

# 5.20 Youth and DDR

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#### NOTE

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# 5.20 Youth and DDR

## Summary

This module on youth — young people between the ages of 15 and 24 — is intended to give advice to policy makers and programme planners on the best ways to deal with the needs of a group that has historically been poorly served by disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes. Youth fall between the legal categories of child and adult, and their needs are not necessarily well served by programmes designed for mature adults or very young children. Young people in countries emerging from conflict are both a force for change and renewal in the country, and simultaneously a group that is vulnerable to being drawn into renewed violence. To manage their expectations and direct their energies positively, special attention has to be focused on involving youth in catch-up education programmes that improve their ability to earn an independent livelihood, restoring their hope in a better future and developing their capacity to contribute as upcoming leaders, entrepreneurs, parents and caregivers.

## 1. Module scope and objectives

This module advocates making the DDR process as a whole more youth-focused, as the majority of combatants in many countries are young. Specifically, it offers insights into the creation of viable livelihood programmes for youth.

The objective of this module is to provide guidance and standards on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of young people. This will ensure that particular nature of both the 15–24 age group and the contexts they will reintegrate into are taken into account in the planning, design and implementation of DDR assistance programmes.

The module focuses explicitly on offering guidance and setting standards to tackle the typical challenges of youth reintegration after war. In order to make DDR assistance more appropriate to young combatants, it explains how to make the most of their positive potential in order to reduce the risk of them becoming a security threat. The module will explicitly provide guidance on designing and implementing youth-focused DDR, so that it channels their ambitions and aspirations towards reconstruction and peace-building. It provides generic standards that will need to be adapted on the basis of detailed country-specific analyses.

## 2. Terms, definitions and abbreviations

Annex A contains a list of terms, definitions and abbreviations used in this standard. A complete glossary of all the terms, definitions and abbreviations used in the series of integrated DDR standards (IDDRS) is given in IDDRS 1.20.

In the IDDRS series, the words ‘shall’, ‘should’ and ‘may’ are used to indicate the intended degree of compliance with the standards laid down. This use is consistent with the language used in the International Organization for Standardization standards and guidelines:

- “a) ‘shall’ is used to indicated requirements, methods or specifications that are to be applied in order to conform to the standard.
- b) ‘should’ is used to indicate the preferred requirements, methods or specifications.
- c) ‘may’ is used to indicate a possible method or course of action.”

### 3. Introduction

DDR programmes have increasingly been conducted in contexts where the majority of former combatants are youth, an age group defined by the United Nations (UN) as those between 15 and 24 years of age.<sup>1</sup>

There is no legal framework specifically dealing with youth (15–24 years). Legally, youth up to the age of 18 years are covered under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and other protective frameworks, such as International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 182 and the Optional Protocol of 2002 (also see IDDRS 5.30 on Children and DDR).

With regard to admission to youth employment, of particular relevance is the ILO Minimum Age Convention of 1973 (No. 138), which contains provisions aimed at the effective abolition of child labour and the progressive raising of the minimum working age. It requires that a general minimum age for admission to work be set that is: (1) not lower than the end of compulsory schooling; and (2) cannot be below age 15, although developing countries could initially set a minimum age of 14. Exception is granted for work done in an appropriate vocational training framework, including apprenticeship from the age of 14, but a higher minimum age of 18 must be set for hazardous work that is likely to endanger the health, safety or morals of young persons. Each country determines its list of hazardous work and must take time-bound measures for the rehabilitation and social integration of children released from armed groups and forces, ensuring their access to health care, and to free basic education or vocational training, as appropriate.

Forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict, slavery and child prostitution is among the worst forms of child labour. DDR programmes should be based on the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention of 1999 (No. 182), which aims to put an end to the involvement of all girls and boys under 18 in the intolerable activities it defines. Accordingly, reintegration programmes for youth should avoid leading young people into jobs or activities that might not be permissible, taking into account the difference between those above and those under 18 (and also the difference between those above and those under the minimum working age).

Effectively, however, youth fall into — and in a sense, between — the legal categories of children and adults. The specific characteristic of this group is that they are neither children nor adults, but have unique needs because of their in-between status. Since they do not fit easily into pre-decided categories, past DDR programmes have largely proved inappropriate for young men and women of this age group. Those under 18 are regarded as child soldiers and are treated as children, disregarding the extended responsibilities many young people have as providers and caregivers. Those just above the age of 18 are treated as adults in programmes with a ‘livelihood’ focus, which usually tend to neglect their need for catch-up education and therefore fail to deal with their ambitions for a career and a better future.

Youth in a war-torn country often have to ‘grow up quickly’ and take on adult roles, such as taking responsibility for the survival of their family or fighting in the war. Conflict leads

to a weakening or breakdown of family and community networks, depriving young people of a secure environment and positive role models. Because of their age and their inability to protect themselves in unstable and violent societies, youth are extremely vulnerable to gender-based violence, unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS. When schools close and there are few chances of finding a decent job, many young people lose their sense of pride, trust and place in the community, as well as their hope for the future. While a significant number of young people are forced to join armed forces and groups, some join out of a sense of fear or despair, or a desire for revenge, or because they see it as a solution to their problems, to protect their family and/or to contribute to their small income.

After war, youth are mostly excluded from decision-making structures, and elders and government members pay little attention to them. In the destruction of economies during and after war, young people tend to be the first to be laid off and the least likely to find work. Education and training services are sometimes disrupted for long periods, and young people can become idle and frustrated if they are only able to do subsistence work in the informal economy. Health care services, especially reproductive health care services, are unavailable. The accumulation of these factors, particularly where insecurity exists, may push young people into a vicious cycle of poverty and social exclusion, and expose them to criminality, violence and re-recruitment into armed forces and groups, or gangs.

DDR programmes should analyse and deal with the reasons why young people join armed forces and groups, and their fears and worries after conflict has ended, in order to provide the type of DDR assistance that would make them feel secure. Failure to do so can easily result in repeated security threats in situations of fragile peace. DDR programmes should design specific measures for young ex-combatants, and not assume that their needs resemble those of older adults. In reality, their exposure to trauma and risky behaviour, and also their labour market disadvantages, are quite specific. They are at a critical stage in their life cycle, and will be permanently disadvantaged if they do not receive appropriate assistance in the transition and post-war periods. It is, of course, equally important to give chances to others in the community who, when faced with similar circumstances — including the lack of education and jobs — chose not to join armed forces or groups (or were fortunate enough to escape forced recruitment).

DDR programmes that have to deal with large numbers of young ex-combatants require integrated approaches that respond to the many different needs, experiences and disadvantages of this group. These may differ depending on age, gender, ethnicity, location, social class, household size, education and training levels, disability, health status, etc. A structured and coherent response should focus on young soldiers and civilian youth at the same time, building on the sense of solidarity that exists among young people and the recognition of their distinct identity and role, and looking forward to their future responsibilities in society.

Making DDR efforts responsive to the needs and aspirations of youth is indeed an enormous challenge. Neglecting them, however, is simply unacceptable, as youth are likely to make up the majority of DDR programme participants. DDR policy makers and implementers should recognize young people's resilience, coping strategies and distinct experiences in conflict situations and make every effort to open up opportunities to them for changing their

Youth in a war-torn country often have to 'grow up quickly' and take on adult roles, such as taking responsibility for the survival of their family or fighting in the war.

future. Such people can provide leadership and inspiration to their societies if they are given opportunities. It is important that young ex-combatants find meaningful roles in the post-conflict period that are similar in terms of responsibility and status to those they played during conflict, but do not rely on using force to get what they need, and they should have a stake in the post-conflict social order so that they support rather than undermine it.

## 4. Guiding principles

The guiding principles for UN-supported DDR have specific implications for, and relevance to, youth. While national ownership is essential for the success and sustainability of DDR programmes, this goal cannot be said to have been met unless youth's aspirations have been identified and appealing solutions have been offered to problems that affect them in particular, such as the right kind of health care services, education and livelihood opportunities to allow them to live independently and well, and the safety and security they need to go about their daily lives. Youth need to participate in political decision-making processes as the age of majority in their country permits, and to feel empowered and included in post-conflict reconstruction and renewal.

Youth DDR programmes must be effectively coordinated with those for children and adults in order to deal with the particular needs of this 'in-between' group and make sure that people who started out as child soldiers but are now over 18 receive proper support. Long-term sustainability should be ensured by designing DDR assistance to contribute to full reintegration rather than separating young ex-combatants from their peers. The ultimate objective is to 'do no harm' by planning for a smooth transition from DDR to national youth policies and action plans, and to recognize youth as an asset in the reconstruction period. Specifically, this implies: analysing and dealing with root causes of youth's participation in armed conflicts; understanding the youth labour market and increasing the employability of youth so they are not trapped in poverty; addressing the health needs of youth, particularly with regard to reproductive health care and HIV prevention, as well as providing long-term care for those with AIDS; assisting youth who have child-care responsibilities; and opening up opportunities for further education and training.

In all programmes, the different needs of young women and men should receive attention; as recommended in Security Council resolution 1325, specific care should be taken to increase the involvement of young women in national and local politics and decision-making, and to help them achieve self-sufficiency (also see IDDRS 5.10 on Women, Gender and DDR).

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## 5. Root causes of youth participation in armed conflicts

For DDR efforts to be sustainable, socio-economic reintegration assistance should be based on a clear understanding of the reasons why young people join armed forces and groups, and should be able to deal with these underlying issues to prevent the re-recruitment of young combatants after the completion of DDR programmes. Country-specific assessments that are specifically designed for regional, rural/urban, age, sex, ability and other demographic differences should be carried out for this purpose.

While many young people are recruited by force, a large number might appear to have 'chosen' to join armed forces and groups; it is important, of course, to try to assess how 'voluntary' this decision was, given the highly degraded circumstances in which many

young people live. The decision of young people to arm themselves is largely influenced by the context they are living in. Growing up in a conflict zone or in a family or community where gun possession is regarded as necessary or desirable, and where weapons are easily accessible, increases the risk of young people turning to violence. The desire for protection is an important incentive to join, as are anger and the desire for revenge. Young people may also be attracted by the risk and perceived thrill and power of taking up arms, or driven by poverty, physical and/or sexual abuse at home, lack of alternatives and unemployment, or having to work under unbearable circumstances. Although an increasing number of young women and girls are involved, membership of an armed force or group is still overwhelmingly attractive to young men and boys. This pattern is most often a result of societal gender expectations that value aggressive masculinity and peaceable femininity. But whatever the final incentive was for them to get hold of a gun, a whole series of underlying causes have already prepared a young person to take the final decision to join an armed force or group.

Young people are not all making exactly the same choices, however. Even when they are faced with similar circumstances, some are more likely to take to arms than others. It is important to understand both their reasons for joining up and their reasons for resisting, through analysing root causes, related causes and triggers that make them behave as they do. Before starting DDR planning, participatory research studies on the situation of adolescents and youth in conflict and post-conflict situations should be conducted to establish a clear understanding of why young men and women participate in violence.<sup>2</sup>

In order to gather and systematize data on the reasons why young people take up arms, or resist doing so, it is useful to ask questions on this subject that deal with broad categories of their reasons for doing so, such as war and insecurity, poverty, education, family and friends, politics and ideology, identity, and culture and tradition.<sup>3</sup> This research will prevent future problems: if, for example, young people join an armed force or group to escape from a violent or abusive home, family tracing and placing them in their old environment will not prevent them from joining an armed force or group again as soon as the next opportunity arises.

International organizations must learn more about youth from youth themselves in order to have a positive impact on young people's decision-making processes — whether these concern their 'choice' to fight or to start a business.

## 6. Preventing youth from participating in armed conflict

Beyond supplying their basic needs, the successful socio-economic reintegration of youth means giving them opportunities that are appealing to them. 'Appealing' is the key word: it includes their visions of a secure life path, a career and ways of achieving a better future.

Given appealing opportunities, youth will contribute to peace, stability and growth. This is essential for long-term stability, as they take their beliefs, values and experiences with them into the future. Concrete initiatives and strategies for providing long-lasting employment opportunities for energetic but underutilized and under-equipped young people must be identified.

In the framework of an integrated DDR process, the most urgent need is to absorb unemployed youth in order to prevent their recruitment (or re-recruitment) into armed forces and groups, or gangs. Youth unemployment and underemployment must be tackled at all levels (local, national, cross-border and regional), applying an integrated approach towards

young (ex-)combatants and civilian youth. Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations aiming to foster sustainable youth (re)integration should:

- utilize the dynamism of young people and build on their capacity for taking risks;
- involve youth in short-term employment, until sustainable jobs can be found;
- develop multifaceted strategies for dealing with youth reintegration, using a comprehensive set of measures involving all social actors;
- ensure that development programmes are equally benefiting the youth of all provinces and regions, and reaching young women and men alike;
- ensure that youth development projects place young people firmly in nurturing environments where they are both able to receive care and guidance, and to support and care for others.

## 7. Youth and security

The emphasis of DDR programmes is to create a secure environment. To achieve this goal, analysing the security threat both posed by and faced by youth is necessary. Time and resources should be made available to study the complexity of youth as security threats and potential risks, rather than automatically regarding them as trouble-makers. It is important to remember, however, that DDR is only one of a series of interventions to create long-term stability, and to utilize information on youth systematically in all aspects of security sector reform (SSR).

Youth make up a unique group of actors in security issues, and may not only be found in formally organized armed groups and forces. They are also in self-defence groups or armed gangs, and working in private security firms or as mercenaries. Even when these other armed groups are not included in formal peace agreements or formal DDR programmes, care should be taken to develop programmes for youth that can assist those left out of such formal arrangements before they become a greater security threat in the post-conflict phase.

The right of youth — including young women — to understand security issues and participate in discussions and planning of SSR, to be trained and employed in the security sector, and to contribute to the security and development of their communities and nation should be recognized and supported through processes that encourage youth leadership, participation and decision-making. Youth also have a right to feel secure and supported, so they can take advantage of every opportunity to lead a better life in the future.

### 7.1. Violent youth

Without gainful employment, a sense of political involvement or access to education, young people can contribute to the political destabilization of a country or region. For example, large numbers of young men in West Africa earn their living by working as mercenaries, moving from conflict to conflict. It is clear that frustrated young men in particular are attracted to subcultures that encourage violence by appealing to their sense of alienation and marginalization, and offering them access to power and status. The violent gang culture that is widely found in many conflict-affected regions — both before and after war — is straining the fragile social fabric within countries and contributing to regional instability by threatening to spread into other countries that are not yet at war.

This problem can only be dealt with through the creation of strategic links between:

- DDR programmes and broader youth strategies and action plans;
- DDR programmes and broader employment policies and programmes;
- DDR programmes and SSR and justice sector reform;
- DDR programmes in neighbouring countries.

SSR processes should start early in order to guarantee that a reintegration process takes place in a local setting in which law and order are largely restored and in which violent youth groups can actually be punished. Particular care must be taken, especially in the disarmament phase, to inform youth carefully, through public information campaigns, about what they can realistically expect to happen. Up to now, many DDR processes have become derailed by tensions over promised but undeliverable services, and youth have reacted violently because these promises were not kept.

## 7.2. Youth and small arms

The proliferation of cheap, small and easy-to-use weapons has enabled armed forces and groups to recruit young and inexperienced combatants. Furthermore, the possession of small arms carries high symbolic value among youth in many societies, with associations of individual or group pride, empowerment, masculinity, belonging to a group, status and recognition, or wealth. There are considerable gender differences in both attitudes to and use of small arms. While girls may be less likely to use and own weapons, in keeping with societal ideas about appropriately feminine behaviour, many boys are caught up in stereotypical images of masculinity that emphasize brutality and strength, and are fascinated by all things military as a result. Fictional images presented by the media can become real-life role models, or young men can be drawn in through meeting international, national or individual local soldiers or militias.

DDR and small arms management planners should focus more on developing programmes that enable youth to contribute actively to disarmament and reconstruction efforts (also see IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament and IDDRS 4.11 on SALW Control, Security and Development). Generating youth employment through the reconstruction process should be given priority attention. In addition, the symbolic value of small arms for men, women, boys and girls must be determined, and where possible, substitute status symbols put in their place. Recreational activities such as sports events, music festivals and theatre can raise awareness about the dangers of the increase in the numbers and use of small arms and light weapons, especially for youth.

In addition, strategies should be developed to disarm and reintegrate non-demobilized youth. The eligibility criteria established for every DDR programme exclude certain groups of armed youth. Other suitable measures are needed to disarm these groups and to assist them to find their place in society.

## 8. Socio-economic reintegration strategies for young ex-combatants

Guidance on the socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants is provided elsewhere; those standards also apply to young ex-combatants (see IDDRS 4.30 on Social and Economic Reintegration). However, as is highlighted in this section, there are a number of issues that are particularly relevant to young people.

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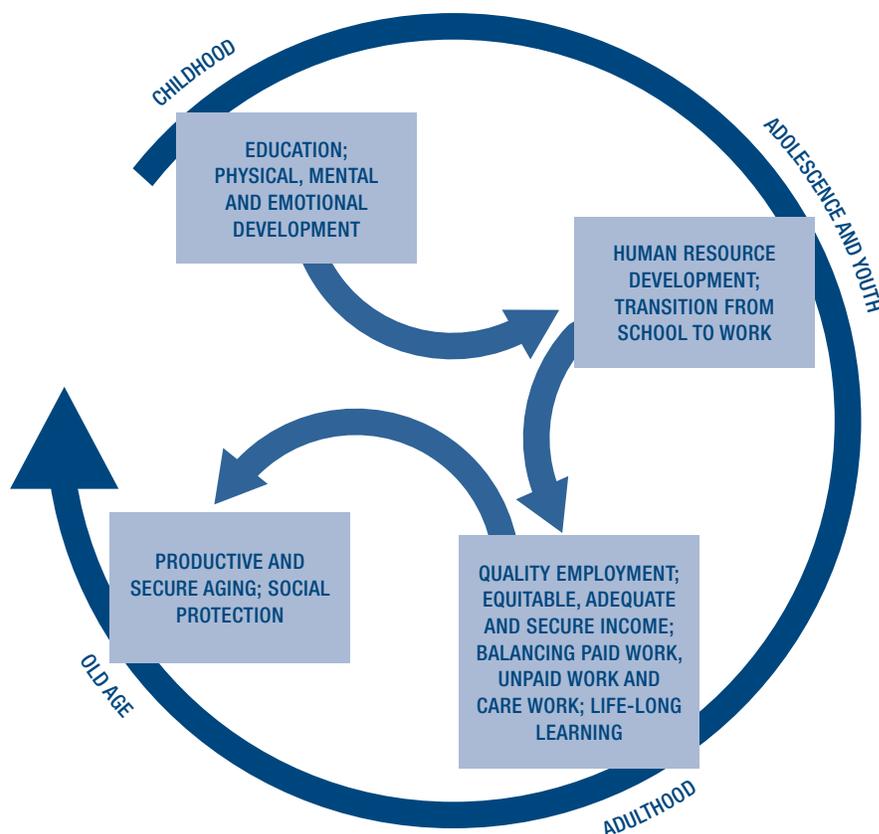
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Efforts to create stable employment and income-generating opportunities so that young people gain a sustainable livelihood must be at the centre of socio-economic reintegration programmes. Successful reintegration depends both on the capacity of the economy to create these opportunities and on the ability of DDR programmes to increase the employability of young former combatants, as well as creating employment.

The socio-economic reintegration of young ex-combatants depends largely on their successful transition into the world of work. DDR programmes designed for younger combatants have proved to be more complex than those for adults. Armed conflict has influenced young people during their formative years; in fact, many young combatants have never lived in a peaceful society and have no reference to, or memory of, such times. In response, DDR programmes should focus on teaching youth to give up violent behaviour learned during the war period; offer education and training, including apprenticeship programmes; support young people who have young children of their own with child-care services so they can take advantage of retraining opportunities; and, finally, heal psychological and physical wounds and deal with other health concerns to increase young people's employability and facilitate their transition to decent work.

Looking at the socio-economic reintegration of young ex-combatants as part of the normal human life cycle may provide a useful analytical framework for policy and programme development. This approach sees youth as one stage of life that is influenced by and also affects other stages of life (see figure 1). During childhood, adolescence and youth, personal development takes place that can affect whether an individual 'succeeds' or 'fails' in the later

Figure 1 **Decent work in the life cycle**



Source: ILO Gender Promotion Programme

stages of life. If children are in the military rather than in school, they will grow up with greater limitations and fewer prospects for decent work. In turn, they will be less able to positively influence the lives of their own children — hence the passing on of multiple disadvantages from generation to generation, often linked with the passing on of poverty from generation to generation.<sup>4</sup>

### 8.1. Matching aspirations with opportunities

Youth-based DDR should strike a balance between building on the aspirations and positive potential of youth and the establishment of stability and security. Not all ex-combatant youth have peaceful intentions for the future of their countries. In order to ensure participatory youth-based approaches that will help reach the overall objectives of DDR, the following key issues should be taken into account:

- Reintegration programmes shall be sensitive and avoid offering reintegration opportunities in job areas that are regarded as hazardous, even if a young person wants to do this type of work. Youth up to the age of 18 are protected under the ILO's Conventions on Child Labour (Nos. 138 and 182);
- Training ex-combatants in areas they might identify as their preference should be avoided if the jobs they choose are not required in the labour market. The feeling of frustration and helplessness that caused people to take up arms in the first place only increases when they cannot find a job after training. This makes them more open to re-recruitment. Counselling and career guidance should be offered to help youth understand why careers they might have heard of or regard as glamorous may not be sustainable in the environment in which they find themselves. To assure their participation, young people need to feel informed, included and capable of making an appropriate choice when they are offered a range of possible options after demobilization;
- Paternalistic approaches to youth should be avoided. Their successful socio-economic integration relies on offering them opportunities that are appealing to them. For example, family tracing and reunification (see IDDRS 5.30 on Children and DDR) need to be followed immediately by programmes aimed at job creation, offering appropriate learning opportunities and recreational activities in the areas to which young people return. Training and apprenticeship programmes should be adapted to young people's abilities, interests and needs, to enable them to complete the programme, which will both boost their employment prospects and bolster their self-confidence. A commitment to motivating young people to realize their potential is a vital part of successful programming and implementation;
- Activities should be offered that reach and involve large numbers of youth. Theatre, music, arts and sports are popular activities with great social benefits and employment potential. Life skills can also be improved when these activities are linked to a useful social message, e.g., the prevention of HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, the media and Internet offer a range of interesting possibilities worth exploring, such as magazines or programmes produced by young people;
- Space should be created for young people to interact with each other, such as centres that allow them to meet off the streets. Well-trained mentors who act as role models should manage these centres. Activities should include finding opportunities for generating employment. These spaces can also be a place for integrating youth with special needs, such as those with disabilities, or for offering support to young mothers. They

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may contribute to the effective empowerment of youth by protecting them from forced recruitment, giving them perspective on employment, furthering their personal development and providing a space in which they can express an opinion. Informal youth drop-in centres may also attract young former combatants who did not go through formal DDR because of fear or misinformation, or because they managed to escape and look for help by themselves. DDR for youth and children needs to be flexible and innovative in its design, so that young people can exercise their right to receive help and support when an armed force or group is disbanded, even if they do not at first trust the formal processes that are planned, or cannot wait for them to be put in place.

## **8.2. Planning socio-economic reintegration programmes**

Reintegration planning should be linked to the national reconciliation strategy on the one hand and to national socio-economic reconstruction on the other. Young demobilized combatants are an important human resource. Their youth and energy can be harnessed for reconstruction and recovery activities after conflict ends.

A vital part of reintegration planning is the situation analysis, where data and analysis on the social and economic profile and expectations of ex-combatants, and on the available (self-)employment possibilities are gathered. This analysis should be used to define how the reintegration process is going to work and be at the centre of reintegration strategies (see Annex D).

## **8.3. Data collection and labour market information**

DDR programme planners should identify the specific issues relating to reintegration of young former combatants and collect data to help design programme components and strategies that cover their specific needs. The lack of availability or problems with sharing of data and information relevant for reintegration programmes can cause major planning difficulties. In cases where the responsibilities for demobilization and reintegration of youth lie with separate organizations, coordination and sharing arrangements for data collection and analysis should be established. Insufficient employment-related information will undermine the overall effectiveness and relevance of reintegration programmes.

The collection, analysis and distribution of labour market information (e.g., on the availability of employment and self-employment opportunities, and the identification of sectors where youth employment is more likely) is vital, as it provides indications for the planning, design, monitoring and evaluation of DDR programmes. The distribution of this information helps to inform young ex-combatants about realistic employment opportunities so that they can make appropriate decisions and plan their career paths.

In most post-conflict countries, the availability of labour market information is limited, and both collection and analysis are difficult tasks. Preliminary labour market surveys can be conducted to overcome these shortcomings and make data and analysis available quickly. The adaptation of existing questionnaires developed in other post-conflict contexts can speed up this task.<sup>5</sup> Rapid assessments can be conducted by the public employment services that exist in the country, with people at the community level providing the necessary information. Data on both labour supply and demand should be built into the overall DDR information management system. This system should provide data disaggregated by age, sex, educational level, location, type of disadvantage, etc.

## 8.4. Programme design

Reintegration programmes designed to assist youth to make the transition to peace and decent work will vary from one country to another and be shaped by several socio-economic factors. There is no one-size-fits-all process, and the design of DDR programmes for the reintegration of youth should depend on the outcomes of a range of assessments. However, it is possible to identify some of the main components that may often appear in DDR programmes in different settings. Lessons learned from their implementation in several countries indicate that in order to achieve a positive impact on youth, DDR should be:

- well targeted and specifically designed to suit individual needs. Programmes that identify and are designed both for the individual characteristics (e.g., age, sex, educational level, sociocultural background) and for the labour market disadvantages faced by young demobilized soldiers have been the most effective. Ways that allow young people to re-enter education should have preference in order to improve their employability in the future;
- conceived to connect young ex-combatants with other participants. The connection with non-combatants exposes young former soldiers to non-military rules and behaviour and encourages their inclusion in the community and society at large. Broad programmes that include components focusing on young ex-combatants but that also address other groups of youth have been successful in breaking through the segregation that hinders many reintegration processes;
- designed to respond to labour market requirements. Careful design that responds to the labour market (e.g., skills that are in demand, self-employment and microenterprises) facilitates the transition to work in growth industries and occupations;
- part of a comprehensive package of services covering labour demand and supply. Reintegration programmes that combine measures dealing with both labour demand (e.g., tax incentives, local economic development) and supply (e.g., career guidance and other job-search assistance, education and training) are more effective in easing the transition to peace and work;
- linked with work experience. Programmes linked with the world of work (e.g., apprenticeships, in-company training, job placement) increase employability of inexperienced young ex-combatants. The most successful programmes place participants with private sector employers;
- based on community approaches and empowerment. Since reintegration takes place at the local level, it is essential to involve the receiving communities in programme design and implementation. Community-based planning approaches shall explicitly include youth;
- designed to involve all social partners. Employers' and workers' organizations can help link reintegration programmes to the world of work. Their involvement in the design and implementation of reintegration programmes increases both their relevance and effectiveness.

## 9. Main components of reintegration programmes for young ex-combatants

The design and development of youth-related reintegration components of DDR programmes should be flexible, based on labour market requirements and designed to meet the needs

of participants. The function of these measures is to link labour supply and demand; to lessen the impact of education and labour market failures; and to increase the levels of efficiency, equity, growth and social justice for lasting peace. Reintegration programmes should be based on integrated approaches that link them to broader reconstruction and recovery plans; deal with issues of labour demand and supply; and take into account not only the creation of jobs, but also the quality of the jobs created. This section will focus on a number of areas that are relevant to socio-economic reintegration, demonstrating that both the combination of different measures and the order in which they are put in place will depend on the specific labour market and other disadvantages faced by young ex-combatants. These measures are listed in the socio-economic reintegration part of the table in Annex D.

### 9.1. Catch-up education

A young person's level of education will often decide whether he/she makes a successful transition into the world of work. In general, the least-educated and the least-skilled people are jobless, although some countries face the problem of the 'educated unemployed'.<sup>6</sup> Although the lack of primary education is normally a problem that only affects younger children, in an increasing number of war-affected countries, low literacy has become a major problem among youth.<sup>7</sup> There is also evidence that keeping young people in school slows the transmission of HIV/AIDS.

Time spent in the army results in loss of educational opportunities. As explained in detail in IDDRS 5.30 on Children and DDR, upon demobilization, young people try to further their education. However, in many cases, youth are reluctant to resume formal basic education because they feel embarrassed to attend schools with children of a much younger age, or their care-giving responsibilities are simply too heavy to allow them the time to study without earning an income. Youth should not feel stigmatized because they lost the opportunity to acquire an education, because they served in armed forces and groups, became refugees or were not able to attend school for other reasons, and they should not be prevented from attending school because they themselves are parents. The best solution is to provide youth who have missed out on education with accelerated learning programmes compatible with and recognized by the formal system of education.

Vocational training should preferably only be part-time, so that it is possible to use the rest of the week for regular catch-up education. The mix of education and vocational training provides former combatants with a better and broader basis for finding long-term employment than simple vocational training. This system has the additional advantage of increasing the number of places available at training centres, which exist only in a limited number, as trainees will only attend two half-days of training a week, allowing many more people to be trained than if only one group attended full-time.

Child-care facilities should be established at all schools offering education for youth, to allow young mothers and youth who are household heads with responsibilities for dependants to attend. Childcare should be free and include a feeding programme.

### 9.2. Learning and training

Vocational education and training can play a key role in the successful reintegration of young ex-combatants into normal life by increasing their chances to effectively participate in the labour market. Training can also contribute to breaking down military types of behaviour, as well as allowing young people to develop values and norms based on peace and democracy.

The acquisition of a set of ‘employable skills’ and the willingness to work increases self-esteem and builds the confidence of young ex-combatants, while helping them (re)gain respect and appreciation from the community. Skills training that leads to employment will reduce risky behaviour, violence and crime.

Most armed conflicts result in the disruption of education and training systems, and the destruction of facilities and institutions that provide young people with learning opportunities. In addition, because of time spent in armed forces or groups, most young ex-combatants have not acquired skills that lead to a job. At the same time, the reconstruction and recovery of a war-torn country requires large numbers of skilled persons. The planning and design of vocational training that supplies labour market requirements present a number of problems that are related to the volatile environment, and lack of systematic and reliable labour market information, data on quantitative and qualitative capacities of training providers, and so on (also see IDDRS 4.30 on Social and Economic Reintegration).

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Young people require learning strategies that allow them to learn at their own pace and to acquire communication and other skills that make them more employable. Programmes that offer these benefits have been successful in counteracting behaviours developed during the conflict that are based on hierarchical systems that reduce creativity and destroy individual initiative. Life skills training — including civic education, parenting skills, rights at work, prevention of HIV / AIDS and education to counter interpersonal violence — should also be part of all programmes designed for young people.

Training of trainers should avoid traditional supply-driven and instructor-oriented methods, encouraging instead more interactive learning approaches. DDR managers should plan staff development activities that aim at training the existing or newly recruited trainers on how to deal with young ex-combatants. The role of the trainer involved in these programmes should be that of a facilitator who encourages active learning, supports teamwork and provides a positive adult ‘role model’ for young participants.

To prepare young people with no previous work experience for the highly competitive labour market, they should be offered apprenticeship and/or ‘on-the-job’ training places. They can then combine the skills they are learning with practical experience of norms and values, productivity and competition in the world of work.

### Main features of employment training programmes for youth

Employment training programmes for youth have the following characteristics:

- labour market-driven;
- a modular approach;
- flexible timing both on delivery, and entrance and exit into programmes;
- learner-centred;
- teaching multiple skills;
- training programmes oriented towards concrete job opportunities;
- competency-based;
- supported by life skills training;
- taught by good role models;
- assessment to industry standards;
- recognition of prior learning;
- practical work experience through on-the-job training or apprenticeship.

### 9.3. Employment services, career guidance and job-search assistance

Programmers should aim to strike the right balance between the aspirations of young ex-combatants and their chances of finding a job in the labour market. Young people can experience further frustration and hopelessness when they do not find a job after having been involved in ineffective training and employment programmes. These feelings can make their re-recruitment more likely.

Employment counselling and career guidance should match the skills and aspirations of young ex-combatants with employment or education and training opportunities. They are an important instrument for managing the transition to civilian life and the world of work. If offered at the first stage of DDR programmes, guidance and counselling can play a key role in designing employment programmes, identifying education and training opportunities, and helping young ex-combatants make realistic choices.

For young people specifically, a major problem is that they have never had opportunities to gain work experience, have no experience of dealing with civilian institutions, have no experience of looking for employment and do not know what they can do, or even want to do. Employment counselling, career guidance and labour market information help young former combatants to:

- manage the change from the military to civilian life and from childhood to adulthood;
- understand the labour market;
- identify opportunities for work and learning;
- build important attitudes and life skills;
- make decisions;
- plan their career and life.

Employment services including counselling, career guidance, and directing young people to the appropriate jobs and educational institutions should not be set up only for ex-combatant youth, but should be open to all young people looking for jobs. Employment services must build on existing national structures, and are normally under the control of the ministry of labour and/or youth. Reintegration should start at the project level, where young ex-combatants are directed to jobs and training opportunities open to all young job-seekers. However, staff of career centres and employment services should receive training on the specific problems faced by ex-combatants.

### 9.4. Youth entrepreneurship

Starting a business or income-generating activity is increasingly seen as part of a strategy to deal with the youth employment challenge. Three elements are necessary for an all-inclusive strategy to encourage youth entrepreneurship: first, support for an entrepreneurial culture; second, the drawing up of policies and regulations that allow the strategy to work; and third, the provision of support services. Encouraging the development of an entrepreneurial culture should start while young people are still in education and training: the correct policies, regulations and support services are essential to help young people who are setting up their own business.

Youth-specific programmes are likely to be more effective if they are supported by policies and regulations that encourage youth entrepreneurship. For example, efficient and fair regulations for business registration will help young people start a business in the formal economy. To make up for their lack of experience and weak business networks, mentor support

is particularly effective for young entrepreneurs during the first years of business start-up, since this is when youth enterprises tend to have high failure rates. Employers' organizations can play an important role in providing one-on-one mentoring to young entrepreneurs.<sup>8</sup>

Microfinance programmes designed specifically for youth cannot be successful unless they are accompanied by other support services, including business training and other non-financial services such as business development services, information and counselling, skills development, and networking. Group-based youth entrepreneurship brings together skills and experience that support each other and that are valuable for starting and running an enterprise. Cooperatives are another important way of providing decent jobs for young ex-combatants, because many of the obstacles that young entrepreneurs face could be overcome by working in a team with other people. In recognition of this, DDR programmes should encourage business start-up in small groups, although there should be a balance between former combatants and civilians to reduce the risk of re-establishing military hierarchies, structures and bonds. The programme should empower these youth businesses by monitoring their performance and defending their interests through business advisory services, including them in employers' and workers' organizations, giving them access to microfinance and creating a favourable environment for business development.

Business development services and availability of finance are very important, but other issues need to be dealt with as well, including: safety (is the environment and new equipment safe?); the need for investment in premises and equipment (a warehouse, marketplace, cooling stores, workplace, equipment); and, above all, the size and nature of the local market (purchasing power and availability of raw materials) and economic infrastructure (roads, communications, energy). Given that such issues go beyond the scope of DDR programmes, there should be direct links between DDR and other development initiatives or programmes to encourage national or international investments in these areas. Where possible, the DDR programme should buy products and services from local suppliers (school benches, tool-kits, office equipment maintenance, etc.).

## 9.5. Microfinance for youth

The success of microfinance lies in its bottom-up approach, which allows for the establishment of new links among individuals, NGOs, governments and businesses. Unfortunately, youth have largely been denied access to microfinance. While some young people are simply too young to sign legal contracts, there is also a perception that young ex-combatants are a high-risk group for credits or investments. They are seen as unpredictable and volatile. These prejudices tend to disempower them, turning them into passive receivers of assistance rather than enabling them to take charge of their own lives. Microfinance, however, holds great potential for young people.

Youth should be allowed access to loans within small cooperatives in which they can buy essential assets as a group. When the group members have together been able to save or accumulate some capital, the savings or loans group can be linked to, or even become, a microfinance institution with access to donor capital.

Governments should assist youth to get credits on favourable terms to help them start their own business, e.g., by guaranteeing loans through microfinance institutions or temporarily subsidizing loans. In general, providing credit is a controversial issue, whether it aims at creating jobs or making profits. It is thus important to determine which lending agencies can best provide the specific needs of young entrepreneurs. With adequate support, such credit agencies can play an important role in helping young people to become successful entrepreneurs. Depending on the case, the credit can either be publicly or privately funded.<sup>9</sup>

Micro- or small credit programmes should be created for young people who do not meet the eligibility conditions for most programmes, such as security, collateral and experience (guarantee funds are an important way of doing this). Microcredit remains an important source of financial help for people who do not meet the criteria for regular bank loans.<sup>10</sup>

### **9.6. Business training and business development services**

Because of severe competition in post-conflict labour markets, very few young ex-combatants will have access to existing jobs. The large majority will need to start their own businesses, in groups or individually. To increase their success rate, DDR programmes should do the following:

- develop young people's ability to deal with the problems they will face in the world of work through business development education.<sup>11</sup> They should learn the following sets of skills:<sup>12</sup>
  - being enterprising — learning to see and respond to opportunities;
  - business development skills — learning to investigate and develop a business idea;
  - business management skills — learning how to get a business going and manage it successfully;
- encourage business people to support young (or young potential) entrepreneurs during the vital first years of their new business by transferring their knowledge, experience and contacts to them. They can do this by providing on-the-job learning, mentoring, including them in their networks and associations, and using youth businesses to supply their own businesses.<sup>13</sup> The more support a young entrepreneur receives in the first years of his/her business, the better his/her chances of creating a sustainable business or of becoming more employable.

### **9.7. Psychological trauma and tensions**

Reintegration programmes have to assist young combatants to overcome the bad effects of the experiences they have been exposed to at an important time in their development. With little life experience beyond war, all the problems faced by individuals in violent societies are made worse for young people.

DDR programme planners should use a variety of innovative strategies to help young people deal with trauma; some of these strategies could result in the establishment of new businesses run by ex-combatants and civilian youth. Useful techniques include increasing the use of music and theatre to spread information, raise awareness and empower youth. Forum theatre and 'theatre of the oppressed' are particularly helpful for this purpose.<sup>14</sup> Sports and cultural events can strongly attract young people. They are popular activities with great social benefits, and programme planners should be aware that this sector can provide employment as well. Youth radio should be supported through the supply of equipment and professional trainers, since it is an excellent way of allowing youth to communicate with each other. Radio can contact and inform many people, and is accessible even to difficult-to-reach groups such as young women in domestic labour and youth in militias. Both the quantity and quality of information for youth should be increased, especially to cater for graduating students, young entrepreneurs, young farmers and those taking care of young children.

Public Internet and telecommunications cafés may be used or even established as a reintegration programme activity, especially in rural areas. Rural cinemas can also assist young people.

The capacity of the health sector to assist youth with war trauma and reproductive health matters, including contraception, HIV/AIDS and other STIs, should be improved. Young people can also learn about security sector matters such as disarmament and new gun laws, receive human rights education and learn about politics through messages that are specifically aimed at them. Many of the strategies mentioned above are excellent ways of transmitting such information.

## 10. Creating reintegration opportunities for youth

DDR programmes have increasingly taken steps to create employment opportunities designed to help young ex-combatants reintegrate into society and bridge the gap between short-term relief and long-term recovery. Labour-based public and community works, job-placement schemes and subsidies, and enterprise creation are the most common types of job-creation programmes that can be used to absorb young ex-combatants. Annex B contains lessons learned from the implementation and evaluation of these measures that should be used in the design of DDR programmes. Their design and implementation requires a variety of different methods to be used in the correct combination and in the correct order, and should be carefully combined with measures focusing on labour demand and supply.

### 10.1. Labour-intensive physical and social infrastructure development

Public works and community services (improvement of public infrastructure, temporary work in public services, etc.) are job-creation measures that can easily be designed for groups of demobilized combatants. There is always urgent work to be done in priority sectors — such as essential public facilities — and geographical areas, especially those most affected by the conflict. Job-creation schemes may provide employment and income support to young ex-combatants and, at the same time, develop physical and social infrastructure. They can also benefit the local economy and businesses if cash (instead of food alone) is paid for work done. Although these programmes offer only a limited number of long-term jobs, they can, in the short term, increase the productivity of low-skilled young ex-combatants, help young participants gain work experience and raise their social status from destroyers to constructors. Another important benefit is that such schemes provide immediate employment and can keep youth occupied in the interim period before more sustainable job opportunities are in place. The chosen schemes could be part of special reconstruction projects to directly benefit youth, such as training centres, sports facilities, places where young people can play and listen to music, and so on. Such projects can be developed within the local construction industry and assist groups of youth to become small contractors. Short-term employment opportunities should preferably mix ex-combatants with other youth and be made available equally to young women and men.

The creation of employment-intensive work for youth should include other components such as flexible training, mentoring and community services to support their integration into society. As discussed above, providing employment opportunities for young people mainly result from a mix of several elements.

Public works and community services programmes shall be started quickly, involving young ex-combatants in productive activities and working immediately after demobilization. With good planning, labour-based projects should replace the cash payments provided to combatants after demobilization (which have caused tensions), spreading the message that work, not guns, pays.

## **10.2. Wage incentives**

The transition of former combatants to work may be encouraged by offering wage subsidies and other incentives (e.g., tax exemptions for a limited period) to employers who hire young ex-combatants. This can, for example, pay for the cost of initial training required for young workers. These subsidies allow disadvantaged and excluded young combatants to be provided with useful work, including those with disabilities.

There are many schemes for sharing initial hiring costs between employers and government. The main issues to be decided are: the length of the period in which young people will be employed; the amount of subsidy or other compensation employers will receive; and the type of contracts that young people will be offered. In many DDR programmes, employers receive the same amount as the wage of each person hired or apprenticed. Others programmes combine subsidized employment with limited-term employment contracts for young people. Work training contracts might provide incentives to employers who recruit young ex-combatants and provide them with on-the-job training. Care should be taken to make sure that this opportunity is provided only to demobilized youth. Furthermore, DDR planners should develop an efficient monitoring system to make sure that training and employment incentives are used to improve employability, rather than turn youth into a cheap source of labour.

## **10.3. Competition in the labour market for people with little or no experience**

One of the clearest lessons learned from past DDR programmes is that even after training, young combatants do not succeed in economies that have been damaged by war. Businesses owned by former combatants regularly fail because of intense competition with highly qualified people already running the same kinds of businesses and because of the very limited cash available to pay for goods and services in post-war societies.

DDR programmes should become more innovative to prevent these problems. They should more effectively empower youth by combining several skills in one course, e.g., driving can be combined with basic car repair skills; and home economics with tailoring, pastry or soap-making, etc. The possession of many skills greatly improves the employability of young people. Also, providing easy-to-learn skills such as mobile phone repair makes young people less vulnerable and more adaptable to rapidly changing market demands.

Employers should be given incentives to hire youth or create apprenticeship places. For example, construction companies could receive certain DDR-related contracts on condition that their labour force includes a high percentage of youth or even a specific group of youth, such as girls who are ex-combatants. Tax reductions could also be used as an incentive.

Training programmes should be offered in new skills that are not on the market yet and are appealing to young people, which will have the additional benefit of stimulating investment in new or growing industries of interest to young people, such as music, radios, the Internet, computers, sports, etc.<sup>15</sup>

## 11. Gender issues

The term 'youth' is often assumed to mean males, whereas female youth are simply considered 'young women', particularly if they are married or have children.

Girls and young women are rarely seen as a specific group in their own right in most DDR programmes, although they do form a large and increasing share of armed forces and groups in many violent armed conflicts. Large numbers of female youth have been involved in conflicts in Sri Lanka, Colombia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Eritrea, Timor-Leste, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Congo, the Philippines and Nepal.

The roles males and females play in conflict are often seen as opposites that balance each other: men and boys as seen as aggressors, women and girls as victims. A more careful examination, however, reveals a complex dynamic in which war is experienced differently between and within the sexes. Violent armed conflict tends to aggravate sexual abuse, because gender-based violence is all too often used as a weapon. Boys are often a target for sexual violence, but sexual violence against girls has reached epidemic proportions in many conflict zones. Young women carry extra burdens of unwanted pregnancies and higher chances of contracting STIs and HIV/AIDS as a result of sexual violence.

Young female combatants tend to be already disadvantaged in comparison with their male colleagues before the conflict, and they have more difficulties in taking advantage of possible benefits during and after the conflict. The specific needs and capacities of young female ex-combatants are often poorly catered for, especially if DDR is treated purely as a security issue, when only the young males, who are seen as 'potential trouble-makers', need to be disarmed, demobilized and kept busy. Evidence from many war zones shows, however, that young women former combatants are equally capable of returning to violence if other ways of getting ahead after conflict fail.

### 11.1. Reasons for joining armed forces and groups

In order to protect themselves from violence, some young women decide to take up arms because they hope that having a gun might make them less vulnerable to gender-based violence. Many young men take up arms because they want to protect the female members of their family from sexual abuse. Some young women also say that they were given few possibilities to express their opinions in public or participate in decision-making processes of the communities, and, faced with this gender-based discrimination, saw violence as one way of making their voices heard and of asserting their equality with males.<sup>16</sup> Many girls and young women are brought into armed forces and groups involuntarily, as they are abducted to be forced labourers or sexual slaves.

### 11.2. Disarmament and demobilization of girls and young women

DDR eligibility should not be based on the handing in of weapons, since this excludes those who have played non-combat roles, even though they have gone through similar experiences in supporting roles. They are eligible for DDR, even if they have self-demobilized or were pre-disarmed by their superiors. In some cases, commanders have been asked to provide lists of combatants under their command, but have left out girls and young women whom they consider dependants of male combatants.<sup>17</sup> In other cases, commanders have ordered young women to leave their weapons behind in the bush in order not to be seen as combatants in public. There are also instances of commanders hiding young women

The UN is responsible for protecting young women from abuse by its own staff members.

and even girls aged under 18, because they see them as 'wives' and claim their children, even though they are aware that their presence in the armed force or group is illegal.

Although there is no general method of

doing this at present, the ways in which young women become excluded from access to DDR programmes should be analysed and dealt with as a matter of urgency.

In the past, DDR planners and other members of the international community who carry out reconstruction activities have not helped to curb this practice of hiding young women, and have made no effort to find them, consult with them and plan for their needs, or provide secure sites for their cantonment, relocation to interim care centres and reintegration. Given the high levels of gender inequality in armed groups and forces, UN agencies involved in DDR programming are responsible for finding, identifying and securing the release of young women. The UN is also responsible for protecting young women from abuse by its own staff members.

Young women have difficulty accessing demobilization for a number of other reasons, including resistance to being recognized as combatants, because they are afraid of social exclusion and stigmatization. The opposition of male soldiers and commanders to their demobilization is also an important factor, as men may want to keep young women to make up for their loss of power after war, or use them for household and family tasks, and may claim their children.<sup>18</sup> As a result, young women may be reluctant to take their children to encampment sites, even if there are child-care facilities there.

Excluding young women, or failing to intervene when they exclude themselves from demobilization, often has many negative effects, as they will miss out on opportunities for support and empowerment. To avoid this, DDR programmes should find out about their motives for mobilizing if they were mobilized voluntarily, their various roles in armed forces and groups, and their reasons for or against demobilizing, and help them leave safely if they were abducted or forced into joining armed forces and groups. Appropriate services must be made available to meet the needs of girls and young women who may have experienced sexual and gender-based violence, or may be infected with HIV/AIDS or other STIs as a result of sexual violence. Girl mothers, and girls and young women who provide care for others not related to them must be adequately included in programmes and their health and livelihoods should be supported. Measures should be taken to empower ex-combatant young women to become valuable social, political and economic members of the new society, starting at the demobilization phase.

### 11.3. Reintegration of girls and young women

Women who participated in conflicts are confronted with a number of additional difficulties during their reintegration process, as they are often faced with the community's negative perception of their involvement.

In many societies, military activities are considered 'unsuitable' for girls. As a result, many face rejection by their families and in-laws upon return from the conflict, which means that they risk being excluded from traditional community-based social support systems. The discrimination against them as job-seekers or new entrepreneurs is also a problem, and as a result, some prefer to settle in areas where their personal history is not known — a decision that further removes them from family and community support.

Many young women former combatants have children born during the war, which may prevent their social acceptance and economic integration, and, of course, causes them additional health and psychological problems resulting from forced sexual activity, childbirth and abortion.<sup>19</sup> Carrying children born of rape, being abandoned by their 'bush husbands', or indeed, being forced into staying in illegal or socially unsanctioned marriages even if their family wants them to return are all tremendous problems. The large burden of care placed on young women makes it difficult to compensate for their lack of basic education, as they often simply lack the time, energy and/or financial means to attend the education and training courses that could improve their living conditions.

While girl combatants might have been the equals of boys as comrades in armed groups and forces, many careers are denied to them as girls during peacetime, so they are forced into a narrow range of industries and occupations that are generally lower skilled and lower paid.<sup>20</sup>

In addition, young women often face even greater discrimination than adult women in the labour market, as it is believed that they will soon get married and leave their employment or become less productive if they become pregnant or have young children. Gendering DDR has often meant only the provision of some special measures for women, such as vocational training courses in 'women's skills'. DDR programmes should, however, invest time and resources to find young women previously associated with armed groups and forces and evaluate not only their potential and their vulnerabilities, but also their dreams and ambitions. This should be done before DDR programmes are designed and started. Specific methodologies have been developed for collecting data of this type in conflict contexts.<sup>21</sup>

DDR planners should also carry out detailed assessments of the reintegration needs of girls and young women, taking into account differences in age, status in the armed forces or groups, exposure to gender-based violence, profiles and ambitions, and design assistance projects that take the problems faced by different subgroups of young women into account. Higher-ranked young women could be offered specifically designed assistance to give them access to important jobs in the post-conflict period.

If young women are to be provided with sustainable livelihood, it is important that claims and demands for land by ex-combatants also consider their needs.<sup>22</sup> In many cases, women do not have access to land, especially if they are unmarried and have children. This is a complicated issue that needs to be explicitly dealt with in the post-conflict period, by a wide range of actors.

Finally, no reintegration processes for girls should go ahead without an analysis of, and measures to deal with, the reasons why they participated in the conflict. Young women must not be put back into abusive situations in their family or community if their reintegration is to succeed over the long term.

While girl combatants might have been the equals of boys as comrades in armed groups and forces, many careers are denied to them as girls during peacetime, so they are forced into a narrow range of industries and occupations that are generally lower skilled and lower paid.

#### **11.4. Disarmament and demobilization of young men**

It should be recognized that ex-combatants as a group often largely consist of young men in their prime. As a workforce, they can contribute enormously to the huge reconstruction

challenges faced by post-war societies. If managed well, they have been very effective in the reconstruction of roads, bridges and hospitals, and in converting military installations to civilian use. Although they might need skills upgrading and psychological assistance to help change their attitudes from military ones to those of civilian employees, employers and society as a whole often underestimate what they have to offer.<sup>23</sup>

However, to improve what these young men have to offer, finding alternatives to violent ways of expressing masculinity is vital in periods of transition from war to peace. While outsiders have to struggle with the question of whether, and how much, they can and should interfere in local expressions of femininity, masculinity and gender relations, it is possible for DDR programmes to start dealing with some of the challenges related to changing violent masculinity. The process of changing attitudes to gender equality may take generations, but DDR programmes can make a small contribution to this process by developing programmes to change cultural attitudes and world-views specifically for the young generation, even if quick solutions to prevent widespread expressions of violent masculinity by youth are not possible, and the existing socio-economic environment decides to a large extent whether change is possible.

DDR programmes require the specialized services of gender experts to analyse gender relations, including masculinity, before, during and after conflict, and design suitable programmes to reinforce positive gender values. UN agencies involved in DDR also have a specific responsibility not to reinforce or even reintroduce pre-conflict gender inequalities and violent masculinity through their programmes, planning and styles of working with local communities (also see IDDRS 5.10 on Women, Gender and DDR and IDDRS 5.30 on Children and DDR).

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## 12. Socio-political reintegration

### 12.1. Authority and intergenerational conflicts at the community level

“It is a paradox that while children . . . are highly valued by adults, the ability, and perhaps even the interest, to care for them declines as they become adolescents. Poverty and destitution, violence, migration, AIDS, and the breakdown of the family also contribute to this [problem].”<sup>24</sup>

Social and family structures change as a result of the war, so that many youth, who have yet to find their role and place in society, lack a sense of direction and purpose. The authority of the parents (and any other form of authority, including that of the State) is destroyed. Youngsters tend to trust and respect their peers most of all, and many lose any hope of achieving their previous ambitions and projects.

“It is a paradox that while children . . . are highly valued by adults, the ability, and perhaps even the interest, to care for them declines as they become adolescents. Poverty and destitution, violence, migration, AIDS, and the breakdown of the family also contribute to this [problem].”

As DDR programmes are normally designed, judged and financed by adults, there is a tendency to take a rather paternalistic approach to youth and to exclude them from analysis and planning processes. As a result, disarmament and reintegration programmes do not deal with the issues that youth themselves feel are important, and therefore have a limited impact. Their failure shows how

important it is to understand what the aspirations of youth are, how they view the world, and how they analyse ongoing social and political processes.

Youth dissatisfaction has led to the creation of a number of youth groups in war-affected countries. While some are working to improve their communities, others are not as constructive and have been described as a grouping of youth trying to replace their elders within the current political system rather than a means to reform the system, or as a base for trouble-makers.

Before DDR programmes are established, it is necessary to study and analyse conflicts between generations in the country, which may differ from region to region and in towns and rural areas. Although youth in most countries are better educated than their parents, in several countries with long-lasting conflicts, a whole generation of illiterate youth has grown up, even though their parents were literate. The tensions between the generations in a specific country should be analysed, and reconciliation measures can be set up to improve the relationship and respect between generations. This is vital because, while no DDR programme can fully reintegrate youth, families and communities can do so.

Youth often do not have the right to speak at meetings of local community representatives, and therefore their views, needs and aspirations will not automatically be reflected in participatory processes that aim to identify possible community-based or community-driven projects. To ensure their inclusion, a deliberate effort should be made to focus on youth, especially young women, when any reintegration or recovery project is planned and implemented.

## **12.2. Voice and representation**

In many war-affected societies, youth are excluded from decision-making processes or barred from leadership roles in community forums. After serving in armed groups or forces in which they had status and even power, young ex-combatants are likely to experience a sudden drop in their influence in families and communities. Young men and women should be explicitly involved in the decision-making structures that affect the DDR process, to allow them to express their specific concerns and needs, and to build their sense of ownership of post-conflict reconstruction processes.

Furthermore, there is a tendency in most countries to fill senior political positions with older males, resulting in large parts of society not being represented, particularly young men and all women. Warring factions and violent youth gangs exploit the sense of alienation and marginalization felt by jobless and frustrated young men in many poor countries, and may at the same time create stereotypes that encourage young women to support and admire young men who turn to violence. Although girl and women combatants might have been leaders in military structures, they are seldom represented in peace negotiations. While political positions are given to their male colleagues, female military leaders are generally ignored and security-related matters such as DDR and SSR are left to men. Discriminatory gender-based power relationships are reinforced in this way, and at the same time an opportunity is missed to reassess gender relations and find ways to make them supportive of a more peaceful society. Many revolutionary movements have at first included gender equality as one of their goals, as a way of mobilizing women, but have broken their promises in peace negotiations and in the post-conflict political order, but the UN and other international organizations have also been guilty of encouraging this exclusion, because they neither bring female mediators or negotiators to the negotiating table, nor demand that women are adequately represented (i.e., that a minimum of 30 percent of those at the peace table are

women). Building on the leadership experience and status of higher-ranked female combatants by assisting them to obtain key positions in the post-conflict society will increase gender equality in the new society and provide positive role models for many other women and girls.

To overcome the problems that result when traditional leadership hierarchies go unchallenged and social structures remain unreformed, DDR planners should empower and involve youth to break the cycles of poverty, social exclusion and violence in which many are trapped. Failure to involve youth in a meaningful way in decision-making structures in the post-conflict period makes it more likely that regional and national development and peace efforts will fail. Seeing youth as positive assets for society and acting on that new perception is vital to preventing them from becoming alienated and turning to activities that destabilize society.

Providing young people with safe spaces to meet off the street where they can experience non-violent excitement can encourage the reintegration of young ex-combatants and other alienated youth into civil society by allowing them to meet with other people of their age in a non-military environment. In addition to the social benefits, these centres and clubs can help with training and employment efforts by, for example, organizing job information fairs and supporting youth in the design and implementation of their work and business plans.

Governments must be convinced that youth are an important and special category of people, and should be convinced of the 'added value' of youth involvement in reconstruction activities and of the positive reasons for investing in youth.<sup>25</sup>

It is also necessary to use an integrated and comprehensive local economic development approach that pays particular attention to young people, including young ex-combatants. The creation of a local/regional forum as a way of building consensus in a community is a useful tool, as long as efforts are made to ensure that the various groups of youth have a voice in these forums (also see IDDRS 4.30 on Social and Economic Reintegration).

◀▶ 4.30

### **12.3. Youth and the use of harmful substances**

Many adolescents and young people are traumatized as a result of the violence they have witnessed or committed during the conflict, and some choose to 'deal' with this trauma by escaping into drug and alcohol abuse. Many have already habitually taken drugs as combatants; in some war zones, commanders routinely give drugs to youngsters to make them more obedient and reduce their resistance to committing violent acts or crimes. The future well-being of young people is badly affected because of the ongoing effects of trauma and the use of harmful substances that result, and their tendency towards violence and criminal acts is made worse.

DDR programmes should make a particular effort to deal with the issue of the harmful use of drugs and alcohol by young combatants. In many countries, the use of such substances seriously undermines the effective implementation of youth employment and reintegration programmes. Too often, young combatants are provided with money to start their businesses while they are not fully detoxified and rehabilitated from drugs they were using during combat. A fear that they are habitual drug users is also an important reason why employers are so unwilling to recruit ex-combatants (also see IDDRS 5.70 on Health and DDR).

◀▶ 5.70

### **12.4. Youth and HIV/AIDS**

More than half of those newly infected with HIV today are between 15 and 24 years old. Educating young people about HIV and teaching them skills in negotiation, conflict reso-

lution, critical thinking, decision-making and communication improve their self-confidence and ability to make informed choices about their own reproductive health.

Since the involvement of parents, extended families, communities, schools and peers is vital in guiding and supporting young people to make safe choices about their health and well-being, DDR programme planners must be careful to consult with other agencies involved in HIV prevention strategies and ensure that the health component of DDR benefits works together with other community-based strategies to avoid transmission of HIV and to care for those infected with HIV or who are AIDS patients. Studies have shown that a consistent, positive, emotional relationship with a caring adult helps young people feel safe and secure, allowing them to develop the resilience needed to manage the challenges in their lives and to protect their sexual well-being. Mentors in DDR training programmes should therefore be trained as educators and counsellors on HIV.

Young women are much more likely to be infected with HIV than are young men, especially when they live in conditions of poverty, are being exploited by older men, or carry out sex work to survive. Nonetheless, interventions to control HIV must aimed at both boys and girls. Proper respect for each other can protect both young men and young women from the dangers of forced or unwanted sex and enable them to feel comfortable discussing sexual matters and negotiating safety and protection.

Youth-friendly services within DDR programmes should offer treatment for STIs and access to condoms, and help young people become responsible for their sexual and reproductive health. Voluntary and confidential HIV counselling and testing services allow young people to find out their HIV status and to choose safe ways of behaving, whether they are uninfected or infected.<sup>26</sup>

## 13. Beyond DDR

### 13.1. Youth development policies

Youth development policies generally include different combinations of social, economic, environmental and health objectives relating to young women and men. In some countries, youth programmes focus on education and training; in others, they focus on youth, sports and other recreational activities, cultural heritage, prevention of substance abuse and HIV/AIDS, and population planning. The variety of approaches is reflected in different institutional frameworks that include several ministries — such as education, health, labour and sports — and, in some countries, a ministry of youth affairs. Some governments make employment a part of their overall youth development planning. Working according to the human life cycle (see figure 1, above), a number of related employment issues (education, training and entrepreneurship) are dealt with to assist the integration of youth into the labour market.

Youth-focused DDR programmes should develop their short-term security and development strategies to fit in with national youth policies and programmes. This requires emphasis on capacity-building to strengthen national ownership of these programmes. Partners include the ministry of labour (especially the employment services section); the ministry of defence; the ministries of youth, health, gender/family, housing, and sports; the ministry of education (including the vocational training service, especially for youth on-the-job training programmes); vocational training providers; business training providers; chambers of commerce and business associations; private sector actors that can create apprenticeship places; microfinance institutions; and national commissions/committees on reintegration.

Without input from a wide range of sources, youth programmes started as part of the DDR programme will be unsustainable. Youth-focused DDR programmes may develop these inputs in the following ways:

- Provide advisory services to government on youth policies within the framework of DDR, but also as part of the overall reconstruction process;
- Restart and improve higher education to prevent further 'brain drain' from the region and to encourage the return of more highly educated refugees and members of the diaspora as teachers, trainers and entrepreneurs. It is crucial to have highly educated youth who have the potential to fill leadership positions in the public and private sectors in the future;
- Develop the entrepreneurial potential of the large number of youth who are active in the informal economy and reduce their vulnerability. The informal economy has been termed informal because it is not recognized or protected under legal and regulatory frameworks, and workers in this sector are extremely vulnerable. The quality of work in the informal economy is usually substandard compared with recognized, protected, secure, formal employment;<sup>27</sup>
- Assist governments to review legislation to make sure that it provides adequate protection and support for young people. Ways of enforcing these laws must also be in place, as should authorities that young people can safely turn to when their rights have been violated;
- Assist governments to design suitable macroeconomic policies in combination with programmes dealing with the specific problems faced by youth. A macroeconomic framework using fiscal and monetary policies to stimulate growth and employment-intensive investments is essential;
- Assist governments to make equal opportunities for young women and men an important part of all public policies, especially in education, training and employment. Governments should combat wage discrimination, enforce policies that control sexual harassment, support young women's efforts to organize and ensure adequate protection against exploitation;
- Develop partnerships for action at the national level, including both governments and employers', workers' and youth organizations, but also alliances and networks at the international and regional levels, to encourage the exchange of experience, good practices and resource mobilization;
- Invite young people into decision-making processes and, more importantly, listen to and act upon their advice. Participation and being able to exert real influence have positive effects on people's sense of belonging, the legitimacy of policies and programmes, and their ultimate success;
- At the global level, international agencies should collaborate within the UN Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network (YEN). International organizations such as the ILO and the World Bank should assist and support, if requested, the efforts of governments to carry out national youth employment reviews and action plans, and carry out global analysis and evaluations of progress being made.<sup>28</sup>

### 13.2. National stakeholders

Unfortunately, youth policies are often drawn up by different institutions with little coordination among them. For this reason, there should be much more cooperation among these

institutions, with different responsibilities assigned to different actors. Specific goals should be set and programmes designed so that they work together and support each other. Many problems confronting youth are complex, yet interrelated, and need integrated solutions that support each other.

The setting up of a national commission on DDR (NCDDR) allows the process of co-ordination and integration to take place, creates synergies and will help to ensure continuity in strategies from DDR to reconstruction and development. To ensure that youth issues are effectively dealt with, the NCDDR should make sure that a wide range of people and institutions take part, including representatives from the ministries of youth, gender, family, labour, education and sports, and encourage local governments and community-based youth organizations to play an important part in the identification of the specific youth priorities, in order to ensure bottom-up approaches that encourage the inclusion and participation of young people. A coherent set of policy objectives must be drawn up, and a strategy and action plan for young people developed on the basis of the priorities and aspirations identified by youth. A committee that includes young people among its members and that aims to find and create decent work for youth — within the organizations represented on the committee and in the local community — should be set up.

Beyond the specific matters dealt with by the NCDDR, a broader framework for social dialogue is important in the development of policies for the socio-economic reintegration of youth. Dialogue has a positive effect on the legitimacy and ownership of policies, and increases the likelihood that the needs of youth will be met. The involvement of employers' and workers' organizations in designing and implementing programmes for youth makes it more likely that they will be sustainable.

Employers' organizations are an important partner, as they may identify growth sectors in the economy, and provide assistance and advice to vocational training agencies. They can help draw up a list of national core competencies or curricula and create a system for national recognition of these competencies/curricula. Employers' organizations can also encourage their members to offer on-the-job training to young employees by explaining the benefits to their businesses such as increased productivity and competitiveness, and reduced job turnover and recruitment expenses.

Trade unions should identify and share examples of good practice for organizing and recruiting young people. These include youth-recruiting-youth methods, networks of young trade union activists for sharing experiences, and other informal networks for exchanging information. Youth committees and working groups from different unions should be set up in order to share information, identify the needs and problems of young people, and implement relevant policies and strategies. Young members can learn from other unions about how to open up job opportunities and improve working conditions. Tripartite consultations and collective bargaining can be used by unions to pressurize governments and employers to deal with questions of youth employment and make youth issues part of policies and programmes. It is also a good idea to work with governments and workers' organizations to develop and implement strategies for youth reintegration that everyone involved supports. Decent work for youth can be made part of collective agreements negotiated by unions.

Unions can also provide advice on workplace issues and proposed legislation, support and encourage the provision of social protection for both young people and adults, put pressure on employers and employers' organizations to prevent child labour, and make sure that young workers are informed about their rights and the role of trade unions.

The private sector can play an important role in the DDR process, not only through employers' organizations, but also because individual companies can contribute to the economic reintegration of young people. There are a great many potential initiatives that the private sector could contribute, ranging from strategic dialogue to high-risk arrangements.

The private sector should sponsor scholarships and support education by, for example: sponsoring young people working toward higher qualifications that provide relevant skills for the labour market; sponsoring special events or school infrastructure, such as books and computers or other office equipment; and establishing meaningful traineeships that provide young people with valuable work experience and help them reintegrate into society. The private sector should also be encouraged to support young entrepreneurs during the critical first years of their new business; large firms could introduce mentorship or coaching programmes, and offer practical support such as providing non-financial resources by allowing young people to use company facilities (fax, Internet, printer, etc.), which is a low-cost yet effective way of helping them to start their own businesses or apply for jobs. Volunteer work at a large business provides young entrepreneurs with valuable expertise, knowledge, experience and advice. This could also be provided in seminars and workshops. The private sector can also provide start-up capital, for example, by holding competitions to provide young people who develop innovative business ideas with start-up funding.

Networks of small businesses run by young people should be helped to cooperate with each other and with other businesses, as well as with institutions such as universities and specialized institutions in particular sectors of the economy, so that they can compete with large, well-established companies better. They can cooperate and reduce costs by sharing the costs of buying more expensive equipment, as well as experiences and knowledge.

Finally, public-private partnerships could assist demobilized youth, e.g., by working together to provide employment service centres for young people. Training centres, job centres and microfinance providers should be linked to members of the private sector, be well informed on the needs and potential of youth, and adapt their services to help this group.

In a post-conflict environment, youth organizations, working with other civil society groups, often have the potential to direct the energy and ability of young people towards rebuilding a prosperous and fair society. Youth organizations should be set up to help the reintegration of young ex-combatants into civil society by allowing them to meet with other people of their age in a non-military environment. Youth solidarity can mean that ex-combatants, regardless of what they did during the conflict, are more easily accepted by people of their own age than by other groups in society. Peer-to-peer counselling at youth centres can support the social and economic reintegration of young ex-combatants, as they are familiar with current youth culture and attitudes and therefore can gain the respect and attention of former fighters. Youth clubs and centres can be focal points for training and employment efforts by offering computer or language classes, and training in essential professional skills such as management or communications; organizing job information fairs; and enabling young people to design and implement their own youth projects, etc., in an environment that is safe and friendly. Finally, youth organizations can help change perceptions of young people's role in society by presenting them as positive role models through their active participation in community projects that benefit wider society. Not only can they stimulate social dialogue as a way of linking young people, civil society, and political organizations and actors, but they can also enable young people to participate in societies that have so far largely denied them the influence that their numbers and roles in society (as breadwinners, fighters and parents) should justify.

Conflict, however, severely reduces the ability of youth organizations to carry out their functions effectively, and in most post-war situations they often have only limited access and resources, and lack the capacity to mobilize and become active partners in the transition and reconstruction process. The UN should work to support the capacity-building of youth organizations and insist on their active participation in DDR processes, although a careful assessment of their ideology should be carried out first.

### **13.3. Coordination and implementation**

With so many different stakeholders, coordination is essential to achieving long-lasting solutions to the problems of youth DDR. A system of coordination that brings different actors together from the planning and design stage of DDR programmes will also achieve increased credibility and be in a better position to effectively implement and monitor programmes and policies. The YEN has a good track record of combining and using the skills and experience of many different partners at the national, regional and international levels. For example, the YEN provides the opportunity for setting up broad national coalitions of young people, civil society and government to sit around the table and discuss youth employment, within DDR programmes, in an integrated way, and also to make use of regional and international partnerships for knowledge sharing and capacity-building.

## Annex A: Terms, definitions and abbreviations

### Terms and definitions

**Absorption capacity:** The ability of a community, economy and/or country to include ex-combatants as active full members of the society. Absorption capacity is often used in relation to the capacities of local communities, but can also refer to social and political reintegration opportunities.

**Business development services:** A set of 'business services' that include any services that improve the performance of a business and its access to and ability to compete in markets.<sup>29</sup>

**Employability:** A combination of skills, knowledge and attitudes that improve a person's ability to secure and retain a job, progress at work and cope with change, secure alternative employment if he/she so wishes or has been laid off, and enter more easily into the labour market at different periods of his/her working life.

**Receiving communities:** The communities where the ex-combatants will go, live and work. Within this concept, often the social network of a small community is referred to, and also the bordering local economy.

**Vulnerability:** The high probability of exposure to risks and reduced capacity to overcome their negative results. Vulnerability is normally classified as sociocultural and economic. In the light of DDR, the term vulnerability is used in relation to the risk of socio-economic exclusion.

**Working age:** The Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) contains provisions aimed at protecting young persons against hazardous or exploitative activities or conditions of work.<sup>30</sup> It requires the setting not only of a general minimum age for admission to work — which cannot be less than age 15 and, according to its accompanying Recommendation No. 146, should be progressively raised to age 16 — but also of a higher minimum age of 18 for admission to work likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals of young persons.

**Worst forms of child labour:** The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) aims at putting an end to the involvement of all persons under age 18 in the harmful activities it lists. Forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict is part of forced labour and listed as one of the worst forms of child labour.

**Youth:** Within the UN system, young people are identified as those between 15 and 24 years of age. However, this can vary considerably between one context and another. Social, economic and cultural systems define the age limits for the specific roles and responsibilities of children, youth and adults. Conflicts and violence often force youth to assume adult roles such as being parents, breadwinners, caregivers or fighters. Cultural expectations of girls and boys also affect the perception of them as adults, such as the age of marriage, initiation and circumcision practices, and motherhood. Such expectations can be disturbed by conflict.

**Youth Employment Network (YEN):** A partnership under the leadership of the UN, the World Bank and the ILO that brings together leaders in industry, youth, civil society representatives and policy makers to tackle the issue of youth employment at the global, national and local levels.

### Abbreviations

DDR	disarmament, demobilization and reintegration
IDDRS	integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration standard/standards

<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>NCDDR</b>	national commission on DDR
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization
<b>SIYB</b>	Start and Improve Your Business
<b>SSR</b>	social security reform
<b>STI</b>	sexually transmitted infection
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>YEN</b>	Youth Employment Network

## Annex B: Examples of youth-focused interventions

### **Example 1: Radios in Congo**

In Ituri, Congo, youth radios have been successful in encouraging inter-ethnic dialogue, and have also been the centre of the United Nations Development Programme/Norwegian Agency for Development AIDS prevention programme. Radios can allow a fairly large number of young people to express themselves, and can show them and their audience that there is something more than the militias, and that the various activities discussed provide alternative potential occupations.

### **Example 2: Targeting young ex-combatants and youth in situations of risk in Kosovo**

To deal with the training and employment needs of youth in situations of risk in post-conflict Kosovo, including demobilized young combatants, the ILO implemented a pilot integrated employment and training programme, including cost-sharing arrangements with private enterprises hiring young people facing discrimination and social exclusion.

Managed by the local employment services, the programme consisted of comprehensive employment counselling and career guidance for young people, participation in competency-based training courses, subsidized wage employment in private enterprises and the establishment of cooperatives for youth. Before they were recruited, most of the beneficiaries had no, or limited, work experience and some were receiving social assistance benefits. Nearly all the companies that employed young people voluntarily renewed their employment contracts after the incentive period (ranging from 12 to 24 months) was over.

The programme also included a capacity-building component and technical assistance for public employment service staff in: the identification of youth in situations of risk; use of the best counselling and guidance skills and techniques for working with disadvantaged youth; persuading employers to hire 'hard-to-place' workers; and monitoring and evaluating effectiveness and impact. One of the tools developed by the Ministry of Labour with the technical support of the ILO is a labour market information database that links the network of employment offices and matches job applicants with vacancies. The system can look for certain characteristics, such as type of disadvantage, age or sex, and assist the most vulnerable groups to find employment and training opportunities.

Given the success in creating permanent and quality employment for youth in situations of risk, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare decided to expand the programme in order to reach a greater number of vulnerable young people.<sup>31</sup>

### **Example 3: Youth voice in the promotion of peace and democracy in Sierra Leone**

The United Network of Young Peacebuilders Sierra Leone Network was established in 1992. In 2002 it organized the first post-conflict nationwide gathering of 70 youth leaders. The conference discussed reconciliation, leadership and NGO/project management and made a contribution to the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001–2010).

### **Example 4: West African Youth Network**

The West African Youth Network, established in 2001, is based in Liberia. It operates as an advocacy mechanism and a voice influencing public policy and advancing the causes of

young people in West Africa. It empowers them to get involved in practical projects dealing with peace-building, human rights, conflict resolution, good governance and HIV/AIDS prevention.

## Annex C: Programmes focusing on labour demand for youth: Opportunities and challenges

PROGRAMME	OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES
Temporary public works and community services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Help youth enter the labour market</li> <li>■ Improve physical and social infrastructure, especially if combined with (local) development strategies and policies for particular sectors</li> <li>■ Increase employability if combined with training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Low labour market integration capacity</li> <li>■ Young workers can be trapped in temporary public works programmes</li> <li>■ Often biased against women and girls</li> </ul>
Wage incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Can create employment if designed to meet specific needs (e.g., compensate for initial lower productivity and training) and help groups of disadvantaged youth (e.g., unskilled persons or those with disabilities)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ High losses and substitution effects (if not carefully designed)</li> <li>■ Employment may last only as long as the subsidy</li> </ul>
Encouragement of entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Can have high employment potential [bullet]May meet youth aspirations (e.g., flexibility, independence)</li> <li>■ More effective if combined with financial and other services, including mentoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Can cause displacement</li> <li>■ May have high failure rate that limits the capacity to create sustainable employment</li> <li>■ Often difficult for youth owing to lack of networks, business experience, know-how and collateral</li> </ul>

Source: International Labour Organization, *Starting Right: Decent Work for Young People*, background paper for the tripartite meeting on 'Youth Employment: The Way Forward', Geneva, 2004.

## Annex D: Managing the socio-economic reintegration of young ex-combatants: Key aspects

<b>Characteristics of young ex-combatants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ age (at the time of recruitment and at the time of demobilization)</li> <li>■ sex</li> <li>■ psychosocial status</li> <li>■ physical conditions (e.g., disability) and health status (e.g., HIV/AIDS)</li> <li>■ literacy, education and skills levels</li> <li>■ socio-economic background (before and after the conflict)</li> <li>■ presence of dependants</li> </ul>
<b>Reintegration environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ political priority</li> <li>■ family reunification</li> <li>■ community involvement in the reintegration process</li> <li>■ economic opportunities</li> <li>■ legal, social or cultural restrictions placed on employment or education due to ex-combatant's sex and social gender expectations</li> </ul>
<b>Factors affecting socio-economic reintegration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ behaviour and aspirations</li> <li>■ time spent in the military</li> <li>■ reasons for joining the armed force/group and type of recruitment (voluntary or forced)</li> <li>■ roles assigned in the military</li> <li>■ demographic trends</li> <li>■ aggregate demand</li> <li>■ labour market institutions and regulations</li> <li>■ education and training outcomes</li> <li>■ work experience</li> <li>■ entrepreneurship options</li> <li>■ representation and voice</li> </ul>
<b>Socio-economic reintegration</b>	<p>Labour supply (employability):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ transition to peace programmes (e.g., discharge programmes, life skills training)</li> <li>■ catch-up education</li> <li>■ vocational education and training</li> <li>■ work experience</li> <li>■ self-employment and entrepreneurship training</li> </ul> <p>Labour demand (employment opportunities):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ priority given to pro-employment and pro-youth approaches (general)</li> <li>■ private sector development (general)</li> <li>■ sectors with high youth employment elasticity (specific)</li> <li>■ recruitment quotas for young ex-combatants in publicly funded tenders (specific)</li> <li>■ labour-intensive infrastructure reconstruction and development</li> <li>■ community services (targeted)</li> <li>■ local economic development in receiving communities</li> <li>■ job-placement programmes and other incentives (targeted)</li> <li>■ incentives for self-employment and microenterprise development, including cooperatives (specific)</li> </ul>
<b>Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ coordination of several government agencies at national and local level.</li> <li>■ involvement of employers' and workers' organizations communities and the civil society, including associations of youth and war veterans</li> </ul>

## Annex E: Further reading

Abbink Jon and Ineke van Kessel (eds), *Vanguards or Vandals: Youth, Politics and Conflict in Africa, African Dynamics*, Vol. 4, Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2005.

Achio, Françoise and Irma Specht, 'Youth in Conflict', in *Jobs after War: A Critical Challenge in the Peace and Reconstruction Puzzle*, Eugenia Date-Bah (ed.), ILO Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction, Geneva, 2003, pp. 153–166.

Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), *Training and Education on Small Arms*, module on 'Youth and Small Arms and Light Weapons', BICC, Bonn, 2005.

Boyden, Jo and Joanna de Berry (eds), *Children and Youth on the Front Line: Ethnography, Armed Conflict and Displacement*, Berghahn Books, Oxford, 2004.

Brett, Rachel and Irma Specht, *Young Soldiers: Why They Choose to Fight*, ILO, Geneva, 2004.

Corbanese, Valli and Gianni Rosas, *Youth Transition to Decent Work: Evidence from Kosovo*, ILO, Geneva, forthcoming.

International Labour Organization (ILO), *Improving Prospects for Young Women and Men in the World of Work: A Guide to Youth Employment*, ILO, Geneva, 2004, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/yen/download/guidelines.pdf>.

—, *Starting Right: Decent Work for Young People*, background paper presented to the tripartite meeting on youth employment, 'The Way Forward', Geneva, 2004.

Kemper, Yvonne, *Youth in War-to-Peace Transitions: Approaches of International Organizations*, Berghof Report No. 10, Berghof Centre for Constructive Conflict Management, Berlin, January 2005.

United Nations, *The Global Situation of Young People*, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, 2003.

—, *World Youth Report 2003*, report of the Secretary-General, 2004.

—, *United Nations World Youth Report 2005*, Report of the Secretary-General, A60/61; E2005/7, 2005.

Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children (WCRWC), *Untapped Potential: Adolescents Affected by Armed Conflict: A Review of Programs and Policies*, WCRWC, New York, January 2000.

—, *Youth Speak Out: New Voices on the Protection and Participation of Young People Affected by Armed Conflict*, WCRWC, New York, September 2004.

Youth Employment Network (YEN), Web site, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/yen/>.

## Annex G: Tools and training materials

In addition to the tools and guides listed in IDDRS 2.10 on the UN Approach to DDR, IDDRS 5.30 on Children and DDR and IDDRS 5.10 on Women, Gender and DDR, which will also be of relevance to youth, the following tools are also available through the IDDRS resource centre:

Brewer, Laura, *Youth at Risk: The Role of Skills Development in Facilitating the Transition to Work*, Skills Working Paper No. 19, ILO, Geneva, 2004, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/recon/crisis/download/gender3.pdf>.

International Labour Organization (ILO), *Handbook on Modules of Employable Skills Training*, ILO, Geneva, 1992.

—, *Community Based Training for Employment and Income Generation: A Guide for Decision-makers*, ILO, Geneva, 1994.

—, *Community Based Training for Employment and Income Generation: A Training Manual*, ILO, Geneva, 1997.

—, *Manual on Training and Employment Options for Ex-combatants*, ILO, Geneva, 1997.

—, *Introduction to Microfinance in Conflict-affected Communities: A Training Manual*, ILO/UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Geneva, 2002.

—, *Local Economic Development in Post-crisis Situations: An Operational Guide*, ILO, Geneva, 2004.

Other relevant material is available from:

- Youth Employment Network;
- UN Children's Fund;
- UN Development Programme.

## Endnotes

- 1 See Annex E for preliminary statistical data on youth in DDR programmes.
- 2 Excellent examples of participatory research methods exist; see, for example, research conducted by the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children.
- 3 See Brett, Rachel and Irma Specht, *Young Soldiers: Why They Choose to Fight*, ILO, Geneva, 2004.
- 4 ILO, *Starting right: Decent Work for Young People*, background paper presented at the tripartite meeting on youth employment, 'The Way Forward', Geneva, 2004, p. 40.
- 5 See ILO, *Manual on Training and Employment Options for Ex-combatants*, Geneva, 2003, annex 2 (c): 'Labour market analysis support document'; and ILO, *Guidelines for Establishing Emergency Public Employment Services*, Geneva, 2003. The school-to-work-transition survey is a generic statistical tool that could also be adapted to analyse the post-conflict youth labour market. For more information on this tool, see <http://www.ilo.org/youth>.
- 6 ILO, *Working out of Poverty*, report of the Director-General, International Labour Conference 91<sup>st</sup> Session, ILO, Geneva, 2003, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc91/pdf/rep-i-a.pdf>.
- 7 International Crisis Group, *Rebuilding Liberia: Prospects and Perils*, Africa Report No. 75, Freetown/Brussels, 30 January 2004, p. 24.
- 8 See ILO, *Meeting the Youth Employment Challenge: A Guide for Employers*, ILO, Geneva, 2001.
- 9 'Youth Unemployment Workshop', Goree Institute, Goree, Senegal, 12–13 February 2004, summary of discussion, 2004.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Among several business training methods, Start your Business, for start-ups, and Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) help train people who train entrepreneurs and, through this multiplier effect, reach a large number of unemployed or potential business starters. SIYB is a sustainable and cost-effective method that equips young entrepreneurs with the practical management skills needed in a competitive business environment. It has been successfully used in DDR programmes. If the illiteracy rate among young combatants is very high, other methods are available, such as Grassroots Management Training.
- 12 ILO, *Consolidated Outcome of the High-Level Panel's Working Groups on Employability, Equal Opportunities Employment Creation and Entrepreneurship*, draft for discussion at the Second Meeting of the High-Level Panel of the Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network, ILO, Geneva, 30 June–1 July 2003.
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- 20 Date-Bah, Eugenia, 'Women and Gender Concerns in Post-conflict Reconstruction and Job Promotion Efforts', in *Jobs after War: A Critical Challenge in the Peace and Reconstruction Puzzle*, Eugenia Date-Bah (ed.), ILO, Geneva, 2003, pp. 111–152.
- 21 For example, ILO's methodology designed for profiling child soldiers in the Great Lakes region, as presented in ILO, *Wounded Childhood: The Use of Armed Children in Armed Conflict in Central Africa*, ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, Geneva, April 2003, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/publ/childsoldiers/woundedchild.htm>. A more qualitative method was developed by Brett and Specht, op. cit., and can be found in appendix 1, pp. 137–162.

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- 24 Abbink, Jon, 'Being Young in Africa', in *Vanguards or Vandals: Youth, Politics and Conflict in Africa*, Jon Abbink and Ineke van Kessel (eds), African Dynamics, Vol. 4, Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2005, p. 2.
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