-combatants and associated groups, members of community-based organizations and NGOs, local and national government officials, United Nations Country Team staff, male and female civilians, elders, youth, and gang members.

Initial findings, policy and programmatic entry points and recommendations were developed with substantial input from members and participants of the Sub-Working Group on Gender and HIV of the Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR (UN Women, UNFPA), a working session with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other key Dutch partners, NGOs including the Refugee Law Project in Uganda and others leading gender-transformative work with men by MenEngage Alliance, Instituto Promundo and Sonke Gender Justice, as well as specialists from the University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa and Boston University School of Medicine, USA.

The findings and recommendations in this report were presented and validated in a number of forums, including the MenEngage Symposium in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, March-April 2009 and the pilot DDR and Gender Course in Oslo, Norway, November 2010, organized by the Norwegian Defence International Centre (NODEFIC), in collaboration with the IAWG on DDR Sub-group on Gender and HIV.

1.4 Key terminology

Box 1: Key terminology

Combatant

A combatant is “a person who: is a member of a national army or an irregular military organization; or is actively participating in military activities and hostilities; or is involved in recruiting or training military personnel; or holds a command or decision-making position within a national army or an armed organization; or arrived in a host country carrying arms or in military uniform or as part of a military structure; or having arrived in a host country as an ordinary civilian, thereafter assumes, or shows determination to assume, any of the above attributes.”⁸

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

Based on the policy guidance on the UN Secretary-General in 2005, the UN Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Standards (IDDRS) defines DDR as “a process that contributes to security and stability in a post-conflict recovery context by removing weapons from the hands of combatants, taking the combatants out of military structures and helping them to integrate socially and economically into society by finding civilian livelihoods.”⁹ Revisions in the Secretary-General’s third report on DDR (2011) have additionally emphasized that while “reintegration programmes supported by the United Nations are time-bound by nature ... the reintegration of ex-combatants and associated groups is a long-term process that takes place at the individual, community, national and regional levels, and is dependent upon wider recovery and development.”¹⁰

DDR programme participants and beneficiaries include male and female adult, youth and child combatants, and others associated with armed forces or groups in non-combat roles.¹¹

Ex-combatant

Ex-combatants are defined as “a person who has assumed any of the responsibilities or carried out any of the activities mentioned in the definition of ‘combatant’ and has laid down or surrendered his/her arm(s) with a view to entering a DDR process. Ex-combatant status may be certified through a demobilization process by a recognized authority. Spontaneously auto-demobilized individuals, such as deserters, may also be considered ex-combatants if proof of non-combatant status over a period of time can be given.”¹²

‘Gender’ versus ‘sex’

Gender refers to the socially and culturally ascribed characteristics, roles, and identities of men and women that are learned throughout the life cycle. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context- and time-specific and changeable. ‘Gender’ determines what is socially expected, allowed and valued in a man or a woman in a given environment and affects responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities.¹³

Gender analysis

Gender analysis refers to the socially constructed attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female and the relationships between and among women, men, girls and boys, in a certain socio-cultural context. Gender-responsive DDR programmes are planned, implemented, monitored and evaluated in a manner to meet the different needs of female and male ex-combatants, supporters and dependants. Due to the context-bound nature of the term, understanding and addressing gender always requires a careful analysis, looking into the responsibilities, activities, interests and priorities of women and men, and how their experiences of problems may differ

Gender dimensions of violence

The gender dimensions of violence is a means to understand the differences in men and women’s experiences of and roles in violence, including their respective coping capacities. By exploring how gender identities are relevant to violent norms and behaviour and how resilience can be strengthened, it paves the way for gender-based transformative interventions.

Gender-sensitive programmes

Gender-sensitive programmes recognize the specific needs and realities of women, men, women, boys and girls based on the social construction of gender role as well as the need “to treat men and women differently based on prevailing gender norms” but that show little evidence of seeking to change overall gender relations in the intervention.¹⁴

Masculinities and femininities

The terms ‘masculinities’ and ‘femininities’ are used to refer to the socially and culturally determined characteristics of men and women, which include the norms and expectations held about their roles, attributes and likely behaviours. The plural form of these terms is used to recognize that even within a particular cultural context, there is not a single concept of masculinity or femininity, but rather many masculinities and femininities exist, each of which may be associated with different positions of power or degrees of social acceptance within society.¹⁵

Gender-based violence (GBV)

According to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action (December 2006), gender-based violence is "an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based upon socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females." UNFPA's 2006 report recognizes that the "term GBV continues to be used principally in reference to violence against women and girls"; however, it highlights that, "while the term gender-based violence is often used synonymously with the term violence against women, in its fullest sense GBV also encompasses violence against men and boys that results from gender roles or gender-role expectations (for example, forced conscription based on the expectation that males fight in wars)..."¹⁶ In this report, GBV includes sexual violence (see definition of sexual violence, below)

Resilience

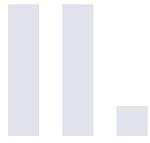
Resilience refers to the ability "to adapt, rebound, and strengthen functioning" in the face of violence, extreme adversity or risk.¹⁷ For the purposes of this report and in the context of ex-combatants, it corresponds with the latter's ability to withstand, resist and overcome the socialization of violence and traumas they experienced in the armed force or group when coping with the social and environmental pressures typical of post-conflict environments and beyond.¹⁸ Acquisition of social skills, emotional development, academic achievement, psychological well-being, self-esteem, coping mechanisms and attitudes when faced with stress and recovery from trauma are all factors of resilience.¹⁹

Sexual violence in armed conflict

According to WHO, sexual violence is: any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting. Conflict-related sexual violence refers to incidents or (for SCR 1960 listing purposes) patterns of sexual violence, that is rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity, against women, men, girls or boys. Depending on the circumstances, these acts can constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, acts of torture or genocide. This report includes sexual violence under GBV. The term "sexual violence" itself refers to many different crimes including rape, sexual mutilation, sexual humiliation, forced prostitution, and forced pregnancy.²⁰

Vulnerability

In this report vulnerability refers to those factors that increase the ex-combatants' susceptibility or risk of being affected by violence, resorting to it, or being drawn into groups that perpetrate it.



Gender dimensions of violence and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration: building a conceptual framework

2.1. Gender dimensions of violence

'Gender dimensions of violence' (GDV) provides a lens for analysing the causes, impacts and dynamics of violence from a gender perspective. The approach recognizes that all forms of violence have gender causes and impacts, and that a gender analysis is necessary to understand the dynamics of violence and to develop effective responses. GDV assigns men and women shared responsibility for transforming harmful behaviours and violent norms and for promoting positive, culturally relevant and equitable gender identities.

Armed conflict affects women, men, girls and boys differently. While high rates of violence committed by combatants *during* the war against one another, or among civilians, particularly women, have been increasingly documented in the last decade, there is a tendency for policymakers and donors to overlook the continuation of violence, its new manifestations, and its gender dimensions in the post-conflict period.²¹

In particular, systematic data on the patterns of violence among ex-combatants and associated groups is lacking.

Most work on gender and violence has focused on special measures to address gender-based violence (GBV) and to bring to light women's particular experiences in conflict settings. However, there is a growing recognition that gender identities are also relevant to men and boys's experiences in conflict, and that men and boys must be engaged if violent behaviour is to be addressed and transformed.²² Focusing on men in gender work is not about transferring attention or benefits away from women to men, but rather about making gender work and programming more meaningful.

Men and women often have different but equally significant motivations for joining armed groups as well as distinctive experiences during and after the conflict. Within the GDV framework, gender identities

Box 2. International commitment to work with men and boys on gender

According to the results of the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) conducted in Zambia and Eastern DRC (2008), the "measurement of progress on the Millennium Development Goals reveals that progress has been made in empowering women. However, progress in areas that require engaging men – reducing violence against women, increasing women's income relative to men's, and reducing inequalities related to the care burden – is left far behind."²³ Indeed, there is a slow but steady recognition that men must be included in gender work to prevent and reduce violence, including GBV as well as promote gender equality.²⁴

The United Nations has recognized the critical importance of considering and addressing the gender specific needs of men and women and to address issues of sexual violence in DDR programmes. International commitments aim to strengthen women's participation in all aspects of peacebuilding through UN Security Council resolutions 1325/1889²⁵ and address conflict-related sexual violence in UN Security Council resolutions 1820/1888/1960.²⁶ Notably, UN Security Council resolution 1325 "encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependents."²⁷

and violence are both treated as social phenomena. Accordingly, understanding motives, social influences and socialization into the use of violence are fundamental to identifying, addressing and breaking the sources or patterns that increase or decrease one's likelihood of falling victim to violence and/or perpetrating and perpetuating violence.

As a conceptual framework, GDV gives DDR practitioners a means to apply gender-sensitive analysis on the priorities and needs of both male and female participants and beneficiaries of DDR. With this knowledge, practitioners can identify programmatic entry points for improving the overall gender-responsiveness of DDR interventions, thereby not only improving the chances for an individual's successful reintegration, but also in helping to prevent the resumption of conflict, promote non-conflict violence prevention and break potential cycles of violence that can thrive in post-conflict settings.

2.2 Gender identities during and after conflict

Gender identities and roles are not static. They evolve over time in response to social, political, economic, and security changes, including those brought about by conflict. In contrast, gender norms – which define acceptable male and female behaviour – are typically much slower to change in normal development contexts.

Importantly, there is not a single concept of masculinity and femininity;²⁸ the norms defining what is considered acceptable masculine and feminine behaviour vary from culture to culture and therein may be associated

with different positions of power or degrees of social acceptance.²⁹ Nonetheless, there are four key “P” elements that are shared to varying degrees across many cultural settings:³⁰

- The ability to **provide** for families.
- The ability to **procreate**, to attract women/men and be a father/mother or caregiver.
- The ability to gain **prestige** through responsibility or social position within the community.
- The ability to **protect** the family and community, which can manifest as a violent or militarized identity.

The four ‘P’s apply to both masculine and feminine identities; however, different cultures will assign different levels of importance to each ‘P’ according to their own respective gender and social norms. For males, the social norms and customs often emphasize roles as providers and protectors. For females, concepts of femininity may emphasize women’s expected roles as caregivers or their ability to attract men. Dramatic events, such as conflict provoke deviations in the masculine and feminine identities that shift (temporarily or permanently) the priorities or social value assigned to the different ‘P’ components. Conflict brings pressures for change that can significantly alter respective gender roles, relationships and identities.

Gender identities are an important factor in explaining men and women’s susceptibility as victims and perpetrators of violence worldwide. In both conflict-affected and peaceful environments, violent masculinities and femininities are shaped by socially constructed and perpetuated norms related to the use of violence.

Box 3: Core elements of gender identities during conflict

Role of provider

In conflict settings, identities as **providers** are typically undermined as economic opportunities stagnate or decline. Limited access to employment opportunities, the destruction of livelihoods, displacement, and other changes brought about by transition, can have a particularly negative impact on men’s ability to earn a living and provide for their family as their skills may become obsolete or undervalued.

In contrast, women’s roles often expand as they take on a greater responsibility for income generation activities as incomes decline or men leave home to fight or to find employment elsewhere. This change of role may be temporary as a way to cope with the livelihood insecurity in conflict but it may also evoke fundamental changes in gender equality. Men may perceive the expansion of women’s roles as providers to be competition and may contribute to men’s developing feelings of disempowerment, particularly if they are unable to fulfil the roles as providers.

For both men and women, the economic hardships and inability to provide can increase an individual’s vulnerability for recruitment into armed groups or forces.

Role of procreator

Economic desperation, displacement and violence endemic to conflict settings erode the cultural barriers that sanction and set boundaries for sexual behaviour. These changes can disrupt family structures and transform both men and women’s identities as **procreators**. Crisis and conflict can disrupt family structures. Men and women who join or are associated with armed forces and groups may be more likely to enter into unconventional marriages or relationships. Men’s responsibilities as fathers and husbands can diminish in importance, while the number of girlfriends, partners and offspring becomes a dominant symbol of manhood.

Women’s attitudes towards sexual relationships and attraction also often change as traditional or cultural norms breakdown in the face of conflict. As women become more vulnerable in the deteriorating security situation, they may become increasingly willing to risk abuse by seeking protection and economic support from armed groups or male combatants. Female combatants and WAAFV may often face social stigma due to their exposure to GBV, to war-time relationships outside of marriage, and to the children born from these circumstances and relationships.

While women often face pressure to marry and to return to caretaking roles, men’s roles as caretakers and fathers may be devalued by the length of time they spent away from their communities and families.

Gaining prestige

The changes associated with conflict can alter men and women's ability to gain **prestige**. Social structures break down during conflicts and the typical opportunities that would provide prestige are no longer available, or at least not as easily accessible. New influences and forms of manipulation coming from elder or political elites, or armed groups or states can reprioritize or even distort social values and redefine what constitutes as prestige. In conflict settings, typical positive role models can be replaced with those that symbolize radicalized views, power or rebellion, often celebrating those that use violence.

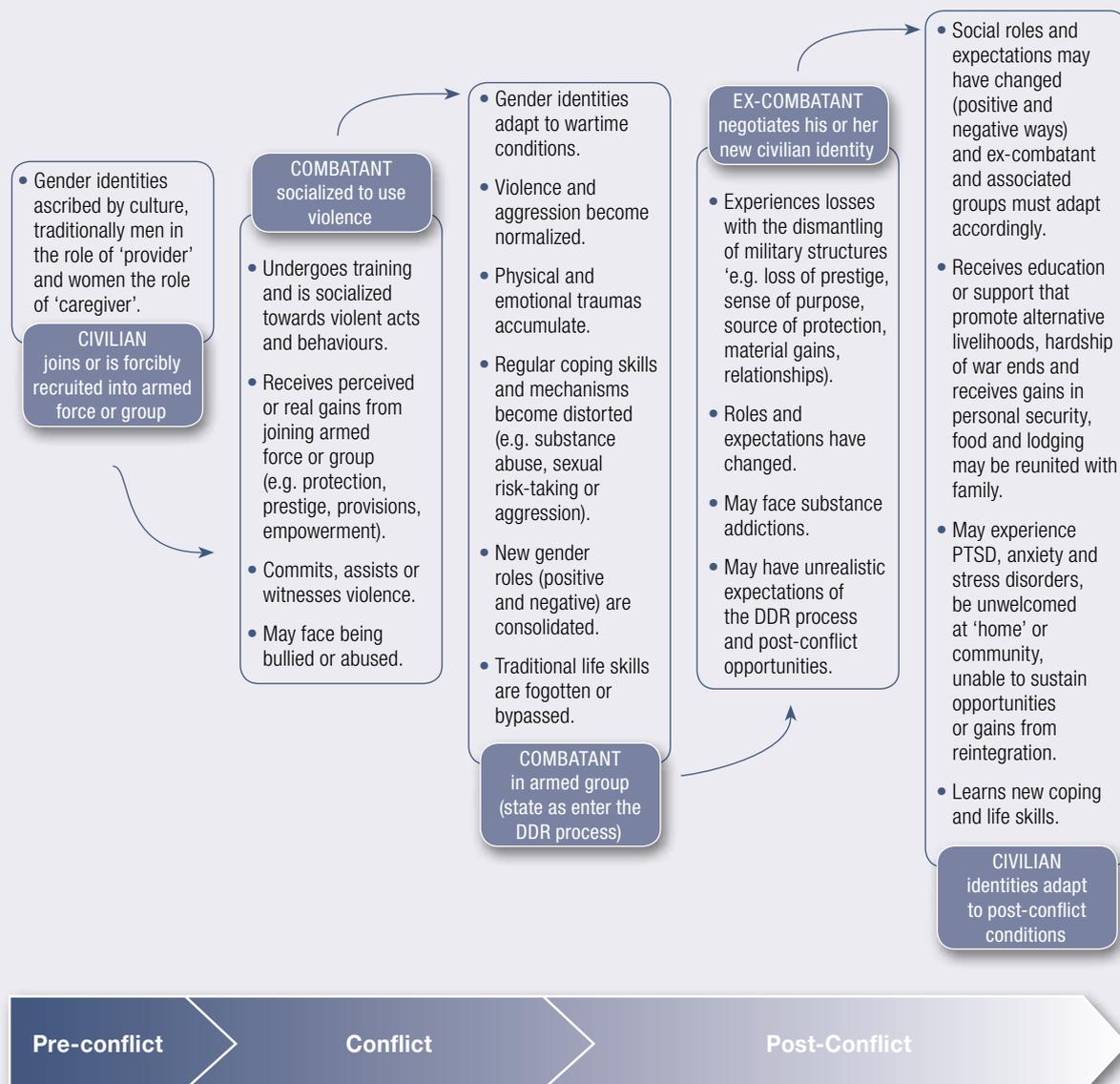
For many men and women, membership in an armed force or group provides new and alternative ways to achieve status, rank and recognition.

Role of protector

When faced with insecurity, men and women's identities as **protectors** may take on increased importance as they respond to threats against their families and communities. Being able to defend one's family and community can become a celebrated aspect of manhood, reinforced by peers, wives and elders. Often a dominant part of a man's identity across cultures, the increased vulnerability of his family during conflict can reduce the man's ability to fulfil his role as protector and evoke feelings of disempowerment. Often armed groups or state forces may also play on this vulnerability as a tactic of war, using public attacks on women and children as a way to humiliate men and undermine their role as protector.

Conversely, in some contexts women may take on the role of protector while the men are away or if they become injured or disabled from the violence. Women may also choose to join armed forces and groups as fighters or support the combatants in other ways such as hiding men and children physically, concealing weapons or serving as caregivers on a range of levels i.e. cooking, carrying weapons and supplies, providing medical care, or sexual companionship.

Box 4: Changing identities: From civilian to combatant to ex-combatant



The changes in identities resulting from the conflict contexts, however, may not all be compatible with post-conflict realities. Post-conflict settings further present their own challenges for individuals, families and communities, bringing with it new stresses and changes in identities.

While women, men, boys and girls all face significant hardships and pressures in conflict and post-conflict settings, changing gender roles can frequently affect men and boys more profoundly. Women's identities often remain anchored in their role as 'caretaker', while also expanding into new areas, which can bring both risks and opportunities. On the other hand, a man's identity and expected role as 'provider' are often challenged or threatened as livelihoods are destroyed and economic opportunities contract in conflict or post-conflict settings.

The consequence of the changing gender identities and norms in the face of conflict and high violence has long-term ramifications. Shifts in either male or female identities will have a direct impact on the identities of the other sex and may not be necessarily easily restored (or welcomed back) to the pre-conflict settings. Likewise, adaptations to new norms may be neither straightforward nor welcomed. For men, the expansion of women's roles during conflict can be perceived as competition and can contribute to men's developing feelings of disempowerment in the post-conflict context. As a result, gains women make during conflict or period of transition are often rolled back in the post-conflict period. Globally rises in domestic violence in the post-conflict period are quite common as some men want to reassert control, particularly in the domestic sphere, which can manifest in physical violence.

Box 4 illustrates the changing of identities and experiences from joining an armed force or group, through military training and socialization to violence, to his or her participation in the DDR process.

Particularly in protracted conflicts such as in Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sudan, ex-combatants will have lost or missed out on education and livelihood opportunities that would have enabled them to enter more readily into civilian life. Analysis indicates that the longer the amount of time spent in armed forces and groups, as well as the more tightly structured nature of the group, often the greater the difficulty in transitioning to civilian life.

2.3 Gender identities and motivations to join armed forces and groups

For men and women, membership in an armed force or group can have both perceived and real benefits for those who join. The benefits and motivations for joining armed forces and groups vary. Many join to improve their own lives and the lives of their families and communities. Where alternatives are limited, membership can help meet one's own basic needs, including for security and protection, as well as providing a source of economic

support. In some contexts, membership is motivated by a desire to address societal injustices. For the young in particular, it can provide a way of escaping narrow or restrictive social expectations and limited options for socio-economic advancement. Joining an armed force or group can provide a sense of prestige, respect and social recognition. Still in other cases, joining is not voluntary either because the individual is forcibly recruited or because they simply have no other options, and the motive for joining is simply self-preservation or a response to coercion.

For some women, membership in an armed force or group can be their first opportunity to compete openly with men and receive recognition for doing something respected or valued in society. Female combatants (weapons-carrying fighters) typically experience a greater degree of equality and higher status than women serving in support roles, WAAFG, and may gain more respect from membership. WAAFG working in support roles as wives or girlfriends of male combatants, or who are coerced into sexual relationships, see fewer benefits, although for them membership can still represent a source of economic and social support, as well as some degree of physical protection. The extent to which women gain a greater degree of equality and respect in armed forces and groups, however, depends greatly on country context.

The gains for women may also be greater when equality is actively promoted as part of the political ideology of the armed force or group. For instance, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Eritrea (EPLF) promoted gender equality as part of its political ideology, and men and women shared all the duties on the front line.³¹ Similarly, in Ethiopia gender equality was seen as a central component of the political agenda of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Work – from cooking to combat – was shared equally between men and women and sexual relations were disciplined, with non-consensual sex between men and women strictly forbidden.³²

Women of higher military rank or group standing may also find greater equality in marriages or relationships with male combatants. For instance, female combatants in Liberia reported that the higher the rank of a wife, the more equality she enjoyed in marriage, while women who were not weapons-carrying fighters often experienced less equitable marriages.³³

For men, particularly youth, joining an armed force or group can be a way to escape narrow social expectations and barriers to traditional markers of success. Furthermore, it can provide an alternative path to manhood in contexts in which elders or entrenched elites constrain other options. As in Liberia, traditional chiefs in Rwanda and Sierra Leone controlled both economic activities and marriage in ways that prevented young men from being able to pay dowry and to marry. At the same time, the state excluded young men from access to education, land and employment opportunities.

These conditions fuelled hostility towards traditional chiefs and in many cases prompted young men to join rebel groups.³⁸ Drawing on the case studies used

in this report, Table 1 highlights examples of the real and perceived gains of membership in armed forces and groups.

Country Example 1: Gender identities and motivations of combatants and WAAFG in Liberia³⁴

Prior to the 14-year civil war in Liberia beginning in 1989, local chiefs held significant control over both labour and marriage. Young men became indentured labourers with little chance of accumulating their own wealth or saving money to pay bride dowries or own land. Traditional systems of marriage, including polygamy practiced by chiefs further limited young men's ability to find brides.³⁵ These barriers to wealth and marriage represented barriers to manhood. Young men's sense of disempowerment fuelled animosity against the chiefs, which facilitated the recruitment of young men into armed groups.

During the conflict, the majority of women involved in the armed groups were not directly involved in fighting. They provided supportive roles such as carrying water or ammunition, cooking, and spying. For many women, 'bush marriages' to male combatants (which had no legal basis) were a survival strategy, a means of protection from sexual assault or a route to material possessions and drugs. For the majority of WAAFG, membership did not lead to gains in status or equality, nor did it bring about a fundamental change in their roles and identities. According to the World Bank, "the traditional division of labour between husband and wife was largely upheld... If the woman did not fulfil these functions to her husband's satisfaction, he would punish her, which often entailed violence; this was also the military way of dealing with disobedience."³⁶

Although the majority women and girls did not participate directly in combat, there were nevertheless female combatants, including a few hundred in female-led battalions called Women's Artillery Commandos (WAC), part of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). In these units, women gained more from their experiences than other WAAFG, and their identities became clearly militarized. According to the ILO, "female commanders wanted to prove that women were as strong as men, and defy common notions of femininity in Liberia that described women as peaceful, obedient, fearful and weak people. Many of them derived a certain pride from being part of an activity that was typically preserved for men, and felt driven to prove their equality with men. The phrase 'women can even do better than men' became one of the slogans of the WAC."³⁷



Ex-combatants participate in skills training as part of the rehabilitation and re-integration process in Kakata (January 2005).

Table 1. Real or perceived gains from membership in armed forces and groups (men and women)

Economic support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to loot, ability to extort taxes or gain profit through illicit activities • Provision of income, food, or other basic needs of dependants (i.e. women and children of combatants)
Security and protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-protection • Fulfilled sense of responsibility to protect or defend family and community (particularly for men) • For women and girls, protection through marriages or relationships to male combatants, as well as through military training and possession of weapons

Escape from traditional or restrictive social expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bypass traditional and/or limited paths to manhood • Escape narrow female roles and gain some degree of respect or equality
Justice and improved quality of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avenge injustices such as social exclusion or impunity of crimes committed against group/community • Enhance freedom and quality of life
Marriage or access to women/men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For men and boys, respect and recognition from women (e.g. wives, girlfriends) • Ability to have relationships without expected responsibilities or obligations of marriage, particularly for men (for example, avoiding the onerous dowry system) • For women and girls, greater equality or protection through marriage or informal relationships, particularly if relationship is with a higher-ranking combatant
Social network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer support • Social and family support network • Relationships to authority figures and role models (particularly for younger men)
Identity and respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belonging and purpose • Respect or recognition from family, community members, and peers (particularly for men) • Path from boyhood to manhood • Path to greater equality and respect for some women

2.4 Socialization of violence in armed groups

*“Socialization is a powerful force shaping behaviours, even in adulthood. Socialization for aggression succeeds in motivating combat participation where biology alone does not do so. Indeed, desensitization and training can turn ordinary people into monsters.”*³⁹

J. S. Goldstein (2001)

According to Social Learning Theory, individuals learn behaviour through observation, imitation, and modelling.⁴⁰ In both conflict-affected and peaceful environments, violent masculinities and femininities⁴¹ are shaped by socially constructed and perpetuated norms related to the use of violence. Violence is a result of a socialization process, whereby “people acquire those behaviours essential for effective participation in society”.⁴²

For combatants and associated groups, socialization requires the development of generally violent behaviours that are, or that appear to be, essential for their participation in the armed force or group, or more broadly essential for basic survival in an environment rife with armed violence. Many combatants and associated groups are trained and socialized to use or at least condone violence, including GBV. Attacks on civilians including rape, kidnapping, looting of property and murder may be part of a deliberate strategy or tolerated as a “spoils of war”. In Liberia, armed groups deliberately used and promoted drug and substance use among its ranks, in order for the combatants to commit the acts expected of them.⁴³

The type of armed force or group helps determine the culture of violence into which combatants are socialized. Some armed groups, such as the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (FRELIMO) (Mozambique) adopted strict policies and codes of conduct guiding

acceptable behaviour and the use of force, with formal structures for training and enforcement. In the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) (Uganda), training is less organized and recruitment and indoctrination often involves participation in kidnapping, rape, assault and murder. In southern Sudan (now South Sudan), most individuals and communities were in some way supporting either the largely volunteer-based Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) or other armed groups, thus contributing to the normalization of violence as a way of life.

During conflict, children associated with armed forces or armed groups are exposed to tremendous violence,⁴⁴ often forced to witness and commit violence, while they themselves are being abused, exploited, injured or killed.⁴⁵ Coerced recruitment often involves violent initiation rites intended to break familial and communal bonds and to force abductees or voluntary recruits to remain loyal to the group. For instance, in Uganda boys and girls abducted into the Lord’s Resistance Army were often forced to kill their own community members, relatives or parents.⁴⁶ The socialization to violence and trauma of such experiences often follows the child, who may now be an adult, into the post-conflict period. This early exposure to violence puts children at particular risk for continued violence in adulthood.⁴⁷ According to Goldstein, “children traumatized by being in a war zone will likely become the next generation of warriors. Political violence may be ‘more stressful for children than other forms of violence,’ because it threatens social identity by attacking the child’s group.”⁴⁸

Many adult combatants also witness and become victims of violence and severe abuse, which further consolidates the naturalization of violence during the conflict and can create longer-term effects that negatively impact their reintegration. In conflict zones, GBV may increase due to the generalized climate of

Country Example 2: Socialization of violence in Southern Sudan⁴⁹

Southern Sudan

After more than two decades, the civil war between the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) formally ended with the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. However, the prolonged fighting, in which the SPLA relied heavily on civilian volunteers, meant that generations grew up in a militarized environment.

The SPLA promoted violence as a legitimate way for the southern Sudanese to attain their political and economic goals. It "instill[ed] in its recruits a sense of hyper-masculinity that glorified the 'raw power' of the gun. New recruits were told that guns would bring the South its rightful heritage and that the lack of guns had denied them this success in the past."⁵⁰

In the post-conflict period, the notion that manhood is closely associated with gun ownership and warfare still persists. In many pastoralist communities, becoming a warrior and raiding cattle to pay dowry is part of a boy's passage to manhood. By the time young men reach the age of 15, they are expected to have a gun as a means of protecting both themselves as well as their communities from cattle raids, abductions of children, and attacks by neighbors.



Young men in a camp in South Sudan (January 2011).

impunity, the proliferation of many forms of violence or as a strategic tactic of war.

Women associated with armed forces or groups are particularly vulnerable to GBV committed by male combatants, with women and girls commonly forced to join groups as sexual companions. Some women seek out 'bush marriages' as a form of protection against other male combatants. However, women's role as perpetrators or enablers of violence – as members of a core group of fighters, in providing material support to fighters or by supporting the ideologies and norms that legitimize violence and calling for revenge and vindication and even as perpetrators of sexual abuse – are often unreported and understudied. Further, women's role in affecting masculine identities should not be underestimated.⁵¹

Sexual violence can also be directed at men and boys as a specific tactic of war, including male rape, which is still largely a hidden problem.⁵² When rape is committed against men, it is often done to intimidate, punish and humiliate the enemy during field operations as well as interrogation processes. In Liberia, one third of male ex-combatants interviewed in a 2008 study reported that they had been victims of sexual violence.⁵³ Many experts believe, however, that these traumas are significantly under-reported in official statistics, due to shame, guilt, fear of denunciation, and strong prejudices against male homosexuality, among other factors.⁵⁴ The underreporting of sexual violence directed against men and boys serves to reinforce stereotypes of sexual violence as a female only issue with males viewed and treated only as perpetrators.

Country Example 3: Sexual violence against men and boys in the Democratic Republic of the Congo⁵⁵



Poster on a wall in the city of Goma, DRC, warning community members about the legal consequences of committing rape (September 2009).

The five-year conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was brought to a partial end by a peace agreement signed in 2002, though conflict has persisted in the eastern region. The war has been characterized by widespread rape and sexual violence against civilians.

While reports on violence in DRC have focused on men's roles as perpetrators and women as victims, men's experiences as victims of sexual and gender-based violence may be more significant than initially thought. Medical clinics in the DRC report that up to 6 percent of victims they treat are men, while legal clinics report that about 10 percent of cases involve male victims. However, the real levels are likely higher due to underreporting.

In addition to rape, men and boys in DRC have been subjected to other forms of sexual violence and torture aimed at humiliating them during war. The brutality includes being forced to have sex with kin (daughters, mothers, wives as revealed in the 2009 Refugee Law Project documentary, *Gender Against Men*⁵⁶) in public or to watch their rape by others, being forced to masturbate or commit sexual acts with objects in public, and being dragged in public by a cord attached to the penis or testicles.

The needs of men and boys who are survivors of sexual violence, torture and humiliation must be recognized and addressed in order to prevent repeated cycles of violence. As Baaz and Stern note: "Combatants (and others) who have experienced trauma and humiliation by being subjected to violence themselves or being forced or encouraged to inflict violence on others, tend to be more prone – in the short term and when proper countermeasures are lacking – to perpetrate new violent acts. This is especially true of the juvenile combatants integrated into the national army and police force."⁵⁷

2.5 Expressions of post-conflict violence

Evidenced throughout this report, both men and women face grave pressures and traumas during the conflict that carry into the post-conflict setting,⁵⁸ from being at the frontlines of committing and witnessing the violence, to being victims of GBV, bullying and emotional humiliation, to facing the range of socio-economic impacts (e.g. loss of economic opportunity or livelihood and broken family structures) in the communities where they are returning.

When returning to communities, female ex-combatants and WAAFG often bear the stigma of broken social and gender norms. Community members may also accuse them of sexual promiscuity and see them as a threat to community morality and family honour. In Nepal, for instance, mothers and other female relatives will often pressure returning female ex-combatants into marriage as a means of erasing their past 'errant' behaviour.⁵⁹

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and related mental health problems, such as anxiety and stress disorders,

Country Example 4: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and violence among US war veterans (Iraq and Afghanistan)⁶⁰



US soldier battling with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (May 2010).

The impact of PTSD and other mental health problems on violent behavior has been well documented among US veterans of wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. According to a study in 2010 by the Rand Corporation, at least 300,000 troops who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan suffer from PTSD or major depression.⁶¹ War veterans are at high risk of suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, drunk driving, assault, domestic violence and murder. One study found that over half of those suffering from PTSD or sub-threshold PTSD reported being aggressive in the previous four months.⁶²

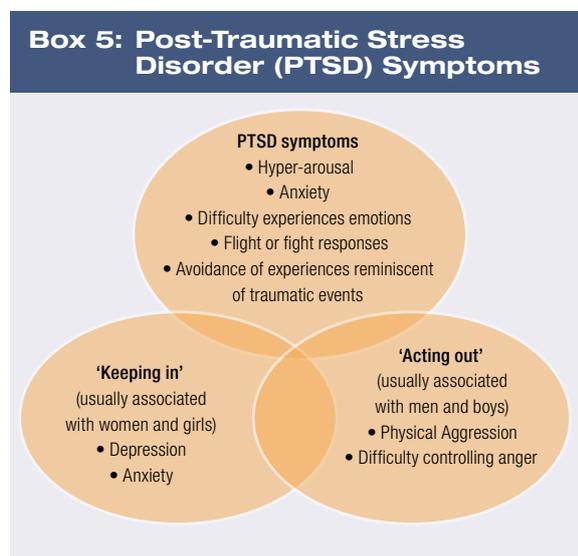
According to the Official Homepage of the United States Army news page, 160 active-duty US soldiers serving in Iraq committed suicide in 2009, up from 140 in 2008 and 77 in 2003. Outpacing war deaths, the Associated Press reports that the suicide rate for 2012 reaches nearly one per day from January to June, which represents an 18 per cent increase over the 130 active-duty military suicides for the same period in 2011.⁶³

The relationship between PTSD and intimate partner violence among US war veterans is increasingly clear. Rates of intimate partner violence are up to three times higher among US military personnel than in the civilian population. PTSD and other mental illnesses associated with exposure to war-related trauma are the main determinant of the risk of intimate partner violence after deployment.⁶⁴

In response to the elevated risk of intimate partner violence, a pilot initiative targeting US war veterans has been developed which may provide lessons for the prevention of intimate partner violence in post-conflict settings. The "Strength at Home" programme is a preventative programme intended for couples who are experiencing relationship difficulties but who have not yet been physically abusive.⁶⁵

Different approaches are required in cases where individuals have already been violent with family members. It is tailored to military populations and focuses on addressing the unique stresses and traumas associated with deployment, which may underlie intimate partner violence. It provides 10 weeks of counseling to couples in a group format because peer support and group cohesion has been shown to help recovery in military populations.⁶⁶ The programme covers three major areas: education about relationship issues and reactions to trauma; development of conflict management skills to help couples manage difficult issues when they arise and basic communication skills.

as well as drug and alcohol abuse and depression, are common among ex-combatants and associated groups. PTSD occurs as a result of trauma experienced during war and the difficulties the ex-combatants face during their reintegration.



Unaddressed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other trauma-related disorders, as well as drug and alcohol abuse (often linked as a coping mechanism to the traumas) can further hinder ex-combatants' ability to reintegrate or be rehabilitated into non-violent civilian life. Consequently, it can undermine and further distort identities in the core elements of provide, protect, procreate, prestige. In its place, it can reinforce feelings of disempowerment and feelings of low self-worth. In southern Sudan (now South Sudan), alcohol abuse, suicide and anti-social behaviour were notably pervasive among ex-combatants and contributed to insecurity within communities.⁶⁷

Members of armed forces and groups frequently develop a heightened alertness to threats. This protects them from danger during war but becomes

problematic in civilian life. For instance, in civilian settings ex-combatants may be more likely to misread social situations and perceive others as hostile, often responding aggressively to everyday life situations.⁶⁸ Furthermore, ex-combatants frequently grapple with intense emotional experiences from combat and "may use anger and aggressive behaviour as a way of establishing a sense of control ... or to express or release tension connected to uncomfortable emotions associated with PTSD, such as shame and guilt."⁶⁹

Inability to overcome or reconcile traumas experienced during the conflict can manifest as: *self-directed violence* (suicide, drug and alcohol abuse as coping mechanisms), *interpersonal violence* (GBV, intimate partner violence, child abuse, rape and murder) and *group violence* against the community (burglary, rape, harassment, beatings and murder). These types of violence can result from traumas experienced during the conflict that require their own treatment for recovery but can also be factors in perpetuating or driving violence forward privately and/or publicly. Table 2 summarizes initial case study observations of the expressions of violence seen among male and female ex-combatants.

The results of case studies undertaken as part of the GDV Initiative suggest that ex-combatants often lack the ability to manage anger and resolve disputes non-violently, either with intimate partners, or with other individuals in the community. Ex-combatants appear to be more prone to resort to violence for resolving even small issues and to be more willing than civilians to use violence in disputes or in crime. Results from an IMAGES⁷⁰ conducted in Rwanda revealed that men who had experienced or witnessed violence during the 1994 genocide were more likely to have used violence against a female partner in the post-genocide period.⁷¹

While both men and women can be verbally abusive, the use of physical violence, both in the public and private spheres, is typically more common among male ex-combatants. Men are more likely to use physical violence and to outwardly display anger and aggression,

Table 2. Three types of expressions of violence

Type	Expression of violence
Self-directed violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicide • Drug and alcohol abuse (often prevalent among both women and men in contexts in which it is socially acceptable for women)
Interpersonal violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical violence against intimate partners (often prevalent and more common among men) • Verbal abuse of intimate partners (often prevalent among both men and women) • Neglect or abuse of children • Escalation of disputes into physical violence directed against other members of the community (often prevalent and more common among men)
Group violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Re-)recruitment into armed groups, militias or gangs (often prevalent and more common among male youth) • Indirect support or encouragement of group violence (often prevalent and more common among women)

while women are more likely to internalize anger or express it verbally rather than physically. This reflects in large measure the differences in the way that men and women are culturally socialized and to deal with anger, stress or trauma. The vast majority of research affirms that these are learned behaviours rooted mostly in the social expectations of how boys and girls should express themselves.⁷²

It is important to note that responses to violence, particularly GBV, have often focused on assisting the victim and punishing the perpetrator. However, understanding the experiences and motivations of perpetrators – including past traumas and violent acts to which they themselves were exposed – provides important insight into preventing violence and rehabilitating those most at risk.⁷³

Country Example 5: Post-conflict violence in Province of Aceh (Indonesia)



Working with Men and Boys to Prevent Violence Against Women in Indonesia (December 2011).

Aceh, Indonesia⁷⁴

The conflict in the Province of Aceh (Indonesia), located on the northern tip of Sumatra, lasted over three decades and claimed over 10,000 lives. In 2005, the Government of Indonesia and the Aceh Free Movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*, or GAM) signed an agreement ending the conflict, which provided for the disarmament and demobilization of GAM rebels and the withdrawal of government soldiers from Aceh.

The prolonged conflict left behind a normalization of violence and legacy of trauma, with a continued idealization of guns and violence among younger generations that grew up during the war. Youth (under 15) are known to move in groups, carry pellet guns, wear gang-like clothing and re-enact shoot-outs in the middle of urban centres. Organized criminal activity, including drug cultivation, illegal logging, and ‘tax collection’ by ‘mafias’ and other gangs are commonly run by disgruntled former GAM members and pensioned members of the government army who drew new recruits from male youth.⁷⁵

The war’s end has also seen an increase in intimate partner violence,⁷⁶ reinforced by a social acceptance of violence against women in the home. For instance, one respondent indicated that “hitting is normal in a family, [though] not to the point of tears or blood, [just enough] so that the wife follows orders.”

According to data compiled for the Multi-Stakeholder Review of Aceh (2009), tensions between men and women appeared to be highest, and most likely to escalate into violence, in geographic areas where conflict had been most intense.⁷⁷ Most of the respondents indicated that, of all social tensions between ex-combatants and returnees, rich and poor, old and young, and different ethnic groups, the biggest surge in violence in the previous six months had been between men and women.

Cases of intimate partner violence in conflict-affected areas have been partly attributed to ex-combatants, civil servants, and police and military, whose unaddressed experiences of trauma, economic hardship and difficulty reintegrating into family and community life are seen as contributing factors to their actions. Alcohol and drug use is also at unprecedented levels despite the imposition of Sharia Law.

Box 6: Transitional justice, DDR and GDV

While DDR programmes offer a window of opportunity to address GDV and contribute to preventing the continuation of violence, those responsible for violations of international human rights, international humanitarian and international criminal law, including war crimes such as rape and sexual violence, should be held accountable at national levels (i.e. through local or traditional justice mechanisms) or international levels if national authorities are not able or willing to take action.

Procuring convictions of ex-combatants can, however, prove challenging, largely due to the lack of evidence linking the accused to the violence committed. Moreover, victims of rape and sexual violence may be highly reluctant to exercise their right to access to justice as these issues are not easily addressed in public and are highly stigmatizing in most post-conflict societies. Other transitional justice mechanisms, such as truth and reconciliation commissions and reparations, should also be considered in achieving justice and fighting impunity during transitions from conflict to peace.

Country Example 6: Post-conflict violence in Timor-Leste



Young Timorese men join a campaign to stop violence (January 2012).

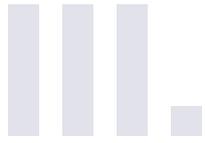
Timor-Leste⁷⁸

Violence perpetrated during Indonesia's 24-year occupation of Timor-Leste, included arming of proxy militias, mass killings, rapes, sexual slavery and torture, forcible encampment of civilians, mass destruction of infrastructure, and grave human rights abuses. The violence has had a lasting impact on Timorese society.

The Timorese guerilla liberation movement Falintil resisted the violence. Both Falintil and pro-Indonesian Timorese militias were offered the opportunity to participate in a DDR programme or to integrate into the new Timorese police or armed forces. However, due to a range of factors, including frustrations over the DDR process and lack of security in the post-conflict environment, many ex-combatants joined criminal gangs, veterans' organizations with links to violent groups, or violent ritual arts groups (RAGs).⁷⁹

Today, recruitment into these groups has spread to a new generation of young urban men who were not directly involved in the conflict. Violent models of masculinity have become normalized in Timorese society over time, and violence is seen as a legitimate means of achieving political, social, economic and individual goals. Popular films and other media have contributed to this, particularly among urban youth, who imitate the dress, behaviour and attitudes of security forces and other violent 'macho' figures in the media.⁸⁰

GBV and child abuse rates are high, with police statistics in 2005 showing that half of all cases brought to them were incidents of GBV.⁸¹ The root causes appear to include the social acceptability of men's violence, poverty and unemployment, a patriarchal culture, and the impact of extreme violence witnessed and experienced by individuals during the war.⁸² High rates of alcohol and substance abuse are also linked with intimate partner violence as well as gang violence.⁸³



Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and violence prevention

The previous section explored the changes in male and female identities over the course of joining armed forces and groups through to their demobilization. It illustrated that when the core elements of identities, namely to provide, protect, procreate and attain prestige were challenged or undermined by the violence perpetrated or received during the conflict, ex-combatants became more susceptible or prone to perpetuating violence, joining criminal activity and/or being re-recruited into armed groups. It also introduced the different manifestations of violence (perpetrated and received) during these phases, including those experienced in the post-conflict period after the DDR process.

Not all ex-combatants, however, go on to perpetrate violence, join criminal activities or re-join armed forces or groups. The degree to which ex-combatants become more or less susceptible to committing post-conflict violence depends on different factors – and the interplay between these factors in relation to the core elements of gender identities – that either fuel vulnerability or foster resilience.

3.1 Defining ‘vulnerability’ and ‘resilience’

In this report, vulnerability is discussed as the factors that increase the susceptibility or risk of being affected by violence, resorting to it, or being drawn into groups that perpetuate it. In contrast resilience refers to “the ability to adapt, rebound, and strengthen functioning” in the face of violence, extreme adversity, or risk.⁸⁴ For the purposes of this report and in the context of ex-combatants, it corresponds with the latter’s ability to withstand, resist and overcome the socialization of violence and traumas experienced in the armed force or group when coping with the social and environmental pressures typical of post-conflict environments and

beyond.⁸⁵ Acquisition of social skills, emotional development, academic achievement, psychological well-being, self-esteem, coping mechanisms and attitudes when faced with stress are all factors of resilience.

No single factor, however, explains why a person or group is at higher or lower risk of perpetuating or resisting violence. Rather, this depends on a combination of factors within different domains of the individual’s environment.⁸⁶ These domains exist, according to the Social Ecological Model (Box 7): at individual, interpersonal, community and societal levels.

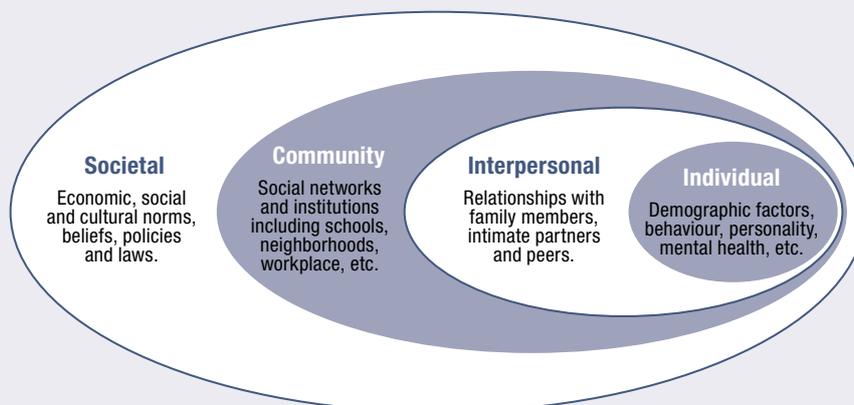
More so than vulnerability, resilience to violence is a complex concept to measure or demonstrate. An individual’s threshold to resist violence changes across time and is affected by the depth, range or number of new and old experiences of, or exposure to, violence. Individuals may be resilient to specific risk factors in one domain of their lives but vulnerable to other factors in another domain.⁸⁷

While transforming individual violent behaviour is important, the norms, attitudes and wider relationships that support violence in the wider community also must be addressed to prevent a continued pattern of violence and recruitment. Table 3 illustrates examples of relevant responses at these different levels.

3.2. From vulnerability to resilience

This report has explored several key sources of vulnerability that can impact ex-combatants use of violence. Alone, none of these sources definitely leads to violence. However, the vulnerability to perpetrate internalized or externalized violence increases when

Box 7: Social Ecological Model for understanding the different factors influencing an individual's socialization to violence in conflict-affected societies



- **Individual level:** includes the natural temperament and behavioural traits (natural or learned) of the individual. In other words, their personal strength (resilience) and susceptibility (vulnerability) to external influences. Addictions to drugs and alcohol can have an additional significant impact.
- **Interpersonal level (family/relationships):** includes discipline and taught values done by parents, families and extended support networks. Exposure to positive mentors, learned problem-solving skills and anti-violence values point to resilience. In contrast, exposure to antisocial beliefs, attitudes, aggression and violence among interactions with family, friends, partners and peers lend itself to vulnerabilities towards violence. Relationships at this level may increase the risk of experiencing violence as a victim or perpetrator. Individual behaviour may be acutely influenced when one's family and/or immediate social networks exhibit violence. Particularly relevant for ex-combatants is the socialization of violence while they were members of armed forces or groups.
- **Community level:** refers to neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces and other institutions. High unemployment, high residential mobility and/or population density, access to drugs and weapons, or weak social support networks, all of which are typically present in post-conflict environments, can generate vulnerabilities to violence.
- **Societal level:** relates to the economic, political and social environment and to state institutions. The state creates an enabling environment through norms, standards and regulations, political and institutional leadership, and through the provision of services. Broad factors that create a climate for violence include rapid social change, policies that maintain or increase economic and social inequalities; excessive use of force by police with impunity, social and cultural norms that support the use of violence; the availability of means (such as firearms) and weak criminal justice systems that leave perpetrators immune to prosecution. Norms and values within this climate prescribe the use of violence as a legitimate means to achieve one's objectives and violence is often perpetrated with impunity, whether laws and policies to prevent it exist or not.

Table 3. Examples of actions to enhance resilience and reduce vulnerability to violence

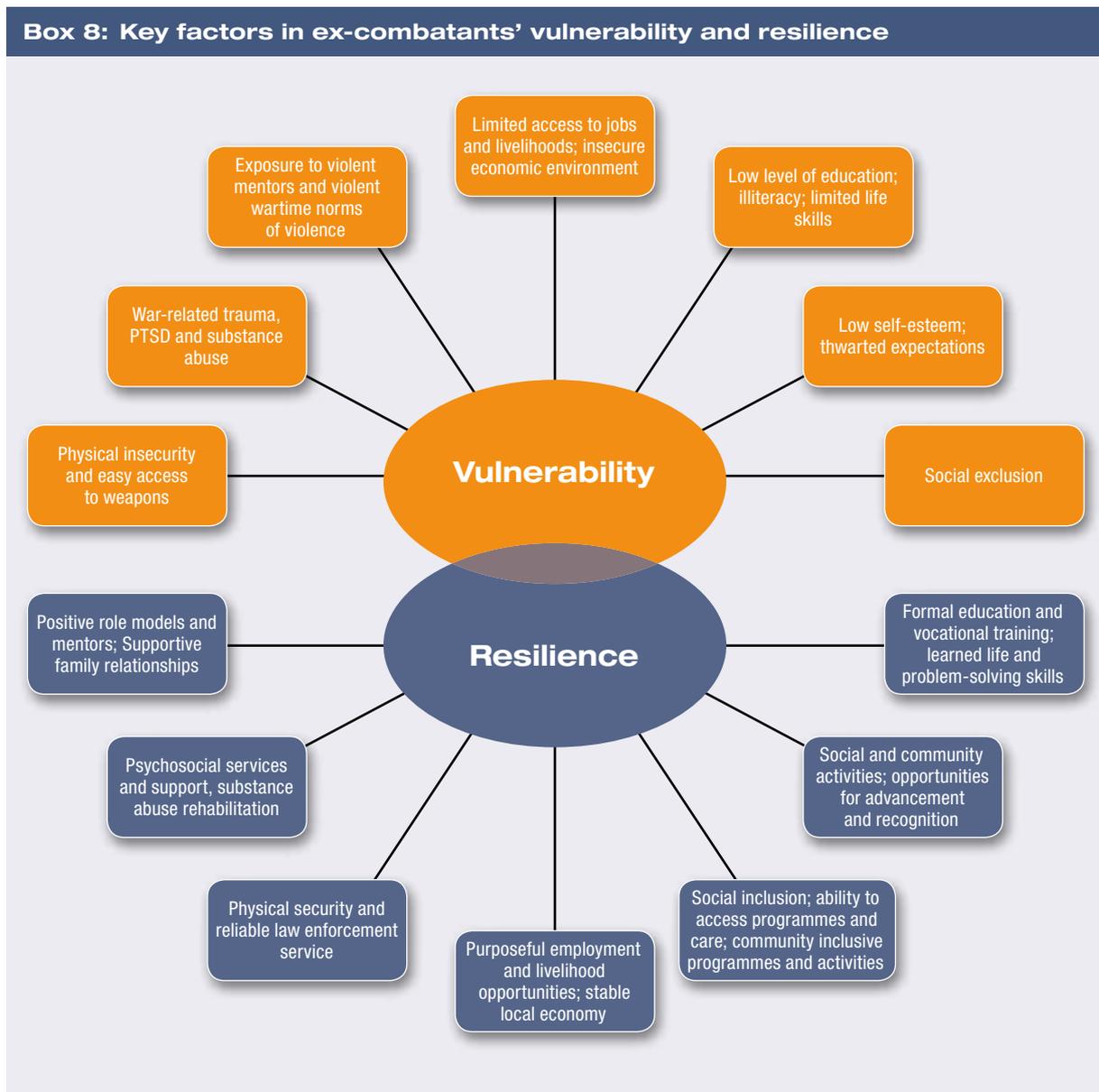
Individual level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enacting measures to address perpetrators of violence, including punitive and rehabilitative measures. • Positively reinforcing key elements of identities relevant for both males and females, including promoting life skills, stress management and non-violent coping mechanisms. • Providing substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation. • Providing psychosocial support including focusing on PTSD.
Interpersonal level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing men and women's capacities for parenting and responsible and equitable relationships, including life skills to manage family relations and finances. • Rehabilitating measures designed to address patterns of abuse such as counselling. • Promoting the transformation of behaviour patterns through exposure and access to positive mentors, facilitated self-reflection and engagement with positive peer groups. • Providing access to family counselling established medical and legal recourses for victims of interpersonal violence.
Community level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing youth-centred programmes that reinforce positive civilian identities; gender-sensitive programmes promoting non-violence; and supporting opportunities that facilitate finding purposeful employment and livelihood opportunities; organizing socially balanced community activities (e.g. sports, arts).

Community level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting measures to empower groups and structures that build resilience. • Enacting measures to address ‘enablers’ of violence and potential pools of recruitment, including punitive and rehabilitative measures.
Societal level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventative measures to address vulnerabilities to violence such as high unemployment, high residential mobility and/or population density, access to drugs and weapons, or weak social support network. • Providing adequate law enforcement and civilian protection services, including building linkages between security personnel and communities as partners in violence prevention. • Transformative measures to reform laws, policies and institutions, including against corruption and impunity and to establish mechanisms to safely report grievances. • Remedial and deterrent measures to address ‘enablers’ of violence, including controls on pro-violence propaganda.

considered against individual temperament, social dynamics and limited opportunities, the potential likelihood of active recruitments into groups and access to weapons and alternative (criminal) livelihood opportunities. Identifying these sources of vulnerability reveals concrete entry points for targeted interventions

at the individual, inter-personal, community and societal level that can help strengthen resilience.

Box 8 identifies key factors that mirror key factors that influence ex-combatants’ vulnerability to or resilience from violence.



3.3 Gender identities and resilience

3.3.1 Resilience through employment and livelihood opportunities

“Men’s stress related to not having enough income or work and achieving the role of provider [is] a key factor associated with perpetration of violence, higher rates of incarceration, higher rates of alcohol abuse and higher rates of suicidal thoughts.”

International Men’s Association
for Gender Equality (IMAGES)⁸⁸

Financial insecurity and the lasting effects of the destruction of livelihoods, infrastructure and institutions characterize post-conflict economies and affect the options available to reintegrating ex-combatants. While commercial trades are seen to provide quick gains and are often a preferred sector among young ex-combatants, they are not always easily accessible or sustainable in the post-conflict economy. For some ex-combatants, far more can be gained from the quick wins from crime or violent activities than from the type of ‘regular’ jobs that are available.

More than an income, however, employment is also a source of respect and dignity. In Colombia, male ex-combatants expressed a strong desire for jobs that would provide a sustainable alternative to violent or criminal activities even if these jobs were less lucrative. They desired work that would give them a sense of dignity and respect, as well as allow them to overcome the insecurity of being members of an armed group, which outweighed potential monetary rewards.⁸⁹

For some men, having a job may not be enough; rather they see the type of job they are doing as a direct reflection of their manhood. For instance, ex-combatants in Liberia expressed resistance to jobs they deemed as ‘unmanly’ or ‘women’s work’.⁹⁰ In many cases, regardless of market demands and skill-sets, young men may reject work in ‘traditional’ sectors such as agriculture in the belief they deserve more ‘modern’ mechanical or technical jobs or that those jobs connote a greater level of prestige associated with achievement socially expected gender roles.

“They want fast money, they want everything – food, drugs, women – fast.”

Liberian LURD commander speaking about
the impact of the war on young fighters

In contrast, women, particularly WAAFG, are more willing than men to accept any job that meets the needs of their families and children, including farming and selling goods in local markets. Women may still face, however, the expectation to return to their previous caretaking roles or traditional female jobs. For some, this represents a loss of the status and respect as well as skill-set they might have earned or developed as a member of the armed force or group.

“She says, ‘You don’t have a job, you can’t even provide for your family, you aren’t a man, you are nothing.’”

Male respondent from Republic of the Congo

Given males’ traditional expectation is to fill the role of ‘provider’ for their families, they may face significant stress if unable to do so. Unemployment and lack of livelihood opportunities can contribute to low self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy, shame, anger, and disempowerment. In the Province of Aceh (Indonesia) and the Garrisa district in Kenya, men indicated that their unemployment compounded with the greater roles their partners or wives were taking on as family providers outside the home, worsened their feelings of inadequacy. In several instances, this appears to have increased tensions within the family and contributed to intimate partner violence.

3.3.2 Resilience through education and life skills

After decades of adhering to strict military or rebel structures – hiding out in harsh conditions and perpetrating and enduring high levels of violence – ex-combatants may lose education opportunities, or never have an opportunity (i.e. for child combatants and youth in particular) to learn life skills, such as social interpersonal relations (including male attitudes towards women), conflict resolution, duties and responsibilities of citizenship, leadership, etc.) and practical skills (i.e. such as how to manage their finances or understanding sexual and reproductive health). The lack of civilian social and practical skills not only limits economic opportunities, but also contributes to low self-esteem and the inability to manage disputes non-violently.

“What I needed was someone to support me in handling stress, in solving a disagreement without using violence and in how to earn a living. Without that, the community would not take me seriously.”

Sierra Leonean ex-combatant

At the same time, drawing upon the skills ex-combatants learned while with armed forces and groups can facilitate reintegration. This is particularly true for women, given the skills they may have acquired during the conflict, such as nursing, logistics, etc.⁹¹

Educational, vocational and life skills training activities can therefore be critical to strengthening resilience. Ex-combatants, particularly youth, should be provided with opportunities for remedial learning, literacy training, and other activities to develop capacity for self-expression. Other key life skills, such as anger and stress management, non-violent dispute resolution and negotiating family and intimate relationships, can also be provided within the context of vocational training.

3.3.3 Resilience through self-esteem, social inclusion and social support

Armed forces and groups can provide a collective sense of identity and shared sense of purpose, as well as a ‘family’ of peers upon whom to depend. While in armed forces and groups, self-esteem may be linked with rank and standing within the group, military capacities, or the praise received as war heroes or as

Country Example 7: Gender identities and livelihoods in the Province of Aceh (Indonesia)⁹² and Liberia⁹³



© Mike Lusmore

Women working in shrimp farms in Aceh, Indonesia (March 2012)

Aceh, Indonesia

Several gender-related challenges emerge from the economic reintegration of ex-combatants in the Province of Aceh. The Free Aceh Movement (GAM) commanders were responsible for distributing reinsertion packages, including small payments to cover the demobilization to reintegration transition period. Many commanders, however, failed to distribute these packages to lower-level fighters, which fuelled frustration and resentment. Moreover, with the lack of employment opportunities and the collapse of livelihood systems following the war, male ex-combatants were expected to return to what they deemed as a 'simple' lifestyle (traditional livelihoods such as farming), which lacked the sense of prestige they held to themselves as a fighter. Consequently, many men reported a lost sense of status and 'manhood', which they resented.

During the conflict, although women were discouraged from work outside the home and from jobs traditionally deemed male, their unpaid labour in agriculture and fisheries, as well as paid work outside the home, became increasingly important. After the conflict, this expansion of women's roles appears to have deepened men's feelings of disempowerment. Men in focus groups in Aceh indicated that when it came to being a 'provider', some wives "are now better at it than men." Although some men have turned over the lead role of 'provider' to women, others insist that this is still exclusively a role for men.

Liberia

The end of the 14-year conflict in Liberia in 2003 and the DDR process that followed redefined the roles, identities and purposes of women and men in society.

Female ex-combatants in Liberia are widely regarded as having more easily reintegrated into civilian life than their male counterparts. In many instances, women's role as mothers, their desire to improve their living conditions, and the support of a female-led government, provided the opportunities and motivation for a new start.

During the focus groups held in Liberia, male combatants acknowledged that women largely took over the role of 'provider' for the family during wartime and that women were indeed capable of earning an income. However, upon the men's return after the war, many of the male ex-combatants found it difficult to accept that women had become the new heads of their households.

Unwilling to accept the changes in women's roles, many men in Liberia were reluctant to support women oriented economic reintegration. In a country with 85% unemployment, men indicated that they felt these programmes treated women as a privileged group and were creating unfair competition. Programmes focusing on women's empowerment through micro-credit, for instance, were generally not well-received by Liberian men.



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Changed gender roles after 14 years of conflict in Liberia (June 2013)

representatives of a wider social and national cause. The association with 'prestige' may be even based on the brutality and ruthlessness of wartime acts. Therefore members of armed forces and groups often face significant losses of community and belonging in the DDR process as demobilization breaks the bonds and ties with the group, which provided social support, inclusion and self-esteem.

Particularly in contexts in which armed struggle has led to 'victory' or provided a framework for social reforms and change, ex-combatants' initial motivations

for fighting can be the basis for non-violent social and political activism or community mobilization for development and recovery. For instance, after having witnessed sexual violence during the conflict, a Sierra Leonean man founded the IMAGES⁹⁴ in order to engage men to bring about social change.

"After the war, I had to learn about my own values and that I should respect others if I wanted to be respected myself. I have certain abilities that I must use for my own welfare."

Indonesian ex-combatant

Country Example 8: War heroes to war veterans in Croatia⁹⁵



Croatian war veteran (July 2010).

During the 1991-1995 war in the former Yugoslavia, Croatian soldiers were viewed as heroes and role models for the new Croatia to follow from secession. Men in military units developed a strong sense of collective identity linked with their ethnic and nationalist aims.

However, when the war ended, about half of Croatia's 500,000 war veterans found themselves unemployed⁹⁶ and another approximately 15 percent were classified as 'war time military invalids' (the official term for veterans who suffered physical injury or mental disorder).⁹⁷

Responding to needs of veterans, Croatia established a Ministry of Veterans' Affairs in 1997 and passed a number of policies and laws that established a system of economic benefits for veterans, including those with physical and mental disorders. Despite these steps, however, veterans' social and psychological issues went largely unaddressed and many remained deeply disillusioned.

Today, more than 20 years later, many express they are torn between failure, low social recognition and their sense of being a social burden and fierce protection of the few privileges and benefits they have gained. Veterans often publicly express their disappointment and anger with the state of the nation, claiming "this is not what we fought for."

The younger generation in Croatia speaks of 'veteran's syndrome' as one of the main threats to democratic processes and social and political stability. In a focus group interview in Zagreb in 2009, a young participant said, "We grew up listening to stories about the veteran who threatens to kill himself, kill his family, or throw a bomb if he doesn't get what he thinks he deserves. They threaten to overthrow the government if it doesn't meet their requests."⁹⁸

Though statistics are lacking, a wide perception implicates Croatian veterans in violent crime and intimate partner violence. Between 1995 and 2005, approximately 1,600 veterans committed suicide.

If the ex-combatant was a member of a defeated force or group, he/she starts demobilization with some degree of lost esteem and they may be stigmatized or socially excluded by their communities.

Involvement in social activities that develop self-esteem, purpose and positive relationships can be key factors of resilience. In post-conflict settings, the support and acceptance ex-combatants receive from families, community members and peers are therefore critical to their resilience and successful reintegration, as well as to the restoration of social cohesion.

Some communities will see ex-combatants as freedom fighters or heroes who have fought on behalf of their interests. In other cases, ex-combatants may be automatically assumed to be implicated in violence committed against community members, may be stigmatized or seen as a drain on scarce resources, or be perceived as a threat to elders or authorities. Without a strong, inclusive approach to national reconciliation, the tensions that preceded and existed during the war are carried into the post-conflict environment. Compounded with few livelihood opportunities, ex-combatants may be motivated to re-join armed groups or gangs in order to regain what they felt they lost during the demobilization: a sense of community and belonging.

Country Example 9: Re-mobilization of ex-combatants in Colombia and Nicaragua



Members of Los Ratojos after surrendering their weapons to the Colombian army as part of the peace process in the region (May 2009).

Colombia⁹⁹

For more than 40 years, Colombia has faced continued cycles of armed conflict and violence involving paramilitary, guerilla and criminal groups. In 2002, the Government signed a ceasefire agreement with the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), (commonly referred to as the paramilitaries) and established a DDR programme. Although the conflict between the government and two guerilla groups – the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and the Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional (ELN) – is ongoing, members of these groups have been demobilizing on an individual basis: Between 2002 and April 2010, 53,141 combatants from both guerilla and paramilitary groups demobilized (87 percent men and 13 percent women).¹⁰⁰

Given the continued high levels of insecurity in certain regions of the country, those combatants that chose to demobilize confronted multiple challenges in establishing new lives. The expansion of illegal drug cultivation and trade, targeted assassinations of ex-combatants, the emergence of a widespread gang culture, and the easy access to small arms and light weapons have made it easy for many ex-combatants to join gangs and criminal groups for security or economic and social reasons.

According to a report of the Office of the Presidential High Counsellor for Reintegration, 7 percent of those demobilized (3,582 ex-combatants, among them 30 women) have re-entered criminal activities, and another 1,921 participants in the reintegration process are at high risk of re-entering criminal activities.¹⁰¹

In areas controlled by guerrillas or paramilitaries, youth in particular have few alternatives to joining an armed group.¹⁰² Former paramilitaries explain that joining the AUC allowed them to “feel like a big man in the streets” of their barrios, “to go out with the prettiest young women”, and “to dress well”.¹⁰³ Being part of an armed group is closely associated with a militarized model of masculinity, where having a weapon equals power.

In Colombia, “cycling through an armed group is a rite of passage for many young men”, says a 2009 study.¹⁰⁴ In this context, a goal of the DDR process should be to provide alternatives “particularly when these men have so little access to civilian symbols of masculine prestige, such as education, legal income, or decent housing.”¹⁰⁵

.....

Nicaragua¹⁰⁶

After nearly a decade of war in Nicaragua, including the Sandinista Revolution and the Contra War, a peace accord was signed in April 1990. The peace accord and the Managua Protocol on Disarmament (which provided for the repatriation of Nicaraguan Contras from Honduras) set the stage for peace and stability. However, the war left behind the consequences of a five-year US trade embargo, high inflation and a legacy of the traumas associated with widespread human rights abuses committed against civilians. Post-conflict structural adjustment programmes and associated austerity measures further contributed to high levels of unemployment and social unrest.

An under-resourced DDR programme was not able to meet the promises made to former combatants, related to payments, medical care, access to housing, land, credit, employment and skills training. Within a short period of time, angry and disillusioned demobilized Contras and former Sandinista soldiers began to reorganize into armed groups known as *recompas*, *recontras* or *revueltas* with the aim of pressuring the government to meet their promises.

Gangs, referred to as *pandillas*, began to appear in Managua in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Gangs provided a way for ex-combatants to recover the sense of self-worth and social value that they had experienced as soldiers. Over time, the *pandillas* began to shed their military roots, drawing their membership from marginalized and frustrated youth. By the end of the 1990s, criminal activity had increased sharply and some areas of Managua were directly under gang control.

Since the end of the 1990s, the Nicaraguan government has taken a preventative approach to addressing gangs. It has developed policy, plans and programmes aimed at understanding the causes of juvenile violence and addressing the culture of violence, which included the creation of a youth affairs department within the police; and the development of public safety programmes, involving the police, prison system, and government ministries and departments. In addition, CSOs have played an active role, including mediating disputes between rival gangs, reintegrating youth into the educational system, and supporting vocational training, drug rehabilitation, and training on domestic violence, gender and masculinity.



Former ex-combatants taking part in the work done by the Association of Men Against Violence in Nicaragua (May 2001).

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IV.

GDV entry points in DDR programming

Responding to the full extent of long-term psychosocial, economic and social needs of ex-combatants and associated groups extends beyond what can be achieved in the limited duration of DDR programmes. Nevertheless, DDR provides an opportunity for early interventions to de-escalate and transform violent identities, to identify and target vulnerabilities and to reinforce resilience that can increase the ex-combatants' chances at successful reintegration. Furthermore, gender-sensitive DDR paves the way for gender-transformative interventions as a part of the wider recovery and development processes.

Part IV of this report looks at how DDR programmes can apply a gender perspective to better address male- and female-specific vulnerabilities and to strengthen their resilience in conflict-affected areas. It explores the particular experiences and vulnerabilities of women, men, boys and girls in relation to each step in the DDR process, in addition to identifying key entry points, considerations and actions for DDR.¹⁰⁷

4.1. Disarmament: Replacing the gun as a symbol of power

Many DDR programmes have recognized the economic value of a weapon, as well as its importance for security and protection, but have failed to consider the symbolic value of a weapon on identities, particularly with respect to power and status.¹⁰⁸ Myrtilinen writes, "weapons are the embodiment of violent, often militarized models of masculinity, which, in turn, have

broader socio-political ramifications."¹⁰⁹ Disarmament can provoke an intense vulnerability among men if they do not have equally significant alternative symbols for the men to adopt or draw upon.¹¹⁰

For women, disarmament can threaten the gender equality and respect they may have gained through the possession of a weapon, which may have also been a significant source of self-protection while in the armed force or group.

The following are key considerations and entry points for disarmament interventions:

- **Providing alternatives to the gun as a symbol of power.** DDR programmes should explore ways to promote alternative role models and symbols of power that are relevant to particular cultural contexts and that promote peace dividends.

For example, anecdotal evidence suggests that ex-combatants often purchase cell phones, or want to become drivers and own cars or motorcycles, in part because of the symbolic value they represent. It is also critical that DDR programmes coordinate with small arms control programmes to explore ways of transforming and redefining the concepts of masculinity that are linked to the use of weapons, such as through media and awareness-raising activities, and that address the ex-combatants' keen concern over safety and protection.¹¹¹

Table 4. Potential experiences of loss during disarmament

Potential losses	Male-specific loss	Female-specific loss
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolic loss of identity as a fighter • Loss of security and protection • Loss of power, respect and status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolic loss related to feelings of manhood, protection and power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of some degree of equality, respect and protection gained in relation to male counterparts • Protection against GBV

➤ **Developing more strategic engagement with women (particularly female dependants) in disarmament processes.** The potential role of female dependants of ex-combatants as agents of change in disarmament processes has often been overlooked, in part because disarmament has been seen as a merely technical exercise. Women can play an equally instrumental role in encouraging family and community members to hand in weapons and in community mobilization to address armed violence.¹¹²

For instance, UNDP and the North Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (SDDRC) are training *Hakamas* (traditional singers) in peace education, gender and gender-based violence, human rights, HIV awareness and DDR. Consequently, instead of singing to encourage bravery in combat, the *Hakamas* have begun to sing for peace, progress and development.¹¹³

Country Example 10: The Hakamas in Sudan



The Hakamas, who once instigated men to fight, rehearsing for a theatrical performance on peace and reconciliation (December 2006).

Hakamas are the traditional women singers indigenous to Southern Kordofan, Northern Kordofan and several states in Darfur. During the long conflict in Sudan, Hakamas, a word that roughly translates as 'the wise ones', accompanied men to the front line to sing songs that included messages linking violence to manhood. The songs expressed such lyrics as men who did not fight were cowards and also promoted the use of rape as a tool of war.

On 31 October 2006, the sixth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325, the North Sudan DDR Commission, UNDP and implementing partners HAD and Umserdiba launched a project to offer training in peace education, human rights and HIV prevention to a group of Hakamas in Southern Kordofan. After initial training, the Hakamas traveled all around their region and to Khartoum spreading messages of peace and reconciliation.

In 2012 the project was expanded to three states of Darfur including South, West and Central. This campaign also worked alongside broader public information campaigns and community mobilization events run by NGO implementing partners. Hakamas sang at half-time shows of football matches in each of the capitals, and wrote songs on peace as well as specifically around key international days, such as International Women's Day and the 16 Days of Activism.

This project has demonstrated that indigenous communication methods are effective to promote peace and reconciliation at the grass roots level and are often implemented at very low cost. Despite the fact that the Hakamas come from different tribes, political affiliations and still support different parties through their songs, moving them away from spreading messages of war and destruction has been generally considered a positive step.¹¹⁴

4.2. Demobilization: Establishing new support networks

Demobilization breaks the bonds between commanders and combatants and dissolves the ranks that for many have been a source of social status or prestige that was higher than what they had before or after the conflict. This can mean a loss of the sense of collective identity, purpose, and belonging. It can also strip ex-combatants of the 'war family' that they depended upon for economic support, protection and peer support. This has specific implications for both male and female ex-combatants.

Once military ranks are dissolved, women can also experience a sense of loss from demobilization. In the armed forces or group, women may have earned a higher degree of equality and social recognition than they previously had, including in terms of the respect they received from male counterparts.¹¹⁵ After the war, female combatants are often relegated to lower-ranking positions within new military structures, or are passed over in the selection of political positions in a new government. The demobilization process can also separate the associated members, being primarily women (and girls), from their informal 'marriages' upon which they depended upon during the war, leaving them with no money and limited standing in civilian society.

If the social and economic support structures previously provided by the armed force and group are not replaced or redefined, ex-combatants may idealize what gains they made during the conflict after the formal demobilization process has taken place. Thus, in order to succeed, DDR programmes must find ways to transform the support structures with alternatives that serve as a positive force for recovery and development. The following are key entry points and considerations for demobilization and for preparing ex-combatants for the transition from demobilization to reintegration:

↳ **Transforming or building new social support networks.** DDR programmes should support ex-combatants to form new social and support networks and practitioners should consider ways to gradually transform the strong social ties

developed within armed forces or groups into a positive new driver of recovery and development. Community service work, national service corps and military reserve forces, even if voluntary, can help ex-combatants retain important social ties and provide a means of making a collective contribution to the recovery process. The inclusion of ex-combatants in youth groups and men or women's associations, as well as other activities that build ex-combatants' relationships to peers, can also provide sources of support. *However, extreme caution should be exercised in supporting veterans' associations as they can perpetuate military identities rather than transform them into civilian identities.*

↳ **Screening for physical and mental health concerns.** Gender-responsive pre-screening for physical and mental health issues, including PTSD, drug and alcohol abuse, HIV and sexually transmitted infections, and exposure to GBV, should be integrated as early as possible in the DDR process, usually during the demobilization phase. It is important that both male and female (ex-combatants and associated groups) survivors of GBV are given the space and the encouragement to come forward to receive support and assistance.

↳ **Initiating awareness-raising and sensitization initiatives.** Awareness-raising and sensitization activities undertaken as part of the demobilization phase can provide an important entry point to address the gender dimensions of violence early in the DDR process. Particularly in contexts in which demobilization and cantonment is prolonged, this can be a critical period for discussing ex-combatants' expectations for reintegration, including expectations relating to gender roles. Discussion of health issues, particularly reproductive health and HIV/AIDS, can provide an opportunity to integrate GDV-related components.

↳ **Building social cohesion through interim stabilization projects.** DDR programmes can support interim stabilization projects that build social cohesion and provide opportunities to build positive relationships between ex-combatants

Table 5. Potential experiences of loss during demobilization

Potential losses	Male-specific losses	Female-specific losses, including WAAFG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of: War family Economic support Security and protection Belonging, peer and social support Identity and sense of purpose 'Hero to zero' - loss of status and prestige 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of status and respect gained as a fighter High-ranking men may gain key political positions in new government; however, lower-ranking men may be passed over and experience disillusionment or feel betrayed by commanders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of some degree of equality, respect and protection gained as a fighter High-ranking women may be relegated to lower positions or be passed over for key political positions in the new government WAAFG and their dependents may be separated from male ex-combatants and thus lose source of social/economic support

and community members. Ex-combatants can be employed in short-term projects that will benefit the wider community, such as rebuilding infrastructure or community clean-up.

4.3 Reintegration: Forming a non-violent civilian identity

While disarmament and demobilization are typically time-bound, reintegration is a longer-term process with economic, social/psychosocial and political components. Successful reintegration requires that ex-combatants form new civilian identities and (re-) learn how to face difficulties and social conflict in a non-violent manner.

4.3.1 Economic reintegration

Economic reintegration is a major challenge in post-conflict settings where viable and sustainable livelihood and employment opportunities are often limited due to the impact of conflict. Both male and female ex-combatants typically face the expectation that they will return to a traditional division of labour. For female ex-combatants and associated groups this means a return to domestic and caretaking roles, or to employment in sectors that are traditionally acceptable for women.

Meanwhile, male ex-combatants often struggle to fulfil their expected role as ‘provider’, or to find employment or livelihood options that give them a sense of purpose and respect. Beyond the importance of earning an income, the identity gained through employment can be central to forming a non-violent civilian identity. As expressed earlier, the stress of not having sufficient income correlates with men’s ‘perpetration of violence, higher rates of incarceration, higher rates of alcohol abuse and higher rates of suicidal thoughts.’¹¹⁶

Table 6 provides an overview of key societal expectations and challenges faced by male and female ex-combatants during their economic reintegration.

Support for economic reintegration must consider how gender norms shape attitudes toward employment and livelihoods. Without this, programmes and activities are unlikely to succeed in developing sustainable livelihood and employment options for ex-combatants that provide alternatives to violence. The following are key considerations and entry points for economic reintegration programming:

- **Ensuring sensitivity to gender norms surrounding sustainable livelihood and employment options.** Job-creation efforts should be informed by an understanding of how gender norms shape attitudes about men and women’s work. Economic reintegration should not reinforce or assume traditional norms but provide flexible socio-economic support that is sensitive to the pressures and expectations ex-combatants face. An assessment of culture-specific attitudes toward acceptable male and female work that also considers how gender norms and roles may have changed due to conflict should be an integral part of a wider assessment of reintegration opportunities. In addition, economic reintegration programmes must focus on specific benefits for women. This includes counteracting stigma (i.e. working with men to allow or encourage women to excel in the reintegration option of their own choosing even if it is not ‘women’s work’), providing for childcare options, and considering financial compensation for training.
- **Inserting social and psychosocial components into economic reintegration programmes.** The findings of this report emphasize the importance of addressing social and psychosocial issues as part of reintegration. Experience has shown that programmes that provide counselling and develop life skills, alongside vocational skills, are particularly effective in addressing the needs of at-risk groups.¹¹⁷ Vocational counselling and training can provide a useful entry point for tackling key themes, including addressing gender norms in the workplace.

Table 6. Potential societal expectations and challenges during economic reintegration

Male ex-combatants	Female ex-combatants
<p>Potential societal expectations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation that he will be a ‘provider’ • Expectation that he will acquire work that is considered ‘manly’ <p>Potential challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disempowerment due to limited livelihood and employment options and inability to fulfil expected ‘provider’ role • Finding an economic opportunity or a job that is a source of dignity and respect • Accepting women’s new role as ‘provider’ and the real or perceived competition they pose in the job market 	<p>Potential societal expectations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation that she will return to traditional domestic/ caretaking role • Expectation that she will perform ‘women’s work’ • Expectation that she will accept lower status and lower paying jobs <p>Potential challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disempowerment due to lack of equal economic opportunities • Double burden of domestic and income-generation responsibilities, often with no child-care support

↘ **Creating income-generating opportunities through work with the public and private sectors.**

Where jobs are scarce, economic reintegration must go beyond a focus on developing ex-combatants' skills. Vocational training and skills development that do not match market demands can raise unrealistic expectations or inadvertently reinforce feelings of inadequacy when failing to find employment. DDR programmes should collaborate with the public, private and natural-resources sectors to support economic expansion, create jobs, and develop small enterprises for sustainable livelihoods at the community level.¹¹⁸

↘ **Building a positive sense of self, purpose and respect that is not dependent upon being an economic 'provider'.**

When livelihoods and employment opportunities are limited, DDR programmes should consider ways to assist ex-combatants to build a positive sense of self and purpose that is not dependent on being an economic provider. For instance, community service work or social activism, even if voluntary, can be a way to gain dignity and respect, although the income needs of participants must also be met. Such efforts can already be seen on the ground in areas where the rate of unemployment is very high. NGO alliances like MenEngage have supported men to reflect on alternative ways of playing the role of 'provider', such as offering provision of care to the ill or elderly, active parenting, participating in activities aimed at improving community wellbeing and so forth.¹¹⁹

↘ **Using economic reintegration as an opportunity to build social cohesion and support local economic recovery.**

Engaging community members alongside ex-combatants in the development of livelihoods and employment can facilitate the reintegration process and build social cohesion. If communities are not engaged as stakeholders, reintegration can create tensions or disputes, for instance over resources and assets that are important for livelihoods, such as land, livestock and water rights.

4.3.2 Social reintegration

"Having been away from civilian life for so many years, I had lost almost all social values and felt so depressed after everything I had been through. I continued to solve problems with violence in everyday settings, including at home."

Colombian ex-combatant

An ex-combatant who has economic opportunities but who remains socially isolated or excluded cannot be considered as successfully reintegrated.

As noted above, ex-combatants may suffer from PTSD or anti-social behaviour brought on by negative experiences and traumas endured during the war. He or she can be unaccepted in communities of return, face prejudice or be perceived as a threat to elders or authorities. Furthermore, both male and female ex-combatants often face a return to more narrow or restrictive gender roles. Many may struggle to negotiate new gender roles and find it difficult to overcome day-to-day challenges.

Social reintegration is an appropriate entry point for addressing GDV. Table 7 provides an overview of key societal expectations and challenges faced by male and female ex-combatants during their social reintegration.

Interventions involving men in gender work such as Programa H in Brazil (the 'H' stands for 'homens', or 'men' in Portuguese) can provide valuable lessons and practices for DDR. Programa H uses group education and community-based campaigns to question rigid ideas about what it means to be a 'man'.¹²⁰ Similarly, the Budi Musko ('Be a man') movement in Serbia is working with young teenage men to redefine what is manly and strong.¹²¹

In South Africa (2006), another organization, Sonke Gender Justice, launched the 'One Man Can' campaign, which encourages and supports men and boys to become actively involved in advocating for gender equality, preventing gender-based violence (GBV), and responding to HIV and AIDS. One Man Can

Table 7. Potential societal expectations and challenges during social reintegration

Male ex-combatants	Female ex-combatants
<p>Potential societal expectations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation that men will return to 'provider' role and (re-)establish a 'normal' civilian identity <p>Potential challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggle to define positive and/or new roles within household • Exclusion from communities; overcoming stigma associated with being a combatant • Inability to find or fulfil social expectations that gives them a sense of belonging or traditional sources of 'prestige' in the post-conflict environment 	<p>Potential societal expectations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation that women will return to caretaking role, marry (may be difficult due to stigma) and 're-populate' <p>Potential challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggle to define positive and/or new roles within household • Stigma associated with being a combatant • Stigma associated with breaking sexual/gender norms or bearing children outside marriage or from rape

Campaign was adapted for the Sudan context in 2010 and piloted under the Sudan DDR Programme in Blue Nile State. After initial piloting in one state, One Man Can rolled out across multiple states in Sudan under the DDR and Community Security and Arms Control programme and has become an integral part of the programme's gender transformative approach. All of these transformative interventions are creating visible symbols (logos on t-shirts, hats and billboards, and graffiti) aimed at forging new identities that "promote healthy, equitable relationships that men and women can enjoy passionately, respectfully and fully."¹²²

The success of the initiative led UNDP and the Sudan DDR Commission to scale up the 'One Man Can' campaign across Sudan by training a pool of 30 national NGOs, 500 peer educators, including community and religious leaders and health workers. The campaign reached over 100,000 men, women and youth and contributed to changing harmful norms regarding gender-based violence across the country.

The following are key entry points and considerations for strengthening social reintegration:

- **Supporting ex-combatants to (re-)learn to manage stress, anger and inter-personal conflict non-violently.** Many ex-combatants, particularly youth who have spent a significant part of their lives in armed groups, need support to learn basic social and life skills. In some cases, initiatives that support the family as a whole to cope with stress, rather than only the individual ex-combatant alone, can be effective in preventing violence.
- **Using health as an entry point to address GDV, including through HIV/AIDS and reproductive health interventions.** Health programmes targeting ex-combatants and communities of return, particularly those that focus on HIV/AIDS and reproductive health, can provide an important entry point for addressing issues of gender identity and GBV. Addressing and preventing GBV, through HIV/AIDS and reproductive health interventions becomes an integral part of social reintegration. Examples include Stepping Stones¹²³ and Engender Health's Men As Partners (MAP)¹²⁴ initiatives.
- **Developing parenting skills.** Parenting interventions, which teach parenting skills and develop parents' ability to manage children, can be an important way to reduce ex-combatants' vulnerability to violence within the family. After particularly prolonged conflicts and especially in the case of men, ex-combatants may lack models to guide them as parents and partners. By developing parenting skills, men can play a positive role in their children's lives, overcome ideas that this is a woman's domain, and establish positive identities as fathers.¹²⁵
- **Transforming harmful gender norms and attitudes within communities.** The attitudes and expectations of community members are critical to successful reintegration. DDR programmes should explore

options to support forums or outreach in communities where ex-combatants are present in order to discuss ideas of masculinity and femininity. Experience shows that men benefit if offered a 'safe space' to openly discuss social expectations of manhood. In some cases man-to-man discussions between peers have been instrumental in changing attitudes toward violence against women. In addition, the use of peers, respected community leaders, social and religious networks and media, such as daily radio shows or soap operas, can help reach a local audience in a culturally appropriate way.¹²⁶

- **Strengthening ties between ex-combatants and communities and building social cohesion.** Community-based projects identified by men and women that bring together ex-combatants and civilians to achieve a common goal (e.g. repairing community infrastructure) are critical to strengthening ties between ex-combatants and communities and building social cohesion. In addition, supporting community centres or other local forums that bring ex-combatants together with community members for social activities (e.g. discussion groups with community leaders, sports, skill-building teams) can also help strengthen social cohesion. In Colombia, for instance, 'The Game of Peace' engaged demobilized youth and their communities in *fútbol* (soccer) to promote active citizen participation, peaceful coexistence, conflict resolution and gender equality. The rules of the game, which required women and men to play together and women to score the first goal, were used as an entry point to question gender roles. This project also served to strengthen ties between ex-combatant youth and communities and build social cohesion.
- **Strengthening local mechanisms for security, justice, governance and peacebuilding.** At the community level, DDR programmes can develop capacities to manage disputes non-violently, strengthen ties between ex-combatants, communities and authorities, improve safety and security, and implement gun control laws, gun hand-in amnesties and gun buy-back initiatives. For instance, the UN's Community Security and Social Cohesion (CSSC) approach¹²⁷ provides a framework for developing multi-sectoral responses to community-identified needs. These can include measures to strengthen the institutions of local governance, peacebuilding and security and justice, address the supply and demand of weapons, and improve the community environment. Linking DDR with security, police, justice and public sector reform initiatives is critical to developing a coherent approach at the national and local levels.

The absence of women from the security sector can represent a lost opportunity to benefit from the different skill sets and approaches offered by women as security providers. Having more women in the security sector can also give women a stronger sense of protection within the wider community. Specific measures to help give women the means

and support to enter the security sector can include: i) informing female ex-combatants during the DDR process of the option to integrate into national security forces, ii) sensitizing national security providers towards the advantages of engaging women, and iii) encouraging the development of policies to protect women within the security sector against harassment.

4.3.3 Psychosocial reintegration

Ex-combatants and associated groups with unaddressed trauma and mental health concerns, including anxiety/stress disorders and PTSD, drug and alcohol abuse, and exposure to GBV, are particularly vulnerable to developing anti-social behaviours. Social and psychosocial reintegration and integrally linked and therefore programmes must address the two components through a comprehensive approach. Psychologically distressed ex-combatants and associated groups require concerted support in the post-conflict period. DDR programmes have often lacked the technical and financial resources to address psychosocial concerns. It is clear, however, that the achievement of sustainable reintegration and reduction of vulnerabilities to violence depend directly upon facing up to these pervasive issues.

Table 8 provides an overview of key societal expectations and challenges faced by male and female ex-combatants during their psychosocial reintegration.

The following are entry points and considerations for psychosocial reintegration:

➤ **Prioritizing psychosocial support to manage PTSD and war-related trauma.** Male and female ex-combatants and WAAFG should be provided with appropriate forums for psychosocial support, which may include individual care, group counselling or collective healing. The best approach will depend upon the context and available human and financial resources.

In cases where both ex-combatants and communities have experienced trauma, collective approaches that address trauma among ex-combatants and war-affected communities together can be a means to promoting reconciliation and social cohesion (See box 9). However, this approach may also be limited in cases of severe trauma and PTSD, as more severely affected individuals may not attend such meetings due to avoidance tendencies and the risk of suffering flashbacks.

➤ **Building psychosocial referral chains and training community counsellors.** Post-conflict countries frequently lack mental health facilities and trained mental health professionals, such as psychologists, psychiatrists and counsellors. In countries where this is the case, midwives, nurses, teachers and members of similar professions can be trained to be community counsellors for basic trauma recovery as part of DDR programmes.

Table 8. Potential societal expectations and challenges during psychosocial reintegration

Male and female ex-combatants	
<p>Societal expectations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expectation that men and women will recover from trauma, cope with mental health symptoms and overcome stigma to become 'normal' members of society (often without the aid of mental health care, which may be stigmatized)¹²⁸ 	
Male ex-combatants	Female ex-combatants
<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More likely than women to deal with PTSD by 'acting out' (e.g. through aggressive behaviour) Trauma from GBV less likely to be recognized due to taboos associated with sexual violence against men Use of drugs and alcohol as a means to cope with PTSD and the difficulties of reintegration 	<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More likely than men to deal with PTSD by 'keeping in' (e.g. depression and anxiety) Difficulty accessing psychosocial and medical help due to stigma and shame associated with GBV Use of drugs and alcohol as a means to cope with PTSD and the difficulties of reintegration

Box 9: Individual and collective psychosocial care in post-conflict settings¹²⁹

At the **psychological-individual level**, the accurate diagnosis of individuals' mental health is a necessary pre-condition for any effective intervention. This may be first accomplished through an active assessment and screening of former combatants, and at the same time open access to diagnosis in a health facility for all other severely-affected individuals in the community.

At the **socio-collective level**, action is at the level of the community. The stories of individuals who have experienced trauma become collective narratives through the use of media and educational programmes. A dialogue between victims and perpetrators then aims to lead to more understanding, tolerance, a reduction of stigmatization, and increased openness and trust, creating a new collective meaning of traumatic events.

DDR programmes can also work to establish a referral chain to ensure appropriate referral mechanisms to handle cases that cannot be treated by community counsellors. This can be achieved for example through training hospital or medical staff (e.g. at a state or provincial level) to address second-level trauma, such that only the most severe cases are referred to psychiatrists/psychologists.¹³⁰

- **Preventing intimate partner violence.** Given the well-established links between PTSD and intimate partner violence, DDR programmes should explore ways to support ex-combatants and their families to prevent domestic violence. Experience with US war veterans suggests that individuals who are at risk, but who have not yet been violent, can benefit from group therapy that helps the family unit as a whole to manage stress and prevent violence within the home.

In cases where violence has already occurred, both the victim and the individual who has been violent often require separate therapy and care, with the potential, in some cases, to come back together for joint work.¹³¹ Community health approaches, which involve community health workers, religious leaders, youth and family members in information and awareness-raising campaigns, community mobilization and peer education, may provide ways to reach ex-combatants and their families, particularly where skilled professional counselling is limited.¹³²

- **Addressing stigma associated with GBV and providing access to care.** While the needs of female ex-combatant and WAAFG survivors of GBV are increasingly recognized, those of male survivors of GBV have been largely neglected. DDR programmes should enable both men and women who face shame and stigma associated with GBV to come forward and to access support for recovery through public information and awareness-raising campaigns in communities of return.
- **Providing special attention to the psychosocial needs of children associated with armed forces and groups, as well as young adult ex-combatants.** Children and young adults who have been socialized to violence at an early age are particularly vulnerable to continued patterns of violent behaviour and need specialized support. Boys are more likely to act out their violent experiences and trauma aggressively while girls are more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety disorders.

DDR programmes should identify ways to support children and young adults to overcome violence-related trauma, to develop the basic social and life skills that they have missed, to seize opportunities for education and advancement, and to recover from drug and alcohol dependencies formed during war. Initiatives by UNICEF and other child protection actors will prove vital to addressing the manifold psychosocial needs of children associated with armed forces and groups.

Country Example 11: Psychosocial reintegration in Sudan and Uganda

Sudan¹³³

The Sudan DDR Programme (SDDRP) developed a pilot programme in the Blue Nile State to support psychosocial reintegration, which incorporated GDV elements. The programme initially targeted WAAFG to offer specialized support, but soon realized that many projects were relevant to the needs of the wider community and that exclusive support to WAAFG caused risks and resentment among both female DDR participants and other women in the community.

In addition, a psychosocial assessment highlighted high levels of unaddressed trauma among men in areas in which violence against female DDR participants was being reported, and in areas where violence during the war had been the most intense. In response to identifying these additional risks and needs, a wider community-based approach was established. In addition, the psychosocial component was expanded to provide benefits and services for both men and women.

The programme consists of four main components: (1) psychosocial support; (2) reproductive health, HIV and GBV prevention; (3) civic education, which integrates issues related to human rights, women's rights, reproductive health, and parenting; and, (4) community-based projects which integrate peacebuilding and reconciliation components and focus upon literacy and training in food processing.



Male peer educator participating in the 'One Man Can' campaign in Sudan (August 2012).

The psychosocial component of the project was designed to address psychosocial trauma among DDR participants in a context where there are very few psychologists and psychiatrists as well as limited access to medical health service centres. It focuses on the creation of a psychosocial referral system, starting at the community level, which can be accessed by all members of the community.

The project trained 86 midwives, teachers and other civilians as community counsellors to handle basic cases. In addition, the programme trained staff in two state hospitals to handle mid-level cases so that individuals showing negative coping mechanisms, including drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence, can be referred to the state level.

The most severe cases will be referred to the Psychosocial Trauma Centre (the only one in the country, and the only level where psychiatrists are present) at Africa University in Khartoum. The programme also includes a psychosocial awareness-raising campaign to reduce stigma of dealing with psychosocial trauma, and includes a radio drama series designed to foster community discussion.

The reproductive health component of the programme is implemented through an inter-agency collaboration between UNDP and UNFPA. This component is also community-based, targeting both men and women to ensure a more comprehensive response to GBV, and addressing lack of healthcare services as well as knowledge on reproductive health, HIV and other key issues.

The programme includes the training of peer educators using the One Man Can Campaign manual from Sonke Gender Justice, which examines issues of power, health, violence, and rights. It also encourages action to prevent domestic violence and sexual violence, promote gender equality, create agents of change, and reduce the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS.

Uganda¹³⁴

In northern Uganda, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) abducted large numbers of children and youth, who were forced to be porters and carriers, sex slaves and combatants during the war. Many children therefore missed out on formal education and appropriate social development during their formative years.

About 20 percent of formerly abducted male and female youth show severe and persistent symptoms of traumatic stress syndrome, depression and suicidal tendencies. In addition, many show increased levels of aggression when compared with non-abducted peers.

Stigmatization of these young people as so-called 'former rebels' and 'murderers' is also common within their communities of return. The psychological impact of experiences with the LRA prevents many from concentrating in school, sleeping, having functional relationships with friends, and integrating adequately back into communities.

In northern Uganda, the NGO Vivo¹³⁵ has developed a comprehensive, gender-sensitive psychosocial programme, which has reached out to over 600 war-affected youth, including both former combatants and non-combatants.¹³⁶ The programme provides a model for how a psychosocial support system can be developed in contexts in which there are few trained psychologists or specialists and how such support can be integrated with vocational training.

The psychosocial component of the programme was developed in close collaboration with the Norwegian Refugee Council's Youth Education Pack (YEP), a vocational training programme that supports war-affected youth, many of them children formerly associated with the LRA.

YEP supports the most severely affected learners to develop practical vocational skills and catch up on academic education at 10 vocational training centres. Prior to intervention, 400 participants were interviewed and then subsequently interviewed again four and eight months after the intervention. Remarkable and significant reductions in PTSD symptoms, depression, suicidal tendencies and aggression were found. Feelings of revenge were reduced, whereas openness to reconciliation increased.

At the time of writing this report, Vivo was developing a best-practices manual based on the outcomes of this initiative, consolidating lessons learned, aiming to make information available to other organizations in northern Uganda and elsewhere.



Youth in Karamoja, Uganda (September 2011).

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Country Example 12: Integrating gender-transformative activities into psychosocial reintegration support in Colombia



Ex-combatants participate in communal services at the Pamplonita River initiated by the Colombian Reintegration Agency (ACR) (April 2013).

In Colombia, many male and female DDR participants were socialized to violence before entering into illegal armed groups. They were already familiar with, or had experienced, societal problems such as sexual and gender-based violence, status gained through arms and illegal activities, prostitution, and social exclusion. In response, the Colombian reintegration programme initiated a strong psychosocial component that aims to “develop, strengthen and re-orient the competencies of the DDR participant and his/her family”.

As part of the reintegration programme, the psychosocial support component aims to develop four key competencies: assertive relations, conflict resolution, responsibility and ambition for achievements. Furthermore, the participants are divided into four levels: Basic, Intermediate I, Intermediate II and Advanced. The programme has one designated psychosocial professional per 120 participants.

In order to advance within the programme, participants have to attend a combination of psychosocial activities and pass the evaluation of performance indicators monitoring the progress of the four key competencies. In each level, participants have access to mandatory and voluntary psychosocial workshops, home visits by programme staff, family activities, community activities and counselling on demand.

Gender-transformative activities are integrated into the psychosocial support component as a fundamental part of each key competency and on all levels of the reintegration process, including psychosocial activities on gender, masculinities, gender-based violence, social stigma and sexual and reproductive health. This has been achieved through an assessment tool (the Masculinities and Feminities Identities Traffic Light) that identifies the type of support ex-combatants require from social workers to construct healthier gender relations with partners, families and communities.¹³⁷

During 2010, 28,192 male and 4,504 female participants received psychosocial support, 24,392 of which took part in the gender-transformative activities. Reports from the psychosocial professionals involved indicated that DDR participants particularly appreciated gender-related activities. Additionally, female dependants reported that they valued the home visits made by psychosocial professionals, which were effective in identifying family dysfunctions.

Table 9: Masculine and Feminine Identities: The Colombia “Traffic Light”

As part of the psychosocial gender strategy/analysis that is provided for former ex-combatants in Colombia, the Colombian Agency for Reintegration (ACR) uses the model of a “traffic light” to depict the linkages and expectations between the degree of masculinities/feminities and violence during the different stages from combatant to civilian life.

ARMED GROUP	DEMOBILIZATION	REINTEGRATION PROCESS
MILITARIZED HEGEMONIC MASCULINITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↘ There are different types of masculinities and feminities that are interconnected by struggles of power, hierarchy and exclusion. ↘ “Hegemonic Masculinities” are those role models that validates a patriarchal social and political order. 	MASCULINITIES IN CRISES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↘ The Inabilities to fulfill the traditional roles (as provider and protector of the family) can cause: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling of shame and humiliation. • Can be trigger for domestic violence and recidivism. 	NEW MASCULINITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↘ To promote acknowledgment of the existence of different forms and expressions of masculinities trough: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional expression. • Affective paternity. • Shared responsibility at home. • Identification and adjustment to non-traditional roles.
MILITARIZED HEGEMONIC MASCULINITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↘ Complex relations inside the illegal Armed Group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender identities often related to military attributes and attitudes, traditionally masculine • At the same time, many women are victims of sexual violence inside the groups. 	MASCULINITIES IN CRISES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↘ Traditional gender roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment. ↘ Subordination of women: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable to poverty and violence. 	NEW MASCULINITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↘ Women in control of their lives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve empowerment in their life projects. • Acquire abilities. • Strengthen trust and self confidence. • Non violent conflict resolution.

4.4 Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR and GDV

The Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR (IAWG) is taking steps to ensure that GDV is more fully reflected in its Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS). For instance, IDDRS module 4.30 on Reintegration is being revised to: i) include specific operational guidance addressing the gender-specific needs of men and boys in addition to the needs of women and girls; ii) strengthen psychosocial components of reintegration; and, iii) enhance the role of strategic communication in DDR.

The IAWG is also working to develop human and financial resources to enable implementation and strengthen relationships with strategic partners on this topic. Activities to build upon human and financial resources include: i) raising awareness among donors, reintegration actors, and the international community; ii) developing the capacity of UN staff and securing funding for programming; and, iii) working to integrate these issues into new programmes and to scale up existing pilot projects in partnership with country offices, national governments, men’s and women’s networks, technical specialists, international organizations and NGOs.

Regular revision and updating of the IDDRS is central to the IAWG’s work. Alongside an improved Module 5.10 on Women, Gender and DDR, the psychosocial needs and vulnerabilities of men and boys are to be dealt with in all relevant modules of the IDDRS. GDV will also be addressed in the revision of Module 4.11 on SALW Control, Security and Development.



Conclusions and recommendations for DDR policy and programming

DDR's primary objective is the sustainable economic, social/psychosocial and political reintegration of former combatants and associated groups into communities. However, members of armed forces and groups were socialized to use violence and often undergo a militarization of their identities that can follow them through the DDR process and beyond. Moreover, many ex-combatants may face PTSD, other mental issues or substance abuse as a result of their experience in the war. With these vulnerabilities ex-combatants form part of a high-risk group for committing different forms of violence long after their reintegration. Ex-combatants are also particularly vulnerable to re-recruitment into gangs and other armed groups, and to become involved in criminal activities. In contrast, many ex-combatants are able to reintegrate successfully and live peaceful, non-violent lives.

Several factors at the individual, interpersonal, community and societal levels fuel vulnerabilities or strengthen resilience. These factors have a significant gender dimensions, which are generally understudied and not adequately considered in DDR programmes. *Blame it on the War?* is a first step towards improving understanding of the relationship between gender identities and post-conflict violence committed by both male and female ex-combatants as well as associated groups.

The core of applying the GDV framework to DDR is the recognition of the differences in social power between males and females and the need to consider gender identities and roles in society within relevant policy and guidance. In order to promote more supportive gender-responsive programming in DDR,¹³⁸ the GDV lens gives men and women a shared responsibility for transforming harmful gender norms and identities and for setting the foundation for promoting longer-term gender equality.

The goal of the GDV Initiative is to give DDR practitioners and policymakers the opportunity to

further reduce security risks and ensure programme effectiveness through a greater focus on GDV during early recovery and into the long-term peacebuilding process. Because of their focus on ex-combatants and associated groups during the transition to peace, DDR programmes are ideally placed to help men, women, boys and girls to overcome violent masculinities and femininities and form alternative, positive civilian identities. They additionally may serve as a precursor to critical development processes, paving the way for gender-transformative interventions and the formation of more equitable relationships between men and women.

The following is a list of seven key recommendations for addressing existing gaps in policy and guidance on the gender dimensions of violence in DDR programming:

Recommendation 1

Apply a gender perspective for both male and female DDR participants and beneficiaries whether it is at the policy or programming level.

DDR policies and programmes should recognize and respond to the gender-related needs and vulnerabilities of men and boys as well as women and girls in order to reduce trauma and vulnerabilities and strengthen resilience of both sexes to violence.

Experience from a number of development contexts has shown that deliberate efforts to question men's and women's attitudes and expectations about gender norms through policies and programmes can encourage men to play a positive role in building gender equality.¹³⁹ While the IDDRS provides strong guidance on addressing the needs of women and girls, including WAAFG, in the DDR process, there is a need to increase the application of a gender perspective on men and boys' experiences and their successful reintegration.

Recommendation 2

Conduct pilot projects that address the gender dimensions of violence in DDR

In order to strengthen practice in the area of gender and to respond more effectively to post-conflict violence, DDR programmes should aim to develop pilot projects or scale-up existing pilots that integrate these issues.

Approaches to integrating GDV issues in DDR programmes should be systematically piloted at the country level in order to collect positive practices and lessons that could be applied in other countries and contexts. For instance, in the Republic of the Congo, community radio stations have started programmes for men that discuss the pervasive issue of GBV and how to resolve marital problems in a non-violent way. In Colombia, the High Council for Reintegration (*Alta Consejería para la Reintegración*) has integrated GDV analysis into its psychosocial support programme provided to ex-combatants (the Colombia Traffic Light mentioned in Table 9).

Recommendation 3

Increase support for the psychosocial components of reintegration

Successful reintegration programming should integrate economic, social and psychosocial components as part of a comprehensive approach, and steps must be taken to increase the UN's capacity to support psychosocial reintegration as part of DDR programming.

The findings of this report suggest that psychosocial issues, particularly PTSD and trauma-related disorders, depression and alcohol and drug abuse, are key factors influencing ex-combatants' continued use of violence. Furthermore, they suggest that economic reintegration will not succeed if socialization to violence, loss of status associated with being a combatant, low self-esteem and other key psychosocial effects of war are not simultaneously addressed. Donors as well as relevant national departments and agencies must be made aware of the need to support social and psychosocial programmes alongside economic reintegration. Local and national leaders must be engaged throughout the process.

Further work is needed to develop and share good practices in psychosocial reintegration, including through support for pilot initiatives that build upon the entry points described in Part IV of this report.

Recommendation 4

Deepen engagement with families and communities of return

DDR programmes must target not only the individual ex-combatant but also his or her family and community of return.

This report highlights that violence often shifts from the battlefield to the home and community, and that the support provided by families and communities is critical to breaking that cycle. Deeper engagement with families and communities will help all to talk about the norms, attitudes and relationships that reinforce violent behaviour and will help support initial steps towards behavioural change.¹⁴⁰

The family can play an important role in strengthening ex-combatants' ability to adapt to the challenges of reintegration and cope with stress and trauma. While DDR programmes have begun to recognize the importance of addressing the needs of female dependents of combatants, they have often neglected the potentially positive role that family members, including wives, children, and extended family networks, can play in supporting reintegration and strengthening resilience.

Community-based mechanisms to strengthen resilience to violence are under-utilized and underfunded. More work is needed to identify and target support to those actors that support resilience at the community level, such as community networks that provide services or bring groups together in social activities like sports or traditional festivities, and to local peace committee members and community leaders who can provide positive role models or embody non-violent gender identities.

Recommendation 5

Strengthen partnerships with organizations working with women and men

In order to effectively address gender dimensions of violence, DDR programmes should strengthen partnerships with relevant organizations, particularly women and men's networks.

Networks and organizations working with men, women, boys and girls on the gender dimensions of violence and gender equality can play a central role in efforts to reach out to and provide a support base to male and female ex-combatants, their families and communities.

Experience has shown that men's networks and groups can be key partners in GBV prevention, particularly through peer outreach. However, despite a growing network of organizations actively working with men to address gender issues and bring about gender equality in developing settings,¹⁴¹ post-conflict contexts lack partner organizations to engage with. An initial investment by UN entities and national counterparts in identifying appropriate men's groups and forums, and developing their capacity to engage on these issues, may be required.

Women's potential influence, not only as wives, partners and mothers of ex-combatants, but also as community members, is often neglected and under-utilized. Experience has shown that women

can be mobilized to support DDR efforts, including encouraging men to hand in weapons, promoting non-violent messages, and supporting ex-combatants' reintegration. Partnerships with women's organizations, particularly those focusing on violence prevention and peacebuilding issues, should be strengthened in order to enable women to have a stronger say in DDR programming.

Recommendation 6

Enhance coordination within the UN system and with national bodies to address the gender dimensions of violence

In order to address the economic, social and psychosocial components of reintegration, multiple UN agencies must strengthen collaboration and coordination among themselves and with national authorities and counterparts.

UN entities such as UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, UNFPA, IOM, WHO, UNAIDS, DPKO, and UN Women among others regularly engage on DDR and related issues within their respective mandates. DDR programmes must be coordinated and sequenced in a manner that is compatible and mutually reinforcing throughout the start, implementation and closing of all the different post-conflict security and recovery programmes and activities, including those undertaken by partners and/or national authorities.

Transforming (violent) norms, institutions and attitudes that support violence in the wider community and society is a long-term process. The political will and financial means to reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience to violence at the community and national levels must continue long after the formal DDR programme ends. It is therefore critical for planners and implementers of DDR programmes to coordinate with the wider Armed Violence Prevention (AVP), peacebuilding, CSSC, or area-based development programmes that aim to provide integrated, longer-term approaches to gender and violence and to national peacebuilding and development strategies. Furthermore, it is critical that cooperation is strengthened with specialized UN agency partners, such as WHO, UNAIDS and UNFPA, which work on psychosocial dimensions of reintegration and have expertise in public health, HIV/AIDS and GBV prevention.

After conflict ends, many (ex-)combatants continue to serve in the security sector or are integrated into new security forces. Security personnel who may have also been socialized to wartime violence or who have fought as combatants have been known to use excessive force and unnecessary violence against civilians.¹⁴² For this reason security sector reform (SSR) and related rule of law (RoL), police, prisons and justice sector reform programmes must also cooperatively address the gender dimensions of violence. This must include more coordinated approaches to training and vetting personnel.

DDR should also be coordinated with wider Livelihoods and Local Economic Recovery programmes to develop a coherent approach to economic reintegration and provide a continuum of livelihood support to ex-combatants, their families and communities of return. Common approaches to addressing gender-related vulnerabilities in vocational training or in the revival of sectors that generate employment may be beneficial.

Given the important role of many of the organizations and national bodies in continuing to support the psychosocial, economic and political reintegration needs of ex-combatants and associated groups after the DDR programme has closed, it is essential for DDR practitioners to prepare and coordinate transition strategies among all of the partners and national bodies in order to ensure continued support and sustainability of the reintegration of ex-combatants and associated groups.

Recommendation 7

Build capacity of UN and partners to address the gender dimensions of violence

In order to produce more gender-responsive DDR programmes, DDR practitioners within the UN system, their partners and national and international counterparts must be provided with the knowledge, technical skills and tools to respond to gender dimensions of violence at any given stage in the DDR process. Similar skills training should also be considered for related fields that implement programmes that take place after DDR but that may include ex-combatants and associated groups as beneficiaries

Training on GDV and programmatic approaches should be provided to both DDR managers and gender focal points in order to ensure that a sufficient number of qualified specialists remain available. In addition, training institutions should integrate gender and GDV issues into already existing basic and advanced DDR trainings to augment the pool of available disarmament, demobilization and reintegration personnel trained in gender issues. Training tailored to specific programmes at the country level can be instrumental not only to building the capacity of programme staff and partners, but also to review gender practices, redress gender imbalances and adopt action plans. This will ensure immediate applicability of learning and possibly generate greater impact by improving the overall gender responsiveness of the DDR programme.

Capacity building and training on GDV and its relevance to ex-combatants should also be considered for all related programmes such as GBV, employment, livelihoods, armed violence reduction, community security, peacebuilding and conflict prevention. International and national practitioners in these fields may have ex-combatants among their beneficiaries and training would be useful to help them understand particular sensitivities, vulnerabilities and positive attributes that can make them agents of change.

Footnotes

- 1 Uganda (Chris Dolan), DRC (Adrienne Stork), Timor Leste (Henri Myrntinen), Sudan (Samara Andrade).
- 2 United Nations (2011). *Third Report of the Secretary-General on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration*. 21 March 2011 (A/65/741).
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 United Nations (2006). *Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS)*. Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (IAWG-DDR), New York: August 2006.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ramsbotham, O., Woodhouse, T., and Miall, H. (2011). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. 3rd ed. London: Polity Press, P.228.
- 7 Key secondary studies and expert contributions included: DRC: Baaz, M. E. and Stern, M. (2010). *The Complexity of Violence: A critical analysis of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)*. Working Paper on Gender Based Violence. Uppsala: The Nordic Africa Institute and SIDA; Uganda: Dolan, C. (2003). *Collapsing Masculinities and Weak States – a case study of northern Uganda*. In Cleaver, F. (ed.) (2003). *Masculinities Matter! Men, Gender and Development*. London: Zed Books; Colombia: Material on Colombia draws from information provided by Presidencia de la Republica, La Alta Consejería para la Reintegración (2010), and compiled by Michelle Glasser, primary research undertaken by Kimberly Theidon and Paola Andrea Betancourt for UNDP BCPR's GDV Initiative, and Theidon, K. (2009). "Reconstructing Masculinities: The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Former Combatants in Colombia", *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 31, No.1, pp.1–34 (2009); Timor Leste: Material on Timor Leste draws from consultations with Robert Morrell and Henri Myrntinen, and from Myrntinen, H., 2011. 'Histories of Violence, States of Denial: Militias, Martial Arts and Masculinities in Timor-Leste,' Ph.D. Thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- 8 United Nations (2006). *Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards*.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 United Nations (2011). *Third report of the Secretary-General on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration*, 21 March 2011 (A/65/741).
- 11 United Nations (2006). *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS)*, Module 2.30, p. 1.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 UN Women (no date). "Gender Mainstreaming: Concepts and Definitions". Online: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>.
- 14 Definition of 'gender-sensitive programmes' taken and moderately adapted from: World Health Organization (2007). *Engaging men and boys in changing gender-based inequity in health: Evidence from programme interventions*.
- 15 For more information on "masculinities" see: Greig, A., Kimmel, M. and Lang, J. (2000). *Men, Masculinities & Development: Broadening our work towards gender equality*. Gender in Development Monograph Series #10.
- 16 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) (2006). *Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs – Equal Opportunities (Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action)*. December 2006, p. 12; Ward, J. and Marsh, M. (2006). *Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls in War and Its Aftermath: Realities, Responses, and Required Resources*. UNFPA Briefing Paper Prepared for Symposium on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Beyond. Brussels: 21-23 June 2006.
- 17 Carpenter, A. (2008). 'Resilience to Violent Conflict: Adaptive Strategies in Fragile States,' *International Studies Association*. In psychology, individual resilience is defined in terms of four factors: (1) outcomes despite adversity (acquisition of social skills, emotional development, academic achievement, psychological wellbeing, self-esteem); (2) sustained competence under stress (coping skills, attitudes towards obstacles); (3) recovery from trauma; and (4) effect of interactions (reaction to risks or negative outcomes, for example, through use of humor to minimize negative impacts).
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Women2000 (1998). *Sexual Violence and Armed Conflict: United Nations Response*. United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, Women's Rights Unit, New York: April 1998.

- 21 Ward, J. and Marsh, M. (2006). *Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls in War and Its Aftermath: Realities, Responses, and Required Resources*. UNFPA Briefing Paper Prepared for Symposium on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Beyond. Brussels: 21-23 June 2006.
- 22 The UN Secretary-General's Network of Men Leaders, launched as part of the UNiTE Campaign to End Violence Against Women, is a notable initiative to encourage men and boys' role as agents of change.
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- 24 The United Nations has called for engaging men and boys in gender equality programmes for more than 15 years. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD, Cairo) affirmed the importance of involving men in improving sexual and reproductive health, and emphasized the need to increase men's involvement in the care of children. The ICPD Programme of Action calls for leaders to "promote the full involvement of men in family life and the full integration of women in community life," ensuring that "men and women are equal partners." Similarly, the 48th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 2004 affirmed the ICPD and went further, recognizing that men and boys can and do make contributions to achieve gender equality. CSW urged governments to adopt and implement policies to close the gap between women and men in terms of occupational segregation, parental leave and working arrangements to encourage men to fully participate in the care and support of others, particularly children. The UN Secretary-General's Network of Men Leaders, launched as part of the UNiTE Campaign to End Violence Against Women, is a notable initiative to encourage men and boys' role as agents of change in the area of gender-based violence. UN agencies have also been part of creating the global MenEngage Alliance, a network of UN agencies and NGOs working globally to engage men and boys in gender equality and violence prevention.
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- 122 See the ‘One Man Can’ project on the Sonke Gender Justice Network website: <http://www.genderjustice.org.za>.

- 123 Stepping Stones is a communication tool developed by the Strategies for Hope project, which was founded in 1989 with the support of ActionAid. It was developed in order to initiate and sustain meaningful dialogue around sexual attitudes and needs. It was originally designed both for use in existing HIV/AIDS projects and in general community development projects which plan to introduce an on-going HIV and sexual and reproductive health component. Whilst it was developed specifically in response to growing communication needs in Uganda, the tool has been tailored and personalized in other parts of Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.
- 124 For more information on Men as Partners project of the EngenderHealth see: <http://www.EngenderHealth.org/pubs/gender/ppasa-manual.php>.
- 125 See, for example, men Care's Global Fatherhood campaign at: <http://www.men-care.org/>
- 126 For instance, *Puntos de Encuentro*, a Nicaraguan NGO, launched the Group of Men Against Violence, which has provided space for critical reflection, counselling and training for men, and has developed a successful outreach campaign that uses a popular soap opera to deal with issues of masculinity and violence. Welsch, P. (2009). *UNDP BCPR Nicaragua GDV Case Study*.
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- 134 Adapted from information provided by Anna Maedl, Vivo.
- 135 Vivo is an independent, non-profit organization working to overcome and prevent traumatic stress and its consequences within the individual, the family as well as the community, safeguarding the rights and dignity of people affected by violence and conflict. Vivo further aims to strengthen local resources for the development of peaceful, human rights-based, societal ways of living. See also: http://www.vivo.org/index_eng.html.
- 136 See "Establishment of a trauma-focused outpatient clinic for Northern Uganda" on the Vivo website: http://www.vivo.org/projects/uganda/index_eng.html.
- 137 In the traffic light tool the red category symbolizes gender identities that have been shaped by the violent setting and that manifest as violent, militarized behaviour. The yellow category symbolizes gender identities in crisis. This stage can follow the change in the ability of men, women, boys and girls to fulfil their traditional gender roles and thus measure up to the expectations set for them in the community or society. The green category symbolizes harmonious gender identities as a result of understanding and accepting one's own masculinity or femininity, as well as that of others. The green stage is marked with a feeling of empowerment in one's own gender role.
- 138 For more information on gender-responsive DDR programmes, see United Nations (2006). *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS)*. Module 5.10. Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (IAWG-DDR), New York: August 2006.
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- 141 The MenEngage alliance is a network with over 300 institutional partners throughout the world. See: www.menengage.org.
- 142 For instance, GBV committed by uniformed personnel was highlighted as a key concern in southern Sudan. Andrade, S. (2009). *UNDP BCPR Sudan Case Study*.

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