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Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011

The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education

Economic reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups

International Labour Organization

2010

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International
Labour
Organization

ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION OF CHILDREN FORMERLY ASSOCIATED WITH ARMED FORCES AND ARMED GROUPS

Background paper

A contribution to the 2011 EFA Global Monitoring Report

2010

**International
Programme on
the Elimination
of Child Labour
(IPEC)**

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1. The use of children in armed conflict

1.1. Introduction

This paper has been prepared as a background document for the 2011 Education for All Global Monitoring Report, which will deal with the broad issue of education and violent conflict.

The paper focuses on one of the worst forms of child labour: the forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.¹ Young people formerly associated with armed forces or groups have been directly affected by armed conflict during their childhood and have thereby, in most cases, been deprived of education, training and livelihood opportunities. Upon their release, they face numerous challenges of physical, social, psychosocial, educational and economic nature. Reintegration programmes are put in place to support the process through which these young persons “transition into civil society and enter into meaningful roles and identities as civilians who are accepted by their families and communities in a context of local and national reconciliation”.²

This paper elaborates specifically on the issue of the economic reintegration of these young people.³ Programmes aiming to help them access decent work have a strong vocational skills training component and can, therefore, potentially contribute to meeting the third Education for All goal (on equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes for young people and adults) in conflict and post-conflict situations.

The review of existing programmes, nevertheless, suggests that much is needed to strengthen the economic component of reintegration programmes for children. The paper presents the ILO’s approach as well as lessons learned and good practices identified through projects implemented in Central Africa (Burundi, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo (RDC) and Rwanda), Sri Lanka and the Philippines. Special emphasis is given to vocational skills training.

1.2. An overview of the use of children in armed conflict

A child associated with an armed force or armed group is “any person below 18 years of age who is or who has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys and girls, used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes. It does not only refer to a child who is taking or has taken a direct part in hostilities”.⁴

While there is no accurate figure for the number of children affected, the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers recognizes that wherever armed conflict exists, children are involved, and tens of thousands of children find themselves fighting adult wars around the world.

¹ Forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict is a worst form of child labour as per article 3 a) of the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). Children who “volunteered” are, however, not excluded from our concern.

² Definition of “reintegration” as per the *Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups*, 2007.

³ In this document, “young people” refers to working age children (i.e. the minimum age for admission to employment in the country concerned) and young people above the age of 18 who were released or had otherwise left the armed forces or groups before they reached the age of 18.

⁴ *Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups*, 2007.

Most parties that recruit and use children are non-state armed groups, however, the list that is established yearly by the Secretary General also includes government armed forces and armed groups who receive the backing of Governments.

Children associated with armed forces and groups are both boys and girls. Some are abducted, others are forcefully recruited. Many also personally decide to enrol (for instance for survival, for protection or for vengeance). However, when personal initiatives are analysed, it becomes clear that most were taken under duress and in ignorance of the consequences.

1.3. Efforts to end recruitment and use of children in armed conflict

1.3.1. Legislative and policy framework

In the last fifteen years, the importance of addressing the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups has been recognized by the international community and efforts to end it have intensified.

New international legal instruments have been adopted to protect children in armed conflict: the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in 1998, the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182) in 1999 and the Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict in 2000.

Legal instruments providing protection to children in armed conflict

The use of children in armed conflict is a violation of international humanitarian, human rights, criminal and labour law:

- The Additional Protocols I (arts. 77[2] and 77[3]) and II (art. 4-3 c) to the Geneva Conventions call for the protection of children in armed conflict, forbid the recruitment and use of children under the age of 15 in conflict. They also call for the provision of special treatment for children in detention.
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict raises the age for direct participation in hostilities from 15 to 18 years. It prohibits conscription or forced recruitment and use by governments below the age of 18 and calls on States Parties to raise the minimum age for voluntary recruitment to 15 and above. It prohibits all recruitment — voluntary or compulsory — of children under 18 by other armed groups. Under article 6, States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons within their jurisdiction recruited or used in hostilities contrary to the present Protocol are demobilized or otherwise released from service.
- The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court makes it a war crime, leading to individual criminal prosecution, to conscript or enlist children under the age of 15 years into armed forces or groups or use them to participate actively in hostilities, in both international and non-international armed conflicts.
- Under the International Labour Organization Convention No. 182, States Parties shall take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, which includes the forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict (a child being defined as a person under the age of 18).

Since the 1990 World Summit for Children, the UN has increasingly sought to draw international attention to the horrendous plight of children affected by armed conflict. In 1996, Graca Machel, an independent expert appointed by the Secretary-General, submitted her landmark report “Impact of Armed Conflict on Children” to the General Assembly.

The report led to the establishment, in 1997, of the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. The office’s mandate includes serving as a moral voice and independent advocate, working with partners to enhance the protection of children and armed conflict, building awareness on the issue and acting as a facilitator.

The United Nations Security Council adopted a number of Resolutions to protect children in armed conflict. A very important one, Resolution 1612 (2005) establishes a Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on grave child rights violations (which include recruitment and use of child soldiers and attacks on schools).

In 2006, the case of Thomas Lubanga Dyilo was the first case to come before the International Criminal Court regarding charges of recruitment and use of children under the age of 15 in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In 2007, the international community expressed a strong commitment to address this issue by adopting the *Paris Commitments to Protect Children Unlawfully Recruited or Used by Armed Forces or Armed Groups* and the *Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups*. The *Paris Commitments* are a policy document aiming to strengthen political action to prevent association of children with armed forces and groups and to ensure their successful reintegration. The *Paris Principles* are a set of operational guidelines for all actors on the ground dealing with prevention and reintegration of children. They are intended to both foster greater programmatic coherence and promote good practices among States and international organizations

The UN actively negotiates action plans with armed parties to end the recruitment and use of children, as well as to secure their release from armed forces and groups. In 2009, action plans were signed between the United Nations and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the Philippines; the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA); the Government of Nepal and the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M). Dialogue on action plans with parties to conflict is also ongoing in other country situations.

In some countries, formal disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes (DDR) for ex-combatants are put in place upon the signature of a peace agreement. They are under the responsibility of the Government that sets-up a national DDR Commission and are often designed and implemented with the support of the UN. Where relevant, DDR programmes would have a component for children.

The release of children is, however, not dependant on any formal peace process and is not contingent on the establishment of formal DDR programmes. It is prioritized at all time, including where hostilities are ongoing. Experience has shown that the majority of children do not leave armed forces and groups through formal DDR processes. While many are separated through informal release and reintegration processes, others leave or escape on their account and melt back into their communities.

1.3.2. The reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups

The return of a child to his or her family and community is the end of an exploitative situation but is the beginning of a long and sometimes difficult process aiming to find a viable alternative to involvement in armed conflict, resume life in the community and make a transition to civilian life. This process is called reintegration. Its aim is for children to be like their peers in all positive aspects.

Children face many challenges upon their return in their families and communities. A study on children released from the Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda describes some of these physical, social, psychosocial, educational and economic challenges.⁵ The research indicates that children returned home in poor physical condition, sometimes with wounds, injuries, general sickness and sexually transmitted diseases. Some girls reported specific problems, such as pain resulting from rape and sexual abuse or HIV infections. Most children reported psychosocial and/or behavioural problems that can persist over time. The reception by the community and the peers was often problematic and sometimes even hostile, in particular for girls. The resulting social isolation and peer rejection at school added to poor concentration, physical and mental difficulties and inability to pay school fees, and eventually led to some children dropping out of school. Other factors for school dropout included marriage and pregnancy among the girls. It happened that children returned to their community to find their parents dead and were left to take care of themselves and their siblings. The need to survive meant that they had to seek a way of earning a living.

Programmes are put in place to support and facilitate the reintegration of children into their communities. These programmes aim to foster community acceptance and involve children in education, training or employment promotion activities. Child protection agencies that implement release and reintegration programmes for children have adopted an inclusive community-based approach to reintegration. This means that a broad cross-section of children should receive support, in addition to children formerly associated with armed forces and groups and that the community be actively involved in facilitating reintegration efforts.

⁵ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers: *Returning Home, Children's perspectives on reintegration, a case study of children abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army in Teso, eastern Uganda*. London, 2008.

Elements of reintegration programmes for children

The UN Integrated DDR Standards outline the main elements of release and reintegration programmes for children:

- **Family tracing and reunification** which “requires mediation to help the family recognize and deal with problems of alienation, addiction, aggression and resistance to civil forms of authority, and involve them in decisions regarding the child’s readaptation, education, learning and training. Children need to be reassured that their families want them back and accept them as they are. Assistance should not only consist of money and other forms of material assistance, but also include social support and follow-up”.
- **Psychosocial support** to “help children develop new patterns of behaviour, improve their self-esteem, develop their capacity to make decisions about the future and enable them to express emotions should they want to do so”.
- **Special care.** “Some children may need specific assistance to overcome particularly negative or harmful experiences during their stay with an armed force or group. Injured and disabled children and the terminally ill, in particular, need care that is specifically adapted to their needs and environment, which should include assistance for community-based rehabilitation and long-term care projects.”
- **Education.** “The higher a child’s level of education, the more their reintegration is likely to succeed. It is therefore important for children to try to reach (or recover) as high a level of education as possible, often starting with basic literacy. However, returning to school is often difficult and even impossible, not only for financial reasons, but also because of the adjustments both teachers and learners have to make. After a relatively long stay within armed forces or groups, or because of the difficulties they previously experienced in school, children may not be able to adapt to traditional teaching methods. Schooling programmes should be developed in liaison with the ministry of education that are specifically designed for such children, and that achieve the same results as other official programmes, and teachers should receive specific training in order to provide better support to children with learning difficulties. Short-term accelerated learning classes and other remedial schooling programmes for children who have been out of school for long periods can provide catch-up education.”
- **Vocational training and income generation projects.** “Programmes should be designed to include vocational training activities (skills training and apprenticeship) that are suited to local conditions (the type of jobs that are available, etc.). There should be a wide range of professional training options available to children to help them adapt successfully to civilian life, but income-generating activities for children should be in line with laws on child labour (minimum age, working conditions, etc.)”.

Source: Adapted from United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR, *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS)*, Module 5.30 on children. New York, 2006.

2. Economic reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and groups

2.1. The economic dimension of child recruitment

This section argues that effective prevention and reintegration are dependent on addressing the economic dimension of child recruitment.

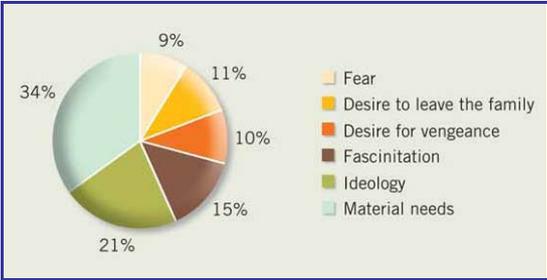
Poor living conditions as a factor of recruitment

There are several reasons why children join armed forces and groups. Some are abducted or forcefully recruited, while others take the initiative to become members. The analysis of children’s motivations indicates that, while the decision is prompted by a combination of reasons, poor living conditions are at the heart of the problem.

Poverty is one of the main reasons for joining armed forces or groups – The case of Congo, the DRC and Rwanda

An ILO study on the use of children in armed conflict in central Africa analyzed the reasons why children took the personal decision to join an armed force or group.

About 34% of children justified their choice for material reasons. Half of them said it was for their immediate survival, while the other half saw in enrolment a long term strategy for earning a livelihood.



About 45% of the children interviewed were separated from their parents at the time of recruitment. They were in a situation of economic distress, having to fend for themselves for food and shelter. The research also indicated that children who enrolled come from families in which the head of household has less job security.

Source: IPEC: *Wounded childhood, the use of children in armed conflict in Central Africa*. Geneva, ILO, 2003.

Precarious socio-economic conditions resulting in, among other things, a lack of access to education increases the vulnerability of a child to recruitment. Addressing the underlying causes of recruitment, therefore, means providing and facilitating access to education and, for older children, to attractive training and employment opportunities.

Employment to ensure sustainable reintegration of young people

For many children released from armed forces and armed groups, going back to school is not an option. Their needs and aspirations are instead to acquire new skills in view of earning a livelihood. This is particularly true for those with dependents, including girls.

The importance of providing these young people with long lasting employment opportunities is increasingly recognized as a key strategy to ensure their sustainable reintegration. It does not only help them meet their needs and achieve personal goals, but it also contributes to peace, stability and growth in their community.

The absence or inadequacy of programmes supporting the economic reintegration of young people will limit their potential and may reinforce a vicious cycle of poverty and social exclusion, potentially exposing them to other forms of exploitation, criminality, violence and re-recruitment.

The lack of employment opportunities exposes young people to exploitation and re-recruitment – The case of Sierra Leone

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants

Sierra Leone emerged from a ten-year civil war in 2001. Tens of thousands of combatants from several armed groups were formally demobilized, including 6,774 children. Programmes were put in place to support their reintegration. Young children entered education projects. Those aged 15-17 could go into training for up to nine months, at the end of which they received a small business “start-up kit”.

Shortcomings of the DDR programme

- Many children, who left armed forces and groups informally, were excluded from reintegration programmes. UNICEF’s “Girls left behind project” identified up to a thousand girls who had not gone through the DDR process (they had been considered as camp followers and not as combatants, because commanders did not let them participate in DDR and also for fear of stigmatization).
- Programmes were not designed in a way to ensure sustainable economic reintegration of children. These children found it difficult to transfer their skills training into viable employment. Start-up kits were not enough to start a business. Besides, due to the weakness of the economy, the increase in labour supply was not matched with an increase in labour demand.

Consequences for children

The economic situation of many ex-combatants, including children, did not improve and they had no other choice but to engage in conflict or in other exploitative activities as illustrated below.

- The levels of economic deprivation were reportedly a factor for some former Sierra Leonean combatants, including former child soldiers, to return to fighting in Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire.
- An estimated 10,000 children are employed in artisanal diamond mining in Sierra Leone, among which are former child soldiers and other war-affected youth. Some of the former child soldiers working in the mines specifically attributed their situation to the failure of DDR programs, partly because skills training received had not resulted in jobs. They are now exposed to severe hazards to their development, health and general well-being.

More generally, a report by the UN Office for West Africa noted that “current levels of unemployment among young men and women in West Africa are a ticking bomb” and

that “genuine peace, security and development is not possible until the situation of youth unemployment changes”. The report also recommends that “in crisis countries, in order to facilitate reconstruction and the integration of conflict-affected youth, the emphasis should be on training for skills demanded locally which provided rapid income-generation”.

Sources: Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report*, London, 2008 and *Release and reintegration of child soldiers: One part of a bigger puzzle*, London, 2009 - The International Human Rights Clinic, *Digging in the Dirt: Child Miners in Sierra Leone’s Diamond Industry*, Harvard Law School. Cambridge, 2009.

Work makes or break prevention and reintegration

The importance of addressing the economic dimension of child recruitment is further illustrated by a comparative case study of two children in Eastern DRC (annex I). Poverty initially trapped them into child labour. The conflict aggravated their situation and led them to engage with armed groups to survive. Upon their release, the support they received (or did not receive) to access employment determines the success or failure of their reintegration.

2.2. Policies and inter-agency guidelines for economic reintegration of children

The following policies and guidelines are of key relevance for the design and implementation of economic reintegration programmes for children.

The 2007 *Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups* (see section 1.3.1) state that “education, vocational and skills training and/or opportunities to provide their own and their family’s livelihoods are essential elements for reintegration” and provide some general guidance on this specific issue (see annex II).

The 2006 UN *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards* are a comprehensive and detailed set of policies, guidelines and procedures for undertaking the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of members of armed forces and groups. They provide specific guidance on economic reintegration of adult, youth and children.⁶

The 2008 UN *Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and reintegration* provides the general framework in which reintegration of children takes place. It provides a United Nations approach to employment and reintegration, built around a set of guiding principles and programming guidelines designed to support programming at country level. Specific attention is given to the needs and capacities of conflict-affected groups, with particular attention to issues relating to unemployed youth. The UN Policy paper presents the complex articulation between interventions throughout the different phases of humanitarian emergency relief, recovery and development (see annex III). The UN Policy paper pays special attention to youth.

⁶ United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR, *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS)*, New York, 2006. See in particular modules 4.30 on reintegration, 5.20 on youth and 5.30 on children

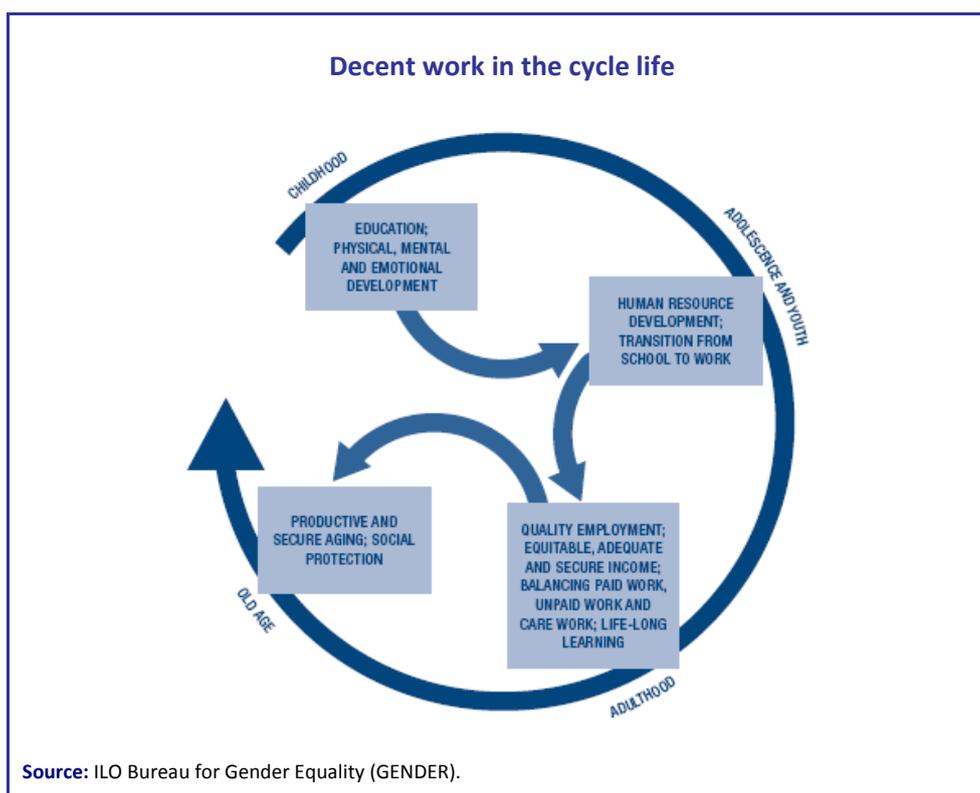
2.3. Challenges to successful economic reintegration of children

In spite of the increased awareness on the importance of addressing the economic dimension of child recruitment and the availability of standards and guidelines on this issue, the economic component of release and reintegration programmes for children⁷ across the world remains the weakest one.

This section examines some of the challenges to the implementation of sound economic reintegration programmes for children.

The profile of the beneficiaries

The youth module of the UN Integrated DDR Standards⁸ illustrates through the figure below the impact that armed conflict may have on young people. It shows that young people are at one stage of life that is influenced by and also affects other stages of life. During childhood, adolescence and youth, personal development takes place that can affect whether an individual “succeeds” or “fails” in the later stages of life. Armed conflict has influenced children during these formative years. Children who were associated with armed forces or groups did not go to school and will grow up with greater limitations and fewer prospects for decent work. Some former children formerly associated with armed forces and groups have indicated that years of lost educational and economic opportunities are more problematic than the actual experience of war.⁹



⁷ Release and reintegration programmes for children are in most cases also responsible for the reintegration of young persons released from armed forces and groups before they turned 18 but who are above 18 by the time reintegration programmes start.

⁸ United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR, *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS)*, Module 5.20 “Youth and DDR”, New York, 2006.

⁹ Psychology Beyond Borders, *Psychosocial adjustment and social reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups: the state of the field and future directions*. Texas, 2008.

These young people face specific labour market disadvantages. They generally have low levels of basic education and vocational skills training and no prior work experience. They may also be exposed to problems that result from their past association with armed forces and groups (such as their exposure to trauma and risky behaviour).

For these reasons, the design of reintegration programmes for children has proven to be more complex than those for adults. Children (and young people) need specific services to build their employability and access employment. In addition, as persons under the age of 18, children cannot be reintegrated into hazardous activities¹⁰ and will not be able to benefit from certain services until they reach 18 (such as micro-credit or becoming a full member of a cooperative).

Reintegration in a conflict or post conflict situation

Recruitment of children is illegal. Mechanisms for their release and reintegration should therefore be independent of the signature of a formal peace agreement and the agreement of a Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme. In practice, this means that release and reintegration programmes for children may take place during conflict and are likely to start before adult DDR. Economic reintegration programmes for children often “break new ground”: simple referral to other initiatives is not possible and reintegration opportunities have to be created.¹¹

More generally, children (and young people) are reintegrated into weak economies and in labour markets characterized by low demand and high unemployment rates, particularly for youth. They may be reintegrated along with many other adult ex-combatants, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other war-affected populations with whom they will be competing for the same jobs. All these reintegration programmes are often put in place before programmes that aim to promote employment opportunities in war-affected communities.

Another important challenge, beside the lack of employment opportunities, is the absence of service providers in some communities where young people are being reintegrated, such as vocational skills training providers, business development services and micro finance institutions.

The design of reintegration programmes for children

Release and reintegration programmes for children are usually implemented by agencies with a mandate and expertise in child protection. They offer protection, family and community reunification, schooling and social reintegration services, including psychosocial support. These agencies, however, are also confronted in their practical work with the need to provide for the economic reintegration of working age children, a task for which they are usually not prepared and for which they do not have the necessary experience.

The institutional set-up of DDR programmes at country level is such that other agencies operating in the field of adult reintegration, which do have the right expertise to run economic reintegration programmes, would not include children in their programmes. They would only support ex-combatants who were above the age of 18 at the time they were demobilized. As a result, it is not rare to observe that the technical and financial resources available for children’s economic reintegration are

¹⁰ As defined by the national legislation.

¹¹ IPEC: *Prevention of child recruitment and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups. Strategic framework for addressing the economic gap.* Geneva, ILO, 2007. Available at: <http://www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productid=6965>.

significantly less than those for adults. Both children and adults, however, are competing for the same jobs within a community and, as explained above, children face a labour market disadvantage.

Due to their emergency nature, the duration and funding of reintegration programmes for children is usually insufficient to ensure sustainable economic reintegration of children.

Together, these challenges result in an economic gap in prevention and reintegration of children, which is described in the following section.

2.4. Review of field experiences: what have we learned?

The ILO recently commissioned, on behalf of the Paris Principle Steering Group (PPSG),¹² a review of economic reintegration programmes for children implemented by various organizations around the world.¹³ The report highlights lessons learned, good practices and challenges to delivering good economic reintegration programmes.

The key lessons learned are that:

- “reintegration should be linked to market demand. It should be based on an opportunity mapping and an understanding of local labour markets. Diversification is most urgent as young people tend to be steered into the same direction in which competition becomes too strong, subsequently leading to business failure and subsequent frustration.”
- “programmes should build on existing skills of young people. More emphasis should be placed on pre-recruitment and newly obtained skills in increasing employability. This requires more serious profiling and counselling. An important issue is the lack of understanding of economics by the counsellors of many child protection agencies, who have psycho-social backgrounds.”
- “stimulating young people to combine work with evening education must be promoted much more, as it has proven to reduce their vulnerability in the short term (work) while keeping them focused on the longer term (education). As such, government policy and UNICEF need to focus initiating or strengthening accelerated learning programmes (ALP) and ensuring that the frameworks for ALP are part and parcel of national development strategies.”
- “specific needs are to be addressed more effectively, in particular those of girls and those of people with disabilities.”
- “reintegration requires much longer support. Long term business support is needed to sustain and develop the very vulnerable micro-businesses in the war-torn local economies, especially for children who start small businesses.”

¹² The Paris Principles Steering Group (PPSG) is an inter-agency group whose objective is “To ensure that the Paris Commitments, and The Principles and Guidelines are the key standard used by all stakeholders, including governments, intergovernmental organizations, and civil society, to guide advocacy, programme response and funding for the care and protection of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Groups”. The PPSG is co-chaired by UNICEF and Save the Children UK; other members include IRC, ICRC, ILO, UNDP, UNDPKO, Christian Children’s Fund and the OSRSG-CAAC, with observer status for the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers.

¹³ Specht, I.: *Stocktaking report on sustainable economic reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups and other vulnerable children*. Geneva, ILO, 2010.

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- “release and reintegration programmes for children should be better embedded in broader economic development plans and programmes, such as youth empowerment programmes.”

3. ILO's experience in economic reintegration of children

3.1. ILO's approach to economic reintegration

The aim of economic reintegration is decent work

For the ILO, economic reintegration is more than just the possibility to earn one's living. It is the possibility to access decent work, that is "work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men".¹⁴

In its *How-to-guide on economic reintegration*¹⁵ the ILO takes the firm position that decent work for young people formerly associated with armed forces and groups is not a luxury and that the decent work paradigm must be fully integrated into release and reintegration programmes from their outset. These programmes should aim to:

- ensure that fundamental rights are respected (no child labour, no forced labour, no discrimination);
- promote a productive activity that generates adequate income (provision of training to improve technical, managerial and entrepreneurship skills, facilitating access to financial services, facilitating integration into the social and economic environment, linking to comprehensive area-based development/recovery initiatives, supporting formalization);
- ensure social protection (facilitating access to health care, ensuring occupational safety and health, addressing HIV and AIDS);
- ensure voice and representation (participation in associations that help make their voices heard).

The transition from reinsertion to sustainable reintegration

The UN *Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration* articulates the transition between stabilization, reintegration and long-term employment creation (see the description of the three tracks paradigm in annex III). The approach of the ILO, in line with this policy, is to make sure that short-term reinsertion and employment-related services intrinsically include the perspective of the transition to sustainable decent employment. The steps for this transition need to be built into the individual reintegration project of each young person.

Who is economic reintegration for?

The *Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children formerly associated with Armed Forces and Groups* promote an inclusive approach to reintegration. This means that programming should not only support children formerly associated with armed forces and groups (formally released and self-released) but also other vulnerable children in the community, such as war-orphans and internally

¹⁴ ILO; United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB): *Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work*. Geneva, ILO, 2007.

¹⁵ See IPEC; ITC-ILO: *Children associated with armed forces and groups. How-to-guide for economic reintegration*. Turin, ILO, 2010.

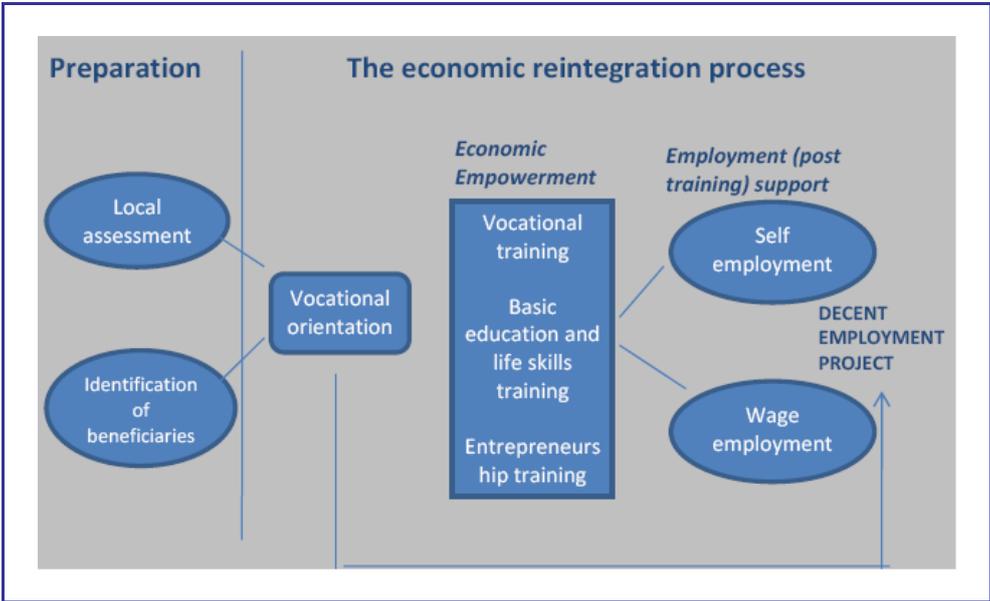
displaced or refugee children. This is a matter of equity and also a way to improve community acceptance.

ILO’s approach is to include an equal number of children formerly associated with armed forces and groups and other vulnerable children in the community in programmes and to provide them with similar services aiming at their economic reintegration. The ILO targets and prioritizes working age children who are particularly vulnerable to recruitment by armed forces and groups. Providing them with long term employment opportunities is seen as the most effective strategy to prevent their recruitment. Special efforts are also made to reach girls who do not want to reveal their past association with armed forces and groups and would not come forward to participate in the programme.

Programmes target children who have reached the minimum age for admission to employment set by the national legislation of the country concerned. Finally, ILO’s approach is to include in programmes young persons who were released from armed forces and groups before they were 18 but who, by the time reintegration started, have become young adults. They have also been deprived from educational and employment opportunities during their childhood and need specific support to access decent work. The ILO, therefore, includes young people formerly associated with armed forces and groups up to the age of 21 for boys and 22 for girls.

The economic reintegration process

The figure below illustrates the economic reintegration process and the way in which the various technical components interlink and build on each other in view of ensuring decent work.



- The local socio-economic assessment should be conducted as early as possible in the preparatory phase. The aim is to identify decent work opportunities in the area (in particular attractive and innovative jobs) but to also identify and assess the capacity of specialized service providers (e.g. vocational training agencies) who may become project partners.
- Vocational orientation draws on the results of the local assessment and is the process of matching a young person’s aspiration with individual constraints and the local economic reality. The outcome of vocational orientation is a decent employment project and the

identification of services that will need to be provided to young people in order to help them achieve their project.

- The first set of services required aim at the economic empowerment of young people. In addition to vocational skills training, it includes basic education, life skills training and entrepreneurship training.
- However, additional support is needed to ensure that young people actually access employment, in particular, in situations with low labour demand and high competition to access jobs:
 - Young people in self-employment will need the following support to start and maintain a business: (i) physical and administrative support in setting up the business; (ii) information on available resources, opportunities and services in the locality and how to access them; (iii) business connections; (iv) technical support, and (v) business management skills. It is important that these young people receive regular professional coaching during this initial phase (at least one year).
 - Young people will also need support to access wage employment (such as the provision of incentives to the private sector employers, negotiation of employment conditions and monitoring to ensure that these are respected).
- Finally, providing social protection (even informal) and a safe working environment to young people is a key element of decent work. This entails, for instance, facilitating access to micro health insurance (protective side of protection) and ensuring occupational safety and health at the work place (preventive side of protection).

3.2. Case studies

The two following case studies illustrate how the above-described ILO approach to economic reintegration of young people formerly associated with armed forces and groups and other vulnerable children has been implemented.

3.2.1. Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): young people access self-employment

South Kivu, in Eastern DRC, has been heavily affected by conflict for the last fifteen years. Child recruitment started in 1996, with the “long march” led by L. D. Kabila against the Mobutu government. In 1998, a new insurrection broke out in Eastern DRC leading once more to massive recruitment of children by rebel armed groups and pro-governmental Mai Mai militias. Between 2003 and 2009, ILO-IPEC implemented projects in South Kivu aimed at supporting the economic reintegration of several hundred young persons released from armed forces and groups and preventing recruitment of vulnerable children. The box below presents some of the lessons learned of these projects.

Support to access self-employment in Eastern DRC

The choice of the implementing agency

One of the implementing agencies selected by the ILO-IPEC (Guichet d'économie local – GEL) is a local organization specialized in entrepreneurship development in the town of Bukavu. GEL organized, in a professional way, the selection of trades and occupations that would be proposed to beneficiaries, the vocational orientation process and the assistance to start and maintain a business.

- This is a confirmation that whenever it is possible, it is preferable to select implementing agencies with expertise in one or more technical fields and to build their capacity in child protection matters.

Local socio-economic assessment

GEL organized a workshop on the selection of trades and occupations for vocational orientation and training. This workshop was prepared on the basis of two studies: (1) a comprehensive analysis of employment and self-employment opportunities and (2) the identification and assessment of training services available in the areas of reintegration. The workshop brought together representatives from the government agencies dealing with employment and economic development; trade unions; employers' organizations; child protection agencies and training centres. Together and in a participatory and transparent manner, workshop participants selected relevant trades and occupations for vocational guidance and training, classified them in accordance with the expected profitability in the short-term and identified and selected unexplored and new trades and occupations to be developed.

- This was a very important step of the economic reintegration process. It required time, resources and a certain expertise, but it ensured that vocational training was actually linked to labour demand. It also contributed to identifying innovative and attractive job opportunities for young people.

Vocational orientation

GEL organized a jobs and career fair as part of vocational orientation activities. This has proved to be very useful for exposing beneficiaries to selected trades and occupations for which training could be made available. It was carried out through presentations by professionals and guided tours to different workplaces. By interacting with professionals and watching them practice their trades and occupations, these young persons were enabled to make decisions about their future

- Beneficiaries' initial ideas are often based on too little knowledge about jobs and ignorance about whole sections of the local economy. Through these activities, GEL expanded young people's visions regarding options that were previously unknown (for instance, the production of guitars, which turned out to be very lucrative).

Economic empowerment

In south Kivu, most beneficiaries were trained in non-formal vocational training centres (managed by NGOs) or through informal apprenticeships. The duration of the training depended on the occupation and trade concerned. It varied from two weeks (for soap making for instance) to 12 months (for mechanics or electrical welding for example).

In parallel to vocational training, young people were provided with basic education to improve their verbal expression, reading and writing, arithmetic and problem-solving. The purpose was not to provide "catch-up education" to close their educational gap, but rather to provide them with the necessary skills to follow vocational training and

enter employment.

Likewise, they received life skills training to acquire (or re-acquire) the personal skills and behaviour that are essential in civilian life and, more particularly, to familiarize themselves with the professional behaviour expected by employers and customers.

Finally, young people were provided with business skills (including planning and management of a business, accounting, marketing and risk taking)

- This experience confirmed that increasing the employability of young people requires much more than just vocational skills training and that these young people need to be trained in these four areas in order to be economically empowered.

Assistance in starting and maintaining self-employment

Considering the economic situation in South Kivu, most beneficiaries had no other option than to be self-employed and to set up a business, either on their own or in small groups. The project provided them with financial support to rent a workplace and buy equipment and helped them with administrative procedures, such as registration of the new business. GEL had the necessary expertise to provide business development services (such as assistance for the elaboration of simple business plans and to establish business connection).

Recognizing that young people needed to be accompanied through the set-up and consolidation of their businesses, ILO-IPEC built up the capacity of the staff of all implementing agencies (in particular those specialized in child protection) on entrepreneurship issues. All social workers were trained on the ILO Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) modules and were in turn able to train beneficiaries and coach their businesses.

The project facilitated the access of young people to micro health insurance schemes, paid for the first year premium and sensitized them on the importance of staying a member. Against the payment of a very low premium (2 to 4 USD per year) these young people saw 80 per cent of their health expenses covered. This improved their social protection but also preserved the capital of the businesses.

All beneficiaries received financial literacy, opened an account to make safe deposits and were encouraged to make savings. The project facilitated access to micro credit for some of them - those with productive businesses generating income – in view of expanding or diversifying their activities.

- Young people need continued, long-term and professional support during the consolidation period of their businesses.

3.2.2. The Philippines: young people access wage employment

The Philippines has a long, protracted history of armed conflict due to insurgencies spread around the country. When the ILO-IPEC project started, in 2003, there were an estimated 2,500 children in armed opposition groups, with others in pro-government militias and private security employment.

Support to access wage employment in the Philippines

IPEC worked through a government agency in the Philippines, the Department of Labor and Employment Regional Office no. XII (DOLE), and a private company, the Cotabato Sugar Central Corporation (COSUCECO), to offer vocational training on sugar cane farming to working age children at risk of recruitment or who have been associated with armed forces and groups.

A total of 115 working age children have benefited from this public-private partnership during 2005-2006. In several 30-day training courses organized in COSUCECO's facilities, they learned about suitable technologies for planting and harvesting sugar cane as well as how to maintain and manage a sugar cane farm. The training also included modules on life skills and peace education. These modules were designed to raise the trainees' awareness about the illegal character of the recruitment of children under 18 years of age in armed forces and groups.

This initiative helped increase the employability of these disadvantaged children, mostly coming from villages in Maguindanao Province in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Previous vocational skills training conducted in the area were found to be disconnected from the few economic agricultural opportunities that existed. As a result, not many were able to generate income linked to the skills acquired during vocational training.

The partnership builds on COSUCECO's strategic goal of promoting the expansion of sugar plantations in Maguindanao Province. This area had until then been inaccessible to the company due to its instability. Furthermore, the company did not want to venture in this area without explicit government support.

In the partnership, COSUCECO provided the technical/agricultural training and the DOLE ensured trainees had accommodation, meals, farm tools, equipment and access to life skills and peace education. The demand for improved technology from local sugar cane producers in Maguindanao Province was such that by 2006-2007 all 115 graduates were working as sugar cane service technicians for sugar cane producers in their areas of origin. Their services are enabling producers in the area to sell sugar cane in larger quantities and of better quality to COSUCECO.

The 115 graduates have acquired skills to work in a wide range of farming tasks, such as operating tools and equipments, coaching/training workers, planning plantation and harvesting operations, controlling budgets and stocks and communicating with sugar industry organizations, suppliers and contractors. These skills are valuable in Maguindanao Province, where the economy relies mainly on farming and other agricultural activities.

This partnership has allowed children at risk of recruitment or who have been associated with armed forces and groups to gain access to wage employment. The sugar cane farming skills can also lead to self employment as these service technicians together with their families also qualify for financial assistance that COSUCECO is extending to sugar cane planters in the area.

Finally, an important component of the training and employment was to ensure that these children were not reintegrated in other forms of child labour. Local chief executives deployed by DOLE to the sugar cane plantation areas were charged with monitoring the activities of these service technicians to ensure they and other minimum working age children working in the sugar cane industry were not exposed to hazardous work.

Lessons learned

- Partnerships with the private sector are crucial to ensure that vocational training effectively leads to employment and income generation. However, forging such partnerships pose enormous challenges. Private companies are rarely willing to venture in conflict-affected areas: they do not want to risk the lives of their staff; they do not want to be seen as associated with armed groups; and they are afraid of extortion which was common in the area.
- Providing vocational training to working age children already living in Maguindanao

identified by DOLE in COSUCECO's own facilities proved to be an excellent means to promote employment in sugar cane farming in Maguindanao and to open the access of local sugar cane producers to markets outside the area.

- COSUCECO found it more acceptable to provide training to former members of armed groups with governmental support. Not only has this enabled the identification of trainees, it has also opened the access of COSUCECO to local government units and authorities in Maguindanao. This has paved the way for future public-private cooperation through community-based projects, including the extension of COSUCECO's micro-finance services to those willing to start or develop sugar cane farming in the area.
- DOLE has also realized that partnerships with the private sector are possible and worth exploring. However, they have to be cost-effective and relevant for the private sector. In other words, such partnerships have to be designed to contribute directly to the profitability of private companies, either in terms of increased revenues, reduced costs or improved quality.
- Partnerships with the private sector can also help improve the overall quality of vocational training and employment services provided by government agencies. The Sala'am Programme had only allocated enough funds to cover training, food and accommodation. There was no fund allocation for the acquisition of tools and equipment. The partnership with COSUCECO allowed the Sala'am Programme to reallocate some of the funds that had been reserved for training to the acquisition of tools and equipments. This allowed vocational training to link more coherently and effectively with employment services.
- The quality of training also increased as trainers were specialized staff from the COSUCECO, fully acquainted with quality control and other requirements by this company and other sugar industries. The partnership also freed funds to introduce life skills and peace education, which were not originally part of training.

Source: IPEC: Prevention of child recruitment and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups. Strategic framework for addressing the economic gap. Geneva, ILO, 2007.

3.3. Focus on vocational training

The experience of IPEC in providing vocational training is described in further details in this section.

3.3.1. Overview of the different vocational skills training modalities, their strengths and weaknesses

Young people are usually reintegrated in their home communities which have been heavily affected by conflict. They often come from rural areas and are sometimes dispersed over large geographical areas (like in DRC). Delivering vocational skills training in the project area has, therefore, proved to be particularly challenging. IPEC experimented with different modalities that are described below. Their strengths and weaknesses are summarized.

Vocational training centres

It is preferable that young people are trained in nationally accredited centres considering that it usually leads to better job opportunities. However, these were rarely present and functioning in the project areas. Public formal sector vocational training centres (VTC), when they existed, were often severely degraded, their equipment destroyed, their trainers forced to migrate or were not motivated. The training provided by these centres did not always correspond to the trade and

occupations that had been identified and was sometimes cut off from the reality of demand. Finally, young people had difficulties accessing these centres due to the entry requirements in terms of educational level, the duration and cost of training and their location.

Vocational training centres run by NGOs or other organizations were generally more flexible with regard to all factors mentioned above, probably due to the fact that they are directly funded by donors, even in crisis situation. However, the quality of the training varied widely.

Vocational training centres ¹⁶	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of training is higher than through CBT, mobile training, informal apprenticeship. • Training institution is accredited (or should be). • Training curriculum follows national standards (or should follow). • Training leads to certification that is officially recognized (or should lead). • Training discipline is easier to achieve. • Additional services such as clothing and health are easier to organize. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is more expensive. • Resistance from training centres to train disadvantaged groups or informal economic workers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Longer training duration. • Drop-out rates are higher if residential facilities are not available. • May have not yet been accredited, curriculum does not follow national standards yet, does not lead to recognized certification

In DRC, none of the beneficiaries were trained in the public formal VTCs (managed by the “Institut National de Préparation Professionnelle”), which were not operational. In Congo however, the project negotiated the ordinary conditions established by the VTCs. In Burundi, the project encouraged a VTC from the capital city to open a new branch in the project area (this branch remained open after the project ended). In Sri Lanka, ILO-IPEC focused its capacity on re-building the training system in the North and the East by strengthening the capacity of some 18 training centres and NGOs offering training.

Where training centres did not exist or were not operational, the following three modalities have commonly been used:

Community-based training

Community-based training (CBT) integrates skills training into a comprehensive economic and social empowerment framework which comprises: identification of employment and income generating opportunities, skills training, post-training support services, follow-up during start-up and consolidation of employment. This type of training is particularly appropriate where there is not enough demand to open a training centre and where material resources are locally available.

¹⁶ IPEC: *Prevention of child recruitment and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups. Strategic framework for addressing the economic gap.* Geneva, ILO, 2007.

Community-based training ¹⁷	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps local economic development and brings new services and technology to the community • Is more easily accessible by providers and beneficiaries • Is the least expensive • Income generation in short-period • Very welcomed by the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited facilities and shortage of trainers • More difficult to achieve discipline • Risk of irregular attendance

This model was used in Sri Lanka and has proved to be more cost effective in that context. The ILO community-based Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) was used.¹⁸

Mobile training

Mobile training is offered by mobile units for limited periods of time from village to village. It is tailored to the specific needs of a given rural area in order to improve a given production technology or the quality of a specific product and to stimulate diversification and innovation. This type of training works well when beneficiaries are scattered across vast rural areas and material resources are locally available.

Mobile training ¹⁹	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No entry level qualifications • Immediate income generation • Can return to location for follow-up • Is less expensive • Well appreciated by the community • Brings new services and technologies for the locality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can only be used to train basic skills • Can only be conducted on selected trades and occupations • Only for short-term training • It has to be planned in conjunction with the seasonal calendar

Mobile training has been used in Sri Lanka to train young people in localities held by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) at the time. It proved to be very adequate given the security situation and for young persons/families who felt uncomfortable moving out of their villages.

¹⁷ IPEC: *Prevention of child recruitment and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups. Strategic framework for addressing the economic gap.* Geneva, ILO, 2007.

¹⁸ ILO: *Rural skills training: A generic manual on training for rural economic empowerment (TREE).* Geneva, 2009.

¹⁹ IPEC: *Prevention of child recruitment and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups. Strategic framework for addressing the economic gap.* Geneva, ILO, 2007.

Informal apprenticeships

Apprenticeship means the transmission of skills from an experienced worker to a young learner in an enterprise, which is based on an apprenticeship agreement that confers certain rights and obligations to both master craftsmen and apprentices. Informal apprenticeships can be found mostly in micro and small enterprises in the informal economy. It is regulated by social norms, customs and traditions. It allows for a smooth transition from training to employment; for informal apprenticeships, the most common path is to become self-employed.

Informal apprenticeship is the dominant way of skills acquisition in most developing countries. According to reports from Africa and Asia, it accounts for 80 to 90 per cent of all ongoing vocational training in urban and semi-urban settings. In central Africa (Congo, DRC, Burundi and Rwanda), a very large number of beneficiaries of the IPEC programme have been trained through informal apprenticeships. This training modality presents many advantages for economic reintegration of young people but also some specific weaknesses that needed to be addressed in the design of the training. The box below presents the most important ones.

Informal apprenticeships

Strengths:

- No formal entry requirements as regards educational level.
- Limited training costs (apprenticeship fees). In some countries, apprentices do not pay for the training they receive and the master craftspeople even provide them with shelter/accommodation, free meals and pocket money. However, some of those who are not paying in cash for training usually have to commit themselves for a certain period of time or contribute towards the purchase of some materials.
- Informal apprenticeship is adapted to post-conflict-contexts where formal training structures and enterprises may have been destroyed, as it is essentially a small-scale enterprise practice.
- Informal apprenticeship has high institutional sustainability because it is rooted in customs, social norms and cultural traditions of the community.
- The reintegration project has considerable possibilities to contribute to improving certain aspects of the apprenticeship.
- In many countries, artisans are well organized. Associations of artisans are involved in skills training (some associations have developed their own apprenticeships programmes and are involved in standardizing training content and recognition of certificates). They are a good leverage point for promoting occupational safety and health (OSH) issues, financial services, cooperatives, sensitization on HIV and AIDS, social dialogue, voice, and empowerment.
- Because of the relative intimacy with the apprentice, the master craftsperson can become a positive role model for the young apprentice. This is important in order to ease the transfer from a military role to a positive civilian one, and the family of the master craftsperson may even become a new family for these young people (for instance when lodging and meals are offered

Weaknesses to be addressed:

- In some regions, growing un- and underemployment and informal economy expansion have changed informal apprenticeships for the worse. While it is true that informal apprenticeship contributes to solve urgent employment problems by providing youth with skills for productive self-employment, and even for wage

employment, it is also true that being an apprentice has in many cases become just another word for being un- or underemployed; contents and duration of apprenticeships have become vague, transitions from the status of apprentice to that of employee sometimes even disappear altogether. Informal apprenticeship can become a simple form of exploitation of cheap or free labour.

- While entry-conditions may be minimal in terms of educational level, there may be strong social restrictions; entry into informal apprenticeship traditionally depends on family and clan relations between master craftspeople and the apprentice's family. Informal apprenticeship is not accessible to everybody, including boys, as usually assumed. The very poor and those without kin linkages may have limited access. Social customs can restrict access of girls and minorities to certain, often more profitable, trades.
- What is an evident strength of the apprenticeship, namely learning by working on actual commercial assignments and contracts may also become its weakness: limited business volume of the master means necessarily limited training capacity.
- Limited capacity of apprenticeship to raise the level of technology in informal economy production; masters mostly pass on their skills and knowledge to apprentices; they rarely create new knowledge. Apprentices learn enough for economic survival but not enough to improve productivity significantly. Informal apprenticeship lacks theoretical content.
- Informal apprenticeship is largely untouched by minimum wage legislation, labour codes and respect of OSH and other working condition requirements.
- There is usually strong gender specificity/bias in an informal apprenticeship.
- Informal apprenticeship suffers from a poor image owing to the fact that it is seen by many as a last resort. Perception seems to vary with social position: ILO research indicates that among highly educated decision-makers, the reputation of informal apprenticeship was low. Master craftspeople and apprentices, however, opted for apprenticeship largely out of positive motivations.
- Informal apprenticeship requires improvement of basic education including literacy and numeric skills, for the master craftspeople as well as for apprentices, so as to improve skills acquisition.
- Informal apprenticeship requires skills upgrading for masters, equipping them with teaching skills, calculation, measurement, reading of drawings and training on new equipment not available in their workshops, and business skills.
- Informal apprenticeship requires evaluation and certification of skills obtained.
- Informal apprenticeship needs to be extended through post training support arrangements.

Source: IPEC; ITC-ILO: *Children associated with armed forces and groups. How-to-guide for economic reintegration*. Turin, ILO, 2010.

3.3.2. Cross-cutting issues

Some additional lessons learned from ILO-IPEC's projects, not necessarily linked to the training modality, are described below.²⁰

Ensuring quality of education. It is challenging to offer quality training in conflict-affected countries. Special measures such as capacity development for programme staff and forging operational and implementation partnerships are crucial to ensure quality training.

Lack of interest in basic education. Young people did not realize the importance of basic education that was offered to them through remedial or catch-up courses until they were confronted with the need to express themselves properly, to use reading and writing skills and to use basic arithmetic. For this reason, remedial and catch-up courses worked best when they were integrated into technical training or were taught concomitantly with technical training. Offering remedial and catch-up courses before technical training usually discouraged trainees and led to low levels of attendance or higher dropout rates from the programme.

The importance of family support, or at least consent. Some family members of young people may be against their participation in vocational training. Family members are, most often, worried about fulfilling daily needs and may not necessarily see the benefits of investing in training. Programmes and plans of action need to allocate time and resources to awareness-raising and sensitization activities to ensure the support of family members.

Gender responsive vocational training. Girls have specific needs and constraints that need to be taken into account, such as the need to care for their children for siblings, elderly or disabled members of the family, household chores, culturally imposed reduced mobility, and culturally imposed reduces access to certain types of training and occupations.

Recognition of qualifications or official training certification. Most training providers are not formally accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency. As a consequence, the qualifications, diplomas and certificates delivered by these training providers are not officially recognized and do not constitute legal entitlements to practice an occupation or trade. Programmes and plans of action should work with national agencies as much as possible to obtain the official recognition of qualifications, diplomas and certificates delivered to girls and boys/young women and men.

Subsistence and health during training. Young women and men cannot fully benefit from training when worried about their own as well as their families' subsistence and health. Programmes and plans of action should as much as possible find ways of catering for these needs. This can be done through operational partnerships, by facilitating access to existing health facilities or through small income-generation during training (for example by enabling trainees to sell the goods they produce during training).

²⁰ Adapted from IPEC: *Prevention of child recruitment and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups. Strategic framework for addressing the economic gap.* Geneva, ILO, 2007.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

This paper has argued that addressing the economic dimension of child recruitment is of critical importance to prevent children from joining armed forces and groups, to ensure sustainable reintegration of children released and to contribute to peace and stability in the communities. It has highlighted, however, that most reintegration programmes are weak in that regard.

It is thus necessary to significantly strengthen the economic component of reintegration programmes for children. This requires changes in the way the programmes are designed and implemented. Child protection agencies need to advocate for long-term and sufficient funding. They need to mobilize the appropriate technical expertise and, whenever possible, select implementing agencies with the necessary technical capacity (rather than a child protection profile).

The aim of these programmes should be to support young people to access decent work opportunities, and this should be built from the outset into the project design. The provision of vocational skills training is a key component of the economic reintegration process but needs to be based on sound assessment of the local market and followed by post-training support to ensure that young people will actually be able to access work. Basic education, life skills training and entrepreneurship training are also needed to actually increase the employability of young people. Finally, although training in nationally accredited centres should be preferred, other training modalities should also be explored.

Inter-agency guidelines are currently being developed and reviewed²¹ with the aim to provide practical guidance to agencies designing and implementing such programmes. The ILO is actively part of this process in order to mainstream its approach.

Reintegration programmes for children are among the first employment creation interventions put in place during or immediately after conflict. While targeting children formerly associated with armed forces and groups and other vulnerable children, they should also aim to re-build the capacity of vocational training and employment service providers for the benefit of other war-affected populations.

²¹ The youth module of the Integrated DDR Standards is under review and a Technical Note on economic reintegration of children under the Paris Principles is under development.

ANNEX I: Work makes or breaks prevention and reintegration

The stories of two children from Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo	
<p><i>Sebastien is 17 and is benefiting from economic reintegration assistance</i></p> <p>At 11, Sebastien helps his family grow vegetables. They live a modest life: their small income is enough to pay the plot monthly rent and to buy other food and clothes.</p> <p>At 12, his family's living conditions deteriorate. Frequent incursions by armed groups in and around their village make farming increasingly difficult and dangerous.</p> <p>At 13, he joins an armed group after being promised a monthly payment. His mother, other family members and neighbours disagree with his departure, but they have very little to offer him instead.</p> <p>At 15, he listens on the radio about the DDR programme for those below 18. The idea pleases him as he also wants to quit. Payments are more than irregular, living conditions are poor and he feels bad about killing and looting. He runs away.</p> <p>At 16, he is no longer a kadogo¹. He has been demobilized and supported to return to his family. He is learning how to make soap with other children. He is also learning how to become self-employed.</p> <p>At 17, he has become a member of a soap making association together with other adolescents. They are the only soap makers in the village and get regular orders from an Agronomic Institute nearby. His mother is able to buy food and other necessities. Neighbours are no longer suspicious and even come for buying soap. Sebastian has made new friends and is going out with a girl.</p> <p>¹Term used in the area to designate a child associated with armed forces and groups.</p>	<p><i>Jean is 16, but is still waiting for economic reintegration assistance</i></p> <p>At 10, Jean lives with his mother and three other younger brothers. He works as a luggage porter at a small airport not too far from his home. His small income buys food for him and his brothers.</p> <p>At 11, he is making less and less money at the airport. Flights start to decrease when the airport became a target for armed groups operating in the area. His mother has to sell their few possessions to buy food.</p> <p>At 12, he accepts to enrol in the armed forces. He wants to become a fisherman like his deceased father but he does not see how his dream can come true. He sees the army as the only solution to become less of a burden for his mother and perhaps even to bring some money home.</p> <p>At 16, he is told by his commander that those below 18 will be demobilized. He would like to quit the army, but he is very worried about the future. What will he do for a living?</p> <p>At 17, he is transferred to a transit and orientation centre where he receives a return-home kit to go back to his family. He is also told he will be supported to find a job in his community. Upon return, his neighbours make an effort to welcome him and other former kadogo. Months go by and he does not receive any support and fails to find a job. He starts hanging around with other young demobilized. They wander in the local market looking for an opportunity to steal cash and other valuables. Neighbours become suspicious of him. He does not miss the armed forces, but would be tempted to rejoin if called back. His family realizes the danger but feels powerless.</p>
<p>Reflections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sebastien and Jean were both child labourers. At 10 and 11, they should have been in school, but they were already working. • Poverty and conflict drove both of them to enrol in armed forces and groups. While they were with the armed forces and groups, they did not learn any marketable skills. • At one point in their lives, both of them were demobilized and supported to return to their families and communities. Their lives were very similar until Sebastien started receiving economic reintegration assistance. 	

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- Sebastien has become a soap maker and earns regular income. His successful economic reintegration has a positive impact on his social reintegration.
 - Jean does not have an occupation that generates him regular income. Efforts to facilitate his social reintegration have failed. He has become a youth gang member and a petty criminal. He is at high risk of being re-recruited.
 - Parents and family members do not want to see their children joining armed forces and groups, but they feel powerless amidst the destitution that surrounds their lives.

Source: IPEC: *Prevention of child recruitment and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups. Strategic framework for addressing the economic gap.* Geneva, ILO, 2007.

ANNEX II: Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups²²

Reintegration, education, vocational and skills training and livelihoods

Education, vocational and skills training and / or opportunities to support their own and their family's livelihoods are essential elements for reintegration. Reintegration programmes should allow and encourage access for all groups, including children who need child care facilities. This support should be free, available on a part time as well as full time basis, and include informal as well as formal assistance. Children who participate should receive food whilst they are there and the hours should be flexible to allow for other commitments. Approaches to providing support of this kind should be adapted according to the child's age, experiences, and circumstances. Educational activities should take into account the children's lost educational opportunities, their age and stage of development, their experiences with armed forces or armed groups and the potential to promote psychosocial well being, including a sense of self worth. Children with disability should be included in educational activities with their peers. Educational and skills training should recognise that many children who were associated with armed forces or armed groups, while missing years of education, have learned other skills and competencies that they do not want to lose and which can be useful in civilian society. Accelerated learning programmes suitable for adolescents who have missed years of school should be compatible with and recognised by the formal system of education. Alternative forms of education such as adult literacy classes or evening classes should be offered to children who cannot or do not wish to enter the formal educational system. Access to education or training programmes is likely to be even more difficult for girls than for boys for a variety of reasons including cultural expectations, poverty, and the need for girls to earn a livelihood, work at home, or look after children. Training programmes should include but not be restricted to occupations considered suitable for girls to enable subsequent income generation while building on the skills and abilities they have developed while with the armed force or armed group. Provision should be made for relevant vocational training and opportunities for employment, suitable for the needs of all girls and boys including those with disabilities. The following guidance should be adhered to:

7.83.0 An adequate technical analysis of the livelihood systems, market opportunities, and household economies in the places to which children are returning should be used to develop economically relevant training, alternative forms of education, and opportunities for economic reintegration;

7.83.1 Actors supporting children's reintegration should coordinate their work, learn from each other, develop joint programmes, ensure appropriate referrals to those having particular expertise in income generation and vocational training and take measures to avoid variations in the benefits of their respective programmes;

7.83.2 Consultation with communities should develop local programmes such as collective initiatives that benefit small groups of children and the community they return to;

7.83.3 Training in very basic business skills is also needed to prepare children to keep accounts and handle money;

7.83.4 Young people with no previous work experience should be offered apprenticeship and/or 'on-the-job' training opportunities;

²² *Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups*, 2007.

7.83.5 Children who need to earn a living immediately upon return to their family and community should have opportunities to do so while they obtain professional training and/or an improved education. For example, the sale of some objects produced in the training phase could allow them to purchase the tools they need for future work. In some circumstances, limited materials can be provided as start up support;

7.83.6 Life skills training – including civic education, parenting skills, rights at work and home, prevention of HIV/AIDS, and education to counter interpersonal violence – should also be part of all programmes designed for young people;

7.83.7 Life skills programming should be sensitive to the particular challenges faced by girls upon reintegration. It should allow both girls and boys to acquire a greater understanding of the challenges faced by the other and foster positive gender relationships;

7.83.8 Providing children with opportunities to begin to learn or relearn skills such as non-violent conflict resolution and anger management can be very helpful to children who have learnt to use violence and aggression in their everyday lives;

7.83.9 Training programmes for girls should take into account child care and meet other needs while training, such as flexible training schedules. Care must be taken that vocational or skills training programmes do not support or lead to exploitation of children or child labour. Work and education should be balanced.

ANNEX III: The UN Post-conflict Employment, Income Generation and Reintegration Policy²³

Coherent and comprehensive strategies for post-conflict employment promotion and reintegration include three tracks of programmes. Programmes in these tracks start at the same time, preceded by pre-peace accord planning. Though all three tracks are observed in any phase of recovery, their intensity generally peaks at different times in the post-conflict period. While all three tracks promote employment, their focus is different: respectively stabilization, reintegration and long-term employment creation.

- a. Track A:** Stabilizing income generation and emergency employment. This track of employment programmes aims to consolidate security and stability. Programmes typically target specific conflict-affected individuals. The emphasis is on short-term responses, often of a temporary nature, that provide a quick peace dividend to targeted ex-combatants, high-risk youth, returnees, IDPs, and others with urgent needs or running a high risk of exploitation or abuse, particularly women. In addition to contributing to stabilization and relief, direct employment programmes can also make first valuable contributions to reconstruction and recovery. If well designed, these programmes can help kick-start economic and social recovery and restore livelihoods. Programmes include emergency temporary jobs as well as basic livelihood and start-up grants.
- b. Track B:** Local economic recovery for employment opportunities and reintegration. This track of employment programmes focuses on promoting employment opportunities at the local level, where reintegration ultimately takes place. Rebuilding communities provides opportunities to address root causes of conflict and facilitate longer term reconciliation. Employment creation and income generation therefore focus on investments for local recovery and reconstruction. The scope of participating economic actors is wider, and capacity and institution building become central objectives. The focus is on consolidating the peace process and reintegration. Programmes include investing in local socio-economic infrastructure, restoration of the natural resource base and local government capacity development.
- c. Track C:** Sustainable employment creation and decent work. This track involves support to policies, institutional capacity development at the national level and creating a framework for social dialogue to define, by consensus, “the rules of the game”. These activities should also start immediately after the crisis, but intensify with increased stability and recovery. The ultimate goal is to promote sustainable long-term development that sustains “productive employment and decent work”, while respecting fundamental human rights, promoting gender equality and giving attention to other marginalized groups. While most interventions in this track continue to have a role as the country progresses into the development process, it is important that work in this field starts during the stabilization phase, balancing the need for quick action with the importance of sustainable impact.

The figure below illustrates the evolving priorities of the three main tracks of post-conflict employment programming, with each track aimed at a wider target group. Initially the priority is income security and satisfying the basic needs of conflict-affected individuals with high and urgent needs, as shown on the left axis. The Track A curve reflects the immediate post-conflict emphasis on grants and cash-for-work programmes, or even food-for-work for groups with urgent needs (for example in situations of famine). The Track B curve emphasizes employment leveraged and

²³ From UN: *UN Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration 2008*. Geneva, 2009.

supervised by local governments and community groups. These projects are typically subsidized, but not entirely financed, by foreign aid or local tax revenues. Microfinance targeting women household heads, for example, is scaled up at this stage. Finally, in Track C, the longer term private sector and sustainable public sector employment require strong national policies relating to labour-intensive industries, including agriculture, fisheries, forestry and service industries. Joint private sector development (PSD) initiatives may also play an important role during this stage. Note that for Track B and Track C, sustainable employment and decent work opportunities tend to develop later in the recovery phase and continue as part of a normal and uninterrupted development process.

