

International Research Group on Reintegration (IRGR)

Workshop October, 2012, Centre for Peace Studies,

University of Tromsø, Norway:

**CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN REINTEGRATION
RESEARCH AND PRACTICE**

Workshop Summary and Notes:

December 2012

Workshop Summary:

In the autumn of 2012 the members of the International Research Group on Reintegration (IRGR) as well as top international scholars and practitioners in the field of ex-combatant reintegration gathered at the Centre for Peace Studies, University of Tromsø for a two-day workshop of discussion and debate. The central focus of the workshop was focused on closing the gap between the practitioner and scholarly knowledge in the field of ex-combatant reintegration - the key successes and evolving challenges.

The workshop was broken into four distinct sessions, each with a different focus. In the opening session, titled: Agenda Setting in Reintegration Studies, presentations by Kees Kingma and Stina Torjesen highlighted key trends from the last 20 years of reintegration work and the emerging opportunities for both practitioner and scholarly communities to expand on the understanding of the complex dynamics of reintegration within the larger challenge of peacebuilding. The second session focused on current cutting edge research from scholars and practitioners within reintegration studies. Following this, the third session highlighted the works of up and coming young scholars within the field. In the final session, titled: Understanding the Practitioner – Scholar Divide, senior practitioners and scholars collected the many strands of discussion throughout the workshop and focused them towards an understanding how to bring the knowledge of practitioners and scholars in the field of reintegration closer together.

Throughout the workshop several key trends of discussion emerged that can be summarized along two lines. First, there was a clear agreement that practitioners and scholars share a deeply under theorized understanding of the individual, communal, and societal processes that occur in post-conflict environments. These discussions focused on human dimension of reintegration as a social, political, and economic *process*. The second strand that emerged focus on the *programming* dimension of reintegration, most prominently the various organizational and methodological issues connected to monitoring and evaluation and their broad implications for the harmonization of the full spectrum of post-conflict peacebuilding activities.

The workshop concluded with two plenary discussions sections that explored, first, the evolving role of the International Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) as a guiding policy document and, second, revisited the theme of closing the gap between practitioners and scholars. In particular, the discussion explored the role of specialized academic units like the Centre for Peace studies and their role and ability in supporting knowledge development for practitioners.

FOR DETAILED NOTES AND SUMMARIES OF THE SESSIONS SEE BELOW

WORKSHOP NOTES:

Thursday October 18th

Session 1 – Chaired by Tone Bleie

Introductory Session: Agenda Setting in Reintegration Studies

Kees Kingma – A Review of Reintegration Experience: What to Learn About Reintegration of Former Combatants

- Often oversimplified, part of a broader peace process, not the solution.
- Reintegration a process, not an activity.
- Variety of factors that can determine the success of reintegration.
- How are XCs doing? (Socio-economic, acceptance, out of military structure).
- Status of CAAFG and WAAFG?
- Status of refugees and IDPs?
- Pragmatic focus on what is needed for reintegration.

Stina Torjesen – Reintegration Studies as Part of a Broader Studies of Peace Building: Key Concepts and Contributions

- Three ways of studying state building (technocratic, liberal state-building critique, political economy approaches).
- Technocratic: narrow focus, programming over practice, ignores the deep political significance of many of the processes.
- Liberal state-building critique: focus on international community and actors, but not on internal actors.
- Political economy: Political and economic transitions at play both during and after a conflict, and how the external actors shape the process (Berdal & Zaum, 2012).

Discussion:

- Importance of social integration as an under-researched aspect of DDR; role of the family in particular.
- Political and cultural reintegration also untouched.

- No proper evaluations of DDR projects, often based on requirements set forward by donor's indicators; poor dissemination of that which is done.
- UN Civilian Capacity report: looks at future of interventions from the perspective of ownership.
- Arab Spring as a catalyst for more scrutiny on processes and external influences.
- Harmonization and coordination of processes, but missing the generally agreed upon definitions of these concepts and processes and what they should look like.
- Liberal state-building critique does have some good features, but the focus is too often on western institutions' analysis of themselves.
- Social integration could potentially be the starting point for a DDR process, but still too little research done in this area.
- Researchers could contribute to the lack of evaluation of DDR processes, particularly on the design of the processes to determine how appropriate the design was for the situation. Did the program take advantage of the positive characteristics in the post-conflict environment? Did the initiative harmonize with the other processes at the national and international level?
- Evaluation should focus on what was the problem, what was the solution and how was it implemented and how successful was it? And needs to be accessible to others.
- Issues of migration and accessibility to DDR programs.
- Looking at the situation and seeing what problem needs to be solved and finding the simplest solution.
- Not as if post-conflict societies are waiting for the UN and international community to come in and design DDR programs for them.

Takeaways:

Since the focus of DDR projects are often so donor-driven some aspects of the process itself, along with the effectiveness of the program are left unexplored and unexplained, particularly social integration. Needs to be more evaluation of DDR projects so

practitioners can learn from other programs' faults and successes. There should also be some kind of followup after the project has ended to see whether it has been successful or not.

Session 2 – Chaired by Randolph Rhea

Current Reintegration Research

Desmond Molloy – UN Approach to Reintegration of Ex-Combatants: A Theory and Practice of Reintegration Under Scrutiny

- DDR processes have been going on for 20 years, but we don't really know if it works.
- Should we continue with it? Is the IDDRS still relevant? Why is there no quantitative data on this?
- No evidence that reintegration support works, but there is a perception of improved security.
- Academics are constantly telling practitioners that what they are doing are not working, but not what they are doing wrong or what they should be doing.
- New research coming from American conservatives, with a stronger focus on qualitative data.
- Can't focus upon the quantitative data associated with DDR because its results are qualitative.
- Shift from shock and awe humanitarian assistance and DDR.
- Second generation DDR programs from DPKO; community focused, not just on the ex-combatants.
- No use in talking about success and failure in DDR programs because there are always elements of both. Have to allow the elements of failure.

Discussion:

- Major problem with DDR is the inflation of expectations of all actors across the board.

- Second generation DDR is not really a part of DDR, more of a tool to allow DPKO to secure funding from the General Assembly (Haiti? Community Violence Prevention)
- Are the international institutions capable of changing their mode of operation if evaluations are taken more seriously?
- UN may be forced to shift its operation style because of reduced economic capabilities.
- IDDRS is a useful guide, but you can't impose it on a new context. Have to use it as a list of potential tools that can be applied, but not as a strict guide.

Vidar Vambheim – Education and (Re)integration

- Social integration: the process of joining parts to make a whole.
- Education creates common ground and understanding.
- Education can change mentality.
- Education gives you skills, a CV, normal emotional balance.
- Short term vs. long term goals: Reinsertion vs. reintegration.
- SWOT: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats: should be introduced into curriculum.

Discussion:

- Have spent millions on vocational training of XCs, but haven't followed up to see what impact it has had.
- The value of life skills training inherent in formal education.
- Education brings hypothetical questions such as “What if the world were different?” that allow us to think academically, not just intellectually, and diminishes our prejudices.
- Difference between the focus on setting up short-term educational/vocational courses, or just investing that money into existing educational structures and expanding the offer while bolstering the education sector?
- Have to allow processes to take time, many will take up to a generation to take hold.

Percy Oware – Exploring Livelihoods in Conflict-Affected Societies

- Post-conflict conditions create a difficult situation and restrict many livelihood strategies.
- SLF (Sustainable Livelihood Framework) + Structuration theory: adaptive, inventive, negotiation, creative? capacities=agency.
- Social structures are not static, but generative and changing in terms of the logic of practice.
- Draws attention to potential transformational opportunities in conflict. Exposes the flexibility of social structures.

Discussion:

- How can this contribute to reintegration? Can study why people make the decisions that they make (whether to enter a vocational training program or to stay in the security sector) because there is an aspect of agency there.
- Possibility of social structures changing during the conflict and then reverting to their former state after the conflict, potentially taking away roles or power from individuals.
- Difficulty of reintegration not just in post-conflict context, but after spending time in demobilization camps.
- Gender aspect of meeting obligations as a husband/wife/father/mother and meeting general subsistence needs.
- War can give people new capabilities and capacities. Why don't we make better use of the diaspora when the conflict is over?
- Have to find ways of rebuilding trust and relationships in the post-conflict society.

Stuart Robinson – Reintegration of Armed Forces in Fragile States

- From correlations to cause and effect ? analytical traps.
- Humphreys and Weinstein, demobilization and reintegration at the micro-level in Sierra Leone.

- Can distort the macro-level view with misleading data from the micro-level.
- Value of a qualitative approach that focuses on process.
- Evaluations: recognizing the limitations of the evidence we have, as well as the limitations of our interventions.
- Reintegration: power dynamics and imperial structures.
- Self mythologization as researchers, promising more than we know we can realistically deliver?

Discussion:

- Research from Sudan: reintegration across twelve communities, majority felt it was a success, but the men age 18-23 that the program was focused towards felt it was an outright failure.
- Using qualitative methods to find the causes for why the program is a failure; reformulate a question and re-quantify the data and get completely different answers, how do you know when to stop?
- Importance of the mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to explain the data.
- Since the intervention is so small compared to all of the other factors taking place in a post-conflict society, evaluation will always be difficult to determine what kind of impact the program actually had and discover causal relationships.
- Difficulty of combining qualitative and quantitative research and ensuring that the qualitative research meets a specific scientific criteria.

Session Review Discussion:

- Programming vs. practice.
- How can we build on the organic DDR processes that are already taking place in the country?
- How does this process work?
- How people's roles change (or stay the same) in the post-conflict setting.
- Agent-driven process ? In the end, people choose to integrate themselves or not.

Takeaways:

There needs to be more research and evaluation done on DDR to determine how effective a program has been. Making this data available will benefit DDR practitioners when designing a program. There also needs to be a focus on giving people in a post-conflict society a viable alternative to conflict.

Session 3 – Chaired by Stuart Robinson

Young Scholars' Session, Part I

Randolph Rhea – Reintegration: The Challenge and the Promise

- Challenges: case-specific programming, structural dilemmas (national ownership, coordination, funding), theoretical challenges (definitions, measurement) ? distinct, yet overlapping dilemmas. Complexity = greater overlap, more difficult to disentangle.
- Reflexive, transitive, scaled.
- Lack of theory in reintegration, mostly policy ideas that are discussed as theory, but no transferable framework that exists ? Is this because reintegration is too complex for theory?
- No agreement on outcomes of reintegration leads to conflation.
- No agreement on metrics or scale.
- Trinity transition: social, political and economic ? too overlapping to discuss one, without discussing the others.

Discussion:

- Lack of theory doesn't just apply to reintegration, applies to peace-building as a whole.
- Are existing migration and integration theories applicable to reintegration in post-conflict societies? Enormous amount of literature and theory on migration/integration/inclusion, but why isn't it being used?
- The process of entering into conflict is just as important to understand as the transformation out of conflict.
- Is it possible to apply a theory or framework to something so complex and multifaceted as reintegration?

- Can't ignore the complexities of reintegration, need to look for ways of explaining some of the common trends such as movement from civilian to combatant to civilian. There is no grand theory, but can maybe find some measure of insight.

Friday October 19th

Continuation of Session 3 – Chaired by Desmond Molloy

Young Scholars' Session, Part II

Ramesh Shrestha – Linking Youth, Gender and Community Security: A Case Study of Reintegration Processes in Nepal

- CPA began in 2005, but broke down along the way.
- No consensus on single or multi-ethnic identity-based federal state.
- Perception of insecurity, reintegration process is not community based and communities are wary of the XCs.
- Political decisions to merge TRC and Disappearance Commission, along with calls for return to revolution by Maoists are contributing to instability.
- Gender and caste issues also contributing to reintegration challenges.

Discussion:

- What is the Maoist's role now in the reintegration process?
- Maoists believed that if they supplied money to the XCs, that they would be loyal to the party. Are now trying to incorporate many XCs into the party structure ? focus on political reintegration rather than social integration.
- Maoists never made a real effort at reintegration.

Tanja Stankovic – Arms Control and Microdisarmament

- XCs are resistant to disarmament because of security concerns; also don't trust one another
- Use of economic theories on war, intergroup dynamics and game theory to create a model for third-party enforcement to quell security concerns.

- XCs fall into groups of those that would take less than the DDR program incentives offer, those that accept the incentives as they are, and those that would need the incentives to be raised to accept them. ? Foot soldier, mid-level, commander.
- Sanctions on non-participation as well as cheating, need to be high, not just one or the other.

Discussion:

- Logic and rationalization from game theory won't work in every situation, but can contribute to the design and planning of DDR for practitioners.
- Links well with Randolph's macro level study of the complexities and intricacies of DDR and conflict in general.
- Variation in control and command centers in rebel groups, insurgencies, national armies, etc. makes it difficult to create a transferable framework.
- Are sanctions useful at all?
- Voluntary process, but many don't make the decision for themselves, it is made by proxy. Can the model function by proxy?
- Because reintegration is a continuous process, is it possible to put a timeline on the model and provide incentives to integration over time?
- Be very specific about what groups are being identified.
- DDR is a process where the weapons are put beyond use and don't have a reason to be used anymore, doesn't really matter where they are.

Nora Ahmetaj – Needs Assessment of the War Veterans

- XCs and war veterans in Kosovo are very focused upon the need for employment, and tend to ignore many other important things.

Discussion:

- Many XCs are now in “political parties” or are associated with them.
- One of the few areas they can find employment is in private security.
- Holding pattern of being an XC; the anticlimactic effect of losing a conflict.

Session 4 – Chaired by Stina Torjesen

Mitigating the Gap: Understanding the Practitioner – Scholar Divide

Stavros (Aki) Stavrou – Who is Our Target Audience? How Can M&E Create Evidence Based Programming That Assists DDR Operations?

- Well-designed M&E architecture should produce data that can support program implementation.
- But it must be appropriately interpreted and analyzed to be useful.
- How often is it actually implemented? Not often enough.
- Context is constantly changing, goalposts are changing, and baseline is often useless before the end.
- Clash between donor and program requirements.
- What is the purpose of the evaluation and what will that knowledge contribute to? Who is the audience(s)?
- M&E does have features that work: holistic, satisfies donors, creating a solid base of knowledge that is beginning to influence programming.
- Many methodological issues and gaps in research agenda (XC family dynamics, migration patterns, cultural and political integration).
- Lack of national commissions valuing M&E findings and no dissemination of findings.
- Need to draft focused recommendations for different departments, allow for change and adaptation, take more time to discuss.

Tone Bleie – Myths and Realities of the Scholar-Practitioner Gap: An Analytical Lens on the CPS-IAWG Partnership

- Commissioned research and collaborative research.
- Structural resistance to change.
- Evidence-based findings are exactly that, not facts.
- Garbage Can Model: independent streams of events.
- Do all problems need solutions?

- Strategic responses: stimulate critical inquiry, collaborations, theory building, analytical concepts.

Discussion:

- Establishment of the culture of using M&E is what determines whether it will be effective or not.
- Evidence remains with the academic community, the practitioner just needs to know that there is evidence and how to use it.
- M&E: We create great stuff but we're missing the toolkit to be able to apply it.

Plenary Discussion, Part I

Topic: Emerging Trends in the Directions of UN Agencies: Is the IDDRS Still a Relevant Policy Guide?

- M&Es now moving to the forefront, where it should have been from the start.
- UN policy moves very slow and can be very contentious when drafting new policy and language; IDDRS is a sound document, creates a common set of goals and standards, so while it is not perfect it is still useful.
- The Arab Spring has redefined everything, things are changing.
- IDDRS should be looked at more as a toolbox, until it has been thoroughly reviewed and reformed.
- Movement now is towards livelihood strategies, community reintegration and how to place more emphasis on that aspect, so the focus is evolving.
- How can it be applied to the Libya case? Shift in demographics, made it very predictable. The militia groups that sprung up from civil society performed DDR on their own after the uprising. Have now gone back to their previous lives. But recall system means that they have not fully left that life.

Plenary Discussion, Part II

Topic: Identifying Key Gaps in Reintegration Programming: Diverging Understandings from Scholars and Practitioners?

- Gaps to fill?

- Need to better identify the gaps that exist.
- Should be mainstreaming, as the project rolls out, not as exiting.
- Shouldn't focus on economic reintegration of XCs, should just reintegrate them to the same level as the rest of society; end up training them for livelihood skills and rewarding them.
- Dilemma of including the XCs and community is no longer a dilemma for practitioners, it is now just a question of time, funding, resources, etc.
- IDDRS has served its purpose to help actors work together, has been a very useful mechanism, but is under threat.
- Need to fight against the private sector who is encroaching in this area, but with the human security goals and altruistic values.
- Need to improve M&E framework and have it built-in from day one.
- Conduct evaluations ? CPS create and compile a database or website of them.
- Debate about the methodology.
- More study on social integration.
- What is most frustrating about researchers?
- Don't find the conclusions that we agree with.
- Don't understand that there are programmatic restraints to why things are how they are.
- Speak with beneficiaries and stakeholders, but not with front line staff, so they miss an important perspective.
- Possibly set up partnerships with institutions ? continuity and investment in human capital.
- Researchers could better share works-in-progress to address continuity and also contribute to the quality of the research product.
- When have you been impressed by researchers?
- How quickly things can be written and disseminated.
- Academia tests the boundaries and can articulate innovation in a way that can be difficult for the practitioner to do or get permission to do.

- Researchers are free of some of the cumbersome international structures and systems.
- Range of discussions were very exciting, theoretical discussions gives an opportunity to look at DDR from a different angle.
- Reinforces a lot of knowledge; how do we relocate the DDR discourse from the rest of the development sector?