


Institution: University of St Andrews 
Unit of Assessment: 21 – Politics and International Studies
Title of case study: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration after War: Assessing and Improving United Nations Programming for Ex-Combatants
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Reintegrating ex-combatants after war is critical to the success of peacebuilding and it is one of the top priorities for the United Nations during post-war transition. Research on ex-combatant disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) by Dr Jaremeay McMullin was the basis for three major policy reports for the UN on DDR in Liberia and Burundi. These reports have had substantial impacts on UN thinking about DDR and on programs and policies for ex-combatants after war. DDR Senior Managers at the UN continue to use the reports to discuss program innovations and lessons learned that Dr McMullin identified and analysed, and they use his reports as a model for the kind of assessment the UN seeks to commission for subsequent peacekeeping and peacebuilding programs. One of the reports also led to a multi-million dollar program for additional support for ex-combatants in Liberia in 2009 and influenced the contours and scope of that program.</p> <p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Dr Jaremeay McMullin (Lecturer in post since 2007) carried out field research with ex-combatants and policy practitioners tasked with DDR programming in post-conflict states in 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, and 2011 in Namibia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Burundi, which has led to the publication during the current REF cycle of a major research monograph and several articles on ex-combatant reintegration.</p> <p>Research underpinning impacts also includes three significant policy reports that Dr McMullin has authored. In 2007, the former head of the UN Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit commissioned Dr McMullin to travel to Liberia to investigate why some ex-combatants there had not accessed formal programming, and to make recommendations for further action. The resulting 27-page policy report (IO3) that Dr McMullin co-authored with a senior UN official was widely disseminated within the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) at the end of 2007.</p> <p>Dr McMullin's subsequent published research and his continued interaction with practitioners at DPKO led the UN to commission him to research and write two more comprehensive, single-author studies on DDR during the REF cycle. The first was a 34-page report on the lessons learned from DPKO involvement with ex-combatant reintegration programming in Liberia (IO2). The second was a 114-page 'After Action Review' funded by the UK's Department for International Development and the World Bank (IO1). 'After Action Reviews' are major UN policy documents, and Dr McMullin's 2011 After Action Review was commissioned to be a definitive history of UN involvement with ex-combatants in Burundi, a retrospective, high-level evaluation of the impact of the DDR process in Burundi, and a comprehensive assessment of potential threats to security in Burundi to assist the UN in continuing its peace support role there.</p> <p>Key conclusions and insights from Dr McMullin's published research that guided the research design and recommendations of the policy reports and their subsequent impacts on DDR thinking, policy, and practice include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important data and knowledge about reintegration processes are often lost after the UN withdraws, and the UN needs to do more to monitor and assess progress with ex-combatant reintegration long after formal programming ends and peacekeeping troops withdraw. (R1) • Reintegration should be conceived as more than returning ex-combatants to the lives of poverty that contributed to war in the first place. (R1, R2) • Vocational training programs for ex-combatants fail to produce long-term employment and

labor-intensive interventions should be prioritized over prevailing neoliberal preferences for macroeconomic stability. **(R1, R2)**

- International and national actors are ill-equipped to manage and resolve reintegration challenges in part because they do not anticipate the ‘right’ challenges (especially with regard to security), but also because they do not see themselves as having a mandate or authority to manage new problems as they arise. **(R1, R2)**
- Modes and processes of political integration tend to be ignored in current approaches, with ex-combatant political protest seen in terms of security threat alone rather than as an expression of political participation. **(R1, R2)**
- Ex-combatants must be viewed as assets to post-conflict reconstruction and not simply as threats to post-conflict communities. They are sources of valuable social capital. They have valuable ideas about reconciliation and reconstruction. **(R1, R2)**
- These insights might seem intuitive, but current reintegration policy and practice is structured in such a way as to promote ex-combatant separation from communities of return rather than their integration into communities of return, mainly because ex-combatants are unpopular beneficiaries in the donor community (because they are perceived as having ‘caused the war’ or perpetrated its worst atrocities). **(R2)**

Dr McMullin’s research on ex-combatants is a significant addition to the conceptual understanding of a critical peacebuilding task and an essential point of reference for research on ex-combatants. In using theoretical insights from critical theory to problematize current DDR thinking and practice, its major contribution to theory-building lies in its argument that challenges faced by ex-combatants after war must extend beyond orthodox security considerations (which frame ex-combatants merely as threats to the post-conflict order) and instead embrace a richer conceptualization of the reintegration process as one that recognizes ex-combatants’ productive capacity. It is also empirically rich, drawing on over 200 interviews with policy practitioners and ex-combatants to identify and analyze reintegration challenges.

The underpinning published research has been reviewed as excellent and world leading by prominent academics from multiple countries, including the USA, Sweden, and Norway, and representing multiple disciplines (anthropology, international relations, and area studies). Dr McMullin’s policy reports are also significant and high-quality research outputs in their own right. They are data- and theory-driven assessments and analyses of UN action in Liberia and Burundi. They are historical, evaluative, and strategic resources for the UN and its partners. They feature novel methods of analysis (for example, the 2011 Burundi report maps security threats and institutional structures by coding and comparing respondent assessments). All have been widely read by senior UN actors, cited in major subsequent UN publications, and used to model subsequent programs and evaluations.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Major Published Research Outputs

(R1) J. McMullin, *Ex-Combatants and the Post-Conflict State: Challenges of Reintegration* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

(R2) J. McMullin, ‘Integration or Separation: The Stigmatization of Ex-Combatants after War,’ *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 2, April 2013, pp. 385-414. DOI:

[10.1017/S0260210512000228](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210512000228)

Policy Reports/Impact Outputs

(IO1) J. McMullin, *Expanded After Action Review: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration in Burundi, 2000-2011* (New York: DPKO, 2011).

(IO2) J. McMullin, *UNMIL Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Recovery (RRR) Section: Lessons from DPKO Involvement with Ex-Combatant Reintegration* (New York: DPKO, 2009).

(IO3) J. McMullin and S. Yazgi, ‘Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) Programme Evaluation,’ United Nations Mission in Liberia, 11-18 April 2007, evaluation commissioned by the United Nations Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit.

The completion of each policy report was followed by dissemination events at UN Headquarters in

Impact case study (REF3b)

New York to share findings of published research and discuss the conclusions and recommendations of the policy reports with senior practitioners.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Dr McMullin's published research and UN-commissioned policy reports have shaped the ideas and opinions of practitioners engaged in designing and implementing post-conflict DDR programs. This research also influenced the adoption and design of new programs and changes to existing programs that have been reviewed independently as having made a positive difference to the lives of ex-combatants and their post-conflict communities. The impacts discussed in this section are on international organization practitioners' thinking and coordination, on international DDR programs and policy, and on ex-combatant access to improved and extended benefits.

Impacts on practitioners' thinking, debate, and coordination

Dr McMullin's published research and policy reports have informed and stimulated practitioner debate and thinking about DDR program duration, components, and rationale. The researcher is listed as one of only three independent experts consulted in the preparation of a major UN report on DDR, the 2010 'New Horizon Discussion Report on Second Generation DDR', and four of the researcher's publications are cited as recommended reading in the report. The New Horizon process is designed to articulate a high-level, forward agenda for UN peacekeeping. Dr McMullin's research is also mentioned and cited throughout the Discussion Report, as a source of information for advice on how to conduct security monitoring during DDR processes (p.42), how to disarm militias (p.48), and how to structure cash assistance for ex-combatants (p.49). [S3]

According to the former Director of the Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Recovery Section of the UN Mission in Liberia, Dr McMullin's reporting and research facilitated discussion and review of policy and practice within the UN Mission of Liberia, because they were 'opportunities to discuss and review our modus operandi' [S1]. He also credited the reports with being 'quite useful in highlighting a new and more practical "hands-on approach" to reintegration, rehabilitation and recovery of ex-combatants' and with identifying and analysing elements of this approach in helpful ways to allow the wider UN system to learn from and model in subsequent missions, especially concerning post-conflict stabilization of high-risk security areas and post-conflict management of natural resources [S1]. The 2009 report is singled out for consolidating agreement within the UN system about the importance of a prominent and sustained DPKO role in ex-combatant reintegration, which prior to the programs in Liberia had been mostly the domain of development actors, with DPKO presumed to 'provide security only' and not 'do development'.

The 2011 After Action Review on Burundi (IO1) has had an 'impact on thinking and programming not only at DPKO, but also a wider impact for the UN system' [S2, S4]. It 'continues to be discussed at the senior level of the UN, including at the joint DPKO-UNDP (UN Development Programme) annual meetings of Senior DDR Managers' and 'is singled out for its comprehensive and effective consultation across the UN system and for its analysis-driven approach to assessment and evaluation' and for its 'rich history of UN involvement in Burundi that has been used in modelling subsequent programs'. '[UNDP] use the report as a model for the kind of assessment [it seeks] to commission on future projects and programs.' [S2] It 'helped to ignite discussion between DPKO, UNDP, and the World Bank on how to improve communication, coordination, and strategy in designing and delivering reintegration for returning populations (including ex-combatants) as well as host communities' [S2]. Conventional wisdom was that World Bank involvement would end after the MDRP, but the 2011 report sketched numerous ways in which the Bank's involvement would continue to be useful and needed, and articulated avenues of future cooperation and integration between the UN and World Bank [S2, S4]. Finally, the Burundi report analysed the peacebuilding contributions of the UN Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund, noting that because these institutions 'were able to commit money to a controversial process that no other donors were willing to fund, a major obstacle to the peace negotiations and peace process was removed, which paved the way for eventual disarmament' of the National Forces of Liberation (FNL) in Burundi [S2]. The report's focus on these issues has 'helped the UN system to recognize the value added of the PBC and PBF and also the value of recognizing potential political benefits of providing reintegration assistance' [S2].

Impacts on international DDR policy and practice

All of the policy reports have structured and stimulated debate within the UN system about the political dilemmas of DDR programming, the linkages between DDR and Security Sector Reform, the nature of beneficiary targeting, and the need for more sustainable, labour-oriented approaches to reintegration [S1 and S2]. All of these were policy recommendations that built on the insights of underpinning research highlighted above. According to a senior UNDP official, a key policy impact of the 2011 Burundi report 'has been to further convince the UN system of the need for follow-up livelihood and reintegration support', which 'has assisted UNDP in extending its support programs in Burundi' [S2]. Research on Liberia resulted in similar policy impacts. The New Horizon Report on Second Generation DDR, relying 'extensively' on Dr McMullin's research, was instrumental in moving DPKO towards adoption of the 'approaches and programs conceived and utilized in Liberia' and identified and analysed in the 2007 and 2009 policy reports [S1]. The research helped to effect a policy shift at senior levels of the UN by contributing to 'widen [UN] understanding of new approaches for assisting ex-combatants', and 'advanced UN-wide understanding of the impacts of new initiatives from the field' [S1]. Prior to PI's policy reports, such initiatives were considered 'too new' and 'too proactive' for a typical UN peacekeeping mission [S1].

The 2007 report (IO3) is singled out as providing crucial guidance for actors in the field about how to proceed in assisting ex-combatants who had been excluded from original programs because of donor and implementing actor errors. It helped to convince UN Headquarters that this 'remaining caseload' of ex-combatants should receive assistance, and 'influenced UNMIL towards undertaking increased efforts at identifying funding for a final phase of rehabilitation and recovery' in the form of a \$12million program for these ex-combatants concluding in 2009 [S1].

Welfare impacts for ex-combatants and community beneficiaries

Respondents credited the policy reports with identifying key lessons learned and influencing debate and thinking across the UN system in ways that promoted the consolidation of security after war in high-risk areas (IO2 and IO3 both recommended the use of careful security monitoring and targeted aid assistance in communities located in vulnerable security areas) and that extended livelihood and social welfare benefits to ex-combatant beneficiaries and their host communities. The impact of the reports' policy recommendations, which were themselves highly informed by the conclusions and data of published research, helped to improve ex-combatant access to programs (given the impact of the 2007 report on the adoption and contours of the follow-up program for the 'residual caseload') and helped to improve program provision (given the impacts attributed to the research in terms of generating debate within the UN about program duration and contours).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[S1] Corroborating letter from the former director of the Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Recovery Section, United Nations Mission in Liberia.

[S2] Corroborating email from a senior official in the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, United Nations Development Programme.

[S3] *Second Generation Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Practices in Peace Operations: A Contribution to the New Horizon Discussion on Challenges and Opportunities for UN Peacekeeping* (New York: UNDPKO, 2010), corroborating McMullin's role as expert consultant and that his research is recommended to senior managers throughout the UN system.

[S4] DPKO, 'DPKO DDR Mission to BINUB', Mission Terms of Reference, in *Expanded After Action Review: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration in Burundi, 2000-2011* (New York: DPKO, 2011, Annex A, pp. 93-94), corroborating that McMullin's Burundi report is used by senior officials within the UN system and the World Bank.