

## **1. DDR is not enough: you need DDR + SSR**

**Peace is a complex business.** Peace born out of violence, but the meaning and nature of 'peace' is culturally specific. For most Europeans, seeing a rifle on the street creates fear and symbolizes a threat of violence – whereas for an Albanian, an Afghan or an American it might seem absurd that people would consider the sight of a rifle 'a threat to peace'. Guns are a part of some cultures, not of all cultures. Clearly 'peace' does not have the same meaning in every culture, and building peace is especially complex in societies that are recovering from violent conflict.

**A ceasefire and a peace agreement** are not sufficient to bring an end to open hostilities. Yet as we see in Ivory Coast, political will is necessary to move from a ceasefire towards a more permanent peace process. DDR is often an early and necessary next step toward lasting peace - but Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration are only three of many risk-laden steps on the path to peace.

We believe that DDR is a misleading term. We use the expression 3D4R to emphasize that there are many small-but-vital steps involved in bringing combatants into civilian life, and the process contains more 'Rs' than 'Ds'. After years of armed conflict, there is often no civilian life into which ex-combatants can re-integrate. We therefore believe that DDR, DDDRRRR, or 3D4R is never enough, and it needs to be inserted into a broader process of Security Sector Reform.

**We might schematize the peace process as FOUR BIG PHASES that are not sequential but need to run concurrently:**

- **Negotiating a peace framework (including a ceasefire)**
- **Managing 3D4R**
- **Investing heavily and quickly in the Peace Economy**
- **Launching comprehensive Security Sector Reform**

**1.1. Negotiating a peace framework** between rival factions involves mediators (some big, but many of them invisible and these include the mothers and grandmothers of armed fighters). Mediation takes place through political pressures, meetings and conferences, and it generally leads to some form of written peace agreement. The Afghans did not negotiate with the Taliban, and this example shows that DDR can be technically successful and yet – because there is no agreed Afghan peace framework – it has had very little impact on lasting peace.

We believe peace negotiations are an essential part of conflict resolution, and they should take place in-country and close to the men with guns. Agreements negotiated in big hotels in foreign countries tend to create doubt in the minds of ordinary foot soldiers on both sides of the conflict. Often leaders find it difficult to 'sell' the peace agreement to their men. The fact that the Sierra Leone agreement was negotiated in Togo, and the Ivorian agreement in France, did not encourage the guys with guns to have confidence in the agreement their leaders had signed.

**1.2. Managing DDR – or 3D4R** – brings in the weapons and the combatants, and offers them a better future in a non-violent society. Although every conflict is distinct, there are certain lessons that have been learned in the field and which are common to almost every situation. One is the rule that you should never offer cash for weapons, which fails because it creates a thriving market for the very product you are trying to eliminate from the market! We define the following steps as essential components for almost every DDR programme, and we call it 3D4R:

- **Disarmament of all armed groups** – make sure you collect ammunition and explosives as well as weapons from individual ex-combatants, and be prepared to enter into special negotiations with commanders who probably control hidden stocks of explosives, ammo, mines, small arms and even heavy weapons. Several DDR programmes failed to include ammo in the initial plan, and later regretted it!
- **Destruction of illegal and surplus weapons + ammunition** : if these are handed over to the local armed forces instead of destroyed, you can be sure that some weapons (and all the hand guns) will disappear, and they will 'leak' sooner or later into the market for illegal and criminal weapons (Mozambique was the biggest example of this, but this rule is universal). EPES Mandala believes that the definition of 'disarmament' in post-conflict zones should include 'destruction'. We favour public destruction of weapons, and 'Flames of Peace' as an important way to build public confidence in the reality of peace. Naturally, explosives have to be destroyed in a very different manner, by high-level technical specialists.
- **Demobilization and Reinsertion** - ID cards is the Demobilization part, but Reinsertion is equally vital as the former fighters enter the process of returning to 'normal' life. Reinsertion provides medical treatments, career planning advice, aptitude tests, literacy and vocational training, information about AIDS and sexually-transmitted diseases, human rights and anger management training, and preparation of fighters for integration into family and community. These are all part of this important process that should take just a few weeks. As the Sierra Leone experience showed (when Freetown was sacked by men fed up by the slowness of DDR) it is important that the 'cantonment process' be kept short. Former fighters are often grouped into DDR camps where the regime must include plenty of sport and entertainment, and a forward-looking programme of training that keeps restless young men from revolt and from changing their minds about the benefits of disarmament.
- **Reintegration of armed groups** – moving armed men and commanders into profitable, income-generating activities or careers is not easy. There needs to be an expanding economy to provide job opportunities, which is not the case in Afghanistan. Reintegration is intended to take men away from their old fighting units, and help them fit into a society run by the rules of decentralized, democratic governance. It is important that a peaceful future should look better than their violent past.
- **Rehabilitation of infrastructure, communities and individuals**, including youths – trauma counseling for child soldiers, and for men and women who have suffered from the violence, and the physical rehabilitation of disabled veterans are equally as vital as rebuilding homes and schools. Very important is remembering the fact that villagers often suffered more than the combatants: in Liberia it caused huge anger among villagers whose livestock had all been killed during the war, that all the benefits of peace appear to flow to the men who had caused the suffering with their weapons. A Western-style focus on individuals may not fit Africa's community culture.
- **Resettlement of displaced populations** is often an important part of building peace. Refugees outside the country may be an important part of any permanent peace settlement (as the Rwanda-Congo experience shows), and they need a lot of support. Sometimes however, as in Darfur today, refugees are actually better off than internally displaced persons

(IDP) whose vulnerability is increased by the fact that they may not benefit from the external assistance, legal status or protection accorded to refugees.

- **Reconciliation between communities** is often forgotten by DDR designers. There are traditional forms of healing and forgiveness that need to be mobilized, so that the causes of violence and resentment can be treated. The causes of conflict need to be broadly discussed and analysed, and local forms of mediation and reconciliation need to be reinforced to transform conflict into lasting peace. In South Africa the Truth & Reconciliation Commission was very helpful, but this model does not suit all cultures.

These steps are not sequential. There is a good case for arguing that the preparation of the 'R' components should start before the 'D'. Although no one denies that the DDD comprise a critical and highly dangerous phase of the process, the success of DDR is always judged on the results of the 'R' components and their long-term contribution to peace.

If you count them there are actually at least five 'Rs' in the list. In the culture-specific Afghan context we can add two more 'Rs' to the list: the failure of the DDR process to understand the local need for Respect and Recognition has caused political headaches for the Afghan government.

Rehabilitation<sup>1</sup> is often the place you must start, in a post-war context. The 'R' phases are so complex, that Rehabilitation should be seen as a pre-condition for Reintegration. You cannot demobilize and reintegrate ex-combatants successfully, if there are no functioning communities for the Xcoms to go to. The complexity of this seven-step 3D4R process explains why we reject the shorthand formulation 'DDR': for if you miss even one of these steps, you may miss them all.

It goes without saying that this is not a short-term process. Experience from the field shows that a typical donor-driven three-year programme for DDR is designed to fail.

A 3D4R programme should be designed to last seven years.

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<sup>1</sup> In the BICC-mediated E-conference in DDR that took place before the Afghanistan programme was started, one of the conclusions of participants was that the Afghan programme should be called RDD instead of DDR: because the 'R' sections take longer to plan and implement than the dangerous-but-finite 'D' sections.

**1.3. Launching comprehensive Security Sector Reform.** Many of the Xcoms will wish to enter one of the uniformed government services, yet violent conflict may have destroyed the police force and disrupted border guards and customs and fire services so severely that they do not provide viable options for beneficiaries of DDR. Nor is it easy to persuade people to surrender their weapons and ammunition, if they have no confidence in the capacity of the authorities to keep order and impose the rule of law.

Experience from successful peace building programs leads EPES Mandala to promote a holistic approach involving a range of actions that are often neglected under the label of DDR:

- Confidence building between armed forces and civilians
- Redefining respect and the roles of police and military forces
- Writing Codes of Conduct, then training people to understand and respect them
- Rebuilding or retraining police and other uniformed forces with minimum equipment
- Creating a coherent legal framework for peace and disarmament and training judges
- Promoting debate on small arms between government, legislature, and civil society
- Building cooperation and cross-border collaboration between neighboring countries
- Mobilizing civil society for peace building and reducing violence
- Reducing the number of illegal weapons and surplus stockpiles
- Destroying surplus arms and ammunition to build confidence
- Ensuring that official armories are well managed and stockpiles are controlled

#### **1.4. Investing in the Peace Economy.**

Peace is measured not by the number of weapons collected, but by the amount of trade and private investment that take place under the new conditions of peace. Violence blocks economic activity, and positive peace restores it.<sup>2</sup> Peace needs investment.

No DDR programme – nor even a 3D4R programme – can be expected to create jobs.

The case of Afghanistan is exemplary. While the international community invested hundreds of millions of US dollars in building a war economy to fight the Taliban after September 2001, virtually nothing was invested in roads, bridges, buildings or government infrastructure during the next five years. As a result, the UN's successful the DDR project that demobilized 63,000 fighters in 2006, was judged a 'failure' by most of these men who found they had few economic prospects in the peace economy. Many received training for functions that the economy could not support: carpenters and tailors cannot make a living if no one can afford to buy their services.

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<sup>2</sup> Professor Johann Galtung - 'the Father of Peace Studies' - categorizes a ceasefire as 'negative peace' and contrasts it with a 'positive peace' that is sustainable because it tackles the underlying causes of conflict.

## **2. Security Sector Reform in more detail**

Experience from the field, and our study of a wide range of successful (and failed) peace building programs on four continents, has guided EPES Mandala towards a holistic approach for SSR involving a range of actions that are usually neglected under the label of DDR. The most important of our personal success stories took place in Cambodia where, under the flag of the European Union, many of the Founders of EPES Mandala worked together to help Cambodians produce a lasting peace after thirty years of civil war. Sad to say, no such success has come to Afghanistan.

The President of Afghanistan outlined a SSR strategy based on five activities:

- DDR
- Restructuring the MoD and the new Afghan Army
- Reform of the Afghan National Police
- Counter-narcotics programme
- Reform of the Justice system

This SSR structure may be suitable for the Afghan context, but it is not applicable everywhere. We have tried to distill in our holistic approach the important Lessons Learned from a range of experiences, identifying common points that may apply to most post-conflict situations. We will explain briefly the content of each of the components we cited above.

**2.1. Confidence building between armed forces and civilians.** Conflict and violence lead inevitably to a breakdown of trust between the men with weapons and their unarmed victims. The situation seldom sinks to the level of human destruction seen in the Cambodia of Pol Pot, or the Sierra Leone ravaged by Foday Sankoh, but rebuilding confidence requires time and patience and careful strategies. Imposing discipline on the armed forces is the first step, and destroying the culture of impunity. Authorities need to create public transparency on the issue and explain the rules – especially concerning carrying and use of firearms by soldiers and police. That is the necessary first step in rebuilding confidence. The media is a valuable ally, but nothing can replace the power of public, human rights education sessions in which community members and the uniformed forces participate together. A Code of Conduct should emerge from this process, which will guide military, police and civilians alike – parliamentarians, civic leaders and civil society organisations included - as to how they should behave in terms of courtesy and mutual respect, mutual oversight, the control of weapons and explosives, violence, and the protection of women and children.

**2.2. Redefining mutual respect between police and military forces.** In civil war, the institution that disintegrates the quickest is the police force. Either the police are massacred, or they turn themselves into a paramilitary force that behaves like an army. Either way, the tradition of civilian policing disappears. The army and police have very different roles, reporting to different ministers. While the army defends the frontiers and looks outwards, the police provide protection for civilians inside the country, and look inwards. Impunity from arrest must be ended. The power of the gun must be broken, if peace is to survive. A new post-conflict relationship must evolve with the police regaining their power to arrest soldiers who commit a crime (even if they may then be judged by the military). Mutual Codes of Conduct are often helpful to guide soldiers and police, and in Mali these were reduced to a series of eight points, printed on a card and kept in the pocket of every uniform.

**2.3. Retraining magistrates, police and other uniformed forces.** The curbing of illegal activities – including illegal circulation of people and weapons – is essential for peace to prevail, and they require a well-functioning force of police, border guards, customs officers, forestry officials and other government services. The cases of Liberia and Sierra Leone show how important it is for magistrates must support the new police force, and vice versa. Together with nursing and fire services, this is the human infrastructure needed for authorities to restore confidence in the rule of law at the end of a violent conflict. Many disarmed and demobilized former fighters can build a peacetime career in these services. For peace to prevail, all uniformed forces need to feature significantly in SSR policy.

**2.4. Creating a coherent legal framework for peace and disarmament.** President Karzai deemed necessary in Afghanistan to reform the whole justice system, but normally the focus of SSR will be on weapons and their misuse, and on related aspects of violence and disorder (including domestic violence and child protection which generally prove problematic when men who have been under arms and under stress return to domestic life). It is helpful to create a National Commission under the President, which has the authority to bring all ministries together to agree on a legal framework – including a mechanism for consulting with and listening to civil society before new rules are adopted. All ECOWAS countries and most African states now have such an inter-ministerial National Commission. In Cambodia, the Commission proved to be the key element in breaking political deadlock on SSR and passing an arms law. The legal framework for SSR will normally focus the regulation of weapons: who can have them and under what conditions? Off-duty soldiers and private security companies provide challenges to this legal framework, which has to be drafted, approved by ministries, by ministers and by parliament. Even then, each ministry still needs to publish its rules for the application of the law: an area that intimately concerns the SSR team, for a law has no value until it reaches implementation.

**2.5. Building cooperation between neighbouring countries.** It is much easier to impose a coherent legal framework if neighbouring countries are operating similar sets of rules. Border officials working together on either side of the frontier are less open to bribes. It is difficult to impose gun restrictions on a population, if guns are brazenly legal and readily available in the country next door (lax Liberian gun laws from the American tradition were one factor in the destabilization of Sierra Leone). In some regions of Africa and Latin America, regional agreements on weapon controls exist. Such agreements strengthen police forces and border/ customs officers, strengthen also the influence of each inter-ministerial National Commission on Firearms, and reinforce the value of sub-Regional organizations that promote dialogue, trade and cooperation between nations.

**2.6. Mobilizing civil society for peace building and reducing violence.** The potential importance of civil society organizations is often forgotten by political leaders, and misrepresented by ministry officials who perceive CSOs as a threat to their hegemony. Trade unions and other CSOs – together with the press - are often the only agencies capable of challenging abuse by local officials. It is often only thanks to civil society that the rule of law may survive in remote areas. CSOs can be the eyes and ears of well-intentioned political reformers and peace builders. CSOs are precious both for supplying information outreach about new laws and peace processes, and for assisting the authorities to implement key elements of SSR: improving civil-military relations, organizing voluntary weapon collections, sensitizing people to the dangers of mines and explosives, policing child abuse and domestic violence, providing education for women and training to resettled or reintegrated populations, encouraging reconciliation, and facilitating the integration of ex-combatants.

**2.7. Reducing the number of illegal weapons and surplus stockpiles.** Illegal weapons and surplus stocks of weapons and explosives are a permanent danger to peace. In a nation that has known years of civil war, a single shot in the dark, or the explosion of a single grenade in the night can provoke sudden, communal fears that set back the peace process by months. In addition, hidden weapons and explosives pose an obvious risk to families and children, and destabilize peace building by keeping doubt in the minds of a population traumatized by the fear of recurring violence. Making weapons illegal, and imposing the law (with house-to-house collections, road barrages with car searches) help take weapons off the streets and encourage a climate of calm. But stored weapons will inevitably find

their way into the hands of criminal gangs, rebels and troublemakers. Mechanisms need therefore to be put in place to encourage people to surrender weapons. They may be so scared of being found out, that they take their weapons and bury them in the rice fields where they are not available for use. Amnesties and other collection mechanisms (weapons in exchange for lottery tickets, or community development projects – but never, NEVER for cash!) have been tried successfully in various places. Voluntary weapon collection programmes (VWCP) are culture-specific: the lottery that worked in Belgrade may not be suitable in Katmandu. Once they have been collected, weapons must be destroyed!

**2.8. Destroying surplus arms and ammunition to build confidence.** The UN's successful DDR programme in Mozambique famously turned into a disaster because the weapons were not destroyed. 200,000 weapons were left in storage when the Security Council cut funding precipitously, and South Africa is still dealing today with the flood of illegal criminal arms from Mozambique, their registration numbers carefully recorded by the UN disarmament team. It is well known to disarmament researchers that every illegal weapon started life as a legal weapon. 'Leakage' is inevitable from any armoury, as soon as the number of weapons surpasses the requirements of a unit, or as soon as the age of the weapons or ammunition leads to their replacement. Weapons that may be rejected by the army will be snapped up by a grateful rebel group overseas, or by the masters of organized crime. If weapon destruction is made public and transparent, it will build confidence that peace has come to stay. The first Flame of Peace was lit in Timbuktu (Mali) on 27 March 1996, and the sight of 3,000 rebel weapons going up in smoke convinced the 10,000 watchers – and the Malian nation - that peace had well and truly arrived.

**2.9. Ensuring that official armouries are well managed and controlled.** One of the ways in which a civilian government can assert political control over an unruly military after a period of violent conflict, is by exerting control over the military's stocks of weapons and ammunition, explosives and vehicles. This involves normal civilian and budgetary oversight, but it is also an important psychological test that allows the government to impose better security over weapons of potential instability (for as we have just mentioned, every illegal weapons started life in a legal government armoury before it 'leaked').

Exerting successful, civilian, democratic and parliamentary oversight involves carrots as well as sticks, as we proved in Cambodia. The degree of oversight should be defined in the Code of Conduct, so that army and police commanders do not feel that their internal authority is threatened. Good weapon storage requires investments: computers and training in the management of software will bring new skills to officers, as well as allowing them to do their jobs better, ensure good control of stocks, and organize the rotation and destruction of old and surplus explosives. Proper buildings are needed, if weapons and ammunition are to be kept safely (preferably in separate buildings). Offering purpose-built armouries to the forces is a significant carrot! If armouries are properly managed, the army and police will become more efficient in all that they do, while the population will be reassured that legal arms will remain legal and locked up in their proper place.

## **Conclusion**

**These are some of the Lessons Learned from the combined experience of senior consultants in the EPES Mandala team.**

**Lessons Learned are never static. Every experience in the field brings new knowledge and new lessons. We are always happy to hear of such experiences, and we will be delighted to incorporate contributions into this paper from the field from practitioners who write to us.**