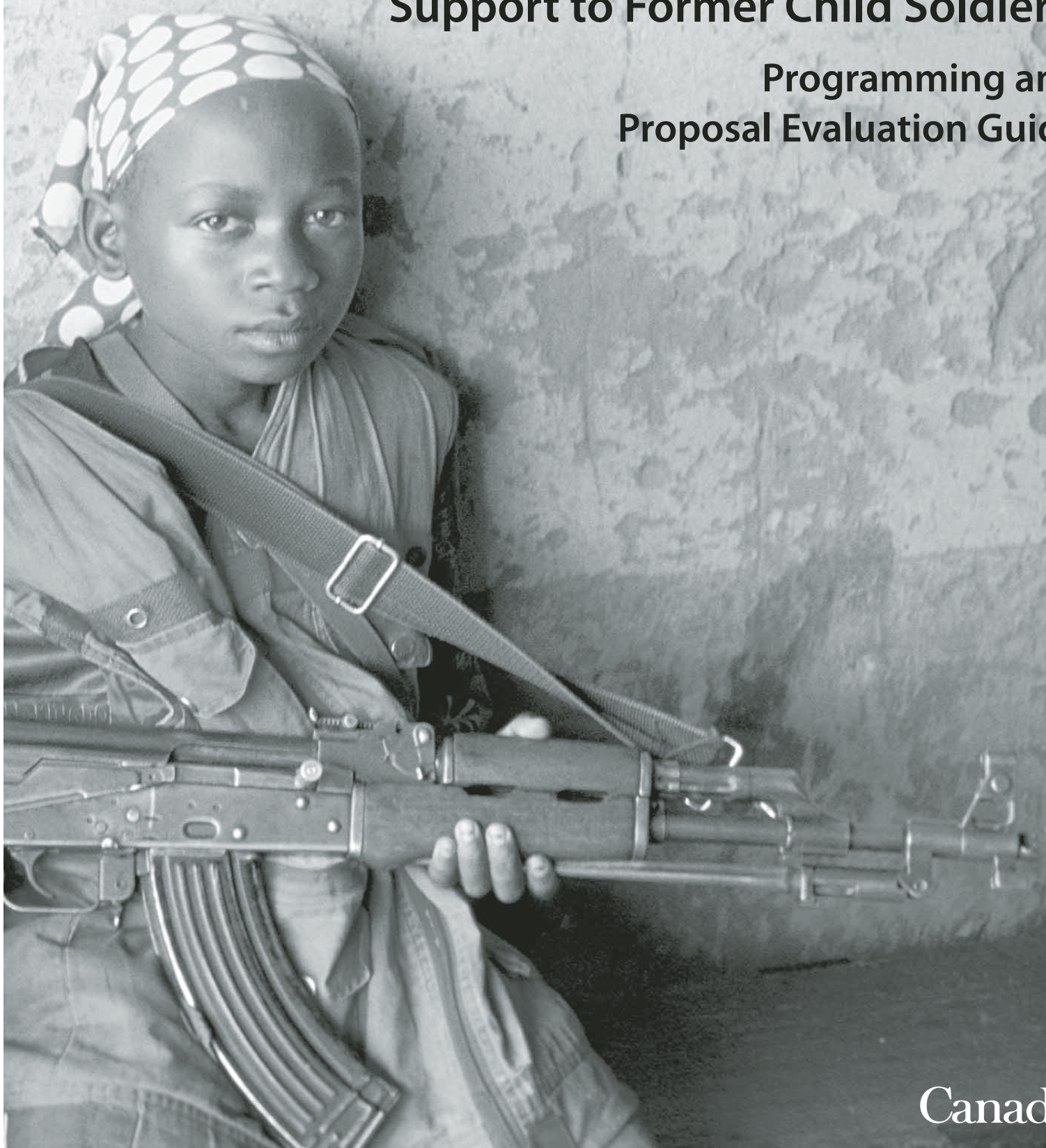




Canadian International  
Development Agency

Agence canadienne de  
développement international

# Support to Former Child Soldiers: Programming and Proposal Evaluation Guide





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Canadian International Development Agency

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May 2005

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Catalogue No. CD4-23/2005E-PDF

ISBN 0-662-40372-X

Cover photo: A boy and girl pose with their rifles in Marabou, Democratic Republic of Congo.

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Printed in Canada

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## Acknowledgements

This guide was developed with the input and insight of numerous people inside and outside CIDA, including: Pierre Bernier; Hubert LeBlanc, Project Services International, Christina Clark, Oxford University; Chantal Goupil, Department of National Defence; Hilary Homes, Amnesty International; Andy Knight, University of Alberta; Ardith Molson; Henry Nzeyimana, UNICEF; Frances Tanner; and Natalie Zend.



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## Acronyms and Initialisms

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<b>CIDA</b>	Canadian International Development Agency
<b>CRC</b>	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>CS</b>	child soldier
<b>DDR</b>	disarmament, demobilization, reintegration
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>RBM</b>	results-based management
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund

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## Introduction

In any given year, there are an estimated 300,000 child soldiers (CSs) in all the regions of the world. Programs to help reintegrate child soldiers (CSs) usually target countries that are engaged in the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of government or rebel forces after the end of an armed conflict. Programming to assist CSs is still in its early stages. As author Beth Verhey suggests:

Determining best practice with child soldiers is an ongoing effort. And for program practitioners, it is often difficult to translate a list of best practice principles into local application. Concerted efforts and funding are needed to evaluate, document, and disseminate lessons.

Demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers are often portrayed as hopeless—especially where child soldiers have been

forcibly recruited and made to participate in atrocities. Yet, . . . children and youths involved in armed conflict can re-engage positive social relations and productive civilian lives. It is not easy, however, and depends crucially on the political will and resources to include child soldiers in peace agreements and demobilization programs and to support their reintegration into family and community.<sup>1</sup>

This guide provides, in a deliberately concise format, tools intended to help translate best practices and lessons learned in assistance to the reintegration of CSs. These include a summary of general considerations and of lessons learned, a risk-analysis matrix, a results-based grid for evaluating proposals or designing programs, suggested readings, and appendixes that contain a series of checklists.



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These boys in Lunsar, Sierra Leone, were recruited by the Revolutionary United Front.

This text is proposed as a reference guide for planners, proposal assessors, managers, monitors, evaluators, and field practitioners involved in DDR programming<sup>2</sup>. It is based on the most relevant experience in the very complex field of CS assistance by various local and international interveners: Amnesty International, Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers and its partners, International Committee of the Red Cross, International Labour Organization (ILO), International Rescue Committee, Save the Children group, UNICEF, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, World Bank, World Vision, and so on.

The guide points out the usefulness of closely factoring geopolitical, cultural, and socio-economic realities in the DDR programs. It also endorses a child rights-based approach. On the latter approach, advocacy on child rights must be implemented at all stages of the program. For CSs, their principal rights at risk are the following:

- right to life and bodily security
- right not to be subjected to mistreatment or to inhuman and degrading treatment
- right to a standard of living high enough to allow physical, intellectual, social, and moral development
- right to health care
- right to education (instruction)
- right to express themselves and participate in decisions
- right to play
- right to justice
- right to gender equality
- right to work

The next section gives a summary of basic international standards for the rights of CSs, a definition of a CS, and the eligibility for reintegration assistance programs.

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## Legal considerations

This section is largely taken from Christina Clark's *Juvenile Justice and Child Soldiering: Trends, Challenges, Dilemmas* (Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2002.)

### International legal standards

A growing body of international law exists to prevent the recruitment and use of children as soldiers. The prohibition on all recruitment of children under the age of 15 into both armed forces and armed groups has by now acquired a customary international law status. The age-of-15 standard is embodied in the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. It is therefore binding on all armed forces and armed groups regardless of whether the state is a party to specific international treaties or even when there is no state.

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which came into force in July 2002, allows for prosecution of those who recruit and use CSs. The statute defines the recruitment and use in hostilities of children under the age of 15 by any armed force or armed group, in both international and non-international armed conflicts, as a war crime. Moreover, it includes sexual slavery as a crime against humanity. This is important, as some CSs are also forcibly held and used as sex slaves.

There is increasing international consensus on the prohibition of conscription or forced recruitment of children under the age of 18. This higher standard is embodied in the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, ILO Convention No. 182, and the



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A government soldier shoulders arms in Battambang, Cambodia.

African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (however, international law allows for the *voluntary* recruitment of 15-year-olds).

As for criminal law relating to CSs, international law has not yet directly addressed the issue of whether CSs should face prosecution for atrocities they commit. However, when a CS is prosecuted, international standards for juvenile justice in conventions such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) must be respected along with the principle of the best interests of the child.

### Cape Town definition

In 1997, international experts on CSs and the donor community adopted the Cape Town Principles and Best Practices on the Recruitment of Children into the Armed Forces and on Demobilization and Social Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Africa during a symposium organized

by the NGO Working Group on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF for the purpose of preventing the recruitment of persons under the age of 18. The following broader definition of CS has garnered a large following over the years:

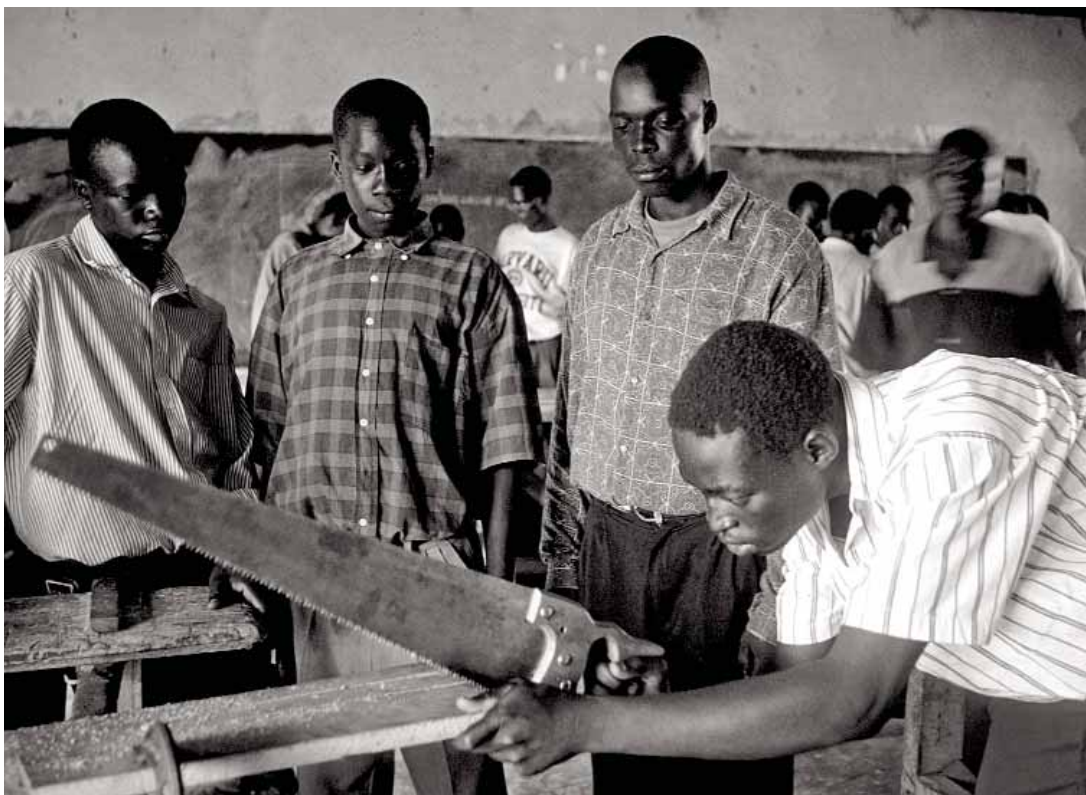
... any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers and those accompanying such groups, other than purely as family members. It includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms.

This is the Cape Town definition, which is favoured in this guide.

## Eligibility for reintegration assistance programs

Some CSs may be led to participate in a formal demobilization process along with adults. Many others, however, are left on the sidelines because of their age, their gender, the function they performed, or a disability.

On the question of age, former CSs older than 18 often lobby to be eligible for reintegration programs, but they are usually left out unless there are significant human and financial resources to assist them. (A decision on these overage CSs should be left to specific programs).



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Woodworking is one of the skills learned by former child soldiers at a training institute in Gulu Province, Uganda.

In terms of the gender of the CS, discrimination against girl CSs is very common, and interveners must strenuously insist for the inclusion of girl CSs. If girl CSs are not included, an emergency plan should be put in place to reflect the specific circumstances and rights of girl CSs, as well as of mutilated, disabled, HIV-positive, and substance-addicted CSs. For example, special care must be arranged for victims of sexual violence and for mothers and their children. Initiatives involving girls<sup>3</sup> in peacebuilding processes must be supported. For example, provision must be made for educational and reproductive-health activities.

On the question of function, the Cape Town definition seen at the beginning and formulated by international experts and the donor community should be used: all child or adolescent participants, regardless of function—cooks, porters, messengers, girls used as “wives,” and those in other support functions—should be considered CSs.



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A counsellor at a centre for traumatized children in Gulu Province, Uganda, uses art therapy as part of the treatment for a former child soldier.

## General considerations regarding assistance to child soldiers

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**The purpose of a DDR program** is to provide assistance to persons who are disarmed and demobilized, to promote sustainable peace, and to restore civilian life. It is good to focus on this from the outset and to remember it in the heat of the moment throughout the program. In Appendix 1, a short text summarizes the reasons for assisting the reintegration of CSs into society.

At each stage of the DDR process, **the best interests of the child** is the key consideration, one that guides the interpretation of the other articles in the CRC itself. The precise content of

the “best interests” principle is not defined, and decision-makers have traditionally determined its application using their own value frameworks and normative belief systems. Despite its imprecision, this principle is of overarching importance where the law has yet to evolve, such as when CSs are accused of crimes.<sup>4</sup>

Support for CSs in a given country must be **coordinated among all stakeholders** and interveners at the various government levels, in civil society, and in the international community. Coordination leads to the use of the *program-based approach*, which provides



These girls are getting the right message at Children’s Town project, which offers academic and vocational training to disadvantaged children in Chibombo District, Zambia.

an informed overview and greater flexibility. Activities must also be added to existing programs to enhance them. The proliferation of new programs is costly, raises expectations, weakens the country's regular programs, and marginalizes the CS. It is also definitely beneficial to use qualified local resources wherever possible. Among other things, they make a vital social and cultural contribution. DDR guidelines may be national, but their implementation is local.

Priority must be given to an approach that advocates **participation by children**,<sup>5</sup> and is **based on their rights**. CSs then act as stakeholders exercising their rights and assuming their responsibilities, instead of being passive victims. The Cape Town principles state that *the rights of children involved in the demobilization process must be ensured and that the media, researchers and others must respect those rights*. Of course, the participation of CSs does not mean catering to their every whim. Rather, it means working with children to develop the best strategy for their reintegration. CSs can be viewed in two ways: they can be seen as children who need to be nurtured back to health; they can also be seen as seasoned veterans of war in which they have had responsibilities to fulfil.

At some time during or shortly after the reintegration program, non-violent conflict resolution should be introduced to as many levels of society as possible. Often the biggest barrier to reintegration is that villagers or other people want to retaliate against former CSs, many of whom are reluctant to return for just that reason. In addition, breaking cycles of violence requires helping former CSs to handle their conflicts non-violently rather than through the barrel of a gun.

It is an inexcusable mistake to neglect local beliefs and customs in the social reintegration of CSs soldiers. Programs should be developed with the communities, they should build on existing resources, and they should take account of the context and community priorities, values, and traditions.

In planning and monitoring these programs, results must be emphasized, but **flexibility** must also be shown. Results-based management (RBM) has its place, but judgment must be exercised in its application. Governance in general, starting with peacebuilding, and capacity development are fairly new and extremely complex.<sup>6</sup>

## Summary of lessons learned from implementation

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Experience has shown that young combatants will often willingly leave an armed group under two conditions: 1) they know they are not putting themselves in any serious danger once they leave the group, and 2) they will receive enough support for long enough to be able to effect a relatively soft transition to civilian life. (It is estimated that it takes substantial means and three to five years to reintegrate a CS sustainably.) This support must be based on an **integrated approach** to assisting youth and their communities toward reintegration. Assistance must aim to improve, at a minimum, the CS's health status and economic well-being. It must also offer the CS personal development and recreational opportunities.<sup>7,8</sup>

Implementing a reintegration program is, above all, a matter of having an **intimate knowledge of the full environment**. This results in sound management, especially technical and logistical management. For example, reintegration makes it necessary to carry out a range of activities at the same time. Parents must be traced. Psycho-social (see Appendix 2 for the definition of "psychosocial") and other health care must be provided when necessary. Special programs must be delivered. These include apprenticeships, vocational training, life skills and formal education. Labour-intensive projects must be executed. Small business and micro-credit must be promoted. Community and local networks of prevention, mutual help, advocacy, and others, must be actively supported.

A tried and tested strategy can be identified to maximize immediate positive outcomes and for preventative purposes: while it is not a panacea and often blends with other specialized forms of care, the **integrated approach** is based on the CS's culture and sets family reunification in motion.<sup>9</sup> It also draws on the contributions of professional and community networks. This approach has five phases: 1) CSs are included in

the peace agreement or another similar agreement, 2) CSs are formally removed from military control, 3) until their families are traced, child soldiers spend some time at a transit centre (the length of stay should ideally vary on a case-by-case basis), 4) CSs then return to their family and community, and 5) families, networks, and communities receive specific assistance throughout.

Family **poverty-reduction** programs are important. It is overly sanguine to expect a hungry family or community to welcome demobilized children with open arms. It is very risky to push solidarity and volunteering to extremes, yet fail to assist individuals, families, and communities who are to welcome child soldiers. All three have been drained by armed conflict, which worsened an economic situation that had long been chronically unstable. There is no question about it. An effort must be made to provide material support for families and communities to promote CS reintegration.

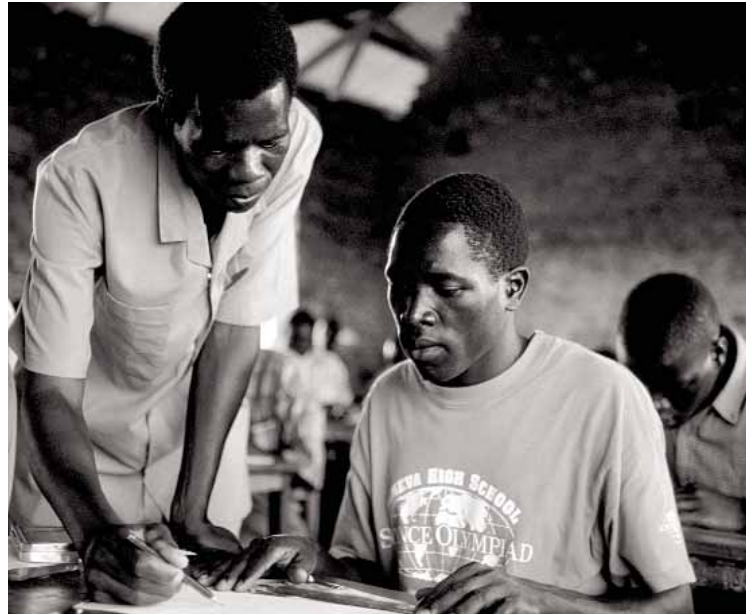
The net must be cast very wide in an effort to support the CS with every possible form of assistance. CS protection and assistance networks must be established and supported at all levels and in many communities. The private sector's cooperation must regularly be sought, especially for apprenticeships and employment. Close ties must be established with authorities, and there must be an increase in local capacity to advocate the rights and interests of children. This will make mechanisms and institutions more sensitive to the status and rights of children in general, and more effective in achieving solutions. To form these **partnerships**, and to provide material and technical support for these child assistance and protection **networks**, it is also necessary to strengthen key stakeholders. These include teachers, trainers, other social partners, community leaders, cooperatives, non-governmental organizations, and so on.

**Reintegration takes time.** One cannot think that a few months of care at a transit centre, or in a similar context, will erase years spent at war amid very serious human rights abuses. Intensive care is usually restricted to a few months. The status of former child soldiers must be monitored for years in order to intervene quickly and well if serious problems emerge in health or social relations.

The best protection and reintegration assistance network could well be the one that voluntarily and closely associates CSs with peer group children who did not experience combat. This would be particularly useful for ex-child soldiers who are natural leaders and might become gang leaders. Where possible, assistance programs should extend to the non-soldier youths who are also sure to have suffered serious hardships for having been involved in conflict. Extending certain benefits to these children has the advantage of demarginalizing CSs while benefiting communities who have suffered through conflict. It also reduces jealousy if care is taken to show CSs that they are not deprived when assistance is given to **non-combatant peers**. Such assistance could well prove to be one of the best strategies to keep CSs from becoming gang leaders.

An unfortunate experience that occurred in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1998 has revealed an important lesson: it is very risky for military leaders to begin demobilization without establishing vital safeguards to protect CSs. Hundreds of CSs were **re-recruited** while being demobilized from transit camps in eastern Congo. UNICEF, for example, now works more closely with military and civilian authorities to obtain their support in demobilizing CSs.

CSs often experience complex psychosocial problems. Adolescence is the time when children develop their identities. CSs may refuse to make the transition from identifying themselves as soldiers to identifying themselves as civilians.



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Former child soldiers receive vocational training at a technical institute in Gulu Province, Uganda.

CSs base their behaviour on the experience of violence and authoritarianism, channelled by armed conflict. It may prove difficult to overcome the mistrust they have learned. That is why reintegration programs must stress the establishment of sustainable, constructive, and trusting **relationships with adults**, focusing on the family environment.

No system has a monopoly on “remedies” for the psychological disorders of war-affected children. The Western method of counselling traumatized children certainly has its place in healing the serious condition of post-traumatic stress. However, this method often proves costly and is of limited use. Psychosocial support, via the family and the community, is central to any CS assistance strategy, especially for girls formerly treated as “wives,” “sisters,” and “cousins.”

One cannot overemphasize the importance of quickly collecting information needed to reintegrate child soldiers. Interveners must continue to gather and fine-tune this information throughout the DDR exercise to ensure maximum confidentiality and effectiveness.

## Grid to evaluate proposals or design programs to support former child soldiers

In its 2003 Humanitarian Action Report, UNICEF states:

The key to reintegrating former child soldiers and preventing their re-recruitment is long-term investment in education, psychosocial support, vocational training, and support for families and communities. . . . Long-term, flexible financial assistance is necessary. . . . Child soldiers must participate and have a

voice. . . . The particular vulnerabilities and capacities of girls must be taken into account in prevention, demobilization and reintegration programmes for child soldiers.

Where possible, the following table takes into account the strategic view contained in the above quotation and organizes programming to reintegrate CSs according to results-based management.<sup>10</sup>

<b>Purpose of a program to assist a child soldier’s transition to civilian life</b>		
To improve the well-being and living conditions of ex-child soldiers, to contribute to sustainable peace, to restore civilian life.		
<b>Medium- and long-term program results</b>	<b>Medium- and long-term program result indicators</b>	<b>Risks<sup>11</sup></b>
<p>The CS has sound mental, emotional and physical health and has re-engaged positive social relations.</p> <p>He or she leads a productive life or is on his or her way to such a result in an environment where the child feels comfortable and accepted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New skills suited to the CS's age.</li> <li>- Existing skills such as leadership have been perfected.</li> <li>- Close ties with caregivers.</li> <li>- Meaningful ties with peers, society, friends.</li> <li>- Sense of identity, belonging.</li> <li>- Higher level of tolerance.</li> <li>- Access to successful training and education.</li> <li>- Increased hope and brighter prospects based on choice. Many quality partnerships have also been established throughout much of the country to create networks to assist and protect the CS. These networks consist of stakeholders responsible for prevention and reintegration programs, and communities dedicated to the same purposes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Lack of political will to give priority to reintegrating</b> the CS (and other youth in difficult circumstances). This lack of political will frequently exists among military or civilian leaders and non-state armed groups.</li> <li>- Flawed approach to reintegrating the CS that is putting too much stress on an overly narrow medical or “psycho-pathological” approach. This ignores family and community as potential key assets in the reintegration process.</li> </ul>

Short- and medium-term program results	Short- and medium-term program result indicators	Risks
<p>1. The CS's reintegration has been handled comprehensively and has achieved three key results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>Reunification</b> with family or reintegration in a healthy environment of the CS's choice.</li> <li>b) Sound <b>physical</b> or <b>psychosocial</b> condition (see Appendix 2 for clarification of the term "psychosocial").</li> <li>c) Improved or improving <b>economic status</b>; access (or chance for access) to training, education, or other opportunity.</li> </ul> <p><b>Girl CSs</b> are in, or on the way to being in, the same positive situation as boy CSs.</p> <p>Consideration has been given to the <b>special condition</b> of CSs who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- parents;</li> <li>- sick or disabled;</li> <li>- gang leaders;</li> <li>- alcoholics or drug addicts;</li> <li>- living with HIV, and so on.</li> </ul> <p>As much as possible, great care is taken to treat all war-affected children equally in order to reduce disruptive jealousy and a backlash against the integrating and assisted ex-CS.</p>	<p>a) At the same time, the CS's family has been traced and well prepared for the CS's return (technical and material assistance).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The CS has returned to his or her family or, failing this, a foster family, or a social environment agreeable to all concerned and respectful of the CS's rights. Eventually, he or she is accepted back by the family, community of origin, or another community or group.</li> </ul> <p>With the help of a multidisciplinary team:</p> <p>b) The CS has received care for his or her physical disorders. As for other maladies, mental illness and antisocial behaviour have markedly decreased through specialized care or means such as traditional justice or purification and forgiveness rituals suited to the milieu to which the CS has returned. Here are some indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are fewer substance-abuse problems.</li> <li>- There is little or no stigma attached to being a CS.</li> <li>- The CS relates appropriately with other youth and the community at large.</li> <li>- The CS has participated in discussion, reconciliation, and non-violent conflict-resolution groups with other children (CSs and non-CSs).</li> <li>- The CS shows little aggression.</li> </ul>	<p>National and local partners lack the political will to recognize that CSs exist and/or these partners lack sufficient capacity for this type of activity. There are also not enough human or financial resources and available time to strengthen partners. This lack is especially felt in efforts to help girl CSs, and prominently, those with children.</p> <p>CS-targeted program increases stigma and results in rejection of former CS by local and wider community.</p> <p>Of DDR activities, DD (disarmament and demobilisation) efforts far outweigh reintegration planning and implementation, and this causes serious negative results such as prolonged stays in temporary or transit centres. In those cases in particular, there are major risks of re-recruitment, retaliation, and stealing of benefits by persons in authority.</p> <p>Efforts by the various stakeholders to assist the CS are poorly coordinated.</p> <p>Insecurity, dilapidated infrastructures, and extreme poverty considerably delay the CS's return to his/her family.</p> <p>Partnerships and networks for ex-CS assistance are non-existent or inadequate, or their implementation is poorly managed.</p> <p>Economic and other assistance to families and communities is inadequate, too short-lived, or poorly managed.</p>

Short- and medium-term program results	Short- and medium-term program result indicators	Risks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The CS shows few signs of serious trauma, overwhelming guilt, or prolonged grief.</li> <li>c) The CS has sufficient means, or livelihood, to resume a normal life. The CS has received and properly used assistance, such as cash, technical advice, credit, job search support, land, and so on. He or she has proper identity documents and proper legal status.</li> <li>- Or the CS has future prospects that may be modest but exclude living in the street, having nothing to do and engaging in criminal activity.</li> <li>- The CS has chosen and receives one or more of the following forms of support: apprenticeship, formal education, vocational training, life skills training, literacy training and so on.</li> <li>- Support is tailored to the CS's situation.</li> <li>- Support is of acceptable quality under the circumstances.</li> <li>- Qualified female resource persons have assisted girl CSs, who have access to quality health care.</li> <li>- Girl CSs with children of their own have improved their parenting skills.<sup>12</sup></li> <li>- Qualified resource persons have helped child soldiers with special problems.</li> </ul>	<p>Perceptions, well-founded or not, that the reintegrating CS is privileged creates strong jealousy, resentment, and rejection among the peer groups and the milieu of reintegration generally. Girls, especially those with children, are stigmatized and rejected, and are not provided with required specialized services.</p> <p>The DDR program includes cash disbursements for demobilizing minors, and this constitutes a major threat of re-recruitment and many other problems.</p>
<p>2. Participation: The CS and other children in the group or community actively engage in planning and implementing reintegration programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Degree of participation by CS and other children in project planning: diagnosis, design, listening to the CS's views, and conveying them to decision-makers. Degree to which the program's</li> </ul>	<p>Participation by children and interest in a participatory approach are slowly dissolved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a lack of political will; or</li> <li>- seeking quick, visible results.</li> </ul>

Short- and medium-term program results	Short- and medium-term program result indicators	Risks
	<p>drafters consider the CS's wishes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Degree of CS's involvement in carrying out the initiative: the CS carries out the initiative him/herself, or helps to decide on its implementation by others. Quality of CS's liaison with steering committee.</li> <li>- Degree of CS's involvement in monitoring aspects of the initiative. Scope of the CS's power to suggest, and even make, changes.</li> <li>- The program frequently consults the CS on key points. The CS generally accepts the quality of his/her involvement.</li> </ul>	
<p>3. The CS's <b>family/community</b> have been properly made aware and materially prepared to welcome the CS, help the CS heal, protect the CS, respect the CS's rights, and ensure the CS's general well-being.</p> <p>The family/community is mobilized and actively helps to reintegrate the CS.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A formal and informal CS-assistance network is set up, and its operation is supported.</li> <li>- Assistance takes the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• welcome, purification ceremony, public forgiveness;</li> <li>• transportation assistance for various social and economic activities;</li> <li>• material assistance, training;</li> <li>• dissemination of messages to advocate for (protect and promote) the rights of children;</li> <li>• alert and defence system in the event of threatened re-recruitment;</li> <li>• peer-support system for mutual help in overcoming behaviour problems such as drug use;</li> </ul> </li> <li>- The family and community respect the CS's rights: right to associate, right to free speech, right to obtain justice, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Community does not exist or has fundamentally changed</p> <p>Planning fails to give the family and community material support to act to help the CS reintegrate.</p> <p>The extremely important need for ongoing child protection and reporting is underestimated or poorly resourced and implemented.</p>
<p>4. The approach is based on in-depth knowledge of the CS's <b>specific situation and</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- After family tracing and effective investigation, the situation of the CS is</li> </ul>	<p>Decision-makers choose to skip this central phase of the program:</p>

Short- and medium-term program results	Short- and medium-term program result indicators	Risks
<p><b>culture.</b> A special effort is made to fulfil the CS's legitimate wishes via social, cultural, political, and economic measures.<sup>13</sup></p>	<p>known,<sup>14</sup> including age, civil status, parents and place of origin, education or trade, skills and abilities, medical history, and recruitment and stay in the armed group. Such information allows for the development of an action plan tailored to the CS's situation. This information is protected by adequate data protection mechanisms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Authorities and other interested persons know how the CS experiences the dark side of an armed conflict, such as separation from family, death, sexual abuse, exploitation, loss of identity, huge changes in economic and social roles, displacement, and chronic insecurity. They also understand how children can be re-socialized in a culture of violence.</li> <li>- The culture and customs of the CS's environment are known and used to provide significant support in reintegration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They lack the political will to assist children. For instance, they claim that children are so resilient that they do not really need help.</li> <li>- They want to show results (window dressing) to donors in a hurry.</li> <li>- They lack the knowledge of, or the sensitivity for, the culture and condition of the CS.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Children and young soldiers are dealt with and assisted based on their <b>rights</b> and responsibilities, rather than treated as victims in need of help.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Degree to which the CS knows, understands and expresses his/her rights.</li> <li>- CS's commitment to defending his/her rights and those of other war-affected children.</li> <li>- Degree to which duty-bearers (government, community, teachers, family) know or are aware of the CS's rights and the degree to which they respect, protect, and fulfil those rights.</li> </ul>	<p>Some decision-makers choose to skip this central aspect of the program out of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ignorance;</li> <li>- disdain for this category, seen as "not really combatants," especially young girls.</li> </ul>
<p>6. <b>Coordination and monitoring</b> mechanisms allow for the effective and efficient use of resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coordination is real and effective, that is, based on real partnership among peers who share decision-making authority.</li> </ul>	<p>The CS-assistance coordinating body is ineffective because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- it has limited means at its disposal;</li> </ul>

Short- and medium-term program results	Short- and medium-term program result indicators	Risks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CIDA's program plays an active role on the national or local coordinating committee.</li> <li>- Other stakeholders are well acquainted with the program.</li> <li>- Monitoring reports are produced on time and follow the work plan.</li> <li>- These reports are often used as a basis for deciding how to follow up the program.</li> <li>- The CS fully participates in monitoring activities that primarily concern the CS.</li> <li>- Mechanisms for review are regularly reviewed and evaluated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- one (or more than one) member overshadows the others to the point of discouraging them from participating;</li> <li>- the government or another key stakeholder undermines the coordinating body;</li> <li>- some want to proceed more quickly to show donors results; or</li> <li>- there is undisciplined duplication of programs and efforts.</li> </ul>
<p>7. <b>Capacity-building</b> of stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Change in capacity to provide economic and social assistance to the CS, the family, and the community</li> <li>- More frequent, better targeted/supported children's rights advocacy activities.</li> <li>- More frequent/effective fact-finding and documentation of child rights abuses.</li> <li>- Increased capacity to negotiate with armed groups on ending the use of CSs and addressing DDR.</li> <li>- Capacity to maintain relations with media and international organizations.</li> <li>- Better logistics and project management capacity building.</li> </ul>	<p>The emergence of these networks and of civil society triggers an open or hidden counter-reaction among leaders or other influential people who have no interest in building local capacity to combat the illegal use of CSs or for child protection in general.</p>
<p>8. Prolonged child protection is ensured through monitoring, reporting, non-violent conflict resolution, useful legislation, and juvenile justice.<sup>15</sup></p>	<p>Protection networks, non-violent conflict resolution, legislation, child-protection resources, and juvenile courts that effectively protect children in general.</p>	<p>Non-existent or weak political will for child protection.</p>

## Risk analysis

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Total, or almost total, failure to reintegrate a generation of child soldiers poses an extremely high risk to society as a whole, especially in terms of its impact on social peace, such as crime. However, the volatile political climate of a postwar era increases the risk. The international aid community must accept and prepare to manage this high level of risk.

It is assumed that any CS reintegration program will necessarily rely on partners, both to provide direct support to children and their families, and to operate community-based, or other, child-protection networks. National, and especially local, partners often have a poor capacity for this type of activity, and in many cases, either the government or another entity with the power to do so curtails their activities. This is rightly seen

as a major risk, and can become debilitating if partners ignore or fail to address perceptions that the reintegrating CSs are privileged. Such perceptions, founded or not, and the ensuing jealousy can derail a program. At the other end, downplaying risks of stigmatization and rejection for all reintegrating CS, but especially girls and those with children, is also a common occurrence.<sup>16</sup> But another risk, just as harmful, is for decision-makers to fail to recognize the strengths of these local partners in terms of their knowledge of local issues. The key in this case is, first, to choose correctly, and second, to strengthen partners properly. However, there are no guarantees in this regard. The desired organization-building efforts are sure to face constraints in terms of time and money and the myopia of some decision-makers.



Child soldiers—one of them a girl—use a looted shop as their headquarters in Marabou, Democratic Republic of Congo

© CIDA/Roger LeMoynes

These inherent difficulties in partner capacity building can be overcome, first by the quality of project management, then by excellent coordination among all stakeholders. But there are limits. When these constraints are compounded by insufficient political will or by a culture of violence so strong that there is a high probability of retaliation against the former CS, even sound management cannot save the day. This leads to the conclusion that the greatest risk is failure to properly protect the children and that it is predominantly political in nature. This risk arises when enough influential people make it their business to derail a whole project because they do not realize a program's merits or because they have a (perverse) interest in keeping the share of compensation owed to women and children for themselves and their kind, and so on.

Inadequate partner capacity will probably continue for the duration of the program. For example, it will lead to inadequate development of sub-projects and poor management of contributions. These risks can be reduced in two

ways. One is to conduct a thorough pre-funding institutional assessment, including risk assessment. The other is to provide substantial assistance in capacity building, focusing mainly on local capacities. This must be accompanied by careful monitoring that includes ongoing, documented reflection and consultation on results achieved and lessons learned. The conventional risk-mitigation method should also be used. It involves receiving the necessary narrative and financial reports before freeing trenches of funding. However, this procedure has obvious limitations. Inadequately trained partners will produce poor reports.

The matrix below illustrates many of a program's key risks. It shows two aspects: the seriousness of the impact that the risk will have, and the likelihood or probability that it will occur. This is immediately followed by possible ways to mitigate the seriousness of the risk.

**Table 1: Risk probability/impact matrix**

Impact → Probability ↓	Low	Medium	High
Low	The Government <b>excludes</b> from the program non-governmental <b>resources</b> that can work for reintegration.	Serious <b>weaknesses</b> in the <b>coordination</b> of efforts by various stakeholders sharply reduce efficacy and efficiency of efforts to assist the CS.	The CS is poorly served by a <b>flawed</b> approach that <b>overstresses</b> psycho-pathological medical care.
Medium	Interest in a participatory approach involving the CS is <b>weak or non-existent</b> due largely to a desire to proceed quickly to show results.	Implementation of CS-assistance <b>partnerships</b> and networks is non-existent, inadequate, or <b>poorly managed</b> .	There is a <b>serious lack</b> of organizations and <b>local resources</b> for care, training, advocacy, networking, protection, prevention, and so on.
High	Insecurity, dilapidated infrastructures, and extreme poverty significantly <b>delay</b> the CS's return to the family or to another group.	Inadequate fieldwork feeds perceptions that the reintegrating CSs are privileged, thus creating strong jealousy and resentment among peer groups and within the milieu of reintegration. Or, on the contrary, poor execution cannot prevent the stigmatization and rejection of CSs, and CSs (girl CSs in particular) are not provided with critical specialized assistance.	<b>Lack of political will</b> to assist the CS can be seen at all levels, especially the local level.

The second, and last, table shows the risk indicators that the program must monitor, the seriousness of the risk, whether the risk is external or internal to the program, and the proposed mitigation strategy.

**Table 2: Risks, indicators and mitigation strategies**

Risk	Degree of impact	Internal/ External/ Mixed	Indicators	Mitigation
The government <b>excludes</b> from the program non-governmental <b>resources</b> that can work for reintegration.	1	External	Organizations and communities constantly run into all kinds of government roadblocks.	Lobby for changes in government policies together with other donors and stakeholders. Continuous reminder of rights-based approach and national and international obligations to children (this mitigation measure should be a constant throughout the whole DDR exercise).
CS <b>participation</b> and interest in a participatory approach <b>diminish</b> due to a desire to proceed quickly to show results.	2	Internal	Quick, unilateral decisions (typical RBM trap to avoid: less participation to achieve quick results, that is, window dressing).	Close monitoring of the quality of participation using CS discussion or focus groups.
Insecurity, dilapidated infrastructures, and extreme poverty significantly <b>delay</b> the CS's return to the family.	2	External	Unusual difficulty and delay in tracing families and returning CSs to their families. Re-recruitment of CSs.	More communication and coordination among stakeholders and pooling of means of intervention.
Serious <b>weaknesses</b> in the <b>coordination</b> of efforts by various stakeholders' delay or limit effective assistance.	3	Mixed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coordination meetings are often postponed, stormy, or disorganized.</li> <li>- Competition for activities and resources; ineffective overlap.</li> </ul>	Pressure on coordinating body, negotiation with stakeholders, dialogue and conflict resolution, mediation.

Risk	Degree of impact	Internal/ External/ Mixed	Indicators	Mitigation
Implementation of CS-assistance <b>partnerships</b> and networks is non-existent or <b>poorly managed</b> .	3	Internal	Number, quality of partnerships; vitality of networks, such as quality, frequency of meetings, democracy, gender equality, communication, and so on.	Ongoing, participatory monitoring-evaluation of quality and vitality of partnerships and networks.  Initiate efforts to develop new partnerships.
Inadequate fieldwork feeds perceptions that reintegrating CSs are privileged, thus creating strong jealousy and resentment among peer groups and within the milieu of reintegration. Girls, especially those with children, are stigmatized and rejected, and are not provided essential specialized services.	4	Internal	High rate (25%–40%) of apathy among families/communities.	Close monitoring of these dynamics through focus groups, key informers, and ongoing evaluation. Regular consultation with communities to see if services promised to communities, families, or groups is being offered.
The CS is poorly served by a <b>flawed</b> approach that <b>overstresses</b> “psycho-pathological” medical care.	4	Internal	Number of CSs who receive no care in relation to those given medical attention.	Awareness, education, lobbying to broaden the approach to care and reintegration.
There is a <b>serious lack</b> of organizations and <b>local resources</b> for care, training, advocacy, networking, protection, prevention, and so on.	4	Mixed	Unbridled competition in seeking resources; salary inflation; schedule delays due to lack of human resources.	Systematic identification and intensive strengthening of human resources; sharing of resources in association with other programs.
<b>Lack of political will</b> to assist the CS can be seen at all levels, especially the local level, and protection of the CS is not assured while his or her reintegration is not taking place.	5	External	Open or hidden non-cooperation by all levels of government services: negative attitude, delay, or denial of resources, services, means of other types.	Awareness, lobbying and sustained pressure and ongoing assessments submitted to the government all in cooperation with other stakeholders.

Legend: low = 1, low-medium = 2, medium = 3, medium-high = 4, high = 5

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## Suggested readings

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- Verhey, Beth. *Child Soldiers: Preventing, Demobilizing and Reintegrating*. Africa Region Working Paper Series No. 23. World Bank. 2001.
- World Vision. *Integrated child protection program: Sierra Leone. Final report*. Freetown, Sierra Leone. 2001.

## CIDA publications

- Canada. Canadian International Development Agency. *Children Affected by Armed Conflict: Programming Framework*. (Geeta Narayan. 2002.)
- . *Children as Partners: Child Participation Promoting Social Change*. (Prepared for CIDA's Child Protection Unit by Philip Cook, Natasha Blanchet-Cohen, and Stuart Hart, International Institute for Child Rights and Development, 2004).
- . *Children as Partners (CAP): Annotated Bibliography*. (Prepared for CIDA's Child Protection Unit by the International Institute for Child Rights and Development, March 22, 2004).
- . *Children in Armed Conflict and Peacebuilding – An Operational Framework*. (Geeta Narayan. 2001.)
- . *Children's Participation in Humanitarian Action: learning from zones of armed conflict*. (Prepared for CIDA by Jason Hart, Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford. 2004.)
- . *CIDA's Action Plan on Child Protection: Promoting the Rights of Children Who Need Special Protection Measures*. 2001.
- . *From Words to Action: Final Conference Report*. International Conference on War-Affected Children. Winnipeg. September 10–17, 2000. (Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and CIDA, 2000).
- . *RBM and Children's Participation: A Guide to Incorporating Child Participation Results into CIDA Programs*. Child Protection Unit, Policy Branch. 2003.
- . *Programming for Results in Peacebuilding – Objectives "Tree" & Performance Indicators*. (Anne-Marie Laprise.)
- Caught in the Crossfire No More: A Framework for Commitment to War-Affected Children*. (Summary by the Chairs of the Experts' Meeting of the International Conference on War-Affected Children, Winnipeg. 2000).
- A Kind of Friendship: working for and with war affected children and youth*. (A resource manual for programmers produced by the Children as Peacebuilders Project (CAP), an inter-agency project sponsored by DCI-Canada and funded by CIDA. 2003.)
- Working with Children in Armed Conflict: A Skills-Building Workshop*. (This workshop was held January 10–11, 2002, sponsored by the Children and Armed Conflict Working Group of the Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee, and produced with the support of CIDA.)
- A Survey of Canadian Programming, Advocacy and Research on Children Affected by Armed Conflict*. (Update compiled by the Children and Armed Conflict Working Group of the Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee. 2004.)

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## Appendix 1: Why assist child soldiers?

Why look at children in and after conflict situations? Here is what one CIDA document states:

Children warrant special focus in interventions in conflict situations for the following reasons:

- Children who grow up living in violence are more likely to turn to violence themselves as a method of problem-solving. The violence, grief and anxiety experienced by children during armed conflict have both short- and long-term effects on their mental health, quality of life, and subsequent behaviour as adults.
- Children represent the majority of civilians affected by exposure to armed conflict, and the absolute numbers of children affected continue to grow as armed conflicts break out with increasing frequency between and within states.
- The involvement of children in armed conflict constitutes an attack on the most basic ethical foundations of society. Re-establishing protection for children is a powerful way to bring society's focus back to its fundamental values and ethics, including respect for the dignity of the child.
- Children are affected differently by armed conflict. The threats that they face are unique and directly related to their vulnerability as children. For example, children are more likely to be abducted and forced to serve in armies, their lives may be valued less . . .
- Girls have particular needs and they face different threats in armed conflict situations. Women and girls are often victims of sexual violence, including rape, sexual mutilation, sexual humiliation, forced prostitution, and forced pregnancy.

From CIDA publication *Children Affected by Armed Conflict: Programming Framework*, prepared by Geeta Narayan, 1998. (Adapted from *Mediating for Children: Child Protection in Armed Conflicts*, by Nigel Fisher, 1998. Chapter contributed to *A Framework for Survival* (2nd ed.), by Kevin M. Cahill, ed., 1999.)

## Appendix 2: Some checklists

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### Contextual factors to consider

- level of internal and external political stability
- degree of legitimacy of the government in power
- government's influence in the region
- international community's role in the country
- government's official position on CSs
- quality of the government's concrete action on CSs
- key non-governmental political stakeholders involved in the issue of CSs and their operational capacity
- peace negotiations with non-state armed groups
- access to the children in times of conflict

### Questions to ask about results

- Are results realistic given the resources and time available to achieve them?
- Is the results chain logical? Are short-, medium- and long-term results logically related?
- Are results gender-sensitive?
- Does the proposed project show good analysis of risks and implementation assumptions? Does it show good knowledge of the field and issues?
- Are means proposed to check progress in achieving results (reference data, indicators, data collection sources/procedures)? Are indicators gender-disaggregated?
- Has the notion of results been properly integrated in the various project phases (design, planning, implementation, monitoring)?

(Contextual factors and this section are adapted from the CIDA publication *Programming/Evaluation Tool for Assistance to Child Soldiers*, prepared by V. Côté and P. Manirakiza, June 2002.)

### Prevention lessons checklist

(For all three checklists, see note 1 of Beth Verhey, *Child Soldiers: Preventing, Demobilizing and Reintegrating*, Africa Region Working Paper Series No. 23. World Bank. 2001).

- What is the national law on the age of recruitment?
- Is there advocacy for ratification and implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict?
- Is there a mechanism to redress cases of underage recruitment?
- Is child recruitment being documented and reported through national and international human rights groups?
- Is a variety of media being engaged to advocate against the use of CSs?
- Who are the community leaders, religious leaders, women's associations, or other national networks that can advocate against child recruitment? Are there traditional practices and values upon which to base child-protection measures?

- Which networks and contacts can reach non-state parties to promote their commitment to the principles of the CRC and prevent recruitment (e.g. religious leaders, diaspora, or other social structures)?
- Is there a situation analysis being done to ascertain which children are the most vulnerable to recruitment (e.g. members of particular ethnic groups, those internally displaced or in refugee camps, children in institutions, working children, or unaccompanied children)?
- Which programs and activities can reach these groups and contribute to prevention (e.g. formal and non-formal education, food-security measures, and cultural and psychosocial support activities)?

## **Demobilization lessons checklist**

- Are CSs specifically included in the peace agreement?
- Are there specific provisions for CSs in demobilization plans?
- Are political leaders, UN officials, peacekeeping forces, and national non-governmental organizations included in advocacy on behalf of CSs?
- Has a legal framework been developed that includes the child's right to be demobilized, not considered a deserter, and exempt from future service?
- Do terminology and program approaches incorporate local social and cultural values on children and youth?
- Are the particular needs of girls and the disabled taken into account?
- Which benefit packages are appropriate for child soldiers? Are they equivalent to benefits for demobilized adults? Are supports oriented to regaining civilian life rather than getting "rewards"?
- If CSs participate in the assembly process with regular troops for demobilization, how can their departure be as rapid as possible so as to separate them from military authority?
- How will demobilized child soldiers be received? Since temporary centres are often necessary, how can they model family-based care and how can family tracing be maximized? Alternatively, are foster systems available instead?
- Are effective measures adopted to ensure the protection of child soldiers during demobilization (e.g. protection from re-recruitment, revenge or retributive attacks, or discrimination or harassment)?
- Do interviews and registration during demobilization focus on family tracing and other immediate requirements? Are the child's experiences during the conflict and psychosocial impacts being addressed in a supportive reintegration context?
- Are tracing and psychosocial programs adequately mobilized and funded?
- Are program partnerships established for psychosocial support, education, and livelihood opportunities?
- Are appropriate staff (considering language skills, community rapport, and experience working with youth) recruited and trained?
- Is there a community-based strategy to support CSs who may escape or be released outside of formal demobilization?
- Are links made between supports for CSs and programs for those disabled by war?

## Reintegration lessons checklist

- Is a family-tracing system adequately mobilized, staffed, and funded?
- Is adequate time planned for the preparation of CSs and their families for reunification?
- Are fostering arrangements available for cases where tracing is not successful?
- Are arrangements for independent living possible and is funding available?
- How can a community-based psychosocial program be established?
- Are traditional healing practices being identified and supported?
- What social structures can contribute to sustainable monitoring and follow-up?
- Are teachers, health workers, churches, local NGOs, and others being reached by an awareness-raising initiative on the rights and needs of child soldiers?
- Are recreational, cultural, religious, and life-skill building activities available and accessible?
- How will access to formal education be facilitated? Are there programs with flexible hours? What policy will be undertaken to support school fees and materials?
- How can family and community small businesses be supported? Are there artisans and trade professionals who could be supported to provide apprenticeships?
- Is the country's economic policy conducive to meeting the livelihood needs of youth and war-affected communities?

## What is “psychosocial”?

The diverse and often violent experiences of armed conflict have profound effects on child development. The word “psychosocial” simply underlines the dynamic relationship between psychological and social effects, each continually influencing the other. Psychological effects are those that affect emotion, behaviour, thought, memory, learning ability, perceptions, and understanding. Social effects refer to altered relationships caused by death, separation, estrangement and other losses, family and community breakdown, damage to social values and customary practices, and the destruction of social facilities and services. Social effects also extend to the economic sphere as many individuals and families become destitute through the material and economic devastation of armed conflict, thus losing status and their place in the social network.

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## Explanatory Notes

1. Beth Verhey, *Child Soldiers: Preventing, Demobilizing and Reintegrating* (Africa Region Working Paper Series No. 23, World Bank, 2001.)
2. Many specialists provided comments on a first draft that was circulated in early 2004. The author of this guide wishes to express his deep gratitude to those contributors.
3. This is especially true considering that many girl soldiers adapt quite well to the power that comes with their status. They are apprehensive about returning to their former status in civilian life. The difficult return to civilian life of Eritrean girl soldiers is an example.
4. In many cases, the “best interests” of CSs accused of atrocities will be interpreted as informal approaches to justice and national reconciliation, such as community-based initiatives or referral to social services, rather than a formal criminal trial. In those few cases where grave criminal responsibility can be attributed to child soldiers, it could be argued that it is in the child’s best interests to be called to account for his/her acts, and the consequences of those acts, through a child-orientated criminal process. As Amnesty International states: Failure to bring such children to justice may contribute to a culture of impunity, deny justice to their victims, and may even encourage the use of children to commit atrocities. (Christina Clark, *Juvenile Justice and Child Soldiering: Trends, Challenges, Dilemmas*.)
5. Participation by former CSs, and children and youth in general, must be adapted to the context. Many societies are quite rigid about respecting social roles, and giving and favouring inadequate participation by youth can produce a significant backlash. Also, as stated in *Children’s Participation in Humanitarian Action: learning from zones of armed conflict* (prepared for CIDA by Jason Hart, Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford, 2004), many adults can see simply bringing enthusiastic and energetic adolescents together in an unstable society as a threat. He recommends that planners and implementers should “consider children’s participation in positive relation to protection” and should “adopt a gradual approach to the development of activities, allowing time for children to gain trust and confidence . . .”
6. It is better to avoid talking about impact as defined in RBM in relation to peacebuilding, DDR and similar initiatives, and even capacity development, unless a long time has elapsed. Existing results-based methodology cannot really *measure the impact*, as defined in RBM, of assistance to the long-term and infinitely complex process of rebuilding a wartorn society. A document entitled *Measuring Results of Assistance Programmes to War-Torn Societies* (United Nations Development Programme, 1999), clearly warns us of this fact. Furthermore, as stated in *The DAC Guidelines: Helping Prevent Violent Conflict* (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2001): “Setting up monitoring and evaluation systems presents a challenge in these complex new areas of development co-operation.”
7. It is good to entrust the management of educational and vocational support to a single umbrella institution. One must avoid setting up or assigning special mechanisms for CSs to prevent creating a ghetto.
8. It is of questionable benefit to offer vocational training that is not closely related to the job market. Beth Verhey says, “Apprenticeships and . . . microenterprise were more effective than vocational training schemes.” Several former child soldiers feel they are too far behind for formal education or else they must quickly earn a living. “Former child soldiers need education opportunities with flexible hours and an emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills. Training in life skills—including nutrition, sexual and reproductive health, and managing finances—should also be incorporated.” In the publication by Susan McKay and Dyan Mazurana entitled, *Where are the girls? Girls in fighting forces in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Mozambique: Their lives during and after war* (Rights & Democracy, Montréal, 2003), the researchers found that former CSs of either gender do not have the patience to sit beside much younger children on school benches, and they want to speed through the grades as fast as possible.

9. More and more experts are concluding that a family-oriented approach gives major dividends. That being said, assuming the family has survived and can be located brings some downsides, and not all children successfully return to their families. Everyone must assume a new role, and demobilized children are no longer the children they were. Some families "sold" their girls or boys to recruiters. However, one factor does greatly help children to return to their families: parents naturally tend to blame the military, recruiters, and adult trainers, rather than their children.
10. See note 7.
11. Regarding the risks outlined in the table, the basic risk of war and insecurity was left out. While this risk is dominant and omnipresent, it lies beyond the capacity and scope of the reintegration project or program. The risks in this column are limited to those that sound management can minimize or eliminate.
12. For CS mothers, using an experienced mother as a mentor is recommended. For every CS, reintegration usually benefits from the assistance of mentors, especially adult former soldiers respected by the CS, family, and community.
13. The reintegration of a 14-year-old boy who has spent six months in an armed group is clearly not handled in the same way as that of a 17-year-old recruited at the age of 13. Reintegration requires great flexibility; it makes no sense to adopt a single model.
14. However, this should be treated on a case-by-case basis. Great care must be taken with this information, as many girl CSs and some boy CSs do not wish to be known. In many contexts, the principal coping strategy for CSs, especially girls, is secrecy.
15. While Section 8 of Table 1 is not properly in the ambit of a DDR program, it is presented in a much-summarized form as a reminder to planners of the necessity to think of the long term at the very outset of any activity that deals with children. The matter of juvenile justice is treated at length in Cristina Clark's publication.
16. In McKay and Mazurana's publication, the critical question of the reintegration of former girl soldiers is addressed in a major and thorough study of former girl CSs in Africa.