



Proceedings

Workshop Schokland “Security Promotion in Fragile States”

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Co-organized by PSO, Centre for Conflict Studies & IKV Pax Christi

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The *Schokland Akkoorden* (Schokland Agreements) were initiated by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to facilitate the Millennium Development Goals and gave birth to the Peace, Security & Development (PSD) Network. One of the working groups within this network, which focuses on “community security and community-based DDR in fragile state”,¹ has recently produced an interim report, *Security Promotion in Fragile States: Can Local Meet National?*,² which is the result of a desk study. Future work by this group includes case studies in Burundi, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan. In order to obtain feedback that can be used in this next phase, the working group organised a workshop in the Hague on 3 September 2009 at which the desk study report was presented to, and discussed with, a group of representatives of Dutch NGOs, academics and Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff. Here, we summarize the main discussions of the workshop organized around the publication

The lack of local involvement in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) is arguably one of the causes of the limited success of DDR programmes. By exploring the connections between community security and DDR, it is argued, some of the weaknesses of state-focused DDR could be overcome. First, the end state of community security can be seen as the overall aim of DDR processes; second, community security as a process can be a characteristic of DDR processes with community participation being a crucial element; third, DDR programmes can be connected to community security initiatives such as traditional systems and peace committees; fourth, DDR programmes can be linked

¹ The working group “community security and community-based DDR in fragile states” involves the following partners: Centre for Conflict Studies (CCS) of Utrecht University; the Centre for International Conflict Analysis and Management (CICAM) of the Radboud University Nijmegen; the Conflict Research Unit (CRU) of the Clingendael Institute; the European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP); IKV Pax Christi; PSO; the Dutch Refugee Council; and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense. The co-chairs of the working group are Georg Frerks (CCS) and Jan Gruiters (IKV Pax Christi).

² Willems, R., W. Verkoren, M. Derks, J. Kleingeld, G. Frerks, & H. Rouw (2009) *Security Promotion in Fragile States: Can Local Meet National? Exploring the Connections between Community Security and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)*. The Hague: Peace, Security and Development Network.

with community-based DDR initiatives; and fifth, community security can be a precondition for DDR. Recent developments towards international standards for DDR implementation and coordination should therefore be carefully balanced with flexibility and openness to local input.

State DDR programmes – defined as programmes designed at a national level, usually jointly by donors and national governments, and centrally implemented – can encounter a number of shortcomings. For one, programmes can neglect special needs groups, such as child, female and handicapped ex-combatants. Also the distinction between ex-combatants and civilians can often be very much blurred, making it harder, yet more imminent, to create clarity over a programme’s target group. Past experiences with DDR have also been overly top-down implemented, creating programmes that are hardly context specific and are designed based on DDR handbooks and troop numbers and financial benefits adopted during peace negotiations rather than with regard to the background of the conflict. Diplomacy on the local level is often overlooked in DDR, even though local issues generally play a crucial role in the conflict. Programmes generally also lack local involvement, and it is found that local involvement and a connection to community security could help address some of the shortcomings of DDR programmes. DDR should also be better incorporated within a wider peacebuilding process, especially regarding SSR, transitional justice and reconciliation. Where DDR is on the one hand viewed to be a short stopgap measure to address immediate security threats, it is on the other hand more and more perceived to require long-term goals. This differentiates DDR programmes from DDR processes, and blurs the boundaries between security and development. In relation to SSR the question then arises whether it is best that DDR follows the western notion of a state monopoly of legitimate violence, or whether another approach in which other actors also serve a role in security provision is more realistic. With regard to transitional justice and reconciliation, again, communities and local arrangements can provide an important impetus. For instance, in many African communities compensation is favored over Western preferences for punishment, and communal values preside over private values. The way people deal with the past and guilt differs throughout and initiatives therefore should be placed in the local context.

While connecting DDR to community security is in the study viewed as part of the solution for some of the weaknesses of DDR, it can by no means be viewed as a panacea. Local communities cannot be idealized as they are complex entities consisting of a network of ever changing relationships between its members, and also connected with diaspora and worldwide economic networks. However, although viewing a community as a complex network may be academically correct, it is a vague concept for practical implementation. Asking in a community who belongs to the community may clarify boundaries, but can also reify cleavages. A geographical definition is marred with similar identity issues and also takes out of the equation any regional and global influences – e.g. through diaspora, economics and information technology. Communities are real or imagined and areas of competence and areas of interest may not necessarily overlap. One way to investigate the boundaries of the community could be by looking at community security initiatives and from there investigate the social basis for these initiatives. Defining a community is nevertheless a problematic undertaking, yet inevitable to do before undertaking a programme aimed at a community level. A definition of the community (complex and unpragmatic) could be differentiated from programmatic starting points (more pragmatic, yet simplifying). Idealistically, however, they overlap as much as possible. Communities can also not be romanticized: they are often highly divided, embedded in political and patrimonial networks, and lacking in managerial and organizational capacities to organize DDR programmes.

It is also important to be realistic about what DDR can achieve. It is not a DDR programme that will lead to job creation and sustainable development. DDR must often start quickly after a peace agreement in order to make use of the window of opportunity of available international support and finances. The political reality is that if this opportunity is not seized, international support for the programmes may drop. On the other hand, it can be questioned whether this political reality should be accepted as a given. Perhaps more importantly, the question cannot be avoided whether disarmament and demobilisation actually lead to increased security for the local populations. DDR programmes often have a political rationale (maintaining commitment of the parties to an armed conflict to a peace process for example), but for them to be truly effective, they need to also keep track of a more fundamental goal: to improve the security of the local communities. This led to the question: what *else* is needed for DDR to be successful in terms of contributing to increased community security? For example, in communities to which demobilised fighters return, development organisations are often not yet present. How, then, can community development processes be commenced that can support reintegration and community security? How can communities be assisted in organising such processes – and who can do this? Do DDR programmers need to be accompanied by experts in peacebuilding and development from the start – as with the famous 3D approach in Afghanistan?

Such changes are difficult to make because of the reality of (post)conflict politics. DDR programmes start shortly after a peace agreement, often also being a result of the negotiations. Communities generally do not participate in such negotiations, and consequently community security is not taken up and will not be reflected as an issue within a DDR programme. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for rebels to wait until the DDR programme meets their demands before they are willing to participate.

While indeed perceived as being intertwined with the long-term perspective of peacebuilding processes, a DDR programme often only intends to contribute to this process for a small portion. Problematic is the lack of actors that are able to pick up where the reinsertion component of a DDR has finished. Also, it must be underlined that an outsider by definition has very limited influence on reintegration, which is mainly a process that depends on the insiders of the conflict. In this regard, it may indeed be very viable to work with local community initiatives where possible, as the number of international development actors able to pick up the stick where DDR left tends to be limited, and since communities are the ones who have to perform the tasks in the end anyway. Local communities generally find their own contextualized ways to enhance their security in moments of crisis, which necessitates a community-based approach to security in general, and opens up possibilities for DDR as well. Local communities can (and should) also be involved even earlier in the DDR process, to highlight the relevant local security issues at hand, empowering them for further responsibilities in this process. At the same time, including communities as actors with a stakes and benefits in the process diminishes perceptions that DDR is about rewarding the perpetrators of past violence. Of course this is not to say everything in DDR should become ‘community-based’ per se. Where in some cases community-based programmes can indeed be undertaken – merging community security with DDR – in other cases it will be more relevant to support community security structures parallel to DDR. Apart from that, it seems relevant to investigate what community security structures can entail for programmes alongside DDR, such as SSR, transitional justice and reconciliation. Complementarities between actors and initiatives on various levels must be enhanced in order to achieve enhanced effectiveness in DDR programmes. Each actor and initiative has its own limitations and possibilities and only when these are combined constructively we can hope to achieve better results.

To conclude, DDR cannot bring about peace and sustainable development on its own. In general, DDR programmes have limited goals and what it can achieve is further limited by its managerial realities. Other actors and initiatives have to pick up where DDR leaves and it is suggested that this can partially be done by communities themselves. To enable this, DDR programmes should take community security and other local issues better into account whenever possible. On the other hand, it requires empowerment of communities and a minimal level of security before DDR can take place with such a community security approach. Such an exercise, however, brings about issues surrounding the definition of the community, both as a concept and as an administrative focus, and this requires more attention. Further it is not only DDR but similarly - and perhaps more so - SSR, transitional justice and reconciliation initiatives that need connecting to community security, which will also be taken up by the research team. Further questions include the extent to which it is possible and desirable to include communities in DDR programmes, and whether it is necessary to always link DDR and community security or if it is better to have parallel tracks.