

# Findings

**Africa Region . Number 81 . October 2002**

**Good Practice  
Infobrief**



*Findings Infobriefs* reports on Good Practice in ongoing operational, economic and sector work carried out by the World Bank and its member governments in the Africa Region. It is published monthly by the Knowledge and Learning Center on behalf of the Region. The views expressed in Findings are those of the author/s and should not be attributed to the World Bank Group.

## **Sierra Leone: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)**

*The conclusion of the Disarmament and Demobilization (D&D) of combatants from all warring parties in January 2002, marked the official end of the civil war in Sierra Leone. D&D was part of a larger disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program, implemented by the Government of Sierra Leone with the support of the World Bank, together with other international institutions and NGOs.*

*The experience of Sierra Leone shows how the Bank can play an important role in post-conflict transitions, complementing political and security efforts of client governments and the international community.*

### **The World Bank's engagement**

The civil war in Sierra Leone started in 1991. In 1997, 50% of the population was displaced, rebels controlled more than half of the territory, and Sierra Leone placed last in the UNDP Human Development Index. In 2002, safe access to the entire country has been restored and peaceful development is resuming. This was in part the result of the long process of DDR started in 1997 with the first of 3 phases. Phase II was launched in October 1999, as indicated by the Lomé peace agreement, with the support of the World Bank, and the British Department for International Development (DFID). Phase III ran from May 2001 to January 2002. Over the three phases, in four years, 72,500 combatants were disarmed and demobilized; 42,330 weapons and 1.2 million pieces of ammunition were collected and destroyed. The long process was eventually crowned by political elections in May 2002.

The Bank has provided the government with financial, technical and capacity-building support. Financial support mainly consisted of a Multi-Donor Trust Fund that committed US\$31.5 million, but also of direct financing through Emergency Recovery Credits, budget support and a Post-Conflict Fund Grant. Technical Advice support was given both to the DDR of ex-combatants and community-driven recovery efforts, with the participation of donors, NGOs and civil society. Finally, putting emphasis on national ownership of the DDR Program, capacity-building initiatives enhanced the leadership role of the government, and improved efficiency and transparency of financial management and procurement.

Currently, community-based recovery efforts are being promoted by the Bank's Social Fund, and Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) relief has been approved for US\$600 million.

### **Lessons learned**

The successful example of Sierra Leone can be used to draw important general lessons for future engagements in disarmament and demobilization programs, with reference to the peace process, the institutional framework, and the disarmament and demobilization operations.

### *Peace process*

The development of a DDR program advanced parallel to the political process, and was heavily influenced by its successes and failures. Political issues such as amnesty for the rebels, and technical issues such as time-frames for demobilization linked the DDR program to the peace agreement.

- The overriding lesson is that DDR can complement a peace agreement, but it cannot lead the political process.
- While DDR technical considerations should be integrated into peace agreements, flexibility is needed to avoid unrealistic timetables, commitments and expectations.
- Issues of amnesty, truth and reconciliation proceedings, and/or war crime tribunals should be discussed early on in the peace process.
- Treating all fighting factions equally reinforced the peace policies of negotiated settlement, neutrality of the D&D process, and reconciliation.
- Peace and D&D cannot be implemented in the absence of security for the disarming parties and international personnel.
- Mass information campaigns are essential in disseminating the details of the peace agreements and sensitizing the rank and file of the rebel groups.

### *Institutional framework*

The Government of Sierra Leone, all the parties to the conflict, and the international community demonstrated firm political will and readiness to coordinate efforts. The cornerstone features of the institutional framework were government ownership and co-ordination between international and local partners.

- Local ownership and leadership can be provided by national coordinating institutions, capable of planning, implementing and overseeing a nationally driven D&D program.
- Outside support is needed in the form of technical advice and, above all, substantial donor funding. The Bank can play an effective role through the management of a Multi-Donor Trust Fund, and integrating the larger disbursements with more rapid and flexible procedures to meet emergency situations.
- Constant contact and communication with the fighting factions at the political and military commander level is imperative to the effective implementation of D&D.

### *Disarmament and demobilization operations*

Security conditions significantly improved the efficiency and speed of disarmament and demobilization. More flexible and decentralized disarmament procedures and “fast-track” demobilization were integrated by special initiatives to care for child-soldiers and dependents of combatants.

- Eligibility criteria for disarmament should be clearly defined at the beginning of the process. While a “one person-one gun” criterion can lure single soldiers away from rebel groups, it can be considered aggressive and unfriendly by rebel commanders. “Group disarmament” proved faster and more efficient but allowed commanders to falsify the number of combatants and/or weapons being turned in.
- The improvement of security conditions helped to bring disarmament sites closer to the rebels and to make them more “user-friendly” both to staff and beneficiaries. Decentralized and secure disarmament sites proved much more effective and speeded up the process.
- Improved security also allowed for a quicker return of ex-combatants to their areas of origin. A “fast track” procedure could be adopted, limited to distribution of IDs and repatriation of the soldiers. “Fast track” procedures are much cheaper and simpler and can be taken in charge by local authorities. On the other hand, they limit the opportunities for fundamental pre-discharge orientation, medical screening and education.
- Rapid reinsertion can swamp reintegration programs, thus compromising their effectiveness. The distribution of reinsertion allowances proved controversial but helpful. To avoid allowances being regarded as “cash for weapons”, they should be distributed to ex-combatants on their return home.
- Civilian organizations should participate in the disarmament phase to assist with specific programs catering to the needs of children and dependants. Child-soldiers should be separated from the rest of the demobilizing groups.

*This article was written by Sean Bradley, Philippe Maughan and Massimo Fusato, consultants at the World Bank. For more information, please e-mail Florian Fichtl : [Fichtl@worldbank.org](mailto:Fichtl@worldbank.org), Juana Brachet : [Jbrachet@worldbank.org](mailto:Jbrachet@worldbank.org), or Sean Bradley: [sbradley@worldbank.org](mailto:sbradley@worldbank.org)*

Persons accessing the World Bank's external website can access more information on this activity by going to Development Topics and then clicking on Social Protection and Labor and/or on Social Development and then on Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction. Bank staff may access the same by clicking on Sectors and/or on Social Protection or Social Development.