

FROM DDR TO SECURITY PROMOTION: CONNECTING NATIONAL PROGRAMS TO COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

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Abstract

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) is a set of activities that forms part of the strategies for peacebuilding after civil war. DDR has become the standard way of addressing security threats in immediate post-conflict situations. However, DDR is designed to promote national security, rather than human or community security. This creates severe obstacles for success, if success is seen in terms of overall security promotion rather than defined merely by the number of arms collected and people demobilized. The reason is that if security at the community level is not improved, then people will be unable to abandon armed violence as a way of protection and of making a living. Disarmament in such a situation will probably be only temporary. Thus, it is a necessity for DDR to aim at community security. However, when community security becomes the aim, then this opens up questions about whether DDR is the most appropriate strategy. At best, it can be part of a more wide-ranging strategy, which in addition to top-down DDR programs also involves community-based activities. Altogether, such a holistic security promotion strategy should endeavor to make people and communities better able to protect themselves and to create a living that does not depend on war and violence. In other words, it should aim at making guns redundant. 'Community-based' and 'Second-generation' DDR initiatives lend inspiration for such a wider security promotion approach. What they show is that the optimal approach is very context-specific. An analysis of the conflict, of local security mechanisms, and of the needs and capacities of communities, therefore, has to be the first step, despite the fact that this takes valuable time.

Introduction

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) is a set of activities that forms part of the strategies for peacebuilding after civil war. Peace agreements often include provisions for DDR in order to reduce the number of people under arms and help former soldiers to find alternative, peaceful ways of living. In various post-conflict countries, national programs for DDR have been implemented, usually by a coalition of bilateral donors, international organisations (such as the United Nations and World Bank), and the government of the country in question. In addition, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participate in the implementation of DDR, particularly in the reintegration phase.

In most cases, soldiers voluntarily submit to DDR by handing over their weapons in return for support in making the transfer to civilian life. Often, they are cantoned in

camps for a period, after which they receive ‘reinsertion’ assistance. This assistance consists of payments or ‘start-up kits’ to help them set up a business or develop another mode of living. Next, reintegration is to take place, a longer process by which people again find a place in their society and community. DDR often aims to assist in this process by providing vocational training. However, while official DDR programs aim to support the reintegration process, it is for the most part seen to be a task of development organizations and of communities themselves.

Recently, criticisms have mounted regarding the limited success of DDR programs (c.f. Muggah, 2009). Compared with the achievement of tangible targets such as collecting arms or demobilizing soldiers, it is much more difficult to ensure that safety and security levels are enhanced and that the rehabilitation of former fighters and their dependants proceeds smoothly. Effective reintegration of ex-combatants into potentially hostile communities is even more ambitious, and the lack of economic opportunities in post-conflict circumstances makes economic reintegration a daunting task. The question looms at large on whether DDR actually contributes to any significant improvement in security in the end.

Some DDR programmers repudiate that such longer-term aims are not, and cannot realistically be, part of DDR programs. DDR often has to be carried out under high time pressures, because of the need to quickly establish stability and show people that peace can bring them benefits. This time pressure means that DDR can only have limited ambitions. DDR should not be seen as a panacea to the entire range of security threats in a post-conflict environment. In the aftermath of war many security threats can come to the fore, such as political and criminal violence, which DDR is not designed to cope with. Nonetheless, DDR is a significant aspect in a wide spectrum of post-conflict strategies aimed to overcome armed conflict. The place of DDR therein, however, remains unspecified, and how DDR can better contribute to post-conflict stability is a difficult question. Even if we agree that DDR can only have limited ambitions, the question of whether it contributes to sustainable security promotion remains pressing.

We suggest that DDR can only contribute to long-term security if it is part of a wider set of security promotion strategies. In particular, we argue that the shortcomings of current DDR practice can only be overcome if its relation to what we call ‘community security’ receives more attention. In this article we explore the connections between DDR programs on the one hand, and community-level security on the other. DDR programs are often based on a logic of state security – of reinstating the monopoly on the use of force by the state – and this is indeed an important prerequisite for peace. But it may not necessarily help promote community-level security, which, as we shall argue, should be the overall aim of post-conflict security promotion.

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Foreign Affairs and Defense, the Conflict Research Unit (CRU) of the Netherlands Institute for International Relations ‘Clingendael’, and several Dutch NGOs including IKV Pax Christi, the European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP), the Dutch Refugee Council, and PSO. The research has been jointly carried out by the CCS, IKV Pax Christi, CRU and CICAM.¹

We take as our starting point the concept of community security, both as a process and as an end state. The first part of the article elaborates on community security and its mechanisms. In the second part, we analyse DDR programs from the perspective of community security. Third, we discuss community-based DDR initiatives. Finally, we explore how connecting these approaches may lead to integrated, and more successful, security promotion strategies.

Concept and Mechanisms of Community Security

Community Security

Maintaining security is a fundamental objective of a government and security is a precondition for other goals. Yet, security is multi-faceted, “consisting of human, physical, economic and socio-political security, failure of which has resulted in structural violence and demand for arms” (Mkutu, 2004: 7). Different actors have different perspectives on security, influenced by culture and circumstance. While some define security in military terms, others emphasize economic or livelihood security, or the security that being part of a group provides.²

With this realization the concept of human security emerged, re-balancing debates on security away from an exclusive focus on military security of the state, towards a security of the people whom the state serves. The UNDP defined human security to have seven main aspects of which ‘community security’ is one. Community security then refers to the security people derive “from their membership in a group – a family, community, an organization, a racial or ethnic group that can provide a cultural identity and a treasuring set of values. Such groups also offer practical support” (UNDP, 1994: 31). Essentially, community security is a sense of security derived from a sense of trust of neighbours and participation in and belonging to a community. However, if we see communities as social networks – not necessarily overlapping with geographic or ethnic units – community security should be viewed more broadly than aiming “to protect people from the loss of traditional relationships and values and from sectarian and ethnic violence” (UNDP, 1994: 32). In the literature relating to community security in practice, it also includes issues like the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW), criminal violence by opportunists and vigilante groups, mistrust and lack of faith in the security forces to provide security to ordinary people (c.f. Hollestelle & Simonse, 2005). In this sense community security is seen as a response to the security threats of the community. Community security can also, however, be seen as a state of affairs (Saferworld, 2008a: 20).

We see community security both as an end state and the process in which communities develop responses to achieve this end state. *Community security as an end state* is the situation in which communities feel secure from threats exerted by violent conflict, arms proliferation, crime, and a lack of protection or direct threat by the state. *Community security as a process* means that communities participate in identifying and prioritizing their security needs, as well as in the development and implementation of appropriate responses for their security needs.

Community Security and Weapons Demand

Post-conflict, ‘fragile’ states are often characterized by the decay of socio-cultural and institutional processes that normally keep limits on the use of violence and the goal is to restore or create such processes and bring back security. As the proliferation of arms is a big obstacle to security, disarmament is a logical measure. However, complete disarmament is often not feasible (at least initially) and registration of firearms, establishing clear criteria, and regulating use (e.g. not carrying guns in the open) can be a first step (Buchanan & Widmer, 2006: 14). Yet, fragile states are far from the most desired environment to enforce laws, assuming SALW proliferation can indeed be managed by controlling supply, and ignoring the demand side.

Whitehead argues that the demand for small arms in fragile states or after conflict remains high because individuals are increasingly viewing their security as a privately provided good. In states with little capacity to provide for security, this gap is filled by “more individualist approaches that make more intensive use of SALW” (Whitehead, 2007: 6-7). Failed political leadership and failure of the state to provide security have eroded trust in government. Consequently, initiatives evolve to organize security at sub-state level, such as at regional and community level. This makes endeavors to restore (or achieve) the state’s monopoly on violence inherently problematic (ibid, 24).

Based on the analysis that the demand for SALW is a phenomenon that occurs at the community level, it can be argued that a response to the demand of SALW must also – at least in part – be targeted at that level. Given the lack of trust in state security providers, in the short term, enhancing community security may be the only way to fill the security-gap while creating room for security as a collective good, rather than a private good.

How is Community Security Organized?

What community initiatives are there in this regard? How is community security – as a process – organized? To the extent that they are known, community-based initiatives to enhance security include traditional peace committees, peace zones and community-based policing. We elaborate on each category here.

Traditional Peace Committees

Peace committees consist of a number of community members and can be organized to address one specific issue – e.g. the proliferation of arms in the community – or a multitude of goals. They can play monitoring roles to ensure accountability of locally-based security forces, bring political parties together and make them accountable to their constituents, and create a space for dialogue to address fears, mistrust and issues of exclusion (International Alert & Friends for Peace, 2007: 9). Where such traditional systems do not (or no longer) exist, an effort can be made to create (or revive) them. Examples of traditional systems that have been used or revived to enhance community security include the *sungusungu*, which is the new term for a traditional system of governance among tribes in Southern Kenya and Tanzania, and which was revived to deal with an increase in cattle raiding (Marwa, 2002; Bukurura, 1996: 257-266); the *barza communautaire* in the DRC, in which civil society, the local administration, police, army, and representatives of the population jointly discuss their issues, and elect local peace committees (Van Puijenbroek, Elela & Malolo, 2008: 42; Frerks & Douma, 2007); peace committees formed by Resources for Peace and Reconciliation (RPR) in Mannar, Sri Lanka, to help war returnees and to restore the social fabric, which mediate in local disputes and are beginning to deal with the proliferation of small arms (Williams, 2005: 32). ‘District Peace Committees’ in Northern Kenya formed at the initiative of a number of CSOs in order for communities to find home-grown solutions and peace initiatives for the security problems they encountered, including banditry and cattle raiding (Muchai, 2005: 123-4).

Peace Zones

Another example of community-based initiatives to improve community security are so-called ‘Gun-Free Zones (GFZs),’ social spaces created by communities where guns are prohibited. These initiatives have been particularly prevalent in South Africa. Although the impact differs from GFZ to GFZ, people are not carrying firearms as often as before, gun-use is de-normalized, and perceptions of safety have improved. Also, it enhanced the social cohesion in communities and provided residents with a forum to express their commitment to a more secure environment (Kirsten, Cock & Mashike, 2006). Another example is the peace zones in Mindanao in the Philippines (Verkoren, 2008). Created by local communities and helped by CSO pressure, these are zones where the warring parties promise not to attack.

Community-based Policing

Though not purely a bottom-up initiative, community-based policing (CBP) gives a voice to communities in their security provision while at the same time – and more importantly *because* of this – strengthening the police in their capacity to address security

issues. CBP is “an approach to policing that brings together the police, civil society and local communities to develop local solutions to local safety and insecurity concerns” (Saferworld, 2008b: 16), and is “increasingly recognized as an approach to policing that meets many of the post-conflict safety and security challenges” (SEESAC, 2006: i). In Kenya, for instance, Saferworld organized joint trainings to police officers and civil society representatives, conducted by both civilian and police trainers. Committees were formed of key stakeholders, and a joint police-community forum was established to meet monthly, “enabling members of the community, civil society and the police to identify appropriate strategies to tackle crime in the area” (Saferworld, 2008b: 16).

Where a state is not able, but willing nevertheless, to fulfill basic services such as the provision of security, that state may outsource security and governance to local intermediaries. In a so-called “mediated state arrangement”, the state co-opts local, non-state security providers to promote security whereby local security providers “operate beyond the state, its legal code, and its most coveted possession – its ‘monopoly on the legitimate use of violence within its territory’” (Menkhaus, 2008: 32). Of course, for such a strategy to work, the sources of local authority have to be relatively legitimate and committed to inclusive governance. While institutions closer to communities may generally be more open to control by the people, outsourcing security issues to local intermediaries is not without risk. Traditional systems, without guarantees that the rules are equal for all community members, can be exploited by powerful members in a community for political, economic, or personal gains. If the old elites that played a role in causing and maintaining war are again placed in power in newly organized peace committees, corruption, marginalization and conflict may resurface. The question is how to tackle these risk factors and keep local initiatives subject to the law; not unproblematic in a situation where the local initiatives arise precisely because the state is not enforcing the law.

Summarizing the first part of this article, we have defined community security to be both an end state and a process. As an end state, it is a goal towards which community security initiatives and DDR initiatives alike, should aim to work. Defining community security as a process however zooms in on the ways in which communities themselves act in response to security threats. From this perspective a number of initiatives have been discussed, showing that communities themselves can indeed find constructive ways to provide for their own security, sometimes with but also without outside help. Now, how can all this be related to DDR programs?

DDR Programs and Community Security

Recently, DDR programs have come under criticism for a number of reasons.³ One issue is that DDR processes often tend to be relatively isolated from wider reconstruction, security reform and peacebuilding processes, severely limiting their success. In addition, a lack of national and local involvement undermines the

sustainability of programs. Connected to this, it is increasingly realized that the reintegration component is the most difficult and long-term aspect of DDR, needing much more attention and funding. Finally, there needs to be particular attention for the special needs of vulnerable groups such as female, handicapped and child combatants. We suggest that these issues relate directly to a lack of attention for community security in DDR programs.

How can we look at DDR from a community security perspective? We suggest five ways of doing so. First, the *end state* of community security can be seen as the overall aim of DDR processes. Second, if we take the *process* view, community security can also be a characteristic of DDR processes, which then need to take community participation in programming seriously. A third way of approaching this issue is to connect DDR programs to community security *initiatives*, such as traditional systems and peace committees, gun-free zones and community-based policing. Fourth, a certain level of community security should be seen as a *precondition* for DDR – i.e., a minimum level of trust and confidence on part of combatants and communities is needed for successful DDR. We will illustrate the importance of sensitizing ex-combatants to submit to DDR, as well as preparing communities for their return. Finally, a fifth way of looking at this is by analyzing what has been called *community-based DDR*. In this section, we treat the first four of these perspectives in turn. The next section addresses community-based DDR.

Community Security as an Aim

As we have mentioned, an important aim of DDR programs is to achieve a state monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. However, in post-conflict environments the process of monopolizing violence into the hands of the government often leads to a security dilemma in the short term because communities do not instantly trust the state with the ultimate provision of their security in a fragile post-conflict environment. Sudden disarmament right after the war has ended is unlikely to occur because of fear of being dominated or defeated by the government, often an actor in the conflict. Indeed, as Keane notes, the state's monopoly of violence could imply that citizens live under "a permanent cloud of threatened violence" (Keane, qtd. in Devetak & Christopher, 2007: 12). The question is how this security dilemma can be overcome or circumvented. Transforming the government from a party in the conflict to a more inclusive representation of citizens is part of such trust building. In addition, the community has a role to play, not only as a recipient of security offered by the state, but as a crucial locus of trust and peacebuilding. Reinforcing community security mechanisms, as discussed below, then becomes part of the effort to achieve community security as an end state.

DDR and peacebuilding

Approaching DDR from a community security perspective implies a more ambitious aim for DDR. Aiming at community security means tackling the root causes of conflict and weapons demand. This makes DDR part of a wider and longer-term peacebuilding process. Indeed, some are beginning to call for DDR to directly address issues of reconciliation and confidence-building, for example through joint community development activities, the organization of community dialogues, public healing ceremonies and traditional cleansing rituals, or the creation of transitional justice instruments (CICS, 2006a: 7). The question, however, is whether such activities should be part of DDR proper or be interpreted as a call for coordination or cooperation with other peacebuilding actors, both prior to and after the start of the DDR process. The answer to this probably depends on the circumstances. The main point is that DDR can only reach these aims by connecting strategically to other peacebuilding activities. This means approaching DDR with a long-term perspective. Instead of placing the weight primarily on the quick collection of arms, the focus is on reconciliation and economic development, and not only of ex-combatants but also the communities in which they reintegrate. This could for instance imply that reintegration activities of DDR are increasingly blurred with community development and local forums for reconciliation. Also, DDR can be geared further towards development and reconciliation by involving ex-combatants from the DDR program into other activities, such as construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure and schools, or sensitization campaigns for civilian disarmament.

Ensuring sustainable livelihood security

From a community security perspective, a person is successfully reintegrated not only when (s)he refrains from taking up arms again in the short term, but when her/his personal security has improved to such an extent that also in the longer term peace can prevail. This entails an increase of people's economic, social, cultural, environmental and political security (UNDP, 1994). In order to create security in all these facets, reintegration programs need to match the local political and socio-economic context. A thorough analysis needs to be undertaken to map the "opportunity structure into which ex-combatants will be absorbed – both country-wide and in the specific communities of settlement – in terms of land, labour and other markets, as well as education and training opportunities, micro-credit services and other business development opportunities" (CICS, 2005: 34; Specker, 2008: 20-22). However, DDR programs have difficulty in achieving a smooth transition from disarmament and demobilization to reintegration. As demobilized fighters receive their reinsertion assistance and arrive in their communities, there is often little or no support there to get reintegration going. Development organizations are yet to arrive, and the communities themselves are still recovering from war. The Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) in the

African Great Lakes region was criticized for limiting reintegration to money and in-kind assistance (DAI, 2005), the provision of some minimal schooling, and the facilitating of people's return to their communities. After the former combatants had completed these formal steps of DDR, they disappeared from view (Klem & Frerks, 2007: 65). The intent was to link up with more long-term programs by the UN and NGOs, but this proved difficult, in part due to tensions between the World Bank and UN (Klem & Douma, 2008; Klem & Frerks, 2007).

Although the long-term and complex nature of reintegration receives increasing recognition and attention, the problem is that post-conflict economic environments tend to be characterized by high unemployment and limited prospects for putting newly acquired skills to use. For this reason reintegration has been called "the Achilles heel of DDR" (ISS, 2004). Based on studies of Sierra Leone, the DRC and Afghanistan, Klem and Douma conclude that due to such shortcomings, "reintegration activities provided mostly short-term benefits and opportunities to ex-fighters, but often failed to deliver sustainable results. Many ex-combatants were unemployed and they had trouble eking out an income despite the training and assets they received" (ISS, 2004: 27). Indeed, the failure rate of businesses set up by ex-combatants is estimated to be between 60 and 80 per cent (Specker, 2008: 21). There is general agreement that a better connection to processes of development is needed, but what exactly that entails often remains vague. The information necessary for better analysis and development of reintegration guidelines is generally lacking (ISS, 2004). For example, there is little clarity about where DDR ends and development begins. There may be a need to develop criteria for an exit strategy for DDR programs (Baaré, 2006: 9), which explicitly deal with the transfer to longer-term development and poverty reduction. Moreover, a context-specific and tailored approach, that builds on the socio-economic reality on the ground as well as on the wishes and capabilities of former combatants, is uncommon in practice, if existent at all (Specker, 2008; Klem & Douma, 2008).

Community Security as a Characteristic of DDR

Combatants as part of communities

A community security perspective implies taking a wider view of ex-combatants (for example, women often were not fighters but logistical helpers or sex slaves) as well as paying attention to groups who do not enroll in DDR programs. Women often tend to 'self-demobilize' and disappear from view without accessing assistance and opportunities provided by DDR (CICS, 2006a: 25). In addition, extending support also to the families, social networks and wider communities into which ex-combatants are (re)integrated is increasingly considered an important element of DDR. This contrasts with previously implemented reintegration processes focused almost exclusively on providing support to individual ex-combatants. The key assumption of this type of programming was that by providing ex-combatants with skills and resources, these individuals would reintegrate

into civilian life on their own terms – an assumption that has been largely falsified (ibid; Ngoma, 2004: 83). The broadening of the target group for DDR beyond a narrowly defined category of former combatants is also necessary in order to prevent new tensions. After all, providing assistance only to ex-combatants (‘perpetrators’) in a context in which all are deprived can lead to resentment on the part of other community members.

Although actual projects that target the potential reception communities of ex-combatants have been a minority pursuit within the DDR sector (CICS, 2006a: 30), there are exceptions. Programs in Chad, Niger, Aceh, the Central African Republic, and the DRC, have included community participation in the reintegration phase (Özerdem & Sukanya, 2008: 35). In the DRC, a joint government-UNDP project in the framework of the MDRP has aimed at the creation or reinforcement of local networks and village committees in order to disseminate project information, promote community participation in socio-economic rehabilitation, and increase confidence and peaceful co-existence between communities and ex-combatants (MDRP, 2009).

In Afghanistan, some argue that the failure to adopt a community-based reintegration program has imperiled the peace process. The individual approach to reintegration made individual soldiers susceptible to manipulation by commanders who were able to maintain their influence and authority over their soldiers. If a community-based approach had been adopted for the program the problems encountered with the non-cooperative commanders might have been reduced. A community-based approach would have strengthened the ties between soldier and community, thereby reducing the chances the soldier would need to seek alternative forms of security (Thruelsen, 2006: 42).

Community involvement

What would such a community-based approach look like? There are different levels of community involvement in planning and implementation. One might say there is a continuum ranging from community ‘sensitization’ to ‘consultation’ to ‘participation’, ‘ownership’, and finally ‘empowerment’. Pouligny argues that communal *consultation* is necessary to become acquainted with the local conditions to which DDR programs are to be tailored (Pouligny, 2004: 11). Such consultation processes could occur simultaneously with the disarmament and demobilization phase of the DDR process when the ex-combatants are cantoned, and under certain conditions even during the design phase of DDR. First, it helps to define priorities from a local perspective and establish accountability norms within communities, thereby ensuring some level of societal control during the reintegration process. This would address potential grievances on the part of the community and encourage the community and the ex-combatant to take first steps toward a reintegration (and rehabilitation) process. Secondly, communal consultation directly addresses community concerns with regard to special treatment of ex-combatants when given financial aid in return for agreeing to participate in a DDR process. Thirdly, community consultation will address memories of violence and open up discussion to

arrive at some form of justice. Consultation also opens up possibilities to draw on local experience and resources (UNSG, para 41; UNDP, 2005: 59). Such *participatory processes* can create a sense of community *ownership* and help to overcome distrust among former combatants, communities, and local authorities (Thusi, 2004: 23-4). This way, a confidence-building measure is created that promotes the likelihood of successful reintegration because the ground has been prepared for the community to receive ex-combatants.

In practice, the concept of ownership is often limited to the national government, and sometimes the rebel leaders, to the exclusion of other key stakeholders (CICS, 2006a: 6). In the cases of Sierra Leone and Liberia it was noted that simply “creating a ‘national commission’ is insufficient to ensure national ownership, in particular in facilitating social reintegration” (Solomon, 2008: 42). No wider representation of people and communities was achieved. As a result “citizens in both countries feel excluded from the planning and implementation of certain key programs, which in turn impacts on the sustainability of the program” (ibid). The MDRP, too, placed much emphasis on ownership by the host countries, particularly during its initial phase. However, many of the governments lacked the necessary capacity and/or willingness (DAI, 2005). After a mid-term evaluation criticized the MDRP for confusing national ownership with government ownership, the program realized that ownership should not mean to give the host government a *carte blanche* (ibid; Klem & Frerks, 2007: 64-6). The Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS) developed by the UN in 2006 illustrate a learning curve in this regard, stressing that national ownership is “more than central government leadership” and involves “a broad range of State and non-State actors at national, provincial and local levels” (UN IAWG, 2006: 2.10, 12). This means that “[l]ocal authorities and populations, ex-combatants and their dependants must all be involved in the planning, implementation and monitoring of DDR activities” (ibid). Similarly, the European Union (EU)’s concept for DDR states that “DDR programs should be planned and delivered within the framework of community level development and include communities in all stages of the process” (European Commission, 2006: 25). In practice the European Commission (EC) has applied this approach to DDR in Colombia, where it supports the Colombian peace process through so called “laboratorios de paz”. These peace laboratories are comprehensive programs aimed at supporting peace initiatives at the local level (Koth, 2005: 52).

However, in spite of a few such examples, the inclusion of a local ownership component in DDR support activities remains the exception rather than the rule. According to recent studies (CICS, 2006a: 6; Muggah, 2005: 2), programming often fails to promote effective participation. Programs only allow for very short reintegration periods, which necessitate rapid planning and implementation, thereby limiting the possibilities for participation and ownership. This may be the result of the ideology of the ‘liberal peace’ on which many state-building exercises have been modeled. This ideology bases its interventions in post-conflict societies on macro-economic reform through market liberalization whereas only very limited attention is paid to economic conditions at grass-roots level. This results in an ill-founded “objectification of war-torn societies”

by donor-led interventions whereby post-conflict societies' distinct economic needs are not taken into account (Pugh, 2005: 23-42). There thus seems to be tension between on the one hand the commitment to a participatory approach with local ownership, and on the other hand, the detailed international blueprints for DDR that limit the possibilities for adjustment to specific contexts and needs (CICS, 2006a: 10-1).

Community empowerment

The concept of *empowerment* means that security promotion programs should not aim simply to *protect* people and *provide* security – but to *empower* people and communities to take care of their own security. Here we come close to the process view of community security as ways in which communities ensure their own security. Participation in decision-making can be a first step towards empowering communities to take care of their own security. In addition, communities may need capacity building aimed in order to strengthen existing security arrangements and other elements of civil society which may enhance community security. Indeed, the IDDRS talk about strengthening local communities and authorities, particularly with regard to rebuilding their capacities for strategic planning and program management (UN IAWG, 2006: 3.30, 12). However, empowerment could also serve less technical goals considering a party is empowered by gaining new awareness and understanding of its goals, options, skills, and resources, and is able to utilize these new insights (Bush, Robert & Folger, 1994: 85-87).

So far these are, for the most part, only words on paper. A top-down approach still characterizes most DDR programs. Too often, these programs overlook potentially valuable inputs from grass-roots organizations and the communities which are supposed to benefit from the DDR program. As a result, they run the risk of not matching with the particular social, economic and political context in which DDR programs are being implemented. However DDR programs are run, their legitimacy and local embeddedness are of the utmost importance. Therefore, it is important that attention is paid to the social and political circumstances of each society, and balance the urge to engineer with the need for local ownership (Cooper & Pugh, 2002: 51).

Connecting DDR to Community Security Arrangements

How can national-level DDR programs connect to existing ways to organize community security such as weapons demand reduction, traditional peace committees, peace zones and community-based policing? The IDDRS acknowledge that although the primary role of disarmament within DDR is to disarm combatants in the immediate post-conflict period, two wider dimensions need to be taken into account: that commonly it is also desirable and necessary to reduce and control the weapons held by the civilian population; and that short-term disarmament measures must be linked to longer-term small arms and light weapons (SALW) control. Thus, the removal of weapons from

combatants is only one aspect of disarmament within security promotion strategies. For instance, civilian disarmament, job creation and sensitization are also important if overall security is to be improved. Initiatives that go beyond formal cantonment and weapons destruction by DDR implementers become necessary. Community-based weapons collection and control programs, as discussed later on, may be a valuable addition in this regard (Greene, Hiscock & Flew, 2008: 13).

However, there are various obstacles that complicate efforts to reinforce community security arrangements as part of DDR or otherwise. First, the viability of community security mechanisms can be undermined by authorities that fear such bottom-up approaches to security can turn into a source of opposition. In Somalia for example, hardliners in both the Transitional Federal Governments as well as the Council of Islamic Courts have embarked on policies designed to undercut rather than partner with local security initiatives (Menkhaus, 2007: 68). This was initially also the fear of the Tanzanian government with the *sungusungu* mentioned earlier. Second, the evolution of local, informal systems of security has often been invisible to external aid agencies that mostly focus on formal state structures. External state-building initiatives have at times undermined public security by disregarding existing informal security structures (ibid, 70). One reason for this may be the illiberal nature of local security systems – a third issue. In Somalia, local security systems are the main if not sole source of security and protection for households and communities, but they often do not live up to international human rights standards. When aid agencies are committed to the promotion of community security, they are faced with the dilemma of whether or not to strengthen these structures (ibid, 92-3). Finally, a fundamental issue is that communities do not necessarily have shared values and beliefs, particularly in divided and fragmented societies (Baker, 2007: 138). This means that programs for community involvement in DDR should have built-in mechanisms for reconciliation and dealing with disagreement.

There may also be instances in which the connection between DDR and community security arrangements runs in the other direction: not national DDR programs trying to link up with community mechanisms, but community mechanisms helping to shape DDR programs. For example, the OECD (2007: 35) notes that pilot projects in Haiti that promote community-based armed violence reduction in slums have formed the template of national DDR and SSR strategies for Haiti.

Community Security as a Precondition for DDR

Community security is one of the determinants that impacts the decision to participate in a DDR program. Some degree of security and prospect for security is needed in the aftermath of war to convince ex-combatants to disarm. Humphreys and Weinstein (2009) identify two underlying mechanisms that influence the decision to join a DDR program. The first mechanism derives from the logic of the security dilemma. In an immediate post-conflict environment, the institutional infrastructure is usually very weak. Therefore, mutual mistrust may lead to unwillingness in taking the first step

toward disarmament. However, credible third party enforcers and credible commitment to community ownership of the DDR program can mediate in such crises of confidence and foster a degree of transparency that mitigates feelings of mutual suspicion. The second mechanism is the role of spoilers who seek to maintain the structure of their armed groups to use violence to undermine the peace efforts so they can bargain for more favorable returns. Both these mechanisms significantly impact on the decision whether to join a DDR program or not.

Rebel forces therefore tend to be reluctant to disarm in the absence of security guarantees. Even though external actors may provide security for the transition period in the form of peacekeepers, additional assurances are often needed in order for the combatants to be persuaded to lay down their arms; for example, in the form of rebels retaining their own armed forces or becoming integrated into the new army, rather than being unarmed (Møller and Cawthra, 2007: 180). Often there is a preference on the part of the government to retain (or obtain) the monopoly on the legitimate use of force and therefore to suggest military integration into the new army as the most feasible option. However, in the longer term, armies have to be downsized and demobilization becomes inevitable.

Different security environments

The level of security during the implementation of DDR has a great impact on the program's results. One aspect of importance is the way the conflict was resolved. Most of the time there was a peace agreement (Caramés and E. Sanz: 2008: 11-13), but disarmament is sometimes also undertaken by force. The latter is often less successful, and therefore less desirable. During the implementation of a DDR program there may be high levels of criminal violence. This is something DDR is designed to prevent but not to deal with when it occurs, and other security promoting activities may be required. There can also be an ongoing conflict such as in eastern DRC or Burundi before the *Forces Nationales de Libération* signed the peace agreement. In the DRC this has led to ex-combatants going into DDR for quick economic gains, only to return to the rebel groups afterwards (Rouw & Willems, 2010). Ongoing conflict increases the risk of DDR becoming a political and economic plaything of the remaining armed groups. Moreover, uncertainty and ongoing conflict can prevent DDR from being fully implemented, such as the case in Sudan.

Flexibility and adapting to circumstances

Of course the ideal conditions for DDR are never there, but it should be taken into account that certain conditions (e.g. levels of trust and confidence in the peace process) can support or may even be required for DDR. What is important in this regard is that policy makers understand from the outset that DDR involves much more than a mere "technical fix." The local population is likely to perceive every intervention as a political

initiative that upsets the existing power balance, and, accordingly, will calculate what they stand to gain or lose from the effort (O'Neill, 2005: 2). The challenge therefore is to demonstrate the positive impact of a new approach, for example through pilot projects that build legitimacy and credibility for wider reform programs (OECD-DAC, 2007: 35). As disarmament is such a highly political and sensitive issue, trust is the essential ingredient for success. Trust takes time to develop and therefore disarmament may be easier to agree on once a certain degree of stability has been achieved. An interesting alternative that may prove effective is a gradual approach to disarmament (Jeong, 2005: 45). If armed groups agree to hand in a number of weapons at fixed intervals, former antagonists' confidence in the successful conclusion of DDR is checked over a given period of time. This method may decrease tension and replace it with greater willingness to disarm. However, this does not mean reintegration programs should be halted. Combatants' reluctance to disarm is related not only to the need for security guarantees in the short-term. Longer-term future prospects also play a role. Dissatisfaction with a peace accord can be associated with unemployment since people who have not found a job judge the peace accord more harshly. This affects one's perceptions of future security, which may lead one to conclude that having a gun offers more security than having none. This also points to the need to manage the expectations of ex-combatants in order to prevent disillusionment with civilian life. High expectations about their well-being upon return to their community far too often lead to disappointment and perceptions that the DDR program has not fulfilled its promises. To ex-combatants, it then may turn out that economic well being in civilian life is not as profitable as livelihoods sustained by using arms (ibid, 145-6).

Thus, for combatants to submit to disarmament, they have to feel sufficiently secure – both physically and economically. Prospects for successful reintegration can help convince combatants to disarm. In some cases, this can mean that reintegration measures, such as sensitization efforts to prepare the ground for a successful reintegration process should precede disarmament. Starting with sensitization and trust building, if successful, reduces the need to carry arms.⁴ Letting go of the standard sequence of D, D and R also creates room for different divisions of labor. Disarmament and demobilization (and possibly some form of reinsertion) could take place through state-based programming and reintegration through community-based programming. The reintegration component can then be initiated alongside DD programming and focus on the whole of war-affected communities, while the DD phases can continue to serve the security issues with a special focus on ex-combatants.

The gap between community security and DDR

Summarizing the second part of this article, we have suggested four ways of looking at DDR from a community security perspective. First, an end state of community security can be seen as the overall *aim* of DDR. In this regard, we may ask whether DDR programs meet community security needs – something which in practice, they often do

not. Second, if we take a *process* view, community security can also be a *characteristic* of DDR processes, which then need to take community participation in programming seriously. This led us to a discussion of empowerment and capacity building, approaches which play only very limited roles in the implementation of most DDR programs. Part of the reason for this may be that there is little clarity on what empowerment means and how it should be done. A (participatory) analysis of community arrangements and institutions is needed which can show which of them are potential carriers of community security across the lines of conflict, and what it takes for them to achieve their potential. In addition, more insights are needed in what security means to a community. Given the short time frames employed for DDR, such analyses are rarely done, and are not mentioned by most policy documents as a step to be undertaken.⁵

A third way of approaching the issue is to connect DDR to the community security arrangements, as they were described earlier: SALW demand reduction, traditional peace committees, peace zones and community-based policing. One way to connect DDR to community security arrangements would be for DDR actors to strengthen these arrangements as a matter of policy. In addition, the connection between DDR and community security arrangements may also run in the other direction, with community mechanisms helping to shape national DDR programs, as it occurred in Haiti. This requires DDR programming to be flexible and open to community involvement. Finally, some level of community security is also a *precondition* for DDR. Convincing combatants to submit to DDR requires a basic level of confidence that they will be secure, both physically and economically, after they give up their arms. This can mean that efforts at reintegration, such as sensitization, should already be introduced before disarmament is undertaken. In other words, the sequencing of DDR may need to be changed.

In DDR practice, we see that lip service is paid to community security, as well as to elements that can help make these a reality, such as strategies of empowerment and capacity building, the involvement of community and civil society representatives in DDR design, treating DDR as part of both wider peacebuilding and longer-term development efforts, and providing assistance not only to former combatants but to communities as a whole. However, overall, this support is not translated into practice. As a result, there is a disconnect between community security arrangements on the one hand, and 'state' DDR programs on the other.

There are various reasons for this. Here, we mention five. First, a military perspective on security of the state is often the starting point of DDR programs, resulting in a focus on the disarmament and demobilization phase at the cost of attention, financing and resources for the reintegration phase. This has led to growing critiques, as it has been realized that the success of ex-combatants largely depends on the community's socio-economic ability to receive them. Second, DDR tends to be treated as a technocratic issue. There is insufficient attention for the fact that DDR is a very political intervention, which upsets existing power balances, and that therefore, careful attention should be paid to not only 'do no harm' but also contribute to the wider peace process. Third, there is

little understanding of what empowerment and capacity building should actually entail. There is far too little discussion about this. Little use is also made of experiences which NGOs and others have with these strategies. Fourth, the dominant blueprint approach to DDR (exemplified by the detailed guidelines contained in the IDDRS) limits possibilities for flexibly adapting DDR to whatever community security needs and arrangements there may be in a given context. This approach also leaves little room for civil society input into DDR programming. It turns NGO partners into subcontractors, which negates their potential added value as connectors between communities and DDR programs and as actors who have experience with capacity building approaches.

Finally, the short time frames employed for DDR leave little time for the analysis of community security structures and the identification of suitable partners that may be strengthened to achieve sustainable community security. As a result, valuable input from local communities on how security can be improved is omitted. In addition, short time frames limit possibilities for starting integration early on and for connecting it to longer-term community development processes. Both the blueprint approach and the short time frames used spring from the need to have DDR programs operational as early as possible in a peace process, so that they can start removing the security dilemma and show combatants and community some ‘peace dividends.’ However, these imperatives have to be weighed against the requirements for achieving long-term success. This could be better achieved when ex-combatants and the communities into which they reintegrate have the freedom to tailor security provision according to their self-identified needs and can exert more initiative, control and responsibility to oversee activities related to the provision of security.

Then, is there nowhere that we can look for bridges that connect community security and DDR? There is, in fact, one area of practice that we have not yet addressed, but that may potentially lend inspiration. This is the field of ‘community-based DDR’ to which we shall turn now.

Community-Based DDR

Experiences with Community-Based DDR

Only a small number of community-based initiatives have been identified, which apart from reintegration, are also aimed at disarmament. Generally, it is argued, DDR does not spontaneously arise from below, but is part of a broader project to secure the legitimate control of force from above (Muggah, 2009: 2). Nevertheless also the first phases of DDR can involve the grass-roots level. One example involving communities in disarmament is given by a UNIDIR publication written by civic leaders from Sierra Leone (Lappia, 2006: 131-9). Recommendations include the arrangement for community heads and war commanders to meet in an atmosphere of friendliness to engender confidence in all parties and reinforce the message of ‘no more war’. In addition, community leaders themselves should work out modalities for disarming groups. A

message must be sent out that supplies of arms and ammunition can easily undermine the fragile peace process, and it should be an urgent priority to publicly and openly collect and destroy all weapons and ammunitions. Other suggestions are to promptly put in place local, democratic structures of governance to enhance the transfer of power from combatants to official structures under law and to provide attractive conditions for combatants in the demobilization camps.

Another example of a stronger involvement of communities in DDR programs comes from Rwanda. The DDR program in Rwanda was completely managed by the Rwandese government, which implemented it through the local concept of *Ingando* –the military assembly area where troops received their final briefing before a military campaign. Refashioned for DDR, the concept was used to help ex-combatants through problem-solving workshops. According to Edmonds et al., this element of local ownership was vital for the program's success (Edmonds, Mills & McNamee, 2009: 42).

In addition to such modalities of community involvement in national DDR programs, there are also examples of what may actually be seen as community-based DDR. Increasingly, voices can be heard in favour of a 'decentralized approach to DDR' (Faltas, 2005) that aims to address the root causes of arms in societies and that focus not on combatants alone, but on communities as a whole. Since the context in which DDR programs take place is often characterized by unemployment and impoverished economies, leaving little for ex-combatants to reintegrate into, bringing ex-combatants 'on par' with the rest of the community is not enough. DDR should be linked to programs aimed at community development and reconciliation between communities and ex-combatants. Development is then seen as a key for successful disarmament, just as disarmament is seen as a requisite for development (Haden & Faltas, 2004; Pouligny, 2004: 17; USAID, 2005: 5-8; Koyama, 2005: 75; Swarbrick, 2007: 51-2). In this context, Muggah (2009) discusses what he calls 'second generation' security promotion interventions, which focus on preventing and reducing armed violence. They involve local, customary institutions and privilege bottom-up approaches by focusing on community-centered security promotion. Second generation security promotion combine a number of activities, such as voluntary weapons collection, and temporary restrictions on weapons-carrying and alcohol use. Other examples include weapons for development programs, weapons lotteries and gun-free zones. What we have termed 'community security initiatives' could perhaps also be placed under Muggah's heading of second generation security initiatives. Thus far, according to Muggah, second generation security promotion interventions have demonstrated significant reductions in armed conflict. In Colombia, homicide rates dropped significantly due to focused interventions that targeted the various dimensions of arms availability (Muggah, 2009: 276-7).

One interesting example is found in the DRC. In Maniema province civil society organizations, organized in la Société Civile de Maniema, called for the return of Mai Mai militia members into civil life. Subsequently, Oxfam Novib and the Conseil Régional des Organisations Non Gouvernementales de Développement au Maniema (CRONGD) started a pilot project of the Social Cohesion/DDR program with activities

directed towards sensitizing for a voluntary disarmament. The first phase of the program aimed at restoring social cohesion and confidence in the communities by means of socio-economic rehabilitation and the restoration and improvement of the *barzas*, large community meetings and the traditional structures of community conflict mediation (CRONGD-Oxfam, 2006). The second phase aimed at a voluntary disarmament based on the principle of ‘weapons for development’: if livelihood security of communities is increased, then they may become less dependent on the possession of arms. Development activities in this context included agricultural assistance and the rehabilitation of infrastructure, two schools and a health centre (CRONGD-Oxfam, 2007). According to Oxfam Novib the *barzas* played a central role in conflict resolution and in reintegrating perpetrators and victims, which helped in the implementation of the program (Oxfam Novib, 2008: 4, 10).

A quite unique instance of community-based disarmament occurred in Somaliland (OECD-DAC, 2008: 43). Armed young men extorting taxes from the civilian population for protection and robberies were a great security problem. The government of Somaliland initially formally announced a disarmament process but lacked the capacity and authority to implement it. Instead a community-based effort involving civil society groups, traditional and religious leaders and women’s groups set up a campaign to ban firearms from the streets. The strategy was to stigmatize the possession and use of firearms and men with guns were shunned, hackled on the streets and refused services. In a matter of weeks the streets were cleared of weapons and popular support was created to persuade clan militias to disarm and join the national security forces.

Most community-based DDR initiatives do not concern themselves with disarmament but focus on reintegration. Here, again, the extent of community ‘ownership’ varies among projects. In the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) the UNDP and IOM jointly launched a disarmament and reintegration program between 2000 and 2002. After being criticized to be rewarding perpetrators of violence, the UNDP linked it with its Community Action for Post-Conflict Recovery project (*Action communautaire*). In this project, community infrastructure was (re)constructed and communities themselves identified, and the activities that required funding were executed when possible. Ex-combatants participated in highly labor intensive activities, such as the reconstruction of bridges and roads (Haden & Faltas, 2004). In Liberia, the UNDP’s DDDR⁶ program eventually expanded its target group from ex-combatants to also include war-affected communities. A Community Based Recovery (CBR) program was initiated, which aimed for the consolidation of peace and stimulation of governance at the grass-roots level. The CBR program restored existing community-level governance structures strengthened by developing ‘District Development Committees.’ This enabled communities to identify community projects. The UNDP’s ex-combatant reintegration and community support project in the Central African Republic (CAR) involved the communities in a different way in the reintegration of ex-combatants (UNDP, 2004). Each combatant received a reintegration voucher to hand in at the local office for reintegration in the community into which they wanted to resettle. Each community would then receive the amount of funds equivalent to the number of vouchers collected.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has developed a model for what it calls community-focused reintegration and implemented it in Burundi, DRC and Liberia. These projects include training for mixed groups of ex-combatants and other community members, as “one of the most pressing problems in all countries was the need to provide skills to ex-combatants and others in order to involve them in the re-building of communal life” (USAID, 2005: 20). These involve leadership training as well as vocational training programs. They first train a group of ‘master trainers’ who then pass it on community-level ‘learning facilitators’ (who come from the community itself) which duplicate the training at community level. The cycles of training are then generally followed by support for a community project. The training and subsequent projects bring together ex-combatants and community members.

Lessons Learned from Community-based DDR

Literature about community-based DDR stresses that careful assessment of the context is critical; even more so because the logistical complexity of a community-based program and its longer commitment makes it not as easy to change the area of focus. Such assessments should be based on the local context and the security needs as perceived by those affected by the violence (OECD-DAC, 2008; Miller & Rudnick, 2008). Another observation made by USAID is that community-based reintegration is best suited to attract rank-and-file combatants, but the creation of a political space for commanders “to redirect their energies in a post-war environment is important for shifting the conflict from the battlefield to the political arena” (USAID, 2005: 22). It is further emphasized that good planning on follow-up is necessary in order to prevent exacerbating tensions due to raised expectations.

Earlier we discussed how DDR needs to be accompanied by peacebuilding and reconciliation processes in order to be successful. For community-based reintegration, this means that its success is enhanced when it helps to “promote reconciliation and provide the tools to prevent local conflicts from recurring” (ibid, 7). By addressing local-level reintegration and reconciliation, for instance by means of peace committees, this could mollify local tensions that are at the core of the conflict. As argued by Kalyvas, these local issues are the real issues that individuals are fighting over and when properly addressed through peaceful means this can take away political space for conflict at the national level (Kalyvas, 2003).

Muggah emphasizes that in second generation initiatives, involvement on the part of international agencies is much more scaled-back and facilitative. The initiative, control and responsibility of overseeing such activities rest much more with local actors. In a description that resonates with the concept of empowerment, Muggah classifies second generation initiatives as a “means transforming the normal and bureaucratic reflexes to standardize, simplify and control in a dominating top-down mode to provide instead conditions for local diversity and autonomy” (Chambers, 2007: 73).

Holistic Security Promotion

A more holistic thinking about post-conflict security promotion is needed, in order to move beyond ad-hoc operations to a more strategic view of how different activities, including DDR, can work together. This requires security-oriented programs to start with long-term and detailed planning processes, based on good analysis, and a proper consultation process with host government and affected population based on principles of participation, ownership and empowerment (CICS, 2006a: 11).

A more top-down approach does not become superfluous when community-based approaches are initiated, as the two should rather reinforce each other. Centralized DDR and community security can complement each other when DDR programs connect to community security arrangements. Strong coordination of community-based projects with the official state-focused DDR programs, however, proves to be difficult in practice. It is not always clear what a community-based approach entails when reviewing policy documents. Unclear objectives and differing views about this reflect controversies surrounding the question whether to target individual families and households as opposed to all vulnerable households or the community as a whole (Chobok, 2005: 34).

Since community security arrangements increase security and reduce potential security dilemmas, they make it easier for ex-combatants to disarm, and for communities to accept ex-combatants. DDR programs could become more effective by connecting to such arrangements. At the same time, community-based institutions may also help shaping national DDR programs, as happened in Haiti. This requires DDR programming to be flexible and open to community involvement. In practical terms, linking DDR and community initiatives requires detailed knowledge of community security arrangements, 'social fabric', local business, and the needs and capacities of former combatants, vulnerable groups, and wider communities. With regard to economic needs, an inventory on what is demanded by local communities themselves is likely to yield better output in terms of livelihood improvement. Many communities depend on their own skills and resources and identify their own strength through diverse economic activities. Incorporating ex-combatants in productive sectors in combination with a clear assessment of the needs and qualities of communities and ex-combatants alike would contribute to a reduction in social friction (Jeong, 2005: 140-143). It requires research at an early stage of DDR design, in close cooperation with local communities. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)'s Security Needs Assessment Protocol (SNAP) could lend inspiration in this regard as it aims to generate explicit community-level knowledge about security concerns in a rapid manner. Engagement of local communities will assure a better identification of local security concerns and related local practices.

Parallel Stages

Letting go of the chronological order of the phases of D, D, and R provides new options of connecting community and state. One option would be to leave disarmament and demobilization (possibly including some form of reinsertion) to a state-focused approach and to complement this with a simultaneously running community sensitization program. The first program would turn the combatants into ex-combatants, while the second program would focus on the war-affected communities and prepare them for the return of ex-combatants to the community (Haden & Faltas, 2004: 20-1). This could be followed by a community-based reintegration and rehabilitation program, which focuses on both the needs of ex-combatants and communities. Moreover, as community-based disarmament experiences show (albeit still limited in number), there is also much to be said for expanding possibilities for community involvement in the D's. Community-based programs seem quite capable of undertaking DDR in a different sequence, as the example of CRONGD and Oxfam in the DRC has illustrated.

Multifaceted Violence

As Cramer (2007) proposes, it may also be helpful to stop distinguishing between conflict and non-conflict violence. All types of violence represent threats to human security, and all are related in ways that are much more complex than is commonly suggested. For example, after a war is over and soldiers are demobilized, there is often a sharp increase in criminal and domestic violence (Muggah, 2006). The OECD-DAC's Armed Violence Reduction and prevention (AVR) policy represents an attempt to link together community security, community-based DDR, and state-centred approaches, seeing them as components of an all-encompassing violence reduction strategy (OECD-DAC, 2008). The document emphasizes that all programs should be based on an understanding of the multifaceted and multi-level nature of armed violence. This can open up opportunities for cross-pollinations and make possible "multi-sector and multi-level responses that address elements and interrelationships across the armed violence lens" (ibid, 51). Similarly, the CICS project argues that programmers should start from a typology of armed violence and seek to understand how this violence is best addressed through either DDR, SALW control or a combination (CICS, 2006b: 7).

Context Matters

The degree of reliance on community-based initiatives as compared to state DDR programs is likely to vary depending on the context. For example, in cases where the distinction between combatant and civilian is blurred, demobilization through national camps will have only limited success, and a community-based initiative would be more in place. Moreover, state DDR programs are often not capable of taking into account regional needs, or even differences between rural and urban needs. For instance, ex-

combatants living in a small apartment in the city of Kabul were given a cow (Frerks, Gompelman & van Laar, 2008: 26) and in the DRC ex-combatants returning to villages without electricity were trained to become electricians (Rouw & Willems, 2010: 30). Where a community-based approach can link to state-focused approaches will also differ from case to case. This may, for example, depend on the strength and accessibility of existing community arrangements.

Who is in Charge?

The literature on community-based approaches to DDR explain that addressing local tensions and reconciliation, organizing development, and tackling reintegration issues can and should be undertaken by members of the local community. They have to be in charge and the role of the international community is facilitation. The issues that need to be addressed for successful reintegration and increased community security are, for a large part, issues with local implications and need to be addressed in a process with local ownership. However, DDR is an instrument used to dismantle and disarm armed groups, usually undertaken by international agencies and national governments. This contradiction leads not only to an ambiguity over the definition of ‘community-based DDR’ as discussed earlier, but more practically to the fundamental question concerning who is in charge of planning and implementing the program. It seems in practice there is very little ownership in transitory environments. Chesterman (2007) attributes this to the time-consuming and frustrating nature of consultative processes which is allegedly in contradiction with the perceived need to act swiftly. In addition, there is a tendency to base interventions on blue-print approaches (Chesterman, 2007: 17). For community-based DDR it is presumed to be essential that the community is empowered and is not only beneficiary but also contributor and is carrying the weight of the decision-making process (Caramés, 2008: 31). Local ownership within a community-based approach would imply that different approaches to achieve reintegration and peaceful cohabitation are arrived at in different contexts because it is determined by each community itself.

The Role of Civil Society Organizations

In theory, NGOs and CBOs are well placed to make the connection between local and national initiatives and to work with communities. However, their role in DDR programs is often limited to that of sub-contractors. Instead, CSOs need to be involved in both DDR policy and strategy formulation *and* implementation. This requires more openness to CSO involvement on the part of donors, and a more proactive approach on the part of CSOs. In addition, capacity building of local organizations should receive much more attention, especially in the fields of context analysis and strategy development.

Assessing Results

What continues to serve as a measurement of success of DDR programs are numbers of weapons collected and combatants that went through training programs, not the extent to which security has improved (Muggah, 2006: 197; Pugel, 2009: 76). However, the contribution of a project to the reduction of violence is hard to measure. A research initiative in the Republic of Congo, for instance, could not go further than recognizing the importance of “the effect that the project had on diverting youths away from the life of the gun” (Haden & Faltas, 2004: 29). A study in Colombia finds that paramilitary DDR did appear to have reduced homicidal violence, but these results also seemed to disappear over time (Restrepo & Muggah, 2009: 40). Also, the reintegration of ex-combatants is difficult to measure, as it is assessed more qualitatively and has a lack of effective indicators (Caramés, Fisas & Sanz, 2007: 10). Moreover, the multidimensional character of DDR programs and the whole peace process in which they are embedded makes it very difficult to assess the individual contribution of specific programs. Recently, there have been attempts to bring more rigor to the evaluation of DDR and its impact (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2007; Muggah, 2009). However, there is still a significant lack of knowledge on the results of DDR programs. In any case, it is probably more realistic to look at what programs may have contributed to the achievement of community security: contribution rather than attribution.

Challenges

Although there may be many benefits to linking centralized DDR programs and community security initiatives, in practice, limited connection can be observed. There are many reasons why this is so. First, DDR by definition needs to be done under great time pressure. After a peace agreement, it is deemed necessary to act quickly to seize the momentum and generate the ‘peace dividend.’ As a result, the time frames for DDR are short. This is not conducive to time-consuming participatory approaches. Hence, there is a tension between the urgency with which DDR needs to take place, and the necessity of extensive analysis and community consultation before a security promotion strategy is adopted. Another process that takes time is that of fostering trust and confidence among former combatants and their communities. Communities do not necessarily have shared values and beliefs, particularly in post-conflict situations where years of violent conflict have left societies highly divided. In these situations, it may be difficult for external agencies to involve the communities in promoting security, without engaging in reconciliation and consensus building. Moreover, the chain of organizations involved in DDR implementation – from trust funds down to local NGOs – seriously impedes downward accountability.

A further complication is the identification of community security structures that are to be strengthened, considering that central DDR actors – governments, donors and international NGOs – lack knowledge of the existing informal systems of security. Most

external agencies focus on the easily visible formal state structures. Local and informal systems are less visible and therefore harder for outsiders to identify. In addition, many post-conflict societies exhibit multi-layered systems of governance, where besides the state, many actors of different levels are involved in the provision of security. Linking centralized DDR programs to community security initiatives requires a close knowledge of this complex situation, which is often lacking with DDR implementers. Furthermore, the post-conflict environment in which many DDR programs take place is not conducive to finding good local implementing partners. Often, local community organizations and NGOs in post-conflict countries lack the required capacity or are tainted by the past conflict. Within the short period in which DDR programs need to be started, there may not be time enough to find capable, trustworthy partners. In addition, not all local community security arrangements are in line with international human rights standards. For example they may exclude particular groups, or violate the rights of women or children. In addition, some local security providers are involved in criminal activities. In these cases, external agencies may be unwilling to link formal DDR programs to existing local security structures.

Besides these challenges in identifying community security initiatives and linking DDR programs to them, there are practical and political obstacles. DDR has often been approached as a highly technical, top-down activity. This has not allowed for much interaction with local DDR initiatives or community security arrangements. At the same time, there is often little room for such interaction because of the political nature of the DDR process and the interests of the actors involved. Rather than aiming for human security, most DDR programs aim at installing the monopoly of violence of the state (which often has never been there before or has been abused in the past). State level authorities may disapprove of support to community security arrangements, fearing that those may turn into a source of opposition. As such, there is great sensitivity about which groups are supported and how, and the need to navigate between the interests of the different parties can be an obstacle to engagement with communities.

Finally, donor convergence towards widely accepted standards and new funding and operational mechanisms have opened possibilities for mutual collaboration and coordination that hitherto were lacking, and enable more rapid implementation. Though these are very important achievements, they risk leading to ‘blueprint approaches,’ inhibiting flexibility and openness to local input. What thus emerges again and again is the need to balance the important objective of coordinated and swift action with the objective of community security. Including local research and community involvement in planning as standard elements of security promotion guidelines could be one way to work towards such a balanced approach.

Concluding Remarks

DDR has become the standard way of addressing security threats in immediate post-conflict situations. However, DDR is designed to promote national security, rather

than human or community security. This creates severe obstacles for success, if success is seen in terms of overall security promotion rather than defined merely in numbers of arms collected and people demobilized. The reason is that if security at community level is not improved, then people will be unable to abandon armed violence as a way of protection and of making a living. Disarmament in such a situation will probably be only temporary. Thus, it is actually a *necessity* for DDR to aim at community security.

However, when community security becomes the aim, then this opens up questions about whether DDR is the most appropriate strategy. At best, it can be part of a more wide-ranging strategy, which in addition to top-down DDR programs also involves community-based activities. Altogether, such a holistic security promotion strategy should endeavour to make people and communities better able to protect themselves and to earn a living that does not depend on war and violence. In other words, it should aim at making guns redundant. ‘Community-based’ and ‘Second-generation’ DDR initiatives lend inspiration for such a wider security promotion approach. What they show is that the optimal approach is very context-specific. Analysis of the conflict, of local security mechanisms, and of the needs and capacities of communities, therefore has to be the first step, despite the fact that this takes valuable time.

Notes

1. Reports of the working group include: Willems et al (2009), Rouw and Willems (2010) and Willems, Kleingeld and Van Leeuwen (2010).
2. These different perspectives on security can be problematic for donors and international organizations planning security promotion activities, for whom planning is based on lessons learned and thereby designed to be independent of, rather than account for, cultural variation. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) states that “it is what makes security problems different from one community to another that is most important when designing activities specific to a community” (Miller & Rudnick, 2008: 31). In response, UNIDIR has developed a Security Needs Assessment Protocol (SNAP) which enables the generation of explicit community-level knowledge about security concerns in a rapid manner, and the reconciling of the findings with standing agencies and practices (Miller, 2007: 2).
3. Klem and Frerks (2007: 63) summarize the main issues mentioned in this debate.
4. In addition to our earlier discussion of this, see also Berdal (1996: 24) Kingma (1997: 29).
5. The SNAP project mentioned in note 1 may provide practical possibilities to fill this knowledge gap.
6. The national program in Liberia was named Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR).

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