Blame It on the War?

The Gender Dimensions of Violence in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

Report and recommendations for action

United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group
on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
Chief Contributors

**United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration** ([www.unddr.org](http://www.unddr.org))

The Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) on DDR was established to improve the UN’s performance in the area of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration by contributing to an integrated approach representing the application of the ‘UN Delivering as One’ principle, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of DDR processes worldwide. Set up by the UN Executive Committee on Peace and Security (ECPS) on 31 March 2005 and co-chaired by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the IAWG is currently comprised of more than 20 UN member entities.


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

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

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

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

UNDP supports DDR programmes in 22 countries and territories. Additionally, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) continues to support programmes for the release and reintegration of children associated with armed forces or armed groups in 15 countries and territories. The International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) also provide specialized services in support of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes worldwide.¹

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

²Ibid., p. 8.
Executive summary

This report is a response to the gaps in policy and guidance on the gender dimensions of violence (GDV) in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programming. Recognizing the importance of understanding both males’ and females’ ever-changing gender identities and roles in society, it provides a conceptual framework for addressing the gender-specific causes, impacts and dynamics of violence in countries emerging from armed conflict.

The gender dimensions of violence framework set forth herein includes a gender-sensitive analysis and identification of the factors that influence ex-combatants’ vulnerability and strengthen their resilience to violence, effective entry points for sustainable reintegration and recommendations for action. By improving the overall gender-responsiveness of DDR programmes, DDR practitioners and policymakers can more effectively address the priorities and needs of programme participants and beneficiaries. In addition, such work provides a foundation for gender-transformative interventions.

Background and objectives

High levels of violence often persist in post-conflict settings, on occasion exceeding levels during wartime. For many ex-combatants and associated groups who internalize violent identities during the war or find few opportunities and gains in the post-conflict period, displays of aggression continue during transitions to civilian life.

Violence stemming from the conflict period has important, though often latent, gender dimensions. For male ex-combatants in particular, who on average make up between 70 and 90 percent of armed forces and groups, socially constructed violent masculinities become difficult to leave behind following demobilization. While the majority of ex-combatants are male, and post-conflict violence among male ex-combatants is more visible, female ex-combatants also appear to be more prone to exhibiting violent behaviour than their female civilian counterparts.

The ultimate objective of DDR is the sustainable economic, social/psychosocial and political reintegration of former combatants and associated groups into communities of their choice. However, if ex-combatants and associated groups find that they are unable to address their violent pasts, break down restrictive gender norms, and learn alternative behaviours and coping mechanisms, the chances of achieving successful reintegration are inevitably reduced and the risk of war reoccurrence is heightened. A clearer view of gender norms, roles and identities is therefore central to understanding the causes, impacts and dynamics of violence in conflict-affected environments, and more specifically DDR programmes.

The gender dimensions of violence in DDR

To assess the gender dimensions of violence in DDR, one must first recognize that armed conflict affects men, women, boys and girls differently. While high rates of violence committed against or among civilians during the war, particularly violence against women, have been increasingly documented in the last decade, there is a tendency by policymakers and donors to neglect the interrelated continuation of such violence and its gender dimensions in the post-conflict period.
This report offers the following key findings on the relationship between gender identities and violence among ex-combatants and associated groups:

- Trained and socialized to use violence, aggressive tendencies and violence among ex-combatants and associated groups is often carried from the battlefield to the home and the community, where it can take on new forms and expressions. These include self-directed violence (e.g. suicide, drug and alcohol abuse as coping mechanisms), interpersonal violence (e.g. GBV, intimate partner violence, child abuse, rape and murder) and group violence against the community (e.g. burglary, rape, harassment, beatings and murder).

- Male and female ex-combatants, as well as women associated with armed forces and groups (WAAFG), often express violence in ways that reflect different prevailing gender roles and identities. For example, physical violence is more common among men, while women are more likely to internalize anger or express it verbally.

- Post-conflict violence committed by ex-combatants often stems from their feelings of frustration, low self-esteem and inadequacy when they are unable to fulfill expected gender roles after conflict ends. While men, women, boys and girls all face significant hardships and pressures in conflict and post-conflict settings, changing gender roles frequently affect men and boys more profoundly. While women’s identities often remain anchored in their role as ‘caretaker’ or expand into new areas, men’s identities and expected role as ‘provider’ are often challenged or threatened as livelihoods are destroyed and economic opportunities disappear in conflict or post-conflict settings.

- For men and boys in the vast majority of cultures, societal conceptions of masculinity have already promoted some degree of violence that membership in an armed force or group often only serve to perpetuate.

- Exposure to violence during one’s childhood often sets the stage for violence later in life. This is particularly important to note when one considers the acute vulnerability of children exposed to tremendous violence when associated with armed forces or armed groups.

- The DDR process can be a deeply disempowering experience for ex-combatants and associated groups of both sexes, often representing a palpable loss of the gains and benefits they enjoyed as part of an armed force or group.

- While the majority of ex-combatants are male, and violence among male ex-combatants is more visible, female ex-combatants also appear to be more vulnerable to violent behaviour than civilian women in the general population.

**Vulnerability and resilience of ex-combatants and associated groups**

While some ex-combatants are able to reintegrate successfully and live peaceful, non-violent lives, for others the transition from military to civilian life is more challenging. Violent habits can persist in peacetime. In the context of this report, ‘resilience’ refers to an individual’s ability to withstand, resist and overcome the social and environmental pressures that might encourage violent behaviour or increase the likelihood of membership in violent groups in conflict-affected societies. ‘Vulnerability’, on the other hand, refers to those factors that increase an individual’s susceptibility to or risk of being affected by violence, resorting to it, or being drawn into groups that perpetrate violence.
Ex-combatants’ experiences differ across contexts. However, there are a number of common factors that increase their vulnerability and resilience to involvement in violence, from which DDR programmes can learn from and benefit:

- **War-related trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse**
  Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and related mental health problems, including drug and alcohol abuse and depression, are common among ex-combatants and associated groups and are increasingly linked to violent behaviour, including intimate partner violence and suicide. While ex-combatants and associated groups may struggle with the memories and physical scars of their wartime experiences for the duration of their lives, they can also build up several points of resilience at individual, interpersonal and community levels, to better manage these lifelong stressors.

- **Exposure to gender-based violence (GBV)**
  Ex-combatants have been both perpetrators and victims of violence and severe abuse, including gender-based violence (GBV). Sexual violence against men, women, boys and girls during war, and within armed forces and groups, is often prevalent, particularly against female combatants and WAAF. However, many experts believe that cases of sexual violence committed against men and boys are significantly under-reported, due to shame, guilt, fear of denunciation, and strong prejudices against male homosexuality, among other factors. Individuals who have been exposed to sexual, physical, and emotional violence and abuse in childhood or adulthood may be more prone to becoming abusive themselves. Positive support from family and community to cope with such trauma and stress in the post-conflict phase of DDR is an important factor in strengthening resilience.

- **Purposeful employment and livelihood opportunities**
  Post-conflict economies are characterized by financial insecurity and the lasting effects of the destruction of livelihoods, infrastructure and institutions, posing significant challenges to ex-combatants’ economic reintegration. Unemployment and lack of livelihood opportunities that perceptibly confer respect can contribute to low self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy, shame, anger, and disempowerment. According to the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (2011), “Men’s stress related to not having enough income or work and achieving the role of provider [is] a key factor associated with perpetration of violence, higher rates of incarceration, higher rates of alcohol abuse and higher rates of suicidal thoughts.” Livelihoods or employment options that offer a sense of purpose and respect can therefore provide an important source of resilience.

- **Education and life skills**
  Ex-combatants often lack basic life skills that are essential for a successful transition to civilian life. Many have spent a significant portion of their lives with armed forces and groups and have never learned from parents, community members or educators how to manage social relationships constructively. Illiteracy and low levels of formal education are also common, and can limit ex-combatants’ ability for self-expression, increasing the likelihood that anger and frustration are manifested violently. This lack of social and practical skills not only limits economic opportunities, it contributes to low self-esteem and the inability to manage disputes non-violently. Educational and vocational training activities to develop key life skills can therefore be critical to strengthening resilience.

- **Self-esteem, social inclusion and social support**
  While in armed forces and groups, individuals’ self-esteem often derives from the social recognition they receive as war heroes or as representatives of a wider social and national cause. Membership provides a collective sense of identity and shared sense of purpose, as well as a ‘family’ of peers and comrades
upon whom to depend. Demobilization can therefore represent significant losses. It can in turn contribute to low self-esteem, depression and insecurity. Involvement in social activities that develop self-esteem, purpose and positive relationships to peers can be a key factor for resilience. In post-conflict settings, the support and acceptance ex-combatants receive from families and community members are also critical to their resilience and successful reintegration.

**GDV entry points in DDR programming**

**Disarmament: Replacing the gun as a symbol of power**

The disarmament process strips ex-combatants of their means of protection and livelihoods, as well as the physical symbols of their identities as fighters: their weapons. Many DDR programmes have recognized the economic value of a weapon, as well as its importance for security and protection, but have failed to consider the symbolic value of a weapon in asserting power and status and in defining ‘manhood’ for male ex-combatants. Given these considerations, DDR programmes should:

- **Exploit ways to support ex-combatants to form alternative civilian identities and to replace weapons with positive symbols of power that are relevant in their particular cultural context;** and

- **Develop more strategic engagement with women (particularly female dependants) in disarmament processes, as they can play an instrumental role in encouraging family and community members to hand in weapons and in community mobilization to address armed violence.**

**Demobilization: Establishing new support networks**

Demobilization breaks the bonds between commanders and the rank and file and dissolves the military hierarchies that can provide combatants with an important source of respect. It can effectively take combatants from ‘hero to zero’ in a day. Once military ranks are dissolved, women may experience a loss of the respect they may have previously been afforded by their male counterparts. For WAAFG, the demobilization process can break up informal ‘marriages’, separating women and girls from male combatants upon whom they depended in war.

By formally discharging combatants from military service, demobilization can mean that ex-combatants lose the ‘war family’ that they depended on for economic support, protection and comradeship. It can also mean a loss of the sense of collective identity, purpose, and belonging that motivates many to join armed forces and groups. In order to succeed, DDR programmes must find ways to replace the ‘war family’ and transform the strong social ties associated with the armed group into a positive force for recovery and development.

**Reintegration: Forming a non-violent civilian identity**

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

**Economic reintegration**
Beyond the importance of earning an income, the identity gained through employment can be central to forming a non-violent civilian identity. The following are key considerations and entry points for economic reintegration programming:

- Efforts to develop sustainable livelihood and employment options should be informed by an understanding of how gender norms shape attitudes about men’s and women’s work. Economic reintegration should not reinforce or assume traditional norms, but should rather provide flexible socio-economic support to ex-combatants that is sensitive to the pressures and expectations they face;
- In order to ensure successful economic reintegration, social and psychosocial issues must be incorporated into programmes;
- Efforts are increasingly being made to match ex-combatants’ vocational training and skills development with market demands. DDR programmes should, however, pay particular attention to the gender dimensions of violence where employment placement and income generating activities raise unrealistic expectations or inadvertently reinforce feelings of inadequacy when seeking employment; and
- DDR programmes should consider ways to assist ex-combatants to build a positive sense of self and purpose that is not dependent on being an economic provider. For instance, community service work or social activism, even if voluntary, can be a way to gain dignity and respect, although the income needs of participants must also be met.

Social reintegration
An ex-combatant who has economic opportunities but who is socially isolated or excluded cannot be considered as successfully reintegrated. Experience has shown that social reintegration is not only just as important as economic reintegration, it can also be a pre-condition and a catalyst for employment and economic security. DDR programmes should consider the following gender dimensions of violence entry points in order to strengthen social reintegration:

- Provide support to ex-combatants to (re-)learn to manage stress, anger and inter-personal conflict non-violently;
- Use health initiatives as an entry point to address the gender dimensions of violence, including through HIV/AIDS and reproductive health interventions;
- Develop parenting interventions, which teach parenting skills and develop parents’ ability to manage children. Men especially often lack models to guide them as fathers and in their relationships with women. By developing parenting skills, men can play a greater role in their children’s lives, overcome ideas that this is a woman’s domain, and establish positive identities as fathers;
- Explore options to support forums or outreach in communities in order to discuss ideas of masculinity and femininity and challenge harmful norms and attitudes;
- Strengthen social ties between ex-combatants, their families and communities by supporting male authorities and personalities to adopt and encourage positive male roles and gender equality; and
- Applying a gender lens, strengthen local mechanisms for security, justice, governance and peacebuilding and develop capacities to manage disputes non-violently, building ties between ex-combatants, their families and communities, and authorities. Specific measures to consider concerning female ex-combatants and associated groups include: i) informing female (ex-) combatants during the DDR process of the option to integrate into national security forces, and ii) linking incentives for joining a DDR programme to the option of a career within the security sector.
Psychosocial reintegration
Ex-combatants and associated groups with unaddressed trauma and mental health concerns, including PTSD, drug and alcohol abuse, and exposure to GBV, are particularly vulnerable to developing anti-social behaviour. This can result in lack of trust from community members and/or put them at risk of harming themselves or others through self-directed, interpersonal or in some cases even group violence. DDR programmes have often lacked the technical and financial resources to address psychosocial concerns; however the chances of achieving sustainable reintegration and reducing vulnerabilities to violence depend directly on confronting these pervasive issues. The following are entry points and considerations for psychosocial reintegration:

- Prioritize psychosocial support to manage PTSD and war-related trauma;
- Post-conflict countries frequently lack mental health facilities and trained mental health professionals, such as psychologists, psychiatrists, and counsellors. Where this is the case, lay persons (e.g. midwives, teachers, etc.) can be trained as community counselors for basic trauma recovery as part of DDR programmes. Psychosocial referral chains can then handle more severe cases that cannot be treated by community counselors;
- Given the well-established links between PTSD and intimate partner violence, DDR programmes should explore ways to support ex-combatants and their families in preventing both;
- While the needs of female ex-combatant and WAAFG survivors of GBV are increasingly recognized, those of male survivors of GBV have been largely neglected. Through public information and awareness-raising campaigns in communities of return, DDR programmes should enable both men and women who face shame and stigma associated with GBV to come forward and to access support for recovery; and
- Children and young adults who have been socialized to violence at an early age are particularly vulnerable to continued patterns of violent behaviour and need specialized support. DDR programmes should work to provide dedicated attention to the psychosocial needs of children associated with armed forces and groups, as well as young adult ex-combatants.

Recommendations

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

To address existing gaps in policy and guidance on the gender dimensions of violence in DDR programming, the following actions are recommended:

1. **Bring a gender perspective to work with male participants and beneficiaries in DDR policies and programmes**
   The Integrated DDR Standards provide strong guidance on addressing the needs of women and girls, including WAAFG, in the DDR process. However, the need for a gender perspective on men’s and
boys’ experiences and their successful reintegration has been largely neglected in policy and guidance. DDR policies and programmes should recognize and respond to the gender-related needs and vulnerabilities of men and boys as well as women and girls in order to reduce trauma and vulnerabilities as well as to strengthen resilience among both sexes to violence.

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

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

3. **Increase support for the psychosocial components of reintegration**

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

4. **Deepen engagement with families and communities of return**

   DDR programmes must target not only the individual ex-combatant but also his or her family and community of return. Deeper engagement with families and communities will help all to talk about the norms, attitudes and relationships that reinforce inequitable gender norms and violent behaviour and will help support initial steps towards behavioural change.

5. **Strengthen partnerships with organizations working with women and men**

   In order to effectively address the gender dimensions of violence, DDR programmes should strengthen partnerships with relevant organizations, particularly women’s and men’s networks. These can play a central role in efforts to reach out to male and female ex-combatants, their families and communities and help transform social norms that support violence.

6. **Enhance coordination within the UN system to address the gender dimensions of violence**

   In order to address the economic, social and psychosocial components of reintegration, multiple UN agencies must strengthen collaboration and coordination among themselves. Because many (ex-) combatants continue service in the security sector, or are integrated into new security forces after conflict ends, security sector reform (SSR) and related rule of law (RoL), police, prisons and justice sector reform programmes must work to cooperatively address the gender dimensions of violence.

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

   In order to produce more gender-responsive DDR programmes, DDR practitioners within the UN system, their partners and national and international counterparts must be provided with the knowledge, technical skills and tools to respond to gender dimensions of violence at any given stage in the DDR process.
I. Introduction

1. Background

Peace agreements may bring a formal end to war and open up opportunities for recovery, including programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants. Nevertheless, high levels of violence often persist in post-conflict settings, and gender-based violence (GBV), criminal and gang activities, and self-directed violence through alcohol and substance abuse are especially common, on occasion reaching higher levels than in wartime. In some instances, deaths due to armed violence in post-conflict settings even exceed levels of violence in countries at war.

The perpetrators of violence in post-conflict settings are diverse, however former combatants and uniformed personnel form a particularly high-risk group. As demonstrated in the cases of Timor-Leste, Colombia and Nicaragua, some become particularly vulnerable to recruitment into gangs and other violent or criminal activities upon their demobilization. Studies from contexts such as Aceh, Indonesia and statistics on US war veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan show that ex-combatants who are suffering from war-related trauma may be more prone than the average civilian to exhibit aggressive behaviour, particularly intimate partner violence. Though data on gender-based violence is often too limited to fully understand trends, male ex-combatants are believed to contribute to high levels of GBV among the civilian population during their reintegration. In settings such as southern Sudan (now South Sudan) and Croatia, war has led many men and boys to associate masculine identities with gun ownership, thievery and public violence.

Violence stemming from the conflict period has important, though often latent, gender dimensions. For many ex-combatants, continued aggressive behaviour may reflect their difficulty fulfilling traditional gender roles – or living up to the socially ascribed roles and responsibilities of men and women – in a changed and constantly evolving post-conflict environment. Particularly for male ex-combatants, the inability to fulfill traditional or altered masculine identities (such as the ability to be a ‘provider’ due to the absence of livelihood opportunities) may contribute to feelings of shame and inadequacy, which can find outlets through a range of violent behaviours.

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3 The DDR process “aims to deal with the post-conflict security problem that arises when combatants and associated groups are left without livelihoods and support networks during the vital period stretching from conflict to peace, recovery and development. DDR also helps build national capacity to assist in the reintegration of ex-combatants and to support communities receiving ex-combatants and working for their peaceful and sustainable reintegration.” In Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS), p. 24.
4 See Annex 1 for definition of gender-based violence (GBV).
5 Higher levels of rape and intimate partner violence have been reported in many post-conflict contexts, including DRC, former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Burundi, Liberia, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Peru. Geneva Declaration Secretariat, Global Burden of Armed Violence (Geneva, 2008), p. 53.
6 Ibid., pp. 49-57.
7 See case studies 3 and 8 within this report.
8 See case studies 3 and 4 within this report.
9 Following the collection of data and preliminary drafting of this report, South Sudan became an independent state on 9 July 2011. For the sake of remaining consistent with the timeframe in which the findings of this report were collected, South Sudan will be referred to as southern Sudan when information pertains to pre-independence.
10 See case study 1 within this report.
While largely overlooked, female ex-combatants and associated groups too may become socialized to violence during war and play a part in the perpetration of violent acts. On average, men make up between 70 and 90 percent of armed forces and groups and are responsible for the bulk of violent acts committed, while women – both female combatants and WAAFG – typically comprise between 10 and 30 percent of forces. In the case of Liberia where a small percentage of women and girls formed female-led battalions, women, too, became fierce fighters during the civil war, defying common notions of femininity.\(^{11}\)

This report purports that men and women often have very different experiences both as combatants and associated groups and in their transitions to civilian life. As a result, in relation to the DDR process they have different, though intersecting, needs, vulnerabilities and capacities.

The ultimate objective of DDR is the sustainable economic, social/psychosocial and political reintegration of former combatants and associated groups into communities of their choice.\(^{12}\) However, if ex-combatants and associated groups find that they are unable to address their violent pasts, breakdown restrictive gender norms, and learn alternative behaviours and coping mechanisms, the chances of achieving successful reintegration are inevitably reduced and the risk of war reoccurrence heightened. A clearer view of gender norms, roles and identities is therefore central to understanding the causes, impacts and dynamics of violence in conflict-affected environments, and more specifically DDR programmes.

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**Box 1. United Nations role in promoting gender equality through DDR**

The UN is committed to promoting gender equality and protecting vulnerable groups in conflict and post-conflict settings, including through DDR. The DDR process aims to contribute to post-conflict security and stability so that recovery and development can begin. By disarming combatants, preparing them for civilian life, and supporting their social/psychosocial, economic and political reintegration, DDR programmes aim to reduce the potential security risk posed by ex-combatants and “to support this high-risk group so that they become stakeholders in the peace process.”\(^{13}\)

UN and international commitments to strengthen women’s participation in all aspects of peacebuilding (UN Security Council resolution 1325/1889)\(^{14}\) and to address conflict-related sexual violence (UN SCR 1820/1888/1960)\(^{15}\) recognize the need to address men’s and women’s different needs and to address issues of sexual violence in DDR programmes. Notably, UN SCR 1325 “encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants.”\(^{16}\)

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\(^{14}\)The ‘Women, Peace and Security Agenda’, particularly the UN Secretary-General’s Reports on Women’s Participation in Peacebuilding and UN SCRs 1325 and 1889, reinforces the need for action to promote women’s participation and ensure their needs are met in conflict and post-conflict settings.

\(^{15}\)UN SCRs 1820, 1888 and 1960 have brought the issue of conflict-related sexual violence into international focus. These resolutions treat conflict-related sexual violence as distinct from GBV in normal development contexts and recognize sexual violence when used as a tactic of war as a matter of international peace and security. New interpretations recognize that conflict-related sexual violence often continues in post-conflict settings after the formal cessation of hostilities. UN Action Against Sexual Violence was established to coordinate the work of 13 UN entities to address conflict-related sexual violence.

\(^{16}\)S/RES/1325 (2000), paragraph 13, p. 3.
2. Objectives

This report aims to enhance the overall effectiveness of DDR programmes and the sustainability of results by providing a basis for addressing ex-combatants’ gender-related vulnerabilities to violence through DDR programming. It has three main objectives:

1. To improve understanding of how armed conflict, membership in armed forces and groups, and the DDR process directly affect the gender identities of male and female combatants, ex-combatants, and associated groups;

2. To improve understanding of the factors that contribute to the vulnerabilities and resilience to violence of male and female ex-combatants in post-conflict settings, including the influence of gender identities; and,

3. To make recommendations for addressing the ‘gender gaps’ in DDR policy and programming, integrating actions both to reduce ex-combatants’ vulnerabilities and strengthen their resilience to violence throughout the DDR process.

The gender dimensions of violence in countries emerging from armed conflict deserve the attention of policymakers and development practitioners at all levels. This report is intended to provide DDR and gender practitioners and policymakers at the field and Headquarters levels with a broad framework for understanding and addressing the emerging issue of GDV within DDR programming.

3. Methodology

UNDP BCPR launched the Gender Dimensions of Violence (GDV) Initiative in 2008 in recognition of the need to fill gaps in understanding the role of gender identities and violent behaviour in crisis settings. In an effort to improve guidance of programming to address GDV, Blame It on the War? draws upon the findings of primary field research conducted in nine violence-affected environments [Colombia, Croatia, Jamaica, Kenya, Palestine, the Province of Aceh (Indonesia), Liberia, Nicaragua and southern Sudan (now South Sudan)], a literature review, and extensive consultations with DDR and gender practitioners and experts from UNDP, the UN system, and international NGOs.

Six of the 9 case studies featured in this report and undertaken as part of the GDV Initiative focus on post-conflict countries where DDR programmes are ongoing or have been implemented: Colombia, Croatia, the Province of Aceh (Indonesia), Liberia, Nicaragua and pre-independent South Sudan. These countries were selected to capture different stages of conflict recovery and transition through the DDR process (i.e. number of years post-conflict). The aim was to examine different target groups (including ex-combatants, gangs, and security personnel), and to provide a balance of perspectives from different cultures and regions.

These case studies have been supplemented with secondary research and consultations with experts from other conflict and post-conflict settings, particularly Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Timor-Leste, and US war veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, so as to provide a broader, comparative perspective.  

Field research consisted of key informant interviews and focus groups in violence-affected communities or regions that were selected for inclusion in the study. Selection criteria included extent and intensity of violence, presence and activity of different perpetrator groups, as well as accessibility to community members. In most cases, three to four communities per country were selected for inclusion in the study, and within each target community three to four focus group meetings (with 10-25 participants each) were conducted. Where possible (for example Liberia, Indonesia, southern Sudan, Croatia), focus group discussions were conducted with groups of ex-combatants – male and female – separately and jointly, as well as with women associated with armed forces and groups (WAAFG).

In addition, approximately 30-45 key informant interviews were conducted in each country. Key informant interviews were conducted one-on-one or in groups of up to three people using an open-ended questionnaire. Respondents included male and female ex-combatants and associated groups, members of community-based organizations and NGOs, local and national government officials, male and female civilians, elders, youth, and gang members. Respondents were not familiar with the questions prior to the interviews.

At the national level, representatives from government ministries and international and national NGOs were interviewed. UN staff provided guidance on the country context and current programmes. Where possible, information gathered from interviews and focus groups was confirmed by existing quantitative data and other country-specific literature.

In order to inform the development of programmatic entry points and recommendations, information was gathered on relevant programmes and approaches undertaken within the UN and by partners around the world. While recognizing that programming to address GDV as part of DDR programmes is limited, the case studies aim to identify examples of good practices, key challenges and existing programmatic gaps.

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

The findings and recommendations in this report were presented and tested in a number of forums, including the pilot DDR and Gender Course in Oslo, Norway, November 2010, organized by the

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Norwegian Defense University College (NODEFIC), in collaboration with the IAWG on DDRSub-group on Gender and HIV.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{18} See ‘Acknowledgements’ for full list of contributors and reviewers.
II. The gender dimensions of violence (GDV) in DDR

Men, women, boys and girls often have very different, though intersecting, experiences as combatants and associated groups during conflict and in their transitions to civilian life. Part II of this report investigates how changing gender norms, roles and identities and socialization to violence may influence or limit ex-combatants’ and associated groups’ ability to peacefully reintegrate in post-conflict settings.

Section 1 provides a background and conceptual framework for assessing the gender dimensions of violence within DDR processes and programmes. It presents key gender terms, concepts and international commitments referred to throughout this report in order to permit readers to examine violence through a gender lens.

Section 2 considers how gender norms, roles and identities change as a result of armed conflict and into the early recovery and peacebuilding periods. And section 3 focuses on factors that determine the likelihood that ex-combatants’ and associated groups’ will continue to use violence during the peacebuilding period. It examines the socialization to violence that takes place within armed forces and groups; the real and perceived gains men and women secure as members of armed forces and groups as well as the losses associated with the DDR process; and then discusses the expressions of violence seen among ex-combatants and associated groups in post-conflict settings.

1. The gender dimensions of violence in DDR: A conceptual framework

Box 2. What are the gender dimensions of violence (GDV) in DDR?

A conceptual framework for understanding and addressing the gender-specific causes, impacts and dynamics of violence in countries emerging from violent conflict in order to provide effective entry points for sustainable reintegration. Through gender-sensitive analysis and identification of the factors that influence ex-combatants’ vulnerability and strengthen their resilience to violence, DDR practitioners and policymakers can better address the priorities and needs of programme participants and beneficiaries.

The GDV framework recognizes that both males’ and females’ gender identities and roles in society must be considered in order to address the gap in policy and guidance on DDR and gender and enhance the overall gender-responsiveness of DDR programmes. It further acknowledges that men and women have a shared responsibility for transforming harmful gender norms and identities and changing unequal relationships and seeks to provide a foundation for gender-transformative interventions during the longer-term reintegration process.

‘Gender’ refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships among men, women, boys and girls. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context- and time-specific and changeable. ‘Gender’ determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a man or a woman in a given social environment. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as
decision-making opportunities. For example, in many settings social norms regarding gender reinforce the idea that women and girls should take care of the home and act as their families’ caregivers, while men and boys are expected to work productively outside of the home. Other norms, as some of the case studies featured in this report point out, reinforce the idea that men must use or be willing to use violence to defend themselves and those around them.

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

Across many cultures, for example, the practice of carrying or using a firearm is perceived as a symbol of “manly prosperity” or “masculine power.” According to Henri Myrttinen writing for UNIDIR, “weapons are the embodiment of violent, often militarized models of masculinity, which, in turn, have broader socio-political ramifications.” Not surprisingly, the vast majority of victims of violent deaths and injuries involving firearms are men and boys. Young men between the ages of 20 and 29 are among the most vulnerable, closely followed by men between the ages of 30 and 34. In countries recently affected by high levels of violence such as Guatemala, Colombia and South Africa, men represent between 87 and 93 percent of all homicide deaths.

The proportion of male homicide deaths is higher in countries with high overall homicide rates, which may reflect men's direct involvement in violent or criminal activities. These violent trends are not usually recognized as being a product of socially constructed gender identities, but should be understood as directly related to the ways societies organize themselves and socialize their members.

**Box 3: Key terminology—applying a gender lens to violent acts**

‘Gender’ versus ‘sex’

_Gender_ refers to the socially and culturally ascribed characteristics, roles, and identities of men and women that are learned throughout the life cycle. Gender differences are not the same as biological sex differences. For instance, a woman’s ability to bear children is related to her sex (biologically determined); that men are expected to be providers for their families is a gender issue (learned or culturally determined). Gender identities are changeable over time, vary between cultures, and are affected by changes in social, political, economic and security conditions.

**Masculinities and femininities**

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19 This definition of ‘gender’, put forth by UN Women, can be found at the website of UN Women under the heading, “Gender Mainstreaming: Concepts and Definitions”. Available at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm

20 Violent masculinities and femininities are expressions of gender identity that encourage the use of force or violence to control or gain power over others.


23 Global Burden of Armed Violence, p. 81.

24 WHO estimates for homicide rates per 100,000 population by age in 2004, forthcoming, cited in ibid., p. 81.

25 Ibid.

26 See Annex 1 definition of ‘gender’ for more detailed information.
One might generally describe ‘masculinities’ and ‘femininities’ as, “the processes and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives.” The terms ‘masculinities’ and ‘femininities’ are used to refer to the socially and culturally determined characteristics of men and women, which include the norms and expectations held about their roles, attributes and likely behaviours. The plural form of these terms is used to recognize that even within a particular cultural context, there is not a single concept of masculinity or femininity, but rather many masculinities and femininities exist, each of which may be associated with different positions of power or degrees of social acceptance within society.

Gender-based violence (GBV)

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

Sexual violence in armed conflict

The term "sexual violence" refers to many different crimes including rape, sexual mutilation, sexual humiliation, forced prostitution, and forced pregnancy. According to the UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action) campaign “Stop Rape Now” strategic framework (2011-2012), sexual violence, whether a single act or a concerted campaign, is categorically prohibited under international law. It can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity, or a constitutive act with respect to genocide.

Sexual violence ranks among the grave breaches of international humanitarian law, and is reflected in the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 1949 Geneva Conventions, and jurisprudence of the international criminal tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. In June 2008, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1820, which acknowledged sexual violence as a tactic of war, and recognized its potential to undermine peace and security. Resolution 1820 demanded the “immediate and complete cessation by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence against civilians.”

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Women are generally more likely to experience violence that is less visible and often committed in the private sphere, including intimate partner violence and gender-based violence (GBV). According to surveys from 48 countries compiled by the World Health Organization, between 10 and 69 percent of women report being physically assaulted by a male intimate partner at some point in their lives.\(^\text{32}\)

Studies have shown that men are perpetrators in over 90 percent of cases of sexual abuse against women and between 63 and 86 percent of cases with male victims.\(^\text{33}\) These high rates of perpetration by men are directly linked to men’s experiences of violence growing up. Numerous studies have affirmed that men who are victims of physical violence in the household during their adolescent years, or who witness violence by men against women in their households, are far more likely themselves to perpetrate sexual and physical violence against female partners later on. What this suggests is that men’s violence is primarily a socially learned behaviour.\(^\text{34}\)

In the case of armed conflict, women are more likely than men to be survivors of GBV. In some settings, sexual violence is used by armed forces and groups as a tactic of war and deliberate strategy to destroy communities. In other cases, sexual violence may be tolerated by commanders as a “spoil of war”, but not committed as a deliberate strategy per se. And in still other settings, GBV may increase during conflict because of a generalized climate of impunity and the proliferation of many forms of violence.

While the end of war can provide an opportunity to counteract GBV and other forms of violence, it can often persist nevertheless and become normalized among the civilian population. For instance, results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)\(^\text{35}\) in Rwanda found that men who had experienced or witnessed violence during the 1994 genocide were more likely to have used violence against a female partner in the post-genocide period.\(^\text{36}\)

Without overlooking their roles as perpetrators of violence, one must recognize that many male ex-combatants and associated groups have themselves been victims of violence and severe abuse. Women and girls may be more vulnerable to GBV, and bear the brunt of it, but sexual violence committed against men and boys is also a significant problem that may be more prevalent in conflict-affected societies than commonly believed.\(^\text{37}\)

### Box 4. International commitment to work with men and boys on gender equality

There is a growing recognition that men must be included in work to achieve gender equality and to prevent and reduce violence, including GBV. This is necessary both to address men’s own needs and vulnerabilities and to encourage their role as agents of change.\(^\text{38}\) In addition, the UN and the


\(^{33}\)Ibid., p. 67.

\(^{34}\)Gary Barker and others, 2011.

\(^{35}\)From 2009 to 2010, household surveys were administered to more than 8,000 men and 3,500 women ages 18-59 in Brazil, Chile, Croatia, India, Mexico and Rwanda.

\(^{36}\)Gary Barker and others, *Evolving Men: Initial Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)*, (International Center for Research on Women and Promundo, 2011). The survey in Rwanda was carried out in 2010 and is a nationally representative household survey.


international community have made a number of commitments to work with men and boys on gender equality issues and engage men to end violence against women and girls.  

The language of more recent international commitments is noteworthy for its recognition of the role men and boys can play in bringing about gender equality and challenging gender-based violence. The 2009 Commission on the Status of Women recognizes “the capacity of men and boys in bringing about change in attitudes, relationships, and access to resources and decision making that are critical for the promotion of gender equality and the full enjoyment of all human rights by women”. The Commission called for action to “ensure that men and boys, whose role is critical in achieving gender equality, are actively involved in policies and programmes that aim to involve the equal sharing of responsibilities…”

To assess the gender dimensions of violence in DDR, one must first recognize that armed conflict affects men, women, boys and girls differently. While high rates of violence committed against or among civilians during the war, particularly violence against women, have been increasingly documented in the last decade, there is a tendency by policymakers and donors to neglect the interrelated continuation of such violence and its gender dimensions in the post-conflict period.

For many ex-combatants and associated groups who have internalized violent identities during the war or found few opportunities and gains in the post-conflict period, displays of aggression continue during transitions to civilian life. For male ex-combatants in particular, socially constructed violent masculinities become difficult to leave behind following demobilization. Systematic data on patterns of violence among ex-combatants and associated groups is lacking, but evidence from this report suggests that violence is often carried from the battlefield to the home and the community, where it can take on new forms and expressions. While the majority of ex-combatants are male, and post-conflict violence among male ex-combatants is more visible, female ex-combatants also appear to be more prone to exhibiting violent behavior than their female civilian counterparts.

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39 The United Nations has called for engaging men and boys in gender equality programmes for at least 15 years. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD, Cairo) affirmed the importance of involving men in improving sexual and reproductive health, and emphasized the need to increase men’s involvement in the care of children (WHO, 2007). The ICPD Programme of Action calls for leaders to “promote the full involvement of men in family life and the full integration of women in community life,” ensuring that “men and women are equal partners.” Similarly, the 48th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 2004 affirmed the ICPD and went further, recognizing that men and boys can and do make contributions to achieve gender equality. CSW urged governments to adopt and implement policies to close the gap between women and men in terms of occupational segregation, parental leave and working arrangements to encourage men to fully participate in the care and support of others, particularly children. The UN Secretary-General’s Network of Men Leaders, launched as part of the UNITE Campaign to End Violence Against Women, is a notable initiative to encourage men and boys’ role as agents of change in the area of gender-based violence. UN agencies have also been part of creating the global MenEngage Alliance, a network of UN agencies and NGOs working globally to engage men and boys in gender equality and violence prevention. See www.menengage.org for more information.


41 Violent masculinities (or femininities) are expressions of gender identity that encourage the use of force or violence to control or gain power over others. According to IDDRS Operational Guide 5.10 on Women, Gender and DDR, “Notions of masculinity are often linked with possession of weapons. In order to transform a violent masculine identity into a non-violent one, it is important to consider men’s gender identities, roles and relations, and how these link to the perpetration of SGBV.”

42 For instance, in South Sudan and Liberia, arguments among women in the community over key resources, such as water, can quickly escalate into threats of violence or violence itself [Andrade, UNDP BCPR Sudan GDV case study (2009); Naraghi-Anderlini, UNDP BCPR Liberia GDV case study (2009)].
The ultimate objective of DDR is the sustainable economic, social/psychosocial and political reintegation of former combatants and associated groups into communities of their choice. However, if ex-combatants and associated groups find that they are unable to address their violent pasts, break down restrictive gender norms, and learn alternative behaviours and coping mechanisms, the chances of achieving successful reintegration are inevitably reduced.

In response to this security risk, this report provides a conceptual framework for understanding and addressing the gender-specific causes, impacts and dynamics of violence in countries emerging from violent conflict in order to provide effective entry points for sustainable reintegration. Through gender-sensitive analysis and identification of the factors that influence ex-combatants’ vulnerability and strengthen their resilience to violence, DDR practitioners and policymakers can better address the priorities and needs of programme participants and beneficiaries.

The GDV framework recognizes that both males’ and females’ gender identities and roles in society must be considered in order to address the gap in policy and guidance on DDR and gender and enhance the overall gender-responsive ness of DDR programmes. It further acknowledges that men and women have a shared responsibility for transforming harmful gender norms and identities and changing unequal relationships and seeks to provide a foundation for gender-transformative interventions during the longer-term reintegration process.

2. Gender norms, roles and identities in countries emerging from armed conflict

Gender identities are not static. They evolve in response to societal pressures, including war. Moreover, men’s and women’s identities and their expected roles and attributes differ across social and cultural contexts. Even within a particular cultural context, there is not a single concept of ‘masculinity’ or ‘femininity’, but rather many masculinities and femininities that exist, each of which may be associated with different positions of power or degrees of social acceptance within society.

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43 See IDDRS 4.30 on Reintegration, 2012 version.
44 Gender-sensitive analysis seeks to recognize and respond to the specific needs and realities of men, women, boys and girls based on social constructions of gender roles. For more information on “gender-sensitive” analysis/programmes see: Engaging men and boys in changing gender-based inequity in health: Evidence from programme interventions (WHO, 2007).
45 For more information on gender-responsive DDR programmes, see IDDRS 5.10 on Women, Gender and DDR.
46 A 2007 study by the World Health Organization, Engaging men and boys in changing gender-based inequity in health: Evidence from programme interventions, defines “gender transformative programmes” as those that seek to transform gender roles and promote more gender-equitable relationships between men, women, boys and girls. Such programmes “seek to critically reflect about, question or change institutional practices and broader social norms that create and reinforce gender inequity and vulnerability for men and women”, according to the study. Such interventions may include, but are not limited to, group education, community outreach campaigns and economic empowerment strategies. “There is no consensus on what is gender-transformative programming for engaging men”, the study continues. “There is also some question as to whether programmes can be ranked on a continuum from gender ‘accommodating’ or neutral at one end to transformative at the other (...).” More work needs to be done to conceptualize interventions with men and boys and to define gender-transformative approaches with them(...) Seeking to change the structures and cultural practices that shape and determine gender norms and inequality requires that interventions move beyond reaching specific groups of men and boys, however important that is to changing broader social norms and structures.”
47 This section has in large part drawn from the framework developed in Idle Minds, Empty Pockets, which focuses on how masculine identities are transformed in crisis. It has been adapted here to consider both men’s and women’s identities and to focus on conflict and post-conflict settings in particular.
48 The terms masculinities and femininities are used to refer to the socially and culturally determined characteristics of men and women, which include the norms and expectations held about the roles, attributes and likely behaviours of men and women. Men and women’s identities and their expected roles and attributes differ across social and cultural contexts. The plural form of these terms is used to recognize that even within a particular cultural context, there isn’t a single concept of masculinity or
Conflict brings pressures for change that can significantly alter men’s and women’s respective roles and relationships and change their identities. Post-conflict settings again present new challenges to individuals, families and communities as they negotiate these changed roles and identities. This transition is particularly significant for male and female combatants and associated groups who must reintegrate into civilian life.

Box 6 shows how changing identities and experiences over time can shape an ex-combatant’s tendency to take part in violence – from joining an armed force or group, through military training and violent socialization, to his or her eventual demobilization through the DDR process. It is worth remembering that the changes that take place during conflict can be felt as positive as well as negative. Thus, early recovery and reintegration processes offer a window of opportunity to address violent identities and harmful norms and to reinforce those positive changes in men’s and women’s identities and roles – for example, newly-acquired leadership experience for women – that may have emerged during their time at war.

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femininity, but rather many masculinities and femininities that exist, each of which may be associated with different positions of power or degrees of social acceptance within society.

Capturing the immense diversity of experiences both across and within cultures is beyond the scope of this report. Nonetheless, the following four key components provide a useful basis for analyzing how gender identities may change over time or across social settings:

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

These four elements (providing, procreating, gaining prestige and protecting) apply to both masculine and feminine identities. For instance, across many contexts, social norms and customs emphasize men’s role as ‘provider’ and, perhaps to a lesser degree, also reinforce the other three components. Similarly, in many settings, ‘normative’ concepts of femininity emphasize women’s role of ‘caregiver’ and their ability to attract men, although women’s ability to provide, protect and gain prestige through social position or responsibility may grow as traditionally-held restrictive norms are challenged.

The case studies undertaken as part of the GDV Initiative suggest that, despite the diversity of experiences across different contexts characterized by high levels of violence, there are similarities in the perceived changes in men’s and women’s roles and identities. In response to the social changes inherent in conflict, post-conflict or violent settings, some components of men’s and women’s roles and identities may be diminished, while others may take on increased importance or be distorted.

**Role of provider**

Men’s and women’s identities and roles as providers often change in response to the economic hardships and changes brought about by conflict. These include the destruction of livelihoods, physical displacement and lack of employment opportunities. In some settings, the changes brought about by conflict can put men in uncharted terrain where their skills are no longer valuable or their ability to earn a living is limited. When this happens, their identities may be threatened if they are unable to fulfill the role of ‘provider’ that is often expected of them.

In contrast, women’s roles in income-generating activities often expand during conflict as men leave home to fight or to go in search of employment elsewhere. This expansion often represents a response to economic hardships and a strategy to cope with livelihood insecurity rather than a fundamental change in gender relations. Yet in some contexts it does yield greater gender equality. Thus, some men may perceive this expansion of women’s roles as threatening and feel their role as breadwinner has been undermined. As a result, in post-conflict environments both men and women often face pressure to return to pre-war, traditional divisions of labor within the household (i.e. women as caretakers and men as providers).

**Role of procreator**

Sometimes, conflict breaks down social norms and taboos that sanction and set boundaries for sexual behaviour. This can then disrupt family structures, changing the roles and identities of both men and women as procreators. Men and women who join or are associated with armed forces and groups may

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50 For more details on this categorization, see also SanamNaraghiAnderlini,*Idle Minds, Empty Pockets* (UNDP, 2011).
enter into unconventional marriages or relationships. When this happens, exposure to sexual exploitation and violence can increase. Among male peer groups, for example, the number of girlfriends, partners and offspring a man has can act as a measure of his importance and manhood. In post-conflict settings, however, female ex-combatants and WAAFG may often face social stigma due to their exposure to GBV, to war-time relationships outside of marriage, and to the children born from these circumstances and relationships. While women often face pressure to marry and to return to caretaking roles, men’s roles as caretakers and fathers may be devalued by the length of time they spent away from their communities and families.

Gaining prestige

The changes associated with conflict can also alter men’s and women’s ability to gain prestige. Where social exclusion is a driver of violence, entrenched elites or elders have often limited young men’s ability to gain prestige, respect and social recognition. As for women, their ability to achieve prestige or social recognition in the public domain is often very limited, whether before, during or after conflict. For many men and women, therefore, membership in an armed force or group provides new and alternative ways for women as well as men to achieve status, rank and recognition. In contrast, however, upon a war’s culmination and following demobilization activities, ex-combatants of both sexes may struggle to find new sources of prestige and recognition, particularly if power is retained by older male elites and social exclusion was not addressed following the peace agreement or culmination of war.

Role of protector

When faced with insecurity, both men’s and women’s identities as protectors may take on increasing importance as they respond to threats to their families and communities. In some cases, militarized or violent models of masculinity can become glorified. Being aggressive, acting invincible, and demonstrating the ability to defend one’s family and community can become a celebrated aspect of manhood. These notions can be reinforced by peers, wives and elders, or used by elites as a tool in recruitment. The important point is that armed conflicts do not create these gender norms; rather, they serve to reinforce them.

While some women recruited into or forced into joining armed forces and groups receive military training and engage in combat, more often they participate in a range of support roles. These often represent an extension of women’s accepted caretaking or domestic responsibilities, as they include activities such as cooking, carrying weapons and supplies, providing medical care, or sexual companionship. Women also may take on more responsibility for protection in their families and communities, including physically hiding men and children from raids, concealing weapons, and communicating or mediating between armed forces and groups and communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 6. Changing masculine and feminine identities in conflict-affected societies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Normative’ masculine and feminine identities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men in peacetime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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51 Graphic adapted from UNDP BCPR, *Idle Minds, Empty Pockets*, op cit., to show changes to both men and women’s identities.
While men, women, boys and girls all face significant hardships and pressures in conflict and post-conflict settings, changing gender roles frequently affect men and boys more profoundly. Women’s identities often remain anchored in their role as ‘caretaker’, while also expanding into new areas, which can bring both risks and opportunities. On the other hand, a man’s identity and expected role as ‘provider’ are often challenged or threatened as livelihoods are destroyed and economic opportunities contract in conflict or post-conflict settings. Pressured to fulfill his society’s changing and often violent constructions of masculinities, a male ex-combatant may find reintegration into civilian life and forming a civilian identity particularly challenging.

3. Violence among ex-combatants and associated groups

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

- J. S. Goldstein (2001)

Many combatants and associated groups are trained and socialized to use violence, including gender-based violence. During war, attacks on civilians including rape, kidnapping, looting and murder are not uncommonly part of a deliberate strategy to intimidate opponents, access resources, or gain new recruits. In some cases, commanders explicitly encourage rape and other forms of sexual violence, while in others, these acts are implicitly condoned or tolerated. Furthermore, many combatants witness and become victims of violence and severe abuse themselves and may enter into the early recovery period with significant psychosocial support needs.

Social Learning Theory posits that people learn through observation, imitation, and modeling. According to Albert Bandura, “Most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action.”

This school of thought maintains that violence is a result of the socialization process, whereby “people acquire those behaviours essential for effective participation in society”. In the case of combatants and associated groups, the socialization process involves the development of violent behaviours that are, or that appear to be, essential for effective participation in the armed force or armed group, or more broadly essential for basic survival in an environment rife with armed violence.

Children’s exposure to violence and abuse within the family often sets the stage for violence later in life. A 2006 study of Colombian adolescents found ‘maltreatment’ or harsh parenting to be directly correlated with a history of violent behaviour.

The International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) includes household samples with men in six countries: two post-conflict (Rwanda and Croatia) and four non-post-conflict. The survey found that in all countries surveyed the strongest factor associated with men’s self-reported use of physical violence against a female partner was witnessing or experiencing violence in the home of origin.

For men and boys in the vast majority of cultures, societal conceptions of masculinity have already promoted some degree of violence that membership in an armed force or group may serve to perpetuate. An OXFAM study in Lebanon found that from early childhood many boys learn to deal with frustrations in a violent manner and are praised by their parents for exhibiting gender-specific characteristics such as toughness, bravery or dominance over women and girls.

56 Hamieh and Usta, The Effects of Socialization on Gender Discrimination and Violence: A Case Study from Lebanon.
Despite more peaceful roles traditionally, female combatants (weapon-carrying fighters) and WAAFG may also express violent femininities and militarized identities. As seen in the case of the Women's Artillery Commandos (WAC) in Liberia, female combatants’ can be equally as brutal as men in combat.

**Box 7: Children associated with armed forces or armed groups and socialization to violence**

Around the world, thousands of boys and girls are recruited into government armed forces and rebel groups to serve as combatants, cooks, porters, messengers or in other roles. Girls are also recruited for sexual purposes or forced into marriage. Many have been recruited by force, though some may have joined as a result of economic, social or security pressures.

As emphasized in the United Nations report on the impact of armed conflict on children, children associated with armed forces or armed groups are exposed to tremendous violence – often forced both to witness and commit violence, while themselves being abused, exploited, injured or even killed as a result. Coerced recruitment often involves violent initiation rites intended to break familial and communal bonds and to force abductees or voluntary recruits to remain loyal to the group. For instance, in Uganda boys and girls abducted into the Lord’s Resistance Army were often forced to kill their own community members, relatives or parents. Into the peacebuilding period these children are often left with severe physical and emotional consequences.

According to Goldstein, “children traumatized by being in a war zone will likely become the next generation of warriors. Political violence may be ‘more stressful for children than other forms of violence,’ because it threatens social identity by attacking the child’s group.” As recognized by many scholars, this early exposure to violence puts them at particular risk for continued violence in adulthood.

Systematic data on patterns of violence among ex-combatants is still fragmentary, but evidence from many post-conflict contexts suggests that ex-combatants who have been socialized to use violence often continue these patterns into the peacebuilding period. Violence is carried from the battlefield to the home and the community, where it can take on new forms and expressions. While the majority of ex-combatants are male, and violence among male ex-combatants is more visible, female ex-combatants also appear to be more vulnerable to violent behaviour than civilian women in the general population.

These continued expressions of violence pose a particular challenge to DDR programmes, which must recognize that without addressing their violent pasts, breaking down restrictive gender norms, and learning alternative behaviours and coping mechanisms, ex-combatants and associated groups will find it difficult to return to civilian life.

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57 Irma Specht, *Red Shoes.*
58 For more information see: http://www.unicef.org/protection/57929_58007.html.
59 Machel Study, 1996.
To further explain the process of socialization to violence, one might adopt a social ecological model, which recognizes that different environmental factors work together at integrated levels—in this case at the individual, interpersonal, community and societal levels—to influence individual behaviour. Box 8 illustrates how factors at these different levels might influence conflict-affected individuals’ socialization to violence.

**Box 8: Social ecological model for understanding the different factors influencing an individual’s socialization to violence in conflict-affected societies**

**Societal**
Economic, social and cultural norms, beliefs, policies and laws

**Community**
Social networks and institutions including schools, neighborhoods, workplace, etc.

**Interpersonal**
Relationships with family members, intimate partners and peers

**Individual**
Demographic factors, behaviour, personality, mental health, etc.

**Interpersonal-level factors:** Relationships at this level may increase the risk of experiencing violence as a victim or perpetrator. Individual behavior may be acutely influenced where one’s family and/or immediate social networks exhibit violent behaviour and/or tolerate, if not respect, violent individulas, including members of armed forces and groups.

**Community-level factors:** In conflict-affected societies, one often finds community settings where weak security and justice sectors permit perpetuation of violence with impunity. Such settings are often associated with becoming either a victim or perpetrator of violence.

**Societal-level factors:** At this level, armed conflict creates or contributes to an overall climate in which violence is encouraged and socially accepted. Norms and values within this climate prescribe the use of violence as a legitimate means to achieve one’s objectives and violence is often perpetrated with impunity in spite of laws and policies or where laws are wanting.

The type of armed force or group influences the culture of violence into which combatants are socialized. Some armed groups, such as the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) (Mozambique) adopted strict policies and codes of conduct guiding acceptable behaviour and the use of force, with formal structures for training and enforcement. In other armed groups, such as the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) (Uganda), training is less organized and recruitment and indoctrination often involves participation in kidnapping, rape, assault and murder. In southern Sudan (now South Sudan),

most individuals and communities were in some way supporting either the largely volunteer-based Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) or other armed groups, thus contributing to the normalization of violence as a way of life (See Country case study 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country case study 1. Southern Sudan and Croatia: Socialization to violence</th>
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</table>

**Southern Sudan**

The civil war between the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) lasted over two decades, formally ending with the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. However, the prolonged fighting, in which the SPLA relied heavily on civilian volunteers from the South, meant that generations grew up in a militarized environment where violence became a way of life.

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

Women also played a role in encouraging men to fight and in promoting notions of manhood tied to violence. For instance, traditional women singers, or Hakamas, would accompany men to the front line to sing war songs that encouraged men to fight. Their messages promoted the idea of violence as an integral part of manhood, including lyrics expressing that men who did not fight were cowards.

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

As was common during the war, political leaders continue to play upon these notions to mobilize youth. In 2009, fighting, ostensibly over cattle, escalated into more extreme forms of violence fuelled by the political climate and leading to deaths and displacement in a number of counties in the country.

**Croatia**

Fifteen years after the four-year long Croatian War of Independence (1991 to 1995), the effects of society’s socialization to violence still affect the country. Wartime gender identities were formed in the context of extreme ethnic nationalism. Violence and aggression were equated with both patriotism and manhood. A Croatian man, for example, was expected to be a brave warrior or ‘father of the nation’, who defends his homeland’s values and fulfills the nationalist dream of independence, statehood, freedom, and above all, equality and justice for all.

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63 Adapted from Samara Andrade, UNDP BCPR Sudan GDV Case Study, 2009 and V. Kesić, UNDP BCPR Croatia GDV Case Study (2009).


Both soldiers and civilians witnessed and participated in brutal acts of violence, including rape, torture, mass killing, and abuse in the name of nationalism. Children experienced violence first-hand and grew up with media and cultural images that portrayed violence and aggressive behaviour as normal and ‘manly’.

Between 2003 and 2008, youth violence steadily increased in Croatia. One of the most visible expressions of the enduring impact of violent masculine identities is the collective violence associated with football clubs and other team sports, which is often accompanied by nationalistic symbols and hate speech against other former Yugoslav ethnicities, most often Serbs or Muslim Bosniaks.

This violence is most often perpetrated by young men against male peers of the same ethnic group, who are fans of rival clubs or members of other youth groups. In part as a response to this, CARE International-NW Balkans and a number of youth-serving organizations have begun to carry out school-based, youth-led campaigns promoting a non-violent version of masculinity, using group education and campaigns designed by youth.

3.2 Real and perceived gains from joining armed forces and groups

Membership in an armed force or group can have both perceived and real benefits for those who join. The benefits and motivations for joining armed forces and groups vary. Many join armed forces and groups to improve their own lives and the lives of their families and communities. Where alternatives are limited, membership in an armed force or group can help meet one’s own basic needs, including for security and protection, as well as providing a source of economic support. In some contexts, membership is motivated by a desire to address societal injustices. For the young in particular, membership can provide a way of escaping narrow or restrictive social expectations and limited options for socio-economic advancement. As previously stated, joining can lead to prestige, respect and social recognition. Still in other cases, joining armed forces and groups is not a voluntary choice: the motive for men’s and women’s participation is simply self-preservation or a response to coercion.

The experiences and perceptions of men and women may feature significant differences. For instance, for some women, membership in an armed force or group can be their first opportunity to compete openly with men and receive recognition for doing something respected or valued in society, although the extent to which women gain a greater degree of equality and respect in armed forces and groups depends greatly on country context (See Country case study 2). Female combatants (weapons-carrying fighters) typically experience a greater degree of equality and higher status than WAAFG and may gain more respect from membership. WAAFG who work in a range of support roles as wives or girlfriends of male combatants, or who are coerced into sexual relationships, see fewer benefits, although for them membership can still provide a source of economic and social support, as well as some degree of physical protection.

Country case study 2. Liberia: Gender identities and motivations of combatants and WAAFG

Prior to the eruption of civil war in Liberia in 1989, local chiefs exercised significant control over both

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67 See http://www.budimusko.org/
68 Box adapted from Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, Liberia GDV Case Study (2009).
labour and marriage. Young men became indentured labourers with little chance of ever accumulating their own wealth or saving enough money to pay bride dowries or own land. Traditional systems of marriage, including polygamy practiced by chiefs or ‘big men’, further limited young men’s ability to find brides and establish relationships with women.69 These barriers to wealth and marriage effectively became barriers to manhood itself. Young men’s sense of disempowerment fuelled animosity against the chieftaincies, thereby spurring recruitment of young Liberian men into armed groups. Particularly in the early stages of the country’s conflict, the rebel movements offered young men a promise of manhood on different, seemingly easier terms.

During the 14-year armed conflict, the majority of women and girls were not directly involved in fighting but rather played support roles such as carrying water or ammunition, cooking, and spying. For many women, ‘bush marriages’ to male combatants (which had no legal basis) were a survival strategy, a means of protection from sexual assault, or a route to material possessions and drugs. For the majority of WAAFG, membership did not lead to gains in status or equality, nor did it bring about a fundamental change in women’s roles and identities. According to papers published in 2005 by the World Bank, “the traditional division of labour between husband and wife was largely upheld. The girls were expected to be faithful and take care of their man by cooking, cleaning, raising the children, doing him sexual favours, etc. If the woman did not fulfill these functions to her husband’s satisfaction, he would punish her, which often entailed violence; this was also the military way of dealing with disobedience.”70

While most women and girls associated with armed groups in Liberia had non-combat roles, there were also female combatants, including a few hundred in female-led battalions called Women’s Artillery Commandos (WAC), part of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). In these units, women gained more from their experiences than other WAAFG, and their identities became clearly militarized. Says a 2006 ILO report, “female commanders wanted to prove that women were as strong as men, and defy common notions of femininity in Liberia that described women as peaceful, obedient, fearful and weak people. Many of them derived a certain pride from being part of an activity that was typically preserved for men, and felt driven to prove their equality with men. The phrase ‘women can even do better than men’ became one of the slogans of the WAC.”71

The gains for women may also be greater when equality is actively promoted as part of the political ideology of the armed force or group. For instance, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Eritrea (EPLF) promoted gender equality as part of its political ideology, and men and women shared all the duties on the front line.72 Similarly, in Ethiopia gender equality was seen as a central component of the political agenda of the Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (TPLF). Work – from cooking to combat – was shared equally between men and women and sexual relations were disciplined, with non-consensual sex between men and women strictly forbidden.73

Women of higher military rank or group standing may also find greater equality in marriages or relationships with male combatants. For instance, female combatants in Liberia reported that the higher

70 Ibid.
71 Irma Specht, Red Shoes.
the rank of a wife, the more equality she enjoyed in marriage, while women who were not weapons-carrying fighters often experienced less equitable marriages.\textsuperscript{74}

For men, particularly the young, joining an armed force or group can be a way to escape narrow social expectations and barriers to traditional markers of success. Furthermore, it can provide an alternative path to manhood in contexts in which elders or entrenched elites constrain other options. As in Liberia, traditional chiefs in Rwanda and Sierra Leone controlled both economic activities and marriage in ways that prevented young men from being able to pay dowry and to marry, and therefore to be recognized as ‘men’. At the same time, the modern state excluded young men from access to education, land and employment opportunities. This fueled hostility towards traditional chiefs and in many cases encouraged recruitment into rebel groups.\textsuperscript{75}

While many gains are visible, still in other cases, combatants may see no benefit for being part of armed forces or groups: they may have been coerced into joining and their involuntary participation is simply a matter of self-preservation. Box 9 highlights some examples of the real and perceived gains experienced by men and women in armed forces and groups, drawing on the case studies found in this report.

\begin{tabular}{|l|p{1\textwidth}|}
\hline
\textbf{Box 9. Real or perceived gains from membership in armed forces and groups (men and women)} & \\
\hline
\textbf{Economic support} & - Access to loot, ability to extort taxes or gain profit through other illicit activities  
- Provision of income, food, or other basic needs of dependants of combatants (particularly women and children) \\
\hline
\textbf{Security and protection} & - Self-protection  
- Some protection from GBV (but also vulnerability to GBV and sexual exploitation)  
- Fulfilled sense of responsibility to protect or defend family and community (particularly for men)  
- For women and girls, protection through marriages or relationships to male combatants  \\
\hline
\textbf{Escape from traditional or restrictive social expectations} & - Bypass traditional way of achieving manhood and find viable, attainable means to be a ‘man’  
- Escape narrow female roles and gain some degree of respect or equality  \\
\hline
\textbf{Justice and improved quality of life} & - Redress injustice associated with social exclusion or past wrongs committed against group/community  
- Enhance freedom and quality of life  \\
\hline
\textbf{Marriage or access to women/men} & - For men and boys, respect and recognition from women (e.g. wives, girlfriends)  
- Ability to have relationships without expected responsibilities or obligations of marriage, particularly for men (for example, avoiding the onerous dowry system)  
- For women and girls, greater equality or protection through  \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{74}Irma Specht, \textit{Red Shoes}.  
\textsuperscript{75}UNIFEM, “MDRP: Taking a Gender Perspective to Strengthen the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme in the greater Great Lakes Region, Workshop Report” (Kigali, Rwanda, 2005).
marriage or informal relationships, particularly if relationship is with a higher-ranking combatant

| Social network | ▪ Comradeship  
▪ Social and family support network  
▪ Relationships to authority figures and role models (particularly for younger men) |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Identity and respect | ▪ Sense of belonging and purpose  
▪ Respect or recognition from family, community members, and peers (particularly for men)  
▪ Path from boyhood to manhood  
▪ Path to greater equality and respect for some women |

### 3.3 Losses experienced as a result of the DDR process

The DDR process can be a deeply disempowering experience for ex-combatants and associated groups. For combatants whose identities were grounded in their role as fighters, or whose sense of purpose was linked with the causes they were fighting for, the DDR process can provoke an identity crisis, stripping them of their wartime gains.

This potential identity crisis has important gender dimensions. For men, the process of disarming and demobilizing can represent a significant threat to their manhood through the symbolic loss that giving up their weapons represents. These losses can be further complicated when male ex-combatants attempting to reintegrate find that legitimate ways of being a man in civilian life are out of reach, such as few job opportunities or few chances of attaining marriage and fatherhood.

For female ex-combatants, the DDR process can also represent a loss of identities gained, such as the potential degree of equality and social recognition achieved through status and rank. In the post-conflict environment, a great challenge for ex-combatant women is often the societal expectation that they are to return to narrower or more restrictive roles as caretakers or mothers in civilian life. Box 10 provides an overview of how each stage of the DDR process poses different challenges for ex-combatants.

**Box 10. DDR’s potential to be a disempowering process for ex-combatants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of DDR</th>
<th>Key objective</th>
<th>Potential experiences of loss or change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Disarmament    | Hand-over of weapons by combatants                 | ▪ Loss of security and protection  
▪ Symbolic loss of manhood, power and/or identity through surrender of weapon (particularly for men)  
▪ Loss of some degree of equality and protection (women) |
| Demobilization | Discharge of combatants from armed forces or groups | ▪ Loss of war family, social support network, and sense of identity and belonging |
| Reintegration  | Ex-combatants (re-) acquire civilian identities    | ▪ Change from militarized/armed group identity to new civilian identity  
▪ Need to renegotiate male/female division of labour and roles within the household and community |
3.4 Post-conflict expressions of violence

In order to understand the different types of violence seen in post-conflict settings, it helps to distinguish between three different levels of violence: *self-directed violence* (suicide, drug and alcohol abuse as coping mechanisms), *interpersonal violence* (GBV, intimate partner violence, child abuse, rape and murder) and *group violence* against the community (burglary, rape, harassment, beatings and murder).

Box 11 summarizes initial case study observations of the expressions of violence seen among male and female ex-combatants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 11. Expressions of violence among ex-combatants and associated groups (men and women)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-directed violence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Drug and alcohol abuse (often prevalent among both women and men in contexts in which it is socially acceptable for women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpersonal violence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Physical violence against intimate partners (often prevalent and more common among men)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Verbal abuse of intimate partners (often prevalent among both men and women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Neglect or abuse of children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group violence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• (Re-) Recruitment into armed groups, militias or gangs (often prevalent and more common among male youth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Indirect support or encouragement of group violence (often prevalent and more common among women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Escalation of disputes into physical violence directed against other members of the community (often prevalent and more common among men)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The case studies undertaken as part of the GDV Initiative suggest that ex-combatants often lack the ability to manage anger and resolve disputes non-violently. Ex-combatants appear to be more prone to resort to violence for resolving even small issues and to be more willing than civilians to use violence in disputes or in crime.

While the majority of ex-combatants are male, and violence among male ex-combatants is more visible, female ex-combatants also appear to be more vulnerable to violent behaviour than their civilian female counterparts. For instance, in southern Sudan (now South Sudan) and Liberia, arguments among women in the community over key resources, such as water, can quickly escalate into threats of violence or violence itself. In southern Sudan, where rape remains endemic, female ex-combatants indicated a desire to keep weapons rather than disarm, and expressed a willingness to resolve serious differences with men in a violent manner. Similarly, the results from a 2011 household study in Rwanda suggest

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76 Andrade, UNDP BCPR Sudan GDV case study (2009); Naraghi-Anderlini, UNDP BCPR Liberia GDV case study (2009).
that men who witnessed or experienced violence as a result of the 1994 genocide were more likely to use violence against female partners in the aftermath of the genocide.\textsuperscript{78}

**Box 12. Transitional justice, DDR and GDV**

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

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

While both men and women can be verbally abusive, the use of physical violence, both in the public and private spheres, appears to be more common among male ex-combatants. This reflects in large measure the differences in the way that men and women deal with anger, stress or trauma. Men are more likely to use physical violence and to outwardly display anger and aggression, while women are more likely to internalize anger or express it verbally rather than physically. The vast majority of research affirms that these are learned behaviours rooted mostly in the social expectations of how boys and girls should express themselves.

Both male and female ex-combatants are also prone to commit violence against family members. While both men and women may be verbally abusive or commit neglect in domestic settings, men are more likely to be physically violent with their wives or intimate partners. Violence is often directed at individuals in the perpetrator’s immediate life who are dependent or less powerful. For women, whose gender roles include caregiving and child rearing, the most vulnerable individuals are often children.

A range of factors appear to contribute to tensions within the home that can escalate into intimate partner violence or child abuse in post-conflict settings. These include unaddressed PTSD and trauma-related disorders and drug and alcohol abuse. In addition, feelings of low self-esteem and inadequacy among men, often associated with experiences of disempowerment and the inability to live up to expected roles as providers, may trigger violence as they seek to regain their dominance and control in the domestic sphere.\textsuperscript{79}

Similarly, the IMAGES study previously cited found that both in post-conflict and non-conflict settings, men who reported feeling stressed about not having enough income or work are more likely to have used violence against a female partner than men who did not report this stress.\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{78}Barker and others, *Evolving Men*.


\textsuperscript{80}Barker and others, *Evolving Men*.
Finally, ex-combatants appear to be more prone to self-directed violence, including drug and alcohol abuse and suicide. Drug and alcohol abuse may be a means to cope with PTSD and trauma-related disorders and depression. Substance abuse and suicide may also be a response to difficulties adjusting to civilian life, including feelings of inadequacy, anger, low self-worth, and shame. In Liberia, for example, armed groups deliberately used and promoted drug and substance use among the rank and file, and many remain addicted.\textsuperscript{81}

### Country case study 3. Province of Aceh (Indonesia) and Timor-Leste: Post-conflict violence

#### Aceh, Indonesia\textsuperscript{82}

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

Three decades of conflict made violence a normality and left a legacy of trauma. The idealization of guns and violence among young men who grew up during the war is commonplace. Even today, young men (under 15) move in groups, carry pellet guns, wear gang-like clothing and re-enact shoot-outs in the middle of urban centers, such as Bireuen. Organized criminal activity, including drug cultivation, illegal logging, and ‘tax collection’ by ‘mafias’ and other gangs, appears to be increasing. Key informant interviews indicated that mafias or gangs were often run by disgruntled former GAM members and pensioned members of the government army who drew new recruits from male youth.

In addition, intimate partner violence appears to have been increasing since the end of the war.\textsuperscript{83} This is reinforced by the social acceptance of violence against women in the home. For instance, one respondent indicated that “hitting is normal in a family, [though] not to the point of tears or blood, [just enough] so that the wife follows orders.” Alcohol and drug use is also on the rise despite the imposition of Sharia Law.

According to data compiled for the Multi-Stakeholder Review of Aceh (2009), tensions between men and women appeared to be highest, and most likely to escalate into violence, in areas where conflict had been most intense.\textsuperscript{84} Most of the respondents indicated that, of all social tensions between ex-combatants and returnees, rich and poor, old and young, and different ethnic groups, violence between men and women had escalated most in the last six months.

Cases of intimate partner violence in conflict-affected areas have been partly attributed to ex-combatants, civil servants, and police and military, whose unaddressed experiences of trauma, economic hardship and difficulty re-integrating into family and community life are seen as contributing

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\textsuperscript{82} Adapted from Andrade, UNDP BCPR Indonesia GDV Case Study (2009).

\textsuperscript{83} Reports from women’s NGOs and shelters in the Province of Aceh (Indonesia) indicate that cases of intimate partner violence have been steadily increasing.

\textsuperscript{84} According to data compiled for the Multi-Stakeholder Review of Aceh, tensions between men and women ranked highest compared with other social tensions in terms of the likelihood that they would escalate into violence. In the areas where conflict was most intense, tensions between men and women were perceived to be a greater source of division. Andrade, UNDP BCPR Indonesia GDV Case Study (2009).
factors to their actions.

**Timor-Leste**

Violence perpetrated during Indonesia’s 24-year occupation of Timor-Leste, which was resisted by the Timorese guerilla liberation movement Falintil, has had a lasting impact on Timorese society. It included arming of proxy militias by the Indonesian government, mass killings, rapes, sexual slavery and torture, forcible encampment of civilians, mass destruction of infrastructure, and grave human rights abuses. Following the resignation of Indonesian President Suharto in 1998, a UN-supervised referendum led to a vote for independence in 1999, which was formalized in 2002 following a period of UN administration.

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

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

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

### III. Vulnerability and resilience of ex-combatants and associated groups

As described in Part II of this report, members of armed forces and groups are socialized to use violence and often undergo a militarization of their identities, contributing to a heightened risk of violence after war ends. While some ex-combatants are able to reintegrate successfully and live peaceful, non-violent lives, for others, the transition from military to civilian life is more challenging and violent habits persist in peacetime.

DDR programmes can benefit from an understanding of the factors that make ex-combatants’ vulnerable to involvement in violence. The factors that strengthen ex-combatants’ resilience – their ability to cope and adapt to adversity without resorting to violence – are equally relevant for targeting DDR programmes to prevent violence.

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85 Case study based upon consultations with Henri Myrttinen, material adapted from Henri Myrttinen, “Angry young men”, and research undertaken by S. Andrade.
87 Myrttinen, “Angry young men”.
88 UNFPA, Gender Based Violence in East Timor (2005).
89 UNFPA, Gender Based Violence in East Timor.
90 Myrttinen “Angry young men”.
Part III of this report examines the factors that influence ex-combatants’ vulnerability and resilience to violence in post-conflict settings. Section 1 defines ‘vulnerability’ and ‘resilience’ at the individual, interpersonal, community and societal levels. Section 2 then examines the key factors that contribute to ex-combatants’ vulnerability or resilience, focusing upon those factors that are most relevant to reintegration programming.

1. Defining ‘vulnerability’ and ‘resilience’

‘Resilience’ refers to “the ability to adapt, rebound, and strengthen functioning” in the face of violence, extreme adversity or risk. In the context of this report, it refers to an individual’s ability to withstand, resist and overcome the social and environmental pressures that might encourage violent behaviour or increase the likelihood of membership in violent groups in conflict-affected societies. ‘Vulnerability’, on the other hand, refers to those factors that increase an individual’s susceptibility to or risk of being affected by violence, resorting to it, or being drawn into groups that perpetrate violence.

Box 13. Gap in UN guidance on the gender-related vulnerabilities of male ex-combatants

According to an IMAGES Survey in Zambia and Eastern DRC (2008), the “measurement of progress on the Millennium Development Goals reveals that progress has been made in empowering women. However, progress in areas that require engaging men – reducing violence against women, increasing women’s income relative to men’s, and reducing inequalities related to the care burden – is left far behind.”

Because the particular vulnerabilities and needs of female ex-combatants and WAAFG were often neglected in DDR processes, the UN Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS) sought to mainstream guidance on the needs of women and girls, including WAAFG, in addition to including the crosscutting issue of Women, Gender and DDR as an individual module.

Ironically, however, while the majority of participants of DDR programmes are men, the need for a gender perspective on men’s vulnerabilities during the DDR process has been largely neglected in policy and guidance. The IDDRS Operational Guide highlights that “gender-responsive DDR should also address male concerns” and identifies several key issues facing men and boys. However, it does not

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91 This section has been adapted from Naraghi-Anderlini, Idle Minds, Empty Pockets.
93 Ibid. In psychology, individual resilience is defined in terms of four factors (1) outcomes despite adversity (acquisition of social skills, emotional development, academic achievement, psychological wellbeing, self-esteem); (2) sustained competence under stress (coping skills, attitudes towards obstacles); (3) Recovery from trauma; (4) Effect of interactions (reaction to risks or negative outcomes, for example, through use of humour to minimize negative impacts).
95 The IDDRS is a comprehensive set of policies, guidelines and procedures on DDR, which have been developed by the Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) on DDR and endorsed by more than 20 UN agencies as the framework for inter-agency collaboration in DDR programming.
96 The specific needs of women are addressed in IDDRS Module 5.10 on “Women, Gender and DDR” and mainstreamed throughout other IDDRS modules.
97 The gender-related needs and vulnerabilities of men and boys are largely absent in IDDRS Module 5.10.
98 The IDDRS Operational Guide summarizes and explains key guidance contained in each IDDRS module in a way that is intended to help practitioners use the IDDRS.
provide a framework or guidance for how to address these needs in all stages of the DDR process, making for a conspicuous gap in gender programming to date.\textsuperscript{99}

As illustrated in the social ecological model presented in Part II of this report, vulnerability and resilience exist at societal, community, interpersonal and individual levels. Action is needed at all four of these levels in order to strengthen resilience and to reduce vulnerability to violence. Targeted approaches are needed to address individuals who are most ‘at risk’ to violent behaviour, including former combatants.

While transforming individual behaviour is important, the norms, attitudes, relationships and structures that support vulnerabilities and resilience in the family and wider community must also be addressed to prevent a continued pattern of recruitment and aggression. Box 14 illustrates the types of responses that are typically most relevant at these different levels.

**Box 14. Key actions to enhance resilience and reduce vulnerability to violence\textsuperscript{100}**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Preventative measures</th>
<th>Transformative measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Societal level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community level</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpersonal level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual level</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **Preventative** measures to address structural drivers of violence
- **Transformative** measures to reform laws, policies and institutions
- **Preventative** measures to address community vulnerabilities to violence
- **Transformative** measures to empower those who promote resilience
- **Remedial and deterrent** measures to address ‘enablers’ of violence and potential pool of recruits
- **Preventative** measures that develop capacities for parenting and responsible and equitable relationships
- **Rehabilitative** measures to address patterns of abuse
- **Rehabilitative and punitive** measures to address core groups of perpetrators and high-risk individuals

2. From vulnerability to resilience

Ex-combatants’ experiences differ across contexts; however, there are a number of common factors that increase their vulnerability to involvement in violence in post-conflict settings. For their part, the factors that contribute to ex-combatants’ resilience to violence, particularly at the individual, interpersonal and community levels, are equally important to their successful reintegration, but they are less well-understood. This report seeks to contribute to a clearer picture.

Box 15 identifies key factors that, together, influence an ex-combatants’ vulnerability and resilience in post-conflict environments. These factors, and the way in which they are shaped by gender identities, are analyzed further in the following sections.

**Box 15. Key factors in ex-combatants’ vulnerability and resilience**

\textsuperscript{99} IDDRS Operational Guide, “Women, Gender and DDR”, Module 5.10, p. 195. Three issues are highlighted to illustrate the relevance of gender to men and boys: (1) Violent masculinity (2) Male victims of GBV (3) Male ex-combatants’ inability to fulfill traditional male roles.

\textsuperscript{100} Box adapted from Naraghi-Anderlini, \textit{Idle Minds, Empty Pockets}. 

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2.1 War-related trauma, PTSD and substance abuse

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and related mental health problems, including drug and alcohol abuse and depression, are common among ex-combatants and associated groups. These result from trauma experienced during war and difficulty adjusting to civilian life. The link between PTSD and aggressive behaviour in ex-combatants has been increasingly established, as shown in Country case study 4.
Individuals suffering from PTSD have also been identified as more prone to committing intimate partner violence.\textsuperscript{101} While both men and women suffer from PTSD, research suggests that the disorder is more strongly associated with aggressive behaviour in men.\textsuperscript{102} PTSD symptoms include hyper-arousal, difficulty experiencing emotions, and avoidance, particularly of situations that are reminiscent of the traumatic event.\textsuperscript{103} As illustrated in Box 16, there are typically two different ways of dealing with PTSD. One is ‘acting out’ or being aggressive, while the other is ‘keeping in’ or being passive, which may be associated with sliding into depression or anxiety. The former is generally, though not always, associated more with the behaviour of men and boys while the latter is generally more associated with the behaviour of women and girls.\textsuperscript{104}

**Box 16. Responses to PTSD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PTSD symptoms</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hyper-arousal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Difficulty experiencing emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Avoidance of experiences reminiscent of traumatic events</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Keeping in’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(usually associated with women and girls)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Anxiety</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Acting out’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(usually associated with men and boys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Difficulty controlling anger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Members of armed forces and groups frequently develop a heightened alertness to threats. This protects them from danger during war but becomes problematic when they return home. For instance, in civilian settings combatants may be more likely to misread social situations and perceive others as


\textsuperscript{103} Bell &Orcutt, “Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and Male-Perpetrated Intimate Partner Violence”.

hostile, often responding aggressively to everyday life situations. Furthermore, ex-combatants frequently grapple with intense emotional experiences from combat and “may use anger and aggressive behaviour as a way of establishing a sense of control ... or to express or release tension connected to uncomfortable emotions associated with PTSD, such as shame and guilt.”

Country case study 4. Iraq and Afghanistan: PTSD and violence among US war veterans

The impact of PTSD and other mental health problems on violent behaviour has been well documented among US veterans of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. According to a study in 2010 by the Rand Corporation, at least 300,000 individuals who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan suffer from PTSD or major depression.

War veterans are at high risk of suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, drunk driving, assault, domestic violence and murder. One study found that over half of those ex-servicemen and ex-service women suffering from PTSD or sub-threshold PTSD reported being aggressive in the previous four months. According to the United States Army, a record of 160 active-duty US military personnel serving in Iraq committed suicide in 2009, up from 140 in 2008 and 77 in 2003. The US Army recorded 54 suicides in the first 155 days of 2012, a rate twice as high as combat-related deaths among US troops over the same period.

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

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

Different approaches are required in cases where individuals have already been violent with family members. The programme is tailored to military populations and focuses on addressing the unique stressors and traumas associated with deployment that may underlie intimate partner violence.

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105 C.T. Taft and others, UNDP BCPR GDV Case Study of US War Veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq (2010).
108 Tull, “PTSD and Anger in Veterans of the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan” (2008). ‘Aggressive’ was defined as threatening physical violence, having a physical fight with someone, or destroying property. Sub-threshold PTSD indicates an individual is struggling with severe symptoms of PTSD but does not meet the criteria of a full PTSD diagnosis.
109 See http://www.army.mil/
112 See Taft and others, 2011 for more information on this “prevention” programme and other programmes that work with those who are already engaging in violence.
provides 10 weeks of counselling to couples in a group format because peer support and group cohesion has been shown to help recovery in military populations.

The US programme covers three major areas: education about relationship issues and reactions to trauma; development of conflict management skills to help couples manage difficult issues when they arise, and basic communication skills.113

During some conflicts, drugs and alcohol induce a fighting spirit or reduce combatants’ inhibitions and empathy with victims, while ex-combatants often use drugs and alcohol to cope with unaddressed trauma, depression, feelings of inadequacy and difficulty adjusting to civilian life. The use of substances by men and women largely depends upon culture. In Somalia, for example, ex-combatants of both sexes use khat, a widely-used amphetamine-like stimulant, to self-medicate their PTSD symptoms.

While drug and alcohol abuse is more commonly seen among men, it is also prevalent among women in contexts where alcohol and other intoxicants are socially acceptable.114 In Croatia the majority of reported cases of domestic violence involved one or more individuals under the influence of drugs or alcohol.115 In southern Sudan (now South Sudan), alcoholism has been proving a widespread problem among ex-combatants, disabled combatants and youth, becoming a source of insecurity and anti-social behaviour in communities.116

Suicide, as illustrated in Country case study 4, is also common among ex-combatants.117 Disabled and abandoned ex-combatants – who face particularly profound challenges in the adjustment to civilian life – can be particularly prone to suicide, alcohol abuse and aggressive behaviour.

While ex-combatants and associated groups may struggle with the memories of their traumatic experiences and substance abuse for the duration of their lives, they can also build up several points of resilience on the individual, interpersonal and community levels, to better manage these lifelong stressors. The best approach(es) will depend on the context and available human and financial resources, but individual care, group and family counselling and collective healing could all provide important paths to recovery.

2.2 Exposure to GBV

Ex-combatants have been both perpetrators and victims of violence and severe abuse, including GBV. Sexual violence against men, women, boys and girls during war, and within armed forces and groups, is often prevalent. As we have seen, WAAFG are particularly vulnerable to GBV committed by male combatants, with women and girls not uncommonly forced to join groups as male combatants’ sexual companions. Some women seek out ‘bush marriages’ in the hope that being ‘married’ to one man will protect them from other male combatants, while other women are simply forced into these arrangements.

113 Taft and others, 2010.
115 V. Kesić, UNDP BCPR Croatia GDV Case Study (2009).
116 Southern Sudan Psychosocial Programme, Community Based Psychosocial Support to Disabled Soldiers and WAAFG for Suicide Prevention project proposal to the Sudan Interim DDR Authority (2006).
117 For instance, between 1995 and 2005, there have been 1,600 suicides of war veterans in Croatia. V. Kesić, UNDP BCPR Croatia GDV Case Study (2009).
When returning to communities after their exposure to fighting, female ex-combatants and WAAF often bear the stigma of broken social and gender norms. Community members may also accuse them of sexual promiscuity and see them as a threat to community morality and family honour. In Nepal, for example, mothers and other female relatives will often pressure returning female ex-combatants into marriage as a means of erasing their past ‘errant’ behaviour.118

Sexual violence against men and boys is a significant, but often unrecognized problem. It may be more prevalent in conflict situations than commonly believed. In Liberia, for instance, one third of male ex-combatants interviewed in a 2008 study reported that they had been victims of sexual violence.119 Such violence is commonly used to initiate men into security forces, to intimidate, punish and humiliate the enemy during interrogation processes, and to establish hierarchies. In the 2009 Refugee Law Project documentary film, Gender Against Men, Dr. Chris Dolan discovers the consequences of sexual violence committed against men in Uganda.120 The documentary addresses the important issue of society’s inability or unwillingness to accept or acknowledge male vulnerability in times of conflict.121

Many experts believe that cases of sexual violence committed against men and boys are significantly under-reported, due to shame, guilt, fear of denunciation, and strong prejudices against male homosexuality, among other factors.122 For these reasons, male ex-combatants grappling with the physical and psychological recovery from sexual assault may be even less likely than women to seek help in coping with their experiences of violence.

It is important to note here that responses to violence, particularly GBV, have often focused on assisting the victim and punishing the perpetrator. However, understanding the experiences and motivations of perpetrators – including past traumas and violent acts to which they themselves were exposed – provides important insight into preventing violence and rehabilitating those most at risk.123

### Country case study 5. Democratic Republic of the Congo: Sexual violence against men and boys124

The five-year conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) involved government forces supported by Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe, and rebel groups supported by the governments of Uganda and Rwanda. The war was brought to a partial end by a peace agreement signed in 2002, though conflict has persisted in the eastern region. The war has been characterized by widespread rape and sexual violence against civilians.

While reports on violence in DRC have focused on men’s roles as perpetrators, and women as victims, men’s experiences as victims of sexual and gender-based violence in DRC may be more significant than initially thought. Although women and girls are the principal victims of rape in the country, it is believed

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119 K. Johnson and others, “Association of combatant status and sexual violence with health and mental health outcomes in postconflict Liberia”.
120 View online at http://www.forcedmigration.org/podcasts-videos-photos/video/gender-against-men
121 Daniel Neumann and others, “Gender Against Men” (documentary film), Refugee Law Project, Faculty of Law, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda (2009). 43 mins.
124 Adapted from Baaz and others, “The Complexity of Violence: A critical analysis of sexual violence in the DRC”.
that the incidence of sexual violence against men is underrepresented in statistics due to extensive stigma attached to male rape and sexual violence.

Medical clinics in the DRC report that up to 6 percent of victims they treat are men, while legal clinics report that about 10 percent of cases involve male victims. However, the real levels are probably higher due to underreporting.

In addition to rape, men and boys in DRC have been subjected to other brutal forms of sexual violence and torture aimed at humiliating them during war, including being forced to have sex with kin (daughters, mothers, wives) in public or to watch their rape by others, being forced to masturbate or commit sexual acts with objects in public, and being dragged in public by a cord attached to the penis or testicles.

Men and boys are also more vulnerable to forced recruitment into armed groups, executions, arbitrary arrests and torture, and other forms of gender-based violence specifically targeting men and boys.

The needs of men and boys who are survivors of sexual violence, torture and humiliation must be recognized and addressed in order to prevent repeated cycles of violence. According to a 2009 analysis by Maria ErikssonBaaz and MariaStern, “Combatants (and others) who have experienced trauma and humiliation by being subjected to violence themselves or being forced or encouraged to inflict violence on others, tend to be more prone—in the short term and when proper countermeasures are lacking—to perpetrate new violent acts. This is especially true of the juvenile combatants integrated into the national army and police force.”

2.3 Purposeful employment and livelihood opportunities

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

- International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)

The end of conflict brings with it new opportunities for economic recovery. Nevertheless, post-conflict economies are characterized by financial insecurity and the lasting effects of the destruction of livelihoods, infrastructure and institutions, posing significant challenges to ex-combatants’ economic reintegration.

Jobs or livelihoods are important not only as a source of income, but also as a source of respect, identity and purpose. In some contexts, ex-combatants may find available jobs and income-generation opportunities lacking when compared with the status, prestige and easier access to resources they enjoyed as combatants.

Frequently, far more can be gained from the quick wins from crime or violent activities than from the ‘regular’ jobs that are available. For instance, in Liberia some believed that the war years had led to a

125 Ibid. See also C. Horwood, The shame of war: sexual violence against women and girls in conflict (OCHA/IRIN, 2007).
126 Barker and others, Evolving Men, p. 60.
short-term survival mentality among young rank-and-file fighters. Despite the widespread characterization of manhood as the ability to provide for the family, ex-combatants expressed resistance to jobs they deemed as ‘unmanly’ or ‘women’s work’. More generally, young men may reject work in ‘traditional’ sectors such as agriculture in the belief they deserve more ‘modern’ mechanical or technical jobs, even if market demands are limited and they lack the necessary skills. Commercial trades seen to provide quick gains may also be preferred.

However, in other contexts ex-combatants are willing to accept lower-paid jobs providing a measure of dignity, respect and security. For instance, in Colombia male ex-combatants expressed a strong desire for jobs offering a sustainable alternative to violent or criminal activities or to work with private security companies, even if these jobs were less lucrative. Their desire for work that would allow them to overcome insecurity outweighed potential monetary rewards. Livelihoods or employment options that offer a sense of purpose and respect may thus provide an important source of resilience.

This transition to sustainable employment or livelihoods can be particularly challenging for male ex-combatants due to the pressures they face to fulfill their expected role as ‘provider’ within their families. Unemployment and lack of livelihood opportunities that perceiveably confer respect can contribute to low self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy, shame, anger, and disempowerment.

In the Province of Aceh (Indonesia) and the Garrisa district in Kenya, for example, men have indicated that their feelings of inadequacy had worsened due in part to the greater roles as providers taken on by wives or partners, through new endeavours outside the home, while they continued unable to find employment. This appears to have increased tensions within the family and may be a contributing factor in intimate partner violence.

For their part, women often face expectations that they return to caretaking roles or traditional female jobs. For some, this represents a loss of the status and respect they might have earned in the war, and a dismissal of the skills gained in an armed group. At the same time and in some instances, women, particularly WAAFG, are more willing than men to accept any job to meet the needs of their families and children, including farming and selling goods in local markets.

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**Country case study 6. Province of Aceh (Indonesia) and Liberia: Gender identities and livelihoods**

**Aceh, Indonesia**

There are important gender dimensions to the challenges associated with economic reintegration of ex-combatants in the Province of Aceh. Free Aceh Movement (GAM) commanders were responsible for the distribution of reinsertion packages, small payments to help ex-combatants in the transition from demobilization to reintegration. However, many commanders failed to pass on these packages to many lower-level fighters. This fuelled frustration and resentment. On top of that, with the lack of employment opportunities and the collapse of livelihood systems following the end of the war, male ex-combatants

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127 Naranghi-Anderlini, UNDP BCPR Liberia GDV Case Study (2009).
128 Focus group discussions with ex-combatants in Colombia undertaken by P. A Betancourt V K. under the supervision of K. Thiedon as a contribution to the GDV Initiative (2009).
129 Adapted from Naraghi-Anderlini, UNDP BCPR Liberia case study on GDV, insecurity and social cohesion.
were also expected to return to a ‘simple’ lifestyle again, abandoning all prestige as a fighter. With many men reporting a sense of loss of status and ‘manhood’, there was perceivable reluctance to take up traditional livelihoods again, including farming.

During the conflict, although women were discouraged from work outside the home and from jobs traditionally deemed male, their unpaid labour in agriculture and fisheries, as well as paid work outside the home, became increasingly important. Though necessary to support their families, however, this expansion of women’s roles into traditionally male areas appears to have deepened men’s feelings of disempowerment in the post-conflict period. Men in focus groups in Aceh indicated that when it came to being a ‘provider’, some wives “are now better at it than men.” Although some men have turned over the role of breadwinner to women, others insist that this is still exclusively a role for men.

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

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

While many women are benefiting from peace dividends, their new roles have proved problematic for many men. Male combatants acknowledged that women largely took over the role of ‘provider’ for the family during wartime and that women were indeed capable of earning an income. But, come the post-war period, many male ex-combatants found it difficult to accept that women had de facto become the new heads of their households.

Unwilling to accept that women’s roles in society had changed during wartime, many men in Liberia were reluctant to support programmes promoting women’s economic reintegration. In a country with 85% unemployment, men indicated that they felt that women were being treated as a privileged group through such programmes and were creating unfair competition. Reinsertion programmes focusing on women’s empowerment through micro-credit, for instance, were generally not well-received by Liberian men.

2.4 Education and life skills
Ex-combatants often lack basic life skills that are critical to a successful transition to civilian life. Many have spent a significant portion of their lives with armed forces and groups and have never learned from parents, community members or educators how to manage social relationships constructively. Illiteracy and low levels of formal education are also common, and can limit ex-combatants’ ability for self-expression, increasing the likelihood that anger and frustration are manifested violently. This lack of social and practical skills not only limits economic opportunities, it contributes to low self-esteem and the inability to manage disputes non-violently.
At the same time, reintegration can be facilitated by new skills learned while with armed forces and groups. This is particularly true for women, with new skills and confidence gained through the roles they played during the conflict, such as handicraft, cooking, map reading as well as organizational knowhow.  

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

2.5 Self-esteem, social inclusion and social support

While in armed forces and groups, individuals’ self-esteem often derives from the social recognition they receive as war heroes or as representatives of a wider social and national cause. Combatants’ identities are also shaped by their status and rank within the armed force or group, their military capacities, and sometimes even their brutality and ruthlessness. Membership provides a collective sense of identity and shared sense of purpose, as well as a ‘family’ of peers and comrades upon whom to depend. Demobilization can therefore represent significant losses (See Country case study 7).

Country case study 7. Croatia: War heroes to war veterans

During the 1991-1995 war that broke up the former Yugoslavia, Croatian soldiers were celebrated as heroes and role models for the new Croatia following its secession. Men in military units developed a strong sense of collective identity linked with their ethnic and nationalist aims.

However, when the war ended, veterans lost this social recognition as war heroes and as important actors in family and society. About 50 percent of Croatia’s 500,000 war veterans found themselves unemployed and approximately 15 percent were classified as ‘war time military invalids’ (the official term for veterans who suffered physical injury or mental disorder).

In response to veterans’ needs, Croatia established a Ministry of Veterans’ Affairs in 1997 and passed a number of policies and laws that established a system of economic benefits for veterans, including those with physical and mental disorders.

Despite these steps, veterans’ social and psychological issues went largely unaddressed by the new

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

- Sierra Leonian ex-combatant

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130 DyanMazurana, “Women in Armed Opposition Groups in Africa and the Promotion of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights” (Geneva Call, 2005).
131 V. Kesić, UNDP BCPR Croatia GDV case study (2009).
133 PTSD, major muscular dysfunctions and other “neurotic disorders of higher degree” are mentioned as the most frequent causes. Ministry of Family, Veterans and Intergenerational Solidarity, “National Program of Psycho-social and Health Help to the Participants and the Victims of Casualties from the Homeland War,” (Zagreb, 2005) p. 4, cited in V. Kesić, UNDP BCPR Croatia GDV case study (2009).
policies, leaving many veterans deeply disillusioned. Today, more than 20 years later, they are torn between failure, low social recognition and their sense of being a social burden, on the one hand, and, on the other, their fierce protection of the few privileges and benefits they have gained. Veterans often publicly express their disappointment and anger with the state of the nation, claiming “this is not what we fought for.”

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

Though statistics are lacking, Croatian veterans have been implicated in violent crime and intimate partner violence. Between 1995 and 2005, approximately 1,600 veterans committed suicide.

If part of the defeated forces, ex-combatants may already be stigmatized or socially excluded by their communities, further lowering self-esteem. Yet the same sense of justice or desire to improve the lives of families and communities that originally motivated some individuals to join armed groups can become a positive source of resilience in post-conflict settings.

Particularly in contexts in which armed struggle has led to ‘victory’ or provided a framework for social reforms and change, ex-combatants’ initial motivations for fighting can be a basis for non-violent social and political activism or community mobilization for development and recovery. In Sierra Leone, the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) was founded by a man who witnessed sexual violence during the country’s conflict and sought to engage other men to overcome it.

Involvement in social activities that develop self-esteem, purpose and positive relationships to peers can be a key factor for resilience. In post-conflict settings, the support and acceptance ex-combatants receive from families, community members, and peers are also critical to their resilience and successful reintegration.

Some communities will see ex-combatants as freedom fighters or heroes who have fought on behalf of their interests. In other cases, ex-combatants may be implicated in violence committed against community members, may be stigmatized or seen as a drain on scarce resources, or be perceived as a threat to elders or authorities. If community reconciliation is not advanced, ex-combatants may be motivated to rejoin armed groups or gangs in order to regain the sense of community and belonging they once had.

**Country case study 8. Colombia and Nicaragua: Re-mobilization of ex-combatants**

134Focus group with leaders and members of Croatian Youth Network, Zagreb, 2 November 2009. V. Kesić, UNDP BCPR Croatia GDV case study (2009).

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

- Indonesian ex-combatant
Colombia\textsuperscript{136}
For over 40 years, Colombia has been affected by continuing cycles of armed conflict and violence involving paramilitary, guerilla and criminal groups. In 2002, the Government of Colombia signed a ceasefire agreement with the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), (commonly referred to as the paramilitaries) and established a DDR programme. Although the conflict between the government and two guerilla groups – the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and the Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional (ELN) – is ongoing, members of these groups have been demobilizing on an individual basis. A total of 53,141 combatants from both guerilla and paramilitary groups demobilized between 2002 and April 2010 (87 percent men and 13 percent women).\textsuperscript{137}

Through 2010, high levels of insecurity plagued certain regions of Colombia, making it challenging for ex-combatants to rebuild new lives. The expansion of illegal drug cultivation and trade, targeted assassinations of ex-combatants, the emergence of a widespread gang culture, and the circulation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) have led many ex-combatants to join gangs and emerging criminal groups for security, economic and social reasons.

According to a report of the Office of the Presidential High Counselor for Reintegration, 7 percent of those demobilized (3,582 ex-combatants, among them 30 women) have re-entered criminal activities, and another 1,921 participants in the reintegration process are at high risk of re-entering criminal activities.\textsuperscript{138}

In areas controlled by guerillas or paramilitaries, youth in particular have few alternatives to joining an armed group.\textsuperscript{139} Former paramilitaries explain that joining the AUC allowed them to “feel like a big man in the streets” of their barrios, “to go out with the prettiest young women”, and “to dress well”.\textsuperscript{140} Being part of an armed group is closely associated with a militarized model of masculinity, where having a weapon equals power.

In Colombia, “cycling through an armed group is a rite of passage for many young men”, says a 2009 study.\textsuperscript{141} In this context, a goal of the DDR process should be to provide alternatives “particularly when these men have so little access to civilian symbols of masculine prestige, such as education, legal income, or decent housing.”\textsuperscript{142}

Nicaragua\textsuperscript{143}
More than a decade of conflict in Nicaragua, including the Sandinista Revolution and the Contra War, led to the death of hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans. The 1990 peace accord and the Managua Protocol on Disarmament (which provided for the repatriation of Nicaraguan Contras from Honduras) set the stage for peace and stability.

\textsuperscript{136} This case study draws upon primary research undertaken by K. Theidon and P. P. A Betancourt V for UNDP BCPR’s GDV Initiative. Information provided by Presidencia de la Republica, La Alta Consejeria para la Reintegracion, 2010, and compiled by M. Glasser. Also see K. Theidon, “Reconstructing Masculinities”.
\textsuperscript{137} Presidencia de la Republica, La Alta Consejeria para la Reintegracion, Colombian Ministry of Defense (2010).
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{139} Theidon, “Reconstructing Masculinities”.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{143} Adapted from P. Welsh, UNDP BCPR Nicaragua GDV Case Study (2009).
However, the DDR programme was wracked with problems due to insufficient government and international funding to cover promises of pay, medical care, access to housing, land and credit, employment and skills training. Consequently, within a short period of time both demobilized Contras and former Sandinista soldiers were at odds with the government.

Gangs known as pandillas, began to appear in the capital Managua in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Their original membership consisted mostly of poorly reintegrated ex-combatants (both Contras and Sandinistas). This influenced their internal organization, which was hierarchical, and their modus operandi, which was based upon military strategies. The pandillas emerged in the context of rising social discontent and unrest, massive inflation, structural adjustment programmes, and high levels of unemployment. Over time the pandillas have shed their military roots, attracting many kinds of marginalized, angry and frustrated adolescents and youth.
IV. GDV entry points in DDR programming

A clearer view of gender norms, roles and identities is critical to understanding the causes, impacts and dynamics of violence in conflict-affected societies and to providing effective entry points for sustainable DDR interventions. It may be beyond the scope of DDR programmes to address the profound range of influences and environmental factors that have affected programme participants’ socialization to violence or perspectives on gender equality, particularly at the societal level.

However, this practical reality should not deter from the significant achievements and potential of DDR programmes in this area. In addition to playing a pivotal role in developing ex-combatants’ post-war identities at the individual and even family and community levels, gender-sensitive DDR paves the way for gender-transformative interventions as a part of the wider recovery and development processes.

Part IV of this report looks at how DDR programmes can better address male- and female-specific vulnerabilities and strengthen their resilience to violence in conflict-affected societies. It analyzes the particular experiences and vulnerabilities of men, women, boys and girls, in relation to each step in the DDR process, and then identifies key entry points, considerations and actions.

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

The disarmament process strips ex-combatants of their means of protection and livelihood, as well as the physical symbols of their identities as fighters: their weapons. In violent settings, the possession of a weapon often becomes an important symbol of manhood, power and security.

If there are no non-violent concepts of masculinity to serve as an alternative, many male ex-combatants can feel a great sense of loss. For female ex-combatants, disarmament can threaten the gender equality and respect they may have gained through the possession of a weapon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 17. Potential experiences of loss during disarmament</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>**Potentia</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Symbolic loss of identity as fighter through surrender of weapon</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Loss of security and protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Loss of power, respect and status</td>
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144 UNDP’s How-to Guide: Gender-Responsive DDR provides practitioners with guidance on building DDR programmes that respond to the needs of both female and male participants and promote gender equality. An integral part of the guide is a Resource Package that contains templates, samples, checklists and other practical tools to facilitate gender-responsive DDR programming.


146 This box features information gathered from the country case studies used in this report and verbal accounts of DDR practitioners.
Many DDR programmes have recognized the economic value of a weapon, as well as its importance for security and protection, but have failed to consider both the real and symbolic value a weapon possesses in defining manhood and asserting power and status. The following are key considerations and entry points for disarmament interventions:

- **Providing alternatives to the gun as a symbol of power.** Disarmament strategies may be more effective if they help combatants address the loss of power and security, as well as the sense of loss of manhood, that they may associate with giving up a weapon. DDR programmes should explore ways to support ex-combatants to form alternative civilian identities and to replace weapons with positive symbols of power that are relevant in their particular cultural context.

  For example, anecdotal evidence suggests that ex-combatants often purchase cell phones, or want to become drivers and own cars or motorcycles, in part because these represent alternative, legitimate symbols of manhood, power and status. It is also critical that DDR programmes coordinate with SALW control programmes to explore ways of transforming and redefining the concepts of masculinity that are linked to the use of weapons, such as through media and awareness-raising activities.¹⁴⁷

- **Developing more strategic engagement with women (particularly female dependants) in disarmament processes.** The potential role of female dependants of ex-combatants as agents of change in disarmament processes has often been overlooked, in part because disarmament has been seen as a merely technical exercise. While women can spark violence in some contexts, they can also play an equally instrumental role in encouraging family and community members to hand in weapons and in community mobilization to address armed violence.¹⁴⁸

  Following conflict in Sudan and southern Sudan, for instance, Hakamas¹⁴⁹ abandoned their previous singing to encourage bravery in combat and instead began to sing for peace, progress and development. The Hakamas are part of the UNDP and the North Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (NSDDRC) project that seeks to train these traditional singers in peace education, human rights, HIV awareness and DDR.

2. Demobilization: Establishing new support networks

By formally discharging combatants from military service, demobilization can mean that ex-combatants lose the ‘war family’ that they depended on for economic support, protection and comradeship. It can also mean a loss of the sense of collective identity, purpose, and belonging that motivates many to join armed forces and groups. This has specific implications for both male and female ex-combatants, as summarized in Box 18.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 18. Potential experiences of loss during demobilization</th>
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¹⁴⁷ Vanessa A. Farr & Kiflemariam Gebre-Wold, “Gender perspectives on Small Arms and Light Weapons: Regional and International Concerns” (BICC, 2002).
¹⁴⁸ Ibid.
¹⁴⁹ As discussed in Country case study 1, during the Sudanese armed conflict Hakamas sang songs about bravery and cowardice to encourage men on the frontlines. Hakamas are traditional female singers indigenous to Southern Kordofan, Northern Kordofan and Southern Darfur states.
Potential losses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loss of:</th>
<th>Male-specific losses</th>
<th>Female-specific losses, including WAAFG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• War family</td>
<td>• Loss of status and respect gained as a fighter</td>
<td>• Loss of some degree of equality, respect and protection gained as a fighter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Economic support</td>
<td>• High-ranking men may gain key political positions in new government; however, lower-ranking men may be passed over and experience disillusionment or feel betrayed by commanders</td>
<td>• High-ranking women may be relegated to lower positions or be passed over for key political positions in the new government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Security and protection</td>
<td></td>
<td>• WAAFG and their dependants may be separated from male ex-combatants and thus lose source of social/economic support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Belonging, comradeship and social support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identity and sense of purpose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘Hero to zero’ - loss of status and prestige</td>
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</table>

Demobilization breaks the bonds between commanders and the rank and file and dissolves the military ranks and hierarchies that can provide combatants with an important source of respect. It can effectively take combatants from ‘hero to zero’ in a day. Lower-ranking men may feel betrayed by male commanders if they are excluded from benefits and political positions often awarded to higher-ranking men, and if their service goes unrewarded.

Once military ranks are dissolved, women may experience a loss of the respect they may have previously been afforded by their male counterparts. Female combatants are often relegated to lower-ranking positions within new military structures, or are passed over in the selection of political positions in a new government. For WAAFG, the demobilization process can break up informal ‘marriages’, separating women and girls from male combatants upon whom they depended in war, and leaving them with no money and no standing in civilian society.

If the social and economic support structures previously provided by the armed force and group are not replaced or redefined, they often continue to retain their importance after the formal demobilization process takes place. Thus, in order to succeed, DDR programmes must find ways to replace the ‘war family’ or transform the strong social ties associated with the armed group into a positive force for recovery and development.

Transforming behaviours and social relationships is a long-term process and therefore central to reintegration. Nonetheless, demobilization and reinsertion – the short-term, transitional assistance provided to ex-combatants to assist them and their families before reintegration begins – must set the stage for the reintegration process to succeed. The following are key entry points and considerations for demobilization and reinsertion:

- **Transforming or building new social support networks.** DDR programmes should consider ways to gradually transform the strong social ties developed within armed forces or groups into a

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

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

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

- **Building social cohesion through interim stabilization projects.** DDR programmes can support interim stabilization projects that build social cohesion and provide opportunities to build positive relationships between ex-combatants and community members. As a key part of reinsertion, ex-combatants can be employed in short-term projects that will benefit the wider community, such as rebuilding infrastructure or community clean-up.

3. Reintegration: Forming a non-violent civilian identity

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

3.1 Economic reintegration

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

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

Box 19 provides an overview of key societal expectations and challenges faced by male and female ex-combatants during their economic reintegration.

| Box 19. Potential societal expectations and challenges during economic reintegration |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| **Male ex-combatants**          | **Female ex-combatants**        |
| Potential societal expectations:| Potential societal expectations:|
|  ▪ Expectation that he will be a ‘provider’ |  ▪ Expectation that she will return to traditional domestic/caretaking role |
|  ▪ Expectation that he will acquire work that is considered ‘manly’ |  ▪ Expectation that she will perform ‘women’s work’ |
| Potential challenges:           | Potential challenges:           |
|  ▪ Disempowerment due to limited livelihood and employment options and inability to fulfill expected ‘provider’ role |  ▪ Expectation that she will accept lower status and lower paying jobs |
|  ▪ Finding an economic opportunity or a job that is a source of dignity and respect |  ▪ Double burden of domestic and income-generation responsibilities |
|  ▪ Accepting women’s new role as ‘provider’ and the real or perceived competition they pose in the job market | |

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

- **Ensuring sensitivity to gender norms surrounding sustainable livelihood and employment options.** Job-creation efforts should be informed by an understanding of how gender norms shape attitudes about men’s and women’s work. Economic reintegration should not reinforce or assume traditional norms but provide flexible socio-economic support that is sensitive to the pressures and expectations ex-combatants face. An assessment of culture-specific attitudes toward acceptable male and female work that also considers how gender norms and roles may have changed due to conflict should be an integral part of a wider assessment of reintegration opportunities. In addition, economic reintegration programmes must focus on specific benefits for women. This includes counteracting stigma (i.e. working with men to allow or encourage women to participate in reintegration programmes), providing for childcare options, and considering financial compensation for training.

- **Inserting social and psychosocial components into economic reintegration programmes.** The findings of this report suggest that social and psychosocial issues must be addressed in order to

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151 Barker and others, Evolving Men, p. 60.
ensure successful economic reintegration. Vocational counselling and training provide an entry point for addressing the social and psychological needs of ex-combatants, alongside their economic needs, including gender norms in the workplace. Experience has shown that programmes that provide counselling and develop life skills, alongside vocational skills, are particularly effective in addressing the needs of at-risk groups.152

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

- **Building a positive sense of self, purpose and respect that is not dependent upon being an economic ‘provider’**. When livelihoods and employment opportunities are limited, DDR programmes should consider ways to assist ex-combatants to build a positive sense of self and purpose that is not dependent on being an economic provider. For instance, community service work or social activism, even if voluntary, can be a way to gain dignity and respect, although the income needs of participants must also be met. Such efforts can already be seen on the ground in South Africa where the rate of unemployment is very high. Activities are being carried out to help men recognize that high levels of unemployment reflect structural rather than individual failings. NGO alliances like MenEngage have supported men to reflect on alternative ways of playing the role of ‘provider’, such as offering provision of care to the ill or elderly, active parenting, participating in activities aimed at improving community wellbeing, and so forth.153

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

3.2 Social reintegration

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152 For instance, the Learning for Earning Activity Programme in Jamaica (LEAP), launched in 1988, has achieved a high success rate through programmes that offer a mix of remedial education and literacy, counseling and vocational training to youth over the age of 17 with behavioural problems. See example from Naranghi-Anderlini, *Idle Minds, Empty Pockets*.

An ex-combatant who has economic opportunities but who is socially isolated or excluded cannot be considered as successfully reintegrated. He or she can be stigmatized in communities of return, implicated in violence against community members, or perceived as a threat to elders or authorities. Furthermore, both male and female ex-combatants often face a return to more narrow or restrictive gender roles. Many may struggle to negotiate new gender roles and find it difficult to maintain day-to-day non-violent civilian identities.

Experience has shown that social reintegration is a necessary partner to economic reintegration, and a catalyst for employment and economic security. It is also social reintegration that offers one of the best entrypoints for addressing the gender dimensions of violence in post-conflict environments.

Box 20 provides an overview of key societal expectations and challenges faced by male and female ex-combatants during their social reintegration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 20. Potential societal expectations and challenges during social reintegration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male ex-combatants</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential societal expectations:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Expectation that men will return to ‘provider’ role and (re-) establish a ‘normal’ civilian identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential challenges:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Struggle to define positive and/or new role within household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Exclusion from communities; overcoming stigma associated with being a combatant</td>
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</tbody>
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DDR programmes could learn from interventions with men such as Programa H in Brazil (the ‘H’ stands for ‘homens’, or ‘men’ in Portuguese). Programa H uses group education and community-based campaigns to question rigid and violent ideas about what it means to be a ‘man’. The Budi Musko (‘Be a man’) movement in Serbia is working with young teenage men to redefine what is manly and strong.

And Sonke Gender Justice launched the One Man Can Campaign in South Africa in late 2006, which works to support men and boys to end violence against women. All of these gender-transformative interventions have the common goal of engaging adult and younger men in questioning rigid and violent norms about masculinity. They are creating visible symbols (with logos on t-shirts, hats and billboards, and graffiti) and hoping to forge new male identities that, in the words of the campaign, “promote healthy, equitable relationships that men and women can enjoy passionately, respectfully and fully.”

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156 See http://www.genderjustice.org.za/onemancan/
The following are key entry points and considerations for strengthening social reintegration:

- **Supporting ex-combatants to (re-)learn to manage stress, anger and inter-personal conflict non-violently.** Many ex-combatants, particularly youth who have spent a significant part of their lives in armed groups, need support to learn basic social skills, such as how to manage stress, anger and social relationships non-violently. In some cases, initiatives that support the family as a whole to cope with stress, rather than only the individual ex-combatant alone, can be effective in preventing violence.

- **Using health as an entry point to address GDV, including through HIV/AIDS and reproductive health interventions.** Health programmes targeting ex-combatants and communities of return, particularly those that focus on HIV/AIDS and reproductive health, can provide an important entry point for addressing issues of gender identity and violence. Examples include Stepping Stones\(^{157}\) and EngenderHealth’s Men As Partners (MAP)\(^{158}\) initiatives.

- **Developing parenting skills.** Parenting interventions, which teach parenting skills and develop parents’ ability to manage children, can be an important way to reduce ex-combatants’ vulnerability to violence within the family. Where conflict has broken down family structures and norms guiding sexual relationships, men especially often lack models to guide them as fathers and in their relationships with women. By developing parenting skills, men can play a greater role in their children’s lives, overcome ideas that this is a woman’s domain, and establish positive identities as fathers.

- **Transforming harmful gender norms and attitudes within communities.** The attitudes and expectations of community members are critical to successful reintegration. DDR programmes should explore options to support forums or outreach in communities where ex-combatants are present in order to discuss ideas of masculinity and femininity and challenge harmful attitudes. Experience shows that men benefit if offered a ‘safe space’in which openly to discuss social expectations of manhood and alternative ways to be a man. Man-to-man discussion between peers in some cases has been instrumental in changing attitudes toward violence against women. In addition, the use of peers, respected community leaders, social and religious networks and media, such as daily radio shows or soap operas, can help reach a local audience in a culturally appropriate way.\(^{159}\)

- **Strengthening ties between ex-combatants and communities and building social cohesion.** Community-based projects identified by men and women that bring together ex-combatants and civilians to achieve a common goal (e.g. repairing community infrastructure) are critical to strengthening ties between ex-combatants and communities and building social cohesion.

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\(^{157}\) Stepping Stones is a communication tool developed by the Strategies for Hope project, which was founded in 1989 with the support of ActionAid. It was developed in order to initiate and sustain meaningful dialogue around sexual attitudes and needs. It was originally designed both for use in existing HIV/AIDS projects and in general community development projects which plan to introduce an on-going HIV and sexual and reproductive health component. Whilst it was developed specifically in response to growing communication needs in Uganda, the tool has been tailored and personalized in other parts of Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

\(^{158}\) For more information on MAP initiatives see: http://www.engenderhealth.org/pubs/gender/ppasa-manual.php

\(^{159}\) For instance, Puntos de Encuentro, a Nicaraguan NGO, launched the Group of Men Against Violence, which has provided space for critical reflection, counseling and training for men, and has developed a successful outreach campaign that uses a popular soap opera to deal with issues of masculinity and violence. P. Welsch, UNDP BCPR Nicaragua GDV Case Study (2010).
addition, supporting community centres or other local forums that bring ex-combatants together with community members for social activities (e.g. discussion groups with community leaders, sports, skill-building teams) can help strengthen social cohesion. In Colombia, for instance, ‘The Game of Peace’ engaged demobilized youth and their communities in fútbol (soccer) to promote active citizen participation, peaceful coexistence, conflict resolution and gender equality. The rules of the game, which required women and men to play together and women to score the first goal, were used as an entry point to question gender roles. This project also served to strengthen ties between ex-combatant youth and communities and build social cohesion.

- **Strengthening local mechanisms for security, justice, governance and peacebuilding.** At the community level, DDR programmes can develop capacities to manage disputes non-violently, strengthen ties between ex-combatants, communities and authorities, improve safety and security, and implement gun control laws, gun hand-in amnesties and gun buy-back initiatives. For instance, the UN’s Community Security and Social Cohesion (CSSC) approach provides a framework for developing multi-sectoral responses to community-identified needs. These can include measures to strengthen the institutions of local governance, peacebuilding and security and justice, address SALW supply and demand, and improve the community environment. Linking DDR with security, police, justice and public sector reform initiatives is critical to developing a coherent approach at the national and local levels.

The absence of women from the security sector can represent a lost opportunity to benefit from the different skill sets and approaches offered by women as security providers. Giving women the means and support to enter the DDR process should be part of wider encouragement for the full representation of women in the security sector. If female ex-combatants are not given adequate consideration in DDR processes, it is unlikely they will be able to enter security forces during reintegration. Specific measures to consider include: i) informing female ex-combatants during the DDR process of the option to integrate into national security forces, and ii) linking incentives for joining a DDR programme to the option of a career within the security sector.

### 3.3 Psychosocial reintegration

Ex-combatants and associated groups with unaddressed trauma and mental health concerns, including PTSD, drug and alcohol abuse, and exposure to GBV, are particularly vulnerable to developing anti-social behaviours. These can then mean loss of trust from community members or harm to themselves or others through self-directed, interpersonal or in some cases even group violence.

Confronted by difficulties in reintegrating into their communities or coping personally with war-related trauma, psychologically distressed ex-combatants and associated groups require concerted support in the post-conflict period. DDR programmes have often lacked the technical and financial resources to address psychosocial concerns. However, the achievement of sustainable reintegration and reduction of vulnerabilities to violence depend directly upon confronting these pervasive issues.

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160 In the context of the work performed by UNDP, Community Security and Social Cohesion (CSSC) is a programmatic approach that integrates security and development interventions. It brings together a wide range of state and civil society actors to identify the causes of insecurity and develop a coordinated response to them at the community level, and an enabling environment at the national level. It emphasizes participatory assessments, planning and accountability and seeks to improve service delivery, reduce social exclusion, enhance relations between social groups and strengthen democratic governance.
Box 21 provides an overview of key societal expectations and challenges faced by male and female ex-combatants during their psychosocial reintegration.

### Box 21. Potential societal expectations and challenges during psychosocial reintegration

**Male and female ex-combatants**

**Societal expectations:**
- Expectation that men and women will recover from trauma, cope with mental health symptoms and overcome stigma to become ‘normal’ members of society (often without the aid of mental health care, which may be stigmatized\(^{161}\))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male ex-combatants</th>
<th>Female ex-combatants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenges:</td>
<td>Challenges:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ More likely than women to deal with PTSD by ‘acting out’ (e.g. through aggressive behaviour)</td>
<td>▪ More likely than men to deal with PTSD by ‘keeping in’ (e.g. depression and anxiety)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Trauma from GBV less likely to be recognized than with women due to taboos associated with sexual violence against men</td>
<td>▪ Difficultly accessing psychosocial and medical help due to stigma and shame associated with GBV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Use of drugs and alcohol as a means to cope with PTSD and the difficulties of reintegration</td>
<td>▪ In some contexts, using drugs and alcohol as a means to cope with PTSD and the difficulties of reintegration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following are entry points and considerations for psychosocial reintegration:

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

In cases where both ex-combatants and communities have experienced trauma, collective approaches that address trauma among ex-combatants and war-affected communities together can be a means to promoting reconciliation and social cohesion (See Box 22). However, this approach may also be limited in cases of severe trauma and PTSD, as more severely affected individuals may not attend such meetings due to avoidance tendencies and the risk of suffering flashbacks.

### Box 22. Individual and collective psychosocial care in post-conflict settings\(^{162}\)

\(^{161}\) According the American Psychological Association, the US Army “recognizes that stigma is a major barrier for veterans in need of mental health care (Mental Health Advisory Team IV, May 2007). According to SAMHSA in 2007, service members frequently cite fear of personal embarrassment, disappointing comrades, losing the opportunity for career advancement, and dishonorable discharge as motivations to hide symptoms of mental illness from family, friends, and colleagues.’ See http://www.apa.org/about/gr/issues/military/critical-need.aspx

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

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

- **Building psychosocial referral chains and training community counselors.** Post-conflict countries frequently lack mental health facilities and trained mental health professionals, such as psychologists, psychiatrists, and counselors. In countries where this is the case, lay persons (e.g. midwives, teachers, etc.) can be trained to be community counselors for basic trauma recovery as part of DDR programmes.

  DDR programmes can also work to establish a referral chain to handle cases that cannot be treated by community counselors, including training hospital or medical staff (e.g. at a state or provincial level) to address second-level trauma, such that only the most severe cases are referred to psychiatrists/psychologists.  

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

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

- **Addressing stigma associated with GBV and providing access to care.** While the needs of female ex-combatant and WAAF survivors of GBV are increasingly recognized, those of male survivors of GBV have been largely neglected. DDR programmes should enable both men and women who face shame and stigma associated with GBV to come forward and to access support for recovery through public information and awareness-raising campaigns in communities of return.

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164 Taft and others, “Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Intimate Relationship Problems”.
Providing special attention to the psychosocial needs of children associated with armed forces and groups, as well as young adult ex-combatants. Children and young adults who have been socialized to violence at an early age are particularly vulnerable to continued patterns of violent behaviour and need specialized support. Boys are more likely to act out their violent experiences and trauma aggressively while girls are more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety disorders.

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

Country case study 9. Sudan and Uganda: Psychosocial reintegration

Sudan

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

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

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

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

The project will train 120 midwives, teachers and other civilians as community counselors to handle basic cases. In addition, the programme will train staff in two state hospitals to handle mid-level cases so that individuals showing negative coping mechanisms, including drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence, can be referred to the state level.

The most severe cases will be referred to the Psychosocial Trauma Centre (the only one in the country, and the only level where psychiatrists are present) at Africa University in Khartoum. The programme

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166 Adapted from information provided by Samara Andrade, Sudan DDR Programme.
also includes a psychosocial awareness-raising campaign to reduce stigma of dealing with psychosocial trauma, and includes a radio drama series designed to foster community discussion.

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

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

**Uganda**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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167 Adapted from information provided by Anna Maedl, Vivo.

168 Vivo is an independent, non-profit organization working to overcome and prevent traumatic stress and its consequences within the individual, the family as well as the community, safeguarding the rights and dignity of people affected by violence and conflict. Vivo further aims to strengthen local resources for the development of peaceful, human rights-based, societal ways of living. Available from http://www.vivo.org/index_eng.html

aggression were found. Feelings of revenge were reduced, whereas openness to reconciliation increased.

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

**Country case study 10. Colombia: Integrating gender-transformative activities into psychosocial reintegration support**

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

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

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

Gender-transformative activities are integrated into the psychosocial support component as a fundamental part of each key competency and on all levels of the reintegration process, including psychosocial activities on gender, masculinities, gender-based violence, social stigma and sexual and reproductive health.

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

This report is a first important step towards improving understanding of the relationship between gender identities and post-conflict violence among male and female ex-combatants and associated groups, and developing a conceptual framework to help address GDV more systematically in DDR policy and programming from the local to the international level.

The Inter-Agency Working Group is taking steps to ensure that GDV issues are more fully reflected in the Integrated DDR Standards in addition to working to develop human and financial resources to enable implementation and strengthen relationships with strategic partners on this topic. Drawing in part from this report, module 4.30 on Reintegration shall be revised to: i) include specific operational guidance addressing the gender-specific needs of men and boys in addition to the needs of women and girls and ii) strengthen psychosocial components of reintegration; and, iii) enhance the role of strategic communication in DDR.

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

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

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

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

**Recommendation 1**

**Bring a gender perspective to work with male participants and beneficiaries in DDR policies and programmes**

*DDR policies and programmes should recognize and respond to the gender-related needs and vulnerabilities of men and boys as well as women and girls in order to reduce trauma and vulnerabilities and strengthen resilience among both sexes to violence.*
As stated in the IMAGES study, “the world increasingly affirms that men must be part of achieving gender equality. Indeed, changing men’s practices and the structures and factors that enable, encourage and shape those practices – in terms of violence, health, overall treatment of women and girls and participation in family life – is a key part of the global gender equality agenda.”

Experience from a number of development contexts has shown that deliberate efforts to question men’s and women’s attitudes and expectations about gender norms through policies and programmes can encourage men to play a positive role in building gender equality.

The Integrated DDR Standards provide strong guidance on addressing the needs of women and girls, including WAAFG, in the DDR process. However, the need for a gender perspective on men’s and boys’ experiences and their successful reintegration has been largely neglected in policy and guidance.

The Operational Guide to the IDDRS highlights that “gender-responsive DDR should also address male concerns” and identifies several key issues facing men and boys; however, it does not provide a framework or guidance for how to address these needs in all stages of the DDR process, giving way to a conspicuous gap in gender programming to date. Box 23 provides examples of the types of GDV guidance that need to be developed in the IDDRS.

### Box 23. Actions to address the vulnerabilities of male ex-combatants and associated groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vulnerability</th>
<th>DDR programme action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violent or militarized masculinities</td>
<td>• Support male ex-combatants to develop non-violent, positive civilian identities. Social reintegration should encourage the transformation of violent norms in the wider community or society, for instance by supporting positive role models and peer groups for men, as well as activities that engage men to prevent GBV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectation to fulfill men’s traditional roles (e.g. role of ‘provider’)</td>
<td>• Assist male ex-combatants to find sustainable livelihoods and employment opportunities that give them a sense of purpose and respect. DDR programmes should not reinforce traditional or stereotypical male roles, but rather provide counselling and flexible socio-economic support that is sensitive to the social pressures men experience, and assists them to form a positive civilian identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male survivors of sexual violence</td>
<td>• Help ensure that both male and female ex-combatants receive the care that they need in order to recover both physically and emotionally, and to address social exclusion or stigma that may be an obstacle to social reintegration. DDR programmes should provide a space for male survivors of GBV to come forward and receive support and care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTSD and related mental health problems</td>
<td>• Provide more comprehensive psychosocial support to male ex-combatants and their families to address war-related mental health problems and to support individuals and families to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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170 Barker and others, Evolving Men, p. 10.
171 For five country case studies and recommendations for comprehensive gender equality policies see Barker and others, What Men Have to Do with It.
Recommendation 2
Conduct pilot projects that address the gender dimensions of violence in DDR

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

Approaches to integrating GDV in DDR programmes should be piloted at the country level on a more systematic basis to identify what works, what does not work, how to make it work and how to replicate it in other countries and contexts. These comparative analyses are fundamental prior to scaling up approaches to the entire caseload of participants in DDR programmes.

Some initial work is already underway, from which current and future programmes may benefit. In Sudan, peer educators have delivered a series of sensitization sessions to ex-combatants as part of the demobilization process on health and HIV, which have explored issues such as gender equitable relationships. Furthermore, under the guidance of UNDP, the DDR programme has worked with the Hakamas\(^\text{172}\) to transform the messages conveyed through their songs to promote peace and to disseminate information about the DDR process.

In the Republic of the Congo, community radio stations have started programmes for men that discuss the pervasive issue of GBV and how to resolve marital problems in a non-violent way. In Colombia, the High Council for Reintegration (Alta Consejería para la Reintegración) has integrated gender dimensions of violence analysis into its psychosocial support programme provided to ex-combatants. This has been achieved through an assessment tool (‘GDV traffic light’) that identifies the type of support ex-combatants require from social workers to construct healthier gender relations with partners, families and communities.

Recommendation 3
Increase support for the psychosocial components of reintegration

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

All components of reintegration are key: addressing one dimension of ex-combatants’ needs (i.e. livelihoods and employment) without the others (i.e. social and psychosocial support) will not change violent behaviour.

\(^{172}\) In Sudan, traditional women singers, or Hakamas, would accompany men to the frontline to sing war songs that encouraged men to fight. Their messages promoted the idea of violence as an integral part of manhood, including lyrics expressing that men who did not fight were cowards.
Despite this, the psychosocial dimensions of reintegration remain underfunded and unimplemented in DDR programmes. Donors have often focused their support on economic reintegration packages.

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

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

**Recommendation 4**

**Deepen engagement with families and communities of return**

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

This report highlights that violence often shifts from the battlefield to the home and community, and that the support provided by families and communities is critical to breaking that cycle. Deeper engagement with families and communities will help all to talk about the norms, attitudes and relationships that reinforce violent behaviour and will help support initial steps towards behavioural change.\(^{173}\)

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

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

**Recommendation 5**

**Strengthen partnerships with organizations working with women and men**

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

\(^{173}\)Behavioural change is a long-term process, which must involve not only the individual, but also the wider community and society whose norms and attitudes reinforce behaviour. DDR programmes can contribute to the initiation of such a process, which can be integrated, over time, into longer-term recovery and development.
Networks and organizations working with men, women, boys and girls on GDV and gender equality can play a central role in efforts to reach out to male and female ex-combatants, their families and communities and help transform social norms that support violence.

Experience has shown that men’s networks and groups can be key partners in GBV prevention, particularly in outreach to their male peers. However, despite a growing network of organizations actively working with men to bring about gender equality in developing settings, an ongoing challenge is the lack of partner organizations specifically located in post-conflict contexts.

An initial investment by UN entities and national counterparts in identifying appropriate men’s groups and forums, and developing their capacity to engage on these issues, may be required.

Partnerships with women’s organizations, particularly those focusing on violence prevention and peacebuilding issues, should be strengthened in order to enable women to have a stronger say in DDR programming. Women’s potential influence, not only as wives, partners and mothers of ex-combatants, but also as community members, is often neglected and under-utilized.

Experience has shown that women can be mobilized to support DDR efforts, including encouraging men to hand in weapons, promoting non-violent messages, and supporting ex-combatants’ reintegration.

Recommendation 6

Enhance coordination within the UN system to address GDV

In order to address the economic, social and psychosocial components of reintegration, multiple UN agencies must strengthen collaboration and coordination among themselves. Because many (ex-) combatants continue service in the security sector, or are integrated into new security forces after conflict ends, security sector reform (SSR) and related rule of law (RoL), police, prisons and justice sector reform programmes must also cooperatively address the gender dimensions of violence.

DDR programmes do not take place in isolation and must be coordinated and sequenced to promote post-conflict security and recovery. The range of necessary DDR interventions required falls within the mandate of multiple UN entities and associated agencies, including UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, UNFPA, IOM, WHO, UNAIDS, DPKO, UN Women and others.

Coordinated and integrated responses are needed in order to effectively address GDV in the following areas: Armed Violence Reduction (AVR), Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) control, Community Security and Social Cohesion (CSSC), Security Sector Reform (SSR), Rule of Law (RoL), Justice and Security, Peacebuilding, and Livelihoods and Local Economic Recovery. To yield positive results, these programmes must complement each other.

Security personnel whose socialization to violence and psychosocial needs are left unaddressed may abuse the use of force and continue patterns of unwarranted violence against civilians, as has been seen in many post-conflict settings. It is therefore critical to enhance coordination of DDR and SSR and to maximize opportunities to address issues of gender identity and violence among ex-combatants and

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174 The MenEngage alliance is a network with over 300 institutional partners throughout the world. See www.menengage.org.
175 For instance, GBV committed by uniformed personnel was highlighted as a key concern in southern Sudan. Andrade, UNDP BCPR Sudan Case Study (2009).
security sector personnel. This must include more coordinated approaches to training and vetting personnel. Help to build life skills or addressing PTSD and mental health issues of ex-combatants may also be relevant for military and other security sector personnel.

To deepen work to address the psychosocial dimensions of reintegration, it is critical that cooperation is strengthened with specialized UN agency partners. Expertise in public health, HIV/AIDS and GBV prevention provided by WHO, UNAIDS and UNFPA will be particularly important.

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

Transforming the social norms, institutions and attitudes that support violence in the wider community and society is a long-term process. The political will and financial means to reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience to violence at the community and national levels must persist beyond the end of a DDR programme to ensure the sustainability of results. It is therefore critical that DDR programmes be coordinated and sequenced with wider Armed Violence Prevention (AVP), peacebuilding, CSSC, or area-based development programmes that may offer a basis for integrated, longer-term approaches to gender and violence and to national peacebuilding and development strategies.

**Recommendation 7**

**Build capacity of UN and partners to address GDV**

*In order to produce more gender-responsive DDR programmes, DDR practitioners within the UN system, their partners and national and international counterparts must be provided with the knowledge, technical skills and tools to respond to gender dimensions of violence at any given stage in the DDR process.*

Training on GDV and programmatic approaches should be provided to both DDR managers and gender focal points in order to ensure that a sufficient number of qualified specialists remain available. In addition, training institutions should integrate gender and GDV issues into already existing basic and advanced DDR trainings to augment the pool of available disarmament, demobilization and reintegration personnel trained in gender issues.

Training tailored to specific programmes at the country level can also be instrumental not only to building the capacity of programme staff and partners, but to review gender practices, redress gender imbalances and adopt action plans. This will ensure immediate applicability of learning and possibly generate greater impact by improving the overall gender responsiveness of the DDR programme.
Annex 1. Definitions of terms

Children associated with armed forces or armed groups
According to the Paris Principles, “‘A child associated with an armed force or armed group’ refers to any person below 18 years of age who is or who has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys, and girls used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes. It does not only refer to a child who is taking or has taken a direct part in hostilities.”

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

Community
Community refers to all actors, groups and institutions within a geographic area, including civil society organizations, informal institutions, local authorities responsible for delivering services, and security providers.

Community security
Community security refers to the condition in which communities and their members are ‘free from fear’ and ‘free from want’. It encompasses both group security (protection against the breakdown of communities/groups that provide members with a shared identity and value system) and personal security (including threats from the State, other states, other non-state groups, gangs, or individuals, and including threats to women, children or self).

Community security and social cohesion (CSSC)
Community security and social cohesion is “a programmatic approach that integrates security and development interventions. It brings together a wide range of state and civil society actors to identify the causes of insecurity and to develop a coordinated response to them at the community level, and an enabling environment at the national level. It emphasizes participatory assessments, planning and accountability and seeks to improve service delivery, reduce social exclusion, enhance relations between social groups and strengthen democratic governance.”

Demobilization
The “formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups. The first stage of demobilization may comprise the processing of individual combatants in temporary centers to the massing of troops in camps designated for this purpose (cantonment sites, encampments, etc.).

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176 The Paris Principles: Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (February 2007).
177 DDRS Operational Guide, p. 4.
178 UNDP BCPR, Community Security and Social Cohesion: Towards a UNDP approach (2009). The definitions of community, community security, and social cohesion are adapted from this paper.
assembly areas or barracks). The second stage of demobilization encompasses the support package provided to the demobilized, which is termed reinsertion.”

Disarmament
The “collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. Disarmament also includes the development of responsible arms management programmes.”

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR)
DDR is “a process that contributes to security and stability in a post-conflict recovery context by removing weapons from the hands of combatants, taking the combatants out of military structures and helping them to integrate socially and economically into society by finding civilian livelihoods.”

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

Gender
“The social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between men, women, boys and girls, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable. Gender is part of the broader sociocultural context. Other important criteria for sociocultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age.

“The concept of gender also includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviours of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). The concept of gender is vital, because, when it is applied to social analysis, it reveals how women’s subordination (or men’s domination) is socially constructed. As such, the subordination can be changed or ended. It is not biologically predetermined, nor is it fixed forever.

“As with any group, interactions among armed forces and groups, members’ roles and responsibilities within the group, and interactions between members of armed forces/groups and policy and decision makers are all heavily influenced by prevailing gender roles and gender relations in society. In fact, gender roles significantly affect the behaviour of individuals even when they are in a sex-segregated environment, such as an all-male cadre.”

Gender analysis

179 Ibid.
180 Note by the Secretary-General on administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of UN peacekeeping operations, 24 May 2005 (A/C.5/59/31).
182 Ibid., p. 7.
183 IDDRS Module 5.10 on Women, Gender and DDR. Annex A; Terms, definitions and abbreviations.
“The collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated information. Men and women perform different roles in societies and in armed groups and forces. This leads to women and men having different experience, knowledge, talents and needs. Gender analysis explores these differences so that policies, programmes and projects can identify and meet the different needs of men and women.

“Gender analysis also facilitates the strategic use of distinct knowledge and skills possessed by women and men, which can greatly improve the long-term sustainability of interventions. In the context of DDR, gender analysis should be used to design policies and interventions that will reflect the different roles, capacity and needs of men, women, boys and girls.”  

**Gender-based violence (GBV)**

Gender-based violence (GBV) is “an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based upon socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females.”  

The types of violence differ across cultures and contexts; however, the acts included should be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following:

a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse of children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation.

b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution.

c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

**The gender dimensions of violence (GDV) in DDR**

A conceptual framework for understanding and addressing the gender-specific causes, impacts and dynamics of violence in countries emerging from violent conflict in order to provide effective entry points for sustainable reintegration. Through gender-sensitive analysis and identification of the factors that influence ex-combatants’ vulnerability and strengthen their resilience to violence, DDR practitioners and policymakers can better address the priorities and needs of programme participants and beneficiaries.

The GDV framework recognizes that both males’ and females’ gender identities and roles in society must be considered in order to address the gap in policy and guidance on DDR and gender and enhance the overall gender-responsiveness of DDR programmes. It further acknowledges that men and women have a shared responsibility for transforming harmful gender norms and identities and changing unequal relationships and seeks to provide a foundation for gender-transformative interventions during the longer-term reintegration process.

**Gender-sensitive programmes**

184 Adapted from IDDRS S.10 on Women, Gender and DDR.
186 Articles 1 and 2 of the UN General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) and Recommendation 19, paragraph 6 of the 11th Session of the CEDAW Committee.
Programmes that recognize the specific needs and realities of men, women, boys and girls based on the social construction of gender roles. “Such programmes recognize the need to treat men and women differently based on prevailing gender norms but show little evidence of seeking to change overall gender relations in the intervention.”

Gender-responsive DDR programmes
“Programmes that are planned, implemented, monitored and evaluated in a gender-responsive manner to meet the different needs of female and male ex-combatants, supporters and dependants.”

Gender-transformative programmes/interventions
Programmes that seek to transform gender roles and promote more gender-equitable relationships between men, women, boys and girls. Gender-transformative programmes “seek to critically reflect about, question or change institutional practices and broader social norms that create and reinforce gender inequality and vulnerability for men and women.” These interventions may include, but are not limited to, group education, community outreach campaigns, economic empowerment strategies and policy reform initiatives.

Intimate partner violence
Intimate partner violence refers to “any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm within the relationship.” This includes physical aggression (e.g. slapping, beating), psychological abuse (e.g. intimidation, humiliating), sexual coercion (e.g. forced intercourse), and other controlling behaviours (e.g. isolating a person from family or friends, controlling movement, restricting access to information or help).

Masculinities/Femininities
The terms masculinities and femininities are used to refer to the socially and culturally determined characteristics of men and women, which include the norms and expectations held about the roles, attributes and likely behaviours of men and women. Men’s and women’s identities and their expected roles and attributes differ across social and cultural contexts. The plural form of these terms is used to recognize that even within a particular cultural context, there isn’t a single concept of masculinity or femininity. Rather, many masculinities and femininities exist, each of which may be associated with different positions of power or degrees of social acceptance within society.

Militarized masculinities/femininities
Expressions of masculinity/femininity that value military attributes or behaviour.

Reinsertion
“The assistance offered to ex-combatants during demobilization but prior to the longer-term process of reintegration. Reinsertion is a form of transitional assistance to help cover the basic needs of ex-combatants and their families. While reintegration is a long-term, continuous, social and economic

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188 IDDRS 5.10 on Women, Gender and DDR.
process of development, reinsertion is short-term material and/or financial assistance to meet immediate needs, and can last up to one year.”

Reintegration
The “process by which former combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open time frame, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility and often necessitates long-term external assistance.”

Resilience
At the national or community level, resilience refers to the ability “to adapt, rebound, and strengthen functioning” in the face of violence, extreme adversity or risk. In the context of this report, it refers to an individual’s ability to withstand, resist and overcome the social and environmental pressures that might encourage violent behaviour or increase the likelihood of membership in violent groups in conflict-affected societies.

Sex (male/female)
The physical and biological differences between men and women.

Sex-disaggregated data
“Data that are collected and presented separately on men and women. The availability of sex-disaggregated data, which would describe the proportion of men, women, boys and girls associated with armed forces and groups, is an essential precondition for building gender-responsive policies and interventions.”

Social cohesion
Social cohesion refers to the reduction of disparities, inequalities and social exclusion within or between communities, as well as the strengthening of social relations, interactions and ties.

Transitional justice
Transitional justice comprises the full range of processes and measures associated with a society’s attempts to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation.

Violent masculinities/femininities
Expressions of gender identity that encourage the use of force or violence to control or gain power over others.

Vulnerability

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192 Secretary-General, note to the General Assembly, A/C.5/59/31, May 2005.
193 Ibid.
194 Carpenter, “Resilience to Violent Conflict”.
195 Ibid. In psychology, individual resilience is defined in terms of four factors (1) outcomes despite adversity (acquisition of social skills, emotional development, academic achievement, psychological wellbeing, self-esteem); (2) sustained competence under stress (coping skills, attitudes towards obstacles); (3) Recovery from trauma; (4) Effect of interactions (reaction to risks or negative outcomes, for example, through use of humor to minimize negative impacts).
196 IDDRS 5.10 on Women, Gender and DDR.
In the context of this report, factors that increase an individual’s susceptibility to or risk of being affected by violence, resorting to it, and being drawn into groups that perpetrate it.

**Women Associated with Armed Forces and Groups (WAAFG)**

“Women and girls who participated in armed conflicts in supportive roles, whether coerced or voluntarily,” and who were socially and economically dependent on the armed force or group.\(^\text{198}\)

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\(^\text{198}\) IDDRS Operational Guide, p. 194.