



Dissertation

A Critical Assessment of the Socio-Economic Reintegration Process of Ex-Combatants Ten Years After the War in Sierra Leone

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Abstract:

This study examines the current socio-economic status of the ex-combatants 10 years after the conflict in Sierra Leone. It examines the job opportunities, political space, relationship with community members, challenges faced, social networks involved in, relationship with former colleagues, access to land and other issues that are significant in the reintegration process of ex-combatants. It further studies the national socio-economic environment and how ex-combatants are faring in the overall post-war recovery process in Sierra Leone. Special focus lies on the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants (DDR) programme which was part of the Lome Peace Agreement signed in 1999. The study also comes up with recommendations as to how the challenges currently faced by ex-combatants could be overcome.



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A Critical Assessment of the Socio-Economic Reintegration Process of Ex-Combatants Ten Years after the War in Sierra Leone

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to people of Sierra Leone. The journey has not been an easy one but we are now seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. My heart and prayers are always with you.

Acknowledgement

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Abstract

Sierra Leone was faced with a decade of a very bloody civil conflict. The conflict led to the mutilation and death of thousands of Sierra Leoneans with over a million becoming either internally displaced or leaving the country to become refugees in other countries. The war was started on the 23rd of March, 1991 by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) but other factions such as the Civil Defence Force (CDF), the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and the so-called West Side Boys became key actors as the conflict progressed. The Lome Peace Agreement signed in 1999 established as one of its components the setting implementation of a Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants (DDR) programme. At the end of the DDR in 2005 over 76,000 ex-combatants from the different factions were reintegrated into their communities of choice or origin. Coupled with this, they were assisted with reintegration packages that included training, education, agricultural kits, money etc.

This study examines the current socio-economic status of the ex-combatants 10 years after the conflict in Sierra Leone. It examines the job opportunities, political space, relationship with community members, challenges faced, social networks involved in, relationship with former colleagues, access to land and other issues that are significant in the reintegration process of ex-combatants. It further studies the national socio-economic environment and how ex-combatants are faring in the overall post-war recovery process in Sierra Leone. The study also comes up with recommendations as to how the challenges currently faced by ex-combatants could be overcome.

Key words: reintegration, disarmament, demobilization, ex-combatants

List of Abbreviations

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
APC	All Peoples Congress
CACD	Community Arms Collection and Destruction Programme
CDF	Civil Defence Force
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CICS	Center for International Cooperation and Security
CMRRD	Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
HRCSL	Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone
ICC	Interim Care Center
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
MARWOPNET	Mano River Women's Peacebuilding Network
MSWGCA	Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs
NAYCOM	National Youth Commission
NCDDR	National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
NRA	National Revenue Authority
NCD	National Commission for Democracy
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
QIPS	Quick Impact Projects

RRR	Resettlement, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SCSL	Special Court for Sierra Leone
SEND	Social Enterprise Development Foundation for West Africa
SLPP	Sierra Leone Peoples' Party
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding

1. Introduction

Contemporary armed conflicts are now “characterized by a number of traits that have not generally been associated with earlier armed conflicts.”¹ Conflicts today “tend to occur more within rather than between states, where the rules of engagement tend to be defined at the local level” (Emerging Issues Peacebuild 2008:1).² “Armed challenges to state power by non-state actors are a defining feature of contemporary conflict, while transnational, multilateral, regional and bilateral actors also play ever more significant roles.”³ At the end of some of these conflicts peace processes are initiated which make provision for the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of former combatants.

This was the case of Sierra Leone, a country that went through a decade of a very bloody civil war characterized by the mutilation and loss of innocent lives and properties. The war which started in the Bomaru, Eastern Kailahun, was quick to consume the rest of the country with untold suffering engulfing the land. Many people running for their lives either became refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs). Rape and torture became weapons of war used by the different factions with innocent women and children as their targets. These victims were also recruited into the different fighting factions while some volunteered into them for reasons of safety and personal security. Women became bush wives, sex slaves, spies, cooks and gun totters. The enormity of the war caught the attention of the international community especially with images of amputated and mutilated women and children.⁴

With the support of the international community, several peace accords were signed which included the Abidjan, Conakry and Lome Peace Agreements. The first two accords failed but the Lome Agreement (despite the many challenges it faced) remained the final peace agreement signed. The DDR of the different fighting factions was one of the many provisions it made.

DDR is “geared towards collecting the weapons from former combatants and assist in their transformation process from combatants to normal civilians.”⁵ The reintegration aspect is important to the maintenance of peace as it limits the possibility for ex-combatants to be

¹ See: http://www.gordonfn.org/resfiles/yeung_emerging_issues.pdf (accessed on the 4th of June 2013)

² Also see: http://www.gordonfn.org/resfiles/yeung_emerging_issues.pdf (accessed on the 4th of June 2013)

³ Ibid

⁴ Bangura, I. (2010): ‘Making Peace Work: Women and Peacebuilding in Kailahun District’ Unpublished thesis, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands pg.7.

⁵ See: http://www.wittenberg-center.org/download/DP_2012-01_Bangura_Liberia_The_Transition_from_Destruction_to_Post-War_Reconstruction.pdf (accessed on the 5th of June 2013)

recruited. This is done by providing them an alternative source of livelihood and changing their mind-set through constructive engagement.⁶

In 2002 the war was declared officially over by Alhaji Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabba, the then president of Sierra Leone. 76,000 ex-combatants went through DDR with the different factions disintegrated. The DDR programme was led by the National Commission for DDR and supported by international actors which included the UN agencies and several other international and national agencies.

After the collection of weapons from the combatants and their demobilization process they were assisted to return to their communities of origin or choice. This depended on what they wanted as some were fearful of returning to their communities of origin for crimes they had committed there. On their return they were provided with reintegration opportunities (socio-economic) such as skills training, access to educational institutions, agricultural tools, start-up capitals etc. This was coupled with psycho-social counseling despite the fact that it was not effectively done due to the lack of trained and qualified personnel.

The DDR programme helped to kick-start local economies as quick impact projects were introduced and ex-combatants were encouraged to work with local community members to foster peace and reconciliation. Parallel to the DDR programme, a twin transitional justice mechanism process was initiated: “the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL).”⁷ This twin initiative was meant to seek redress for the victims of the war by facilitating a reconciliatory process through the TRC with the mandate of “creating an impartial historical record of violations and abuses of human rights and humanitarian law related to the armed conflict in Sierra Leone...”⁸ The SCSL was “given the mandate to try those who bear the greatest responsibility for war crimes, crimes against humanity and violations of international humanitarian laws.”⁹

However, DDR programmes are time and budget bound and normally span from 3 to 5 years. Thus, the DDR programme came to an end in Sierra Leone in 2007. This is due to the fact that

⁶ Interview 1: Zinurine Alghali is a staff of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) in Durban, South Africa. Interview conducted on the 7th of December 2012

⁷ See: http://rct.dk/media/416885/cedsa_report_sierraleone%20pdf.pdf (accessed on the 6th of June 2013)

⁸ See: http://www.scu.edu/scjil/archive/v5_NovogrodskyArticle.pdf (accessed 7th of June 2013) Also see: Humper, J.C (2009): “The Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission” Freetown, Sierra Leone, pg.1.

⁹ See: <http://www.sc-sl.org> (accessed on the 6th of June 2013) Humper, J.C (2009): “The Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission” Freetown, Sierra Leone, pg.6.

DDR by itself is not responsible for the overall development process of post-conflict countries; it only feeds into the growth and development process. At the end of DDR programmes reintegration processes begin. This is a process that the ex-combatants personally go through for the rest of their lives. How smooth it gets is up to the kind of support they were provided with in the form of skills trainings and how they could access alternative sources of livelihoods and take care of themselves and their families.

This study critically examines the socio-economic reintegration process of ex-combatants in Sierra Leone ten years after the war. The study fundamentally highlights the actual possibilities and challenges faced by ex-combatants, their causes and correlations and provide recommendations on possible further interventions to overcome the challenges.

2. Theoretical Framework

Although some literature and research reports are available on DDR, international organisations, especially UN agencies, fail to evaluate their programmes in a way which shows their real impact. Through a review of this literature it became apparent that after a certain period of the official end of the programme, a longer-term evaluation is missing in most cases. Thus, there has been limited focus on the reintegration *process* as the bulk of the concentration is on the programme. For clarity the term ‘programme’ in this context refers to the intended activities that make up reintegration as part of a formal DDR programme, whilst ‘process’ reflects to the actual longer-term process of socio-economic reintegration that ex-combatants experience. A reintegration programme and process are inextricably linked as a successful programme will have direct implications on the sustainability of the reintegration process.

Whilst the programme is integral, it is the sustained process which really plays a part in ensuring sustained peace as “successful long-term reintegration can make a major contribution to national conflict resolution and to restoration of social capital”¹⁰ (Colletta et al 1998: 18). This chapter aims to explore the range of theories and conclusions on the role and experience of the reintegration process, using Sierra Leone and other country cases as illustrative examples. This will then be used as a conceptual framework for examining the hypothesis that ex-combatants are ‘reintegrated into poverty’ which will be the focus of the rest of the paper.

According to Irma Specht (2012)¹¹ “a reintegration process is a long-term process and it is a process that the ex-combatants have to undergo by themselves with the support of families and local communities. It begins at the end of the reintegration programme; however, the reintegration programme prepares the ex-combatants for the process”.¹² Thus, a weak or ill-implemented reintegration programme will have an immense effect on the success of the reintegration process. This is largely due to the fact that a poor reintegration process will result in ex-combatants failing to be in a position to face the challenges presented by normal societies. Ex-combatants may therefore be forced to either live reclusive lives (shy away from society) or resort to violence as a coping strategy. The capacity of reintegration to provide a

¹⁰ Also see: http://statesandsecurity.org/_pdfs/Kilroy.pdf (Accessed on the 3rd of June 2013)

¹¹ Lecture done at the Barcelona Peace Academy on the 20th of December 2012

¹² Also see: <http://www.bicc.de/uploads/pdf/tresa/RSC-06A02.pdf> (Accessed on the 5th of June 2013)

viable alternative livelihood in an inclusive community environment is therefore crucial. The factors affecting this issue are explored throughout this section. Before examining this hypothesis further it is important for us to understand who an ex-combatant is and why reintegration is necessary.

According to Ratnavale (2001)¹³ “ex-combatants are a potentially dangerous group in the society if not integrated, but they are also a group of people with traumas, disabilities, social stigmas and are often without automatic access to land, jobs, or income generating activities. They need assistance in the process of leaving the life of being a soldier to becoming normal civilians.” This point is strongly emphasised by Irma Specht (2003) who stated in her work “Jobs for Rebels and Soldiers” that “*assistance is needed, not only in changing the mind-set but also in making their neighbours and family members respect them again, something that is much easier if they can provide an income for themselves and their dependants.*” In giving up their guns ex-combatants are giving up their source of power and livelihood. Therefore, reintegration programmes are, or should be, tailored towards assisting the ex-combatants to find alternative sources of livelihood through peaceful means.

Further to this Joe-Patrick Amara,¹⁴ a socio-economic reintegration specialist based in the Republic of South Sudan, argues that:

“Different programmes define who a combatant is depending on who they want to target. As a whole, anybody that in one way or another was associated with a fighting group whether as cooks, load carriers or gun totters, is a combatant. But in Sierra Leone and Liberia, due to the available budget and timeframe particularly gun totters were targeted by the DDR. Those who did not carry guns but served in various roles within the different armed groups and fighting forces were included in the general post-war reconstruction programmes that were developed.”

In defining who an ex-combatant is, Benjamin Olagboye¹⁵ a reintegration specialist in La Cote d’Ivoire, stated that the definition states the eligibility criteria and who will eventually benefit from the a DDR programme. In a lecture¹⁶ at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center in Accra, Ghana, he presented the case of La Cote d’Ivoire as

¹³ Ratnavale (2001): Abstracts from " Preparing for Peace and Healing the Psyche in Sri Lanka ", Annex III

¹⁴ Lecture on DDR conducted at the University of Sierra Leone in 2011.

¹⁵ Lecture conducted at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Gender on the 27th of November 2012.

¹⁶ Lecture done on the 25th of November 2013 during the Advance DDR Course.

follows: *“La Cote d’Ivoire is presently plagued with the eligibility criteria. This needs to be clarified and there should be a joint operation plan on DDR with a focus on reintegration that all the actors should be clear on.”*

In many cases reintegration programme designers fail to understand the circumstances of the ex-combatants before designing programmes. Ex-combatants become part of a fighting force either through forceful recruitment or forced or unforced volunteerism. Many of those who volunteer willingly do so because of the context within which they lived. Factors responsible for volunteerism may include, but are not limited to, marginalization, revenge or poverty. Leaders of fighting groups use the vulnerability of young people especially, to recruit them into fighting forces. This was the case in “Sierra Leone, Liberia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and presently Uganda and Sudan.”¹⁷ Although the need for a holistic DDR process was recognised relatively early on practitioners have consistently failed to achieve a broader contextual approach in design and implementation (Kilroy 2009: 3). Failure to understand the context in which civilians become soldiers has direct implications on the sustainability and success of a reintegration programme, which in turn will influence the success of the reintegration process (Jennings 2007).

As indicated by Prieto “the complexity as to how DDR is implemented and how it can subsequently contribute to the maintenance of peace leads to programmes should be taken into consideration at the design stage. This is due to the fact that the success of a DDR programme is largely measures by how the process unfolds.”¹⁸ An unclear reintegration programme design also leads to a failure to address the roots of the conflict, and does not include all parties that were involved in the conflict, including communities.¹⁹ If the programme targets all relevant stakeholders *and* takes into consideration the root causes of the conflict it will to a very large extent be successful. Subsequently the programme will ensure that the process is successful. If the programme is ill-defined and poorly-implemented, the country will have the potential of relapsing into another conflict.

At this juncture is it also pertinent to note that different stakeholders tend to see reintegration as fulfilling different functions. Many from a military and government perspective see DDR

¹⁷ See: <http://www.unicef.org/tdad/seenbutnoheardsecurityagenda.pdf> (accessed on the 6th of June 2013)

¹⁸ Prieto, J. D. (2012): "Together after War While the War Goes On: Victims, Ex-Combatants and Communities in Three Colombian Cities", International Journal of Transitional Justice. Also see: Holguin, Jimena (2010): "Communitarian reintegration in DDR programs: an analysis of the communitarian component of the reintegration program in Colombia, 2002-2008" p. 5-6.

¹⁹ Holguin, Jimena (2010), p. 6.

as having a temporary and pragmatic function, for example disarming to prevent future danger. This has an additional symbolic purpose of building up confidence within communities and society. Indeed scholars such as Mark Duffield argue that DDR, and other peacebuilding activities, has the primary function of containing the threat of insecurity (Duffield 2008, Keinscherf 2011). By containing non-insured²⁰ groups, deemed to cause instability in society such as ex-combatants, development agents are thus able to contain insecurity at all levels. On the other hand “donors and development agencies see these processes as viable long-term development programmes, and view ex-combatants as a potential labor force” (SIDDR 2006 and Muggah 2005).²¹ Therefore to an actor who considers the primary function of reintegration to be to reduce the size of armed groups and promote stability the success of a reintegration process may be viewed differently from an actor of believes that reintegration predominantly serves an economic function. Although some DDR programmes have been designed both with the “short term aim of stabilization” and the long term aim of “economic development”, these two components frequently conflict with each other (Berdal & Ucko 2009).

Reintegration programmes are generally divided into social, economic and political components. Emphasis on each component varies from context to context and between the stakeholders involved.

For the economic component, a strict analysis of the institutional capacities and conditions of the target community is needed prior to the start of the programme (Holguin 2010: 30). Furthermore, the vocational training offered in reintegration ‘packages’ should be linked to the actual demands of the market (Bangura and Specht 2012: 58).²² A detailed analysis of service providers coupled with a needs assessment, opportunity mapping and labour market analysis are needed to render vocational trainings provided to ex-combatants effective.

In Sierra Leone, promises and high expectations of ex-combatants acquiring skills and jobs failed to be delivered upon. Even in cases where some promises of opportunities were kept, the training delivered did not aim at addressing the economic needs of the ex-combatants and local communities and no employment opportunities were provided (Ginifer 2003: 41). Factors that inhibited the progress of the DDR programme, and process, were not only limited

²⁰ In other words peripheral groups less able to access the state safety net such as ex-combatants.

²¹ Muggah, R (2005): "No Magic Bullet: A Critical Perspective on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Weapons Reduction in Post-conflict Contexts", The Round Table, London

²² Also see: <http://www.c-r.org/accord-article/work-not-war-youth-transformation-liberia-and-sierra-leone> (Accessed on the 14th of June 2013)

to the capacity of the local economy but also to the capacity of local and international implementing partners. Their restricted capacity to deliver assistance hampered the opportunities that the target groups should have benefitted from (Ginifer 2003: 42). Subsequently, the ex-combatants were left unprepared to compete for alternative sources of livelihood during their reintegration process. This was mostly due to the limited capacity they have and the inability of the programme to link them to real opportunities that they could benefit from. Furthermore, Kilroy argues that “without a range of available economic opportunities, interventions such as vocational training to help ex-combatants find an alternative livelihood may still leave them unemployed and disillusioned” (Kilroy 2009: 2).²³ Linking ex-combatants to local markets and wider community structures is therefore an integral part of a successful reintegration process.

Further to the above, the lack of service providers who can deliver services needed in the reintegration process poses a significant challenge to the reintegration process of ex-combatants (Ginifer 2003: 45). As previously stated information on the labour market in the country are necessary to plan successful reintegration programs, as otherwise ex-combatants may be trained in skills which are not needed on the job market, which can lead to a rise in unemployment and a failure to meet expectations, both of which can have dire consequences on the future stability of an area (Holguin 2010: 41).

Although vocational training in Kosovo was an important step towards secure employment or successful establishment of business for ex-combatants, the competition was very high and the probability of finding employment was very low. Nevertheless small enterprises were very important in the rehabilitation process of the country (Barakat, Sultan and Özerdem 2003: 37).

Depending on the country’s situation, the program needs to be designed to link training and job opportunities successfully (Holguin 2010: 51). Reality has to be faced and missed opportunities need to serve as lessons learnt. Barakat, Sultan and Ozerdem conclude that “... the reintegration strategy in Kosovo could have benefitted greatly from information on existing markets, future potential markets, the needs of people to be reintegrated and employed, and the possibilities for education, vocational training and business training” (Barakat, Sultan and Özerdem 2003: 35). At the end of the day, some ex-combatants may be in a better position to access employment opportunities than others. For example in Ethiopia, for female ex-combatants who often held auxiliary and logistical positions in their army rather

²³ See: <http://statesandsecurity.org/pdfs/Kilroy.pdf> (Accessed on the 8th of July 2013)

than serving as fighting combatants, economic reintegration was found easier because often they had skills that appeared more marketable to the current economic situation (Colletta et al. 1996: 78).

In resource-scarce environments a heavy focus on the economic component of reintegration can lead to dangerous precedents and a situation of “the only game in town” (Muggah 2005: 246). This can create tension and animosity between the ex-combatants and receiving communities as they both vie for limited resources in a post-conflict context. In such cases, receiving communities may perceive ex-combatants as being given preferential treatment and/or being rewarded despite the fact that they have committed atrocities, whilst they (the “victims”) are left out. This “favourable treatment ... in comparison with ordinary civilians raises many questions” (Kilroy 2009: 1). Thus, practitioners like Specht (2007)²⁴ have called for an inclusive approach in which there is dual targeting of ex-combatants and receiving communities, as the best approach to be used in order to avoid conflict between ex-combatants and receiving communities.

This model also creates room for the involvement of ex-combatants to actively participate in issues related to their communities. Involving former combatants in decision-making processes at all levels is conducive to the success of the reintegration process and helps prevent them from regrouping and remobilizing into armed groups (Barakat, Sultan and Özerdem 2003: 29). This ‘participatory approach’ can result in a higher level of ownership, both amongst community members and ex-combatants, thereby strengthening the peacebuilding process (Dzisenesa 2006, Bell & Watson 2006: 5).

Ex-combatants who are frustrated with their reintegration process due to unsecured employment often drift into criminality and remain a potential threat to a renewed outbreak of conflict (Ginifer 2003: 39). The potential instability of these groups highlights the importance of the economic component of reintegration in creating sustainable alternative livelihoods for ex-combatants.

Even though the social component of the reintegration phase was seen as being successful in Liberia, the economic reintegration did not include important components for the period after the implementation, such as agricultural training (Blattman et al 2011: 38). Furthermore, although 80% of the DDR participants in South Sudan declared themselves as unemployed, a

²⁴ Specht, I (2007): Community Based Reintegration in the Democratic Republic of Congo’ OxfamNovib and Transition International, The Netherlands.

closer look at the situation of ex-combatants and war-affected people showed that formal employment and regular salary was limited, but the number of small scale businesses in urban areas, subsistence agriculture, self-employment and finding employment in the informal sector had increased, therefore the number of self-declared unemployed people has to be seen relative to the economic circumstances in the country (Lamb: 59-60). The above stated examples provide an indication of the importance of understanding the context and needs of a community before designing and implementing a programme.

The social component of the reintegration process is sometimes combined with political reintegration. According to Muggah (2005: 248) “the management of national political issues associated with reconciliation and peacebuilding, as well as the meaningful reform of the structures in the justice, government and economic sectors form the basis for a successful reintegration programme.”²⁵ Social reintegration ensures the peaceful coexistence of ex-combatants with families and communities, while change of roles has to be noticed (Barakat, Sultan and Özerdem 2003: 29). Holguin emphasizes the importance of this component while raising the question:

“how can a communitarian reintegration project be developed in a society with huge numbers of former combatants, displaced persons and victims of violence who, in the aftermath of war, come back at the same time to their place and try to resettle in their communities without any reconciliation process and even counseling support?”
(Holguin 2010: 52).

Reintegration designers in most cases fail to constructively engage local communities during the design and implementation of reintegration projects and programmes (Kilroy 2009). As noted earlier, reintegration is a process which continues after the programmes have come to an end. For the process to be sustainable the role of the community is crucial, particularly for children, ex-combatants with disabilities and women who tend to be more vulnerable groups. When the community accepts and actively participates in the programme, ex-combatants get extra support from family and community members. However, the exclusion of local communities has the potential of turning community members into potential “spoilers” of the process (Stedman 1997). In a report of global lessons learned on DDR, Meek & Malan found that attention to the dynamics between community members and ex-combatants is consequently being seen as an important part of ensuring successful reintegration (Meek &

²⁵ Muggah, R (2005): "No Magic Bullet: A Critical Perspective on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Weapons Reduction in Post-conflict Contexts", The Round Table, London

Malan 2004). Furthermore, Pouligny finds that “community consultation and engagement ... is critical to successful DDR programmes” (Pouligny 2005: 498).

The Centre for International Cooperation and Security (CICS) at the University of Bradford “sees community-based reintegration as key to empowering host communities, improving constructive organisational capacities, improving efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, and strengthening local government.”²⁶ These components are important to the successful reintegration process of ex-combatants as they increase the absorption capacity of communities to host and peacefully co-habit with ex-combatants.

Specht argues that community-based reintegration is linked with ‘voice and representation’ of ex-combatants (Specht 2007:31), stressing that “the perceived lack of voice and representation is one of the factors that have, in the past, caused many ex-combatants to return to violence”. She emphasised that “this is particularly the case for young ex-combatants who feel excluded from processes that they should be part of, especially in areas that have to do with their growth and development” (Specht 2007:31).

In addition to the economic, social and political components of reintegration, security is also an important related factor. The security of disarmed, demobilized and reintegrated former fighters must be provided as a precondition to reintegration. That was not the case in Afghanistan where the target groups lived in fear, which hampered the reintegration process (Derksen 2011: 2). On the other hand, in Sierra Leone communities affected by violence were involved in the reconciliation process, together with victims and former combatants, which made the acceptance in communities easier. In addition some form of counseling and special psychosocial assistance was provided to “make them [the ex-combatants] conscious that the hardest part of the process would be to gain the acceptance in the communities that suffered from violence” (Holguin 2010: 43).

In many cases the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (NDDRC) acted together with religious and traditional leaders as mediators to facilitate a reconciliation process between the different actors to receive ex-combatants in the communities. Additionally, returnees were encouraged to contribute to the communities they returned to through participation in activities and contributing of skills. Steps were

²⁶ See: <http://escolapau.uab.es/img/programas/desarme/ddr/ddr2009i.pdf> (accessed on the 3rd of July 2013)

successfully taken to prevent further conflict and violence which makes a reintegration programme, and eventually the process, more difficult (Holguin 2010: 53). This again illustrates the importance of a more inclusive approach to reintegration.

Key spoiling factors identified have been related to the sense of exclusion suffered by receiving communities as they feel left out by DDR planners and designers. On the part of the ex-combatants, lack of confidence in democratic processes, elections, state and local institutions and governments bring them back into their illegal groups (Holguin 2010: 39). Indeed Humphreys & Weinstein argue that “without skills and isolated from social networks, combatants face an uphill battle in re-establishing a non-military way of life” (Humphreys & Weinstein 2005: 2). However, “development actors often forget that DDR ... follow, rather than lead, the political process” (Muggah 2005: 248). In Liberia, the combination of psychosocial assistance and life skills education with practical skills has been an important step towards a peaceful coexistence of ex-combatants and the communities and the build-up of a peaceful society (Blattman Annan 2011: 36). However, in Aceh, Indonesia, special groups such as the poor, elderly and IDPs tend to do better in community-decision making processes when compared to ex-combatants and the communities show low levels of tolerance to ex-combatants (Barron et al 2009: 48-49). Again, if the social component of reintegration is unsuccessful, high risk and vulnerable groups are likely to feel excluded from society and may thus rejoin armed groups, increasing the risk of future conflict.

Countries coming out of a violent past have limited capacity to address the plethora of challenges associated with the aftermath of war; external donors play a vital role in funding interventions such as a DDR program. Due to the order of implementation, funding shortfalls affect especially the reintegration phase and prevent steady progress (Ginifer 2003: 39), potentially undermining the whole process (Kilroy 2009: 3, Spear 2006). In Liberia, the inability to have sufficient funds was a key challenge for a successful reintegration programme (Holguin 2010: 53). Because of limited funds often only short-term reintegration programmes are carried out and medium and long-term objectives are not in the agenda, which are the most necessary ones for the society and the reintegrated target groups (Ginifer 2003: 40). This proves devastating to the impact and sustainability of the programmes and subsequently the process as the ex-combatants are left on their own. It is obvious that through constant follow-up and monitoring, long-term and successful reintegration processes can be supported (Blattman and Annan 2011: 36). However, monitoring and evaluation of programmes is seldom done after the lifespan of reintegration programmes.

Another component of reintegration which is increasingly being emphasized is the issue of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Groups (CAAFGs). Over the years more and more DDR programmes included a special programme for children and youth. As Ursano and Shaw (2007: 567) stated “abused and tortured, while required to wound and kill—such is the daily world of nearly a quarter of a million child soldiers.”²⁷ The trauma and shock of war gravely affects CAAFAGs and this is mostly due to the tenderness of their age. They sometimes encounter difficulties in adjusting to their new lives, with some appearing emotionally cut-off and suppressed, whilst others are preoccupied with violence in their recreational activities and play (Apio 2008: i). Additionally CAAFAG face an additional challenge in reintegration back into communities as they are minors requiring adult support and supervision. They require a wide range of support from reintegration experts, family and local communities.

According to the international organisation the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), there were 9 main elements which should have been addressed to build up a successful child and youth reintegration programme in Sierra Leone:

“1) community sensitization; 2) formal disarmament and demobilization; 3) transition periods in separate centers for boys and girls located well away from adult DDR sites; 4) tracing and family mediation; 5) return to family and community, and follow-up, and extended monitoring for children not placed with their parents; 6) traditional cleansing ceremonies, traditional healing, and religious support; 7) school or skills training of adequate quality and duration, coupled with literacy and numeracy instruction and provision of tools, materials, and follow-up counseling; 8) ongoing access to health care, particularly for war-related conditions for those in school or training; 9) individual supportive counseling, facilitation, and encouragement” (Williamson 2005 17-19).

To successfully reintegrate children, the opportunity to access education school or provided with skills training is very important, as it helps them to establish their “new identity and increases the acceptance by their family and community members”.²⁸ This process can be supported by the development of Child Welfare Committees (CWC) and Child Clubs²⁹ and through follow-up services and constant support from social workers, provided for example

²⁷ Also see: <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/extract/298/5/567> (accessed on the 16th of June 2013)

²⁸ See: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACH599.pdf (accessed on the 17th of June 2013)

²⁹ Also see: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACH599.pdf (accessed on the 17th of June 2013)

by NGOs, which support not only the children, but also parents and community members who help to foster the reintegration of the children (Williamson 2005: 16). In Ethiopia, “the situation of former child soldiers is probably the worst, both economically and psychosocially” (Colletta 1996: 78). Returning from their armed groups no special programme was provided to reintegrate this vulnerable group mostly without marketable skills and education. Due to the lack of schools or courses especially for the young ex-combatants and former child soldiers, there was an increase in the disinterest of studying and interest of occupation related to economic survival. Due to these facts only 12% of the minors are studying and 20% of them had abandoned school in Angola (Christian Children’s Fund 1998: 29). The reintegration of youth and children is a very sensitive part in the reintegration programme and dealing with issues related to children and youth is very challenging in ongoing DDR programmes.

Like dealing with children during reintegration programmes and processes, the issue of ex-combatants with disabilities is also crucial. Conflicts leave communities with a significant percentage of people with disabilities (PWDs) (disabilities could be physical or mental). PWDs require all the help they could possibly get to overcome the challenges they are likely to face and live a normal life. To ensure their safety and protection, the reintegration of PWDs requires advance planning, taking into consideration the community they are going to, the nature of their disability and the type and special assistance each might require (ILO 2003: 1). Unfortunately, this is mostly not the case as programmes are mostly ill-prepared and ill-financed. At the same time the concern is mostly on those who are not physically challenged as they are perceived to be of threat to society. Idowu Ibishomi,³⁰ a reintegration expert, expressed strong feeling on the way PWDs are treated:

“Ex-combatants with disabilities are treated with levity as they are perceived not to be of threat to society. Programme designers are oblivious of the fact that these people need much more support than those that are not physically challenged. The focus is on their disability rather than their abilities. At the same time the private sector is not encouraged to work with them when there is a lot of possibilities for employment for them that could be developed.”

In looking at DDR programmes and girls/women Specht (2006:5) stated that “despite their specific needs and capacities, girl combatants tend to be neglected in DDR programmes, mainly because they are not regarded as a security threat.” DDR planners and implementers

³⁰ Lecture note provided during the Advance Reintegration Course in Landgraaf, The Netherlands in July 2011.

concentrate their attention on the men who are seen as potential spoilers to the peacebuilding process.³¹ Thus, activities organised are not gender sensitive and do not address the principal reasons why the female combatants became fighters. Also, the eligibility criteria set exclude women who play support roles and are dependants of male combatants. In presenting the trauma of their neglect³², Specht further stated that “girls will remain, as during conflict, at risk from violence and other threats. They and their households will face great economic difficulties, and often stand at a disadvantage in gaining income compared to males. They will typically be left with no alternatives but unacceptable coping strategies (crime, sex work, dependence on abusive partners)³³. Ultimately, if not included in DDR, girls, like boys, are also a potential source of crime, civil unrest and/or recruits for other armed groups.”³⁴

Even in cases where they are included, activities designed for them are based on stereotypes and not what they actually need. Also, former colleagues of the opposite sex are seen playing active roles when it comes to engagement in the peace process while the girls and young women are excluded. They are then exposed to activities that are stereotypically designed that will continue keeping female combatants in lowly paid jobs (Date-Bah 2003).

The reintegration process of former female combatants is in most cases much more difficult than that faced by those of the opposite sex. This is the case because in addition to the economic challenges faced there is a significant amount of social pressure placed on them by the societies in which they find themselves. Taking an active role in a fighting force is seen as a taboo and unwomanly (Rokhaya 2001:29). As a result, Specht stated that “many women face rejection by their families and in-laws upon return from the conflict, which means that they risk being excluded from traditional community-based social-support systems. Perceived sexual impurity, even where girls have been forced into sex, can have the same effect” (Specht 2006:8).

In examining reintegration outcomes of reintegration programmes and the process itself, it is argued that peace and stability relies heavily on the economic opportunities available to ex-combatants. Johnah Schulhofer-Wohl and Nicholas Sambanis (2010: 10) argued that “if crime is motivated by the paucity of profitable non-expropriative economic activity for ex-

³¹ Specht, I (2006): "The reintegration of teenage girls and young women", Intervention, the Netherlands

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Ibid

combatants, then in theory several components of DDR programs can help reduce post-conflict crime and violence by helping to economically reintegrate ex-combatants.” This signifies that the elements of reintegration do not only play a lead role in the reintegration process of ex-combatants but also in ensuring the peace and security of the countries affected. The fundamental issue raised here is ex-combatants having an alternative source of livelihood that will help them live in decency and dignity and subsequently see the need for peace and tranquility. A poor reintegration programme will lead to a poor reintegration process, thereby creating an unstable environment, as stated by Schulhofer-Wohl and Sambanis (2010: 11) “poor DDR programmes could be attributed to poor security outcomes.”

Babiker and Özerdem (2003) stated that DDR is most effective when it is a stage in a process. They strongly assert that ex-combatants should be “reintegrated into a society where genuine efforts are made to develop the society overall. Thus, while schemes may initially be directed specifically at ex-combatants, the goal must be to mainstream those programmes within a wider strategy of development³⁵. To them, ex-combatants are mostly reintegrated into poverty and the reintegration of ex-combatants into poverty is not success, and is part of the reason why many conflicts reignite.”³⁶

This point is strongly supported by Baare (2001) who also stated that in most cases ex-combatants are ‘reintegrated into poverty’. The failure of the reintegration programme to adequately prepare ex-combatants for an alternative source of livelihood creates the possibility of them going back into the same conditions there were in before the conflict. As a result, when faced with poverty, deprivation and unemployment the “temptation is to turn to crime. The involvement of ex-combatants in crime, either opportunistic or organized, has been evidenced in places such as Mozambique, South Africa, El Salvador, Cambodia, Nicaragua and Angola”³⁷ (Rolston 2007, Knight and Özerdem 2004). ‘Reintegration into Poverty’ has been seen in countries like Liberia and Uganda where the ex-combatants are faced with the challenge of coping with daily survival. The trainings provided to them are not sufficient to help them overcome poverty and destitution. They cannot compete for employment as they are disadvantaged in the transitional job market (Rolston 2007: 263). Faced with this challenge many ex-combatants are mostly incapable of taking care of their

³⁵ Also see: <http://statecrime.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/rolston2007a.pdf> (Accessed on the 16th of July 2013)

³⁶ Also see: <http://statecrime.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/rolston2007a.pdf> (Accessed on the 16th of July 2013)

³⁷ Also see: <http://statecrime.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/rolston2007a.pdf> (Accessed on the 16th of July 2013)

families. This knowledge has led Humphreys & Weinstein (2005:1) to conclude that there is “only weak evidence that participation in DDR programmes improves reintegration prospects at the individual level.”³⁸

We can assume from the above analysis that much of the current literature available on the reintegration process is centered on the successes and challenges faced by reintegration programmes and processes. Several key themes emerge repeatedly; firstly that ex-combatants are key players in the drive from war to peace. Additionally, the success or failure of the reintegration programme/process positively or negatively impacts the peace process. We can also conclude that there are a range of different functions of a DDR programme and that consequently different stakeholders will view reintegration as fulfilling different functions.

Scholars and policy makers alike place emphasis on the importance of linking DDR, and particularly reintegration, to wider structural processes of peacebuilding. Furthermore it is believed that the success of the economic, political and social components of a reintegration process is largely dependent on the inclusive capacity of the programme to involve all stakeholders. As previously mentioned, a programme which treats ex-combatants in isolation of the rest of society is much less likely to be successful.

However, despite this knowledge reintegration programmes continually suffer failure. This study builds upon the argument of Babiker and Özerdem (2003) which states both that ex-combatants are usually reintegrated into poverty, and that DDR should be viewed as a stage in the process of post-war recovery. Reintegrating ex-combatants into poverty is inimical to the peace and security of their communities and countries. This study looks at the reintegration process of ex-combatants and their current socio-economic status. It tries to examine whether they were reintegrated into poverty and examines how they fit into the overall post-war recovery process in Sierra Leone.

³⁸ Also see: http://weber.ucsd.edu/~kgledits/igcc/dscwv/hw_igcc2005.pdf (accessed on the 19th of June 2013)

3. Context

3.1 Origins of the war in Sierra Leone

On the 23rd of March 1991, the fire of rebel conflict which enveloped Liberia was lit in Sierra Leone in a nightmarish glow of death and destruction (Koroma 1996: 138). Abdul Karim Koroma³⁹ stated in his book ‘Sierra Leone: The Agony of a Nation’ that *“it began at dawn in Bomaru and Sienga, in the eastern district of Kailahun..... A coordinated surprise attack by heavily armed elements of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) with Sierra Leoneans trained and armed in Liberia was made on the two border towns. The rebelshad moved from their base in Voinjama in the northern Lofa County of Liberia bordering Sierra Leone. When the attack was over, it left one major, one lieutenant and eleven civilians dead. Troops from the Daru barracks were rushed to the towns, and in the ensuing battle, the invaders withdrew with heavy losses.”* (Koroma 1996: 139).

The prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) David Crane graphically described the attack *“this is a tale of horror, beyond the gothic into the realm of Dante's inferno. They came across the border, dark shadows, on a warm spring day, 23 March of 1991. Hardened rebels trained by outside actors from Liberia, Libya and Burkino Faso. These rebels consisting of Sierra Leoneans and Liberians were assisted by Libyan Special Forces...and they were approximately 250”* (SCSL 2004:1).

Crane stated in his indictment of the RUF that the attack was planned on the 27th of February 1991 and those who planned the attack included Sierra Leoneans and Liberia- “Isaac Mussah⁴⁰, NPFL Battle Front Commander, Oliver Varney, NPFL War Propaganda Advisor, Oliver Council, NPFL Deputy Training Commandant, Grace Beatrice Minor, NPFL Political Advisor, Brigadier John Tarnue, NPFL Training Commandant, and Joe Mulbah, NPFL Information Officer and Foday Sankoh and Augustine Gbao from Sierra Leone.” The military training⁴¹ was done in “Liberia at Camp Jackson Maama, a former artillery base located in

³⁹ Mr Koroma was the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone when the conflict started.

⁴⁰ See: <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Ozfyb8ohNBM=&tabid=156> (accessed on the 20th of June 2013)

⁴¹ Also see: <http://www.bicc.de/uploads/pdf/tresa/RSC-06A02.pdf> (accessed on the 20th of June 2013)

Bong County. The training, done under the direction of Brigadier Tarnue, was completed by Special Forces from Libya and Burkina Faso.”⁴²

The cause of the invasion appeared very unclear to many Sierra Leoneans and even the government for a while. Government authorities assumed that it was mere cross border attacks by rebels of the NPFL.⁴³ By then there was fierce fighting in Liberia between the government of Samuel Doe and the NPFL. The question on the minds of Sierra Leoneans at that time was “what really happened in Kailahun and is Sierra Leone at war, or was it as people say activities of bandits?”⁴⁴ Answers were shortly provided as ‘Several towns in Kailahun district became targets, and soon succumbed to the invading rebel forces. Among the early casualties were: On the 27th of March, 1991, Buedu was attacked and occupied by a rebel force of 300 men armed with AK-47 assault rifles, heavy caliber machine guns and rocket propelled grenade launchers (RPGs). On the 28th of March, 1991, with reinforcements bringing their troop strength close to 400 men the rebels occupied the Buedu customs post. On the 29th of March 1991, at 04.30 hours, the main commercial center of Koindu was taken, followed by the extensive looting and destruction of the town” (Koroma 1996:139).

Sierra Leone was now at war and the leader of the insurgency group (which became known as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) identified to be Foday Saybana Sankoh. Sankoh had a history of bitterness against the All People’s Congress (APC) which was the government in power. This bitterness stemmed from his earlier involvement in a failed coup attempt in 1971. When asked about Sankoh and his grievance against the APC, Mohamed Lainkuray Bangura⁴⁵ a high level APC official had this to say: “Sankoh was arrested in 1971 after a coup plot organised by Brigadier Bangura was foiled by the Steven’s administration. He was imprisoned for seven years, later released and dismissed from the army. Sankoh was close to Bangura and when Bangura was arrested it was alleged that he was also part of those who organised the coup.”

Sankoh remained in Sierra Leone after being released from prison nursing his grudge until he was recruited in the early 80s and taken to Libya. According to Koroma (1996:143), Sankoh was “born in the northern Tonkolili district and had spent several years as a young man in the town of Segbwema in Kailahun district. He had subsequently enlisted in the national army

⁴² See: <http://www.sc-sl.org/prosecutor1.pdf> (accessed on the 7th of June 2013)

⁴³ Interview conducted on the 11th of December, 2012 in Freetown with Oswald Hanciles, Special Assistant to the President of Sierra Leone on Media Issues

⁴⁴ Interview with Oswald Hanciles.

⁴⁵ Interview conducted on the 23rd of December 2012.

where he served as a signals man and official photographer.” He served “briefly as part of the failed United Nations peacekeeping operation in Congo in the early 1960s”⁴⁶, an experience which brought him contempt for the UN⁴⁷ (The Economist 2003).⁴⁸ While fanning his hatred for the APC and especially the president Major General Joseph Saidu Momoh, “the uncharismatic, ill-educated and of inadequate military combat training, Sankoh, nonetheless dreamt of political power to be achieved through the barrel of the gun..... He endeavoured to improve on his intellectual deficiencies by reading and constantly listening to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Voice of America (VOA) radio broadcasts. He scorned the national radio as an agency of government. But Sankoh would never forget that scores had to be settled, at whatever level - personal or national, and no matter how long it took to attain this objective. With these factors now in active play in Sankoh’s mind, a rebel was born” (Koroma: 96:143). Sankoh’s mindset could be compared to Victor Hugo’s⁴⁹ Jean Valjean who “condemned society and sentenced it. He sentenced it to his hatred. He made it responsible for the doom which he had undergone, and promised himself that he, perhaps, would not hesitate someday to call it to account.”

Fortunately for Sankoh, he got recruited and taken to Libya by a Pan-African Union (PANAFU) member Victor Ebiyemi Reider, “a high school drop-out who was active in Freetown’s revolutionary circles in the late 1970s.”⁵⁰ He discovered Sankoh in the diamond areas of Sierra Leone (Abdallah 2004: 54). Abdallah further went to state that “perhaps, the greatest tragedy of the revolution has to do with the fact that those who recruited Sankoh underestimated his capacity to think and act politically.”⁵¹

⁴⁶ See: <http://www.geocities.com/honestabepolitics/terror.FodaySankohObit.2003Aug7.html> (accessed 17th December 2012)

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ See: <http://www.economist.com/node/1974062> (Accessed on the 17th of December 2012)

⁴⁹ Hugo, V (1964): ‘Les Miserables’ Washington Square Press Publication, USA, pg. 21.

⁵⁰ Abdallah, I (1998): "Bush path to destruction: the origin and character of the Revolutionary United Front/Sierra Leone", The Journal of Modern African Studies.

⁵¹ Ibid

The Liberia factor

This section discusses the nexus “between the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia and the role played by Charles Taylor and his NPFL”⁵² in helping the RUF begin its insurgency in Sierra Leone. Taylor was an Americo-Liberian with Gola roots (his mother was reported to have Gola roots) who partly studied in Liberia and the United States of America (Youboty 1993:190). Just as he returned to Liberia a coup d’états⁵³ took place on April 12, 1980 that saw the death of President William Tolbert, his son A.B. Tolbert and several members of his government. The People Redemption Council (PRC) was formed with Master Sergeant Samuel Kanyon Doe becoming the head of state of Liberia (Youboty 1993: 41). Taylor was appointed the Director-General of the General Services Agency (GSA).

In 1983, Charles Taylor was transferred from his position as Director-General of the GSA to the Commerce Ministry as an assistant minister. Unfortunately for him, the new General Services Agency (GSA) boss, Clarence Momolu, ordered an audit of his predecessor’s transactions before fully assuming the portfolio. During the audit, it was discovered that about \$900,000 was unaccounted for during Taylor’s incumbency. This led to the summon of the former GSA boss by the audit committee for his side of the story. But rather than facing the audit committee and possibly finding himself in a state of public disgrace, the ostentatious Taylor absconded Liberia. He later reappeared in the United States where he was arrested for extradition upon request by the Liberian government (Youboty 1993:76).

In what remained to be a mystery to many, Taylor escaped from prison. While many accounts have surfaced on how he escaped, he himself stated during cross examination at the Special Court for Sierra Leone that he was assisted by the US government to escape. “With his prison cell unlocked by a US prison guard late one night in November 1985, Taylor walked out of the maximum security area of the Plymouth County Correctional Facility in Massachusetts.” Taylor said (while testifying at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague) “he was escorted by the same guard to the minimum security area. Tying a sheet to a window, Taylor climbed out the window and over the prison fence, where a car containing two men was

⁵² See:

<http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/~courses/PoliticalScience/474A1/documents/SawyerViolentConflictsGovernanceChallengesWAfrica.pdf> (16th of June 2013)

⁵³ Several writers including Youboty strongly stated that Taylor was very active in the staging of the coup and that he convinced members of the PRC to kill the son of President Tolbert See: Youboty 1993: 60.

waiting to whisk him to New York” (OSJI 2009).⁵⁴

Not much was heard from him after this period. However, it has been alleged that he was in Libya being trained by the forces of Muammar Gaddafi. “Qaddafi’s motivation for supporting Taylor was part vengeful and part strategic.”⁵⁵ The Libyan leader “wanted to get back at the United States for frustrating Libya’s efforts to extend its influence across the Middle East and Africa.”⁵⁶ In particular, “he wanted to get even for U.S. pressure on Liberia to sever its ties with Libya. Liberia had been a tight U.S. ally in the Cold War, hosting a large Voice of America (VOA) radio transmitting facility and reportedly an important CIA electronic listening post.”⁵⁷

In late 1989, “the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), led by Charles Taylor, launched a rebellion against the Doe government from neighbouring Côte d’Ivoire, an incident that signaled the genesis of a brutal and bloody conflict.” “The rebel group was initially small with a total number of 186 members of mostly ill-trained and ill-equipped soldiers.”⁵⁸ However, “within a period of six months, this once small number increased to more than ten thousand, and had speedily captured a substantial amount of Liberian territory, including strategic locations such as the country’s second largest city and port, Buchana. On 11 September 1990, ten years after Doe came to power, he met with his death. Doe had been invited to a meeting with Prince Johnson in the camp of ECOMOG. His bodyguards were disarmed at the gate and as they entered the facility they were attacked by forces of Johnson who snatched President Doe and later killed him. Prince Johnson was a former high level commander in Taylor’s NPFL, but had subsequently formed his own splinter group called the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia.”⁵⁹ The war in Liberia continued with brutal intensity and on the 23rd of March 1991 there was a spill over into Sierra Leone.

When the war in Sierra Leone started all fingers pointed to Charles Taylor as the key supporter of the RUF. The questions asked by Sierra Leoneans were “what is the motivating

⁵⁴ See: <http://www.charlestaylortrial.org/2009/07/15/taylor-alleges-us-govt-helped-him-escape-from-us-prison/> (visited on the 17th of December, 2012) Also see: <http://www.liberianforum.com/Articles/Liberian-war-as-State-Corporate-Crime.html?ac=0> (Accessed on the 17th of December 2012)

⁵⁵ See: <http://www.juancole.com/2012/05/my-last-phone-call-from-charles-taylor-or-how-qaddafi-plagued-africa-pirio.html> (accessed on the 17th of December 2012)

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ <http://www.juancole.com/>

⁵⁸ See: http://www.wittenberg-center.org/download/DP_2012-

01_Bangura_Liberia_The_Transition_from_Destruction_to_Post-War_Reconstruction.pdf

⁵⁹ Ibid

factor for Taylor to support a war against Sierra Leone? What have Sierra Leoneans done to him?⁶⁰

It was recalled that on 1st November 1990 Taylor had made explicit threats in an interview over the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), to attack and destroy Freetown's airport. He argued that "by allowing its territory to be used by the West African Intervention Force, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Peace Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), Sierra Leone had robbed him of the final fruit of his invasion -the Presidency of Liberia" (Koroma 1996: 140). Also, according to Koroma (1996: 142), a secret history serving as further motivation for the invasion existed. Prior to the initiation of conflict in Liberia, Charles Taylor and three companions reportedly travelling on Burkinabe passports had, sometime in early 1989 entered Sierra Leone and sought audience with President Momoh. The purpose was to seek the President's endorsement for the use of Sierra Leone's territory as a route for the invasion of Liberia. Discussions on the issue were held between Charles Taylor and a highly placed official in the President's office. Coupled with this, a substantial amount of money changed hands to secure approval of Taylor's request. This was rejected by the President whose memory of a previous failed military attempt by Thomas Quiwonkpa against President Doe was still fresh. The money which the President reportedly never saw was nonetheless never returned. Taylor was arrested and placed at the Pademba Road Maximum Security Prison. When Doe heard of this he sent a delegation to seek his extradition but Taylor and the others with him were given a safe passage out of the country through Guinea (Koroma: 1996: 142).

Taylor had to turn to La Cote d'Ivoire for an entry point into Liberia⁶¹ as the Sierra Leoneans were not cooperative. Consequently, Sierra Leone further went into the bad books of Taylor as he was at that time working with elements from Sierra Leone to eventually destabilize the country.

⁶⁰ Interview conducted on the 24th of December 2012 with Alimamy Mahun Conteh, lecturer, Peace and Conflict Studies Department, University of Sierra Leone.

⁶¹ See: <http://www.ub.uit.no/munin/bitstream/10037/1586/1/thesis.pdf> (accessed on the 20th of December 2012)

3.2 Factions involved in the conflict

There were several factions involved in the war in Sierra Leone. Some of these factions (AFRC, Kamajors and West Side Boys) became involved as the war progressed. These factions are discussed below:

Revolutionary United Front (RUF)

The RUF was the first insurgency group in Sierra Leone and they remained part of the conflict until the end. According to Ibrahim Abdallah (2004: 56) *“the RUF was a peculiar organisation. It did not share any of the essential characteristics of ideology, organization and discipline which marked revolutionary movements in Africa and elsewhere, except for the use of force to attain power.”* This was obvious from the way they pursued the war as they lacked a political strategy that could convince people of their intentions. At the start, the RUF sent propaganda messages of wanting to liberate the country from the APC but with time it became obvious that they were not faithful to their initial promises. They started committing atrocities against those they claimed they wanted to liberate.

Initially, the RUF was composed of three distinct groups: “those who had acquired military training in Libya (predominantly urban lumpens) and had seen action with the NPFL as combatants; a second group of Sierra Leoneans, resident in Liberia, mostly lumpens⁶² and others of different categories including foreign fighters and criminals” (Abdallah 2004:57). This number grew with time as the people who were in the South-Eastern parts of Sierra Leone felt marginalized by the APC and wanted to see it lose power. There are allegations of families providing their children to become part of the RUF as a move to rid the country off the Momoh government.⁶³

The report of a survey conducted by Humphrey and Weinstein (2003:18) titled “What the Fighters Say” stated that 50-60% of the members of the RUF were Mendes while 20% were Temnes. The report also stated that at the end of the war 24, 338 members of the RUF were registered with the NCDDR.⁶⁴

Corporal Foday Sankoh was the head of the group but after his arrest in Nigeria in 1996, Sam Bockarie alias Mosquito temporarily assumed leadership until the return of Sankoh. In 2000

⁶² Also see: <http://sozwi-linux.sozialwiss.uni-hamburg.de/publish/lpw/Akuf/publ/ap1-06.pdf> (accessed on the 20th of July 2013)

⁶³ Interview conducted with Alimamy Mahun Conteh.

⁶⁴ This was the number of those who went through DDR, the exact number of the RUF cannot be determined as some fighters either auto-demobilized or left for Liberia which had relapsed into another violent conflict.

there was a divorce between Bockarie and Sankoh which led to the former leaving Sierra Leone to join Charles Taylor in Liberia. After Sankoh was arrested after the 8th of May 2000 incident⁶⁵ Issa Sesay became the head of the group until he was indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC)

On the 25th of May 1997 some soldiers of the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) staged a coup d'états. The announcer of the coup d'états Corporal Tamba Gborie stated in the speech announcing the coup that the army was dissatisfied with the way they were treated by the government. He particularly stated that the government prioritized the Kamajors (a civil defense militia) over the army as the coordinator of the Kamajors was the Deputy Minister of Defense.⁶⁶

Major Johnny Paul Koroma was taken out of the Pademba Road Maximum Security Prison, named the Chairman of the regime and sworn in as the head of state of Sierra Leone.⁶⁷ Major Koroma named Foday Sankoh the deputy leader of the regime and the deputy head of state. And a marriage was formed between the AFRC and the RUF. However, at this point, Foday Sankoh had been arrested in Nigeria⁶⁸ so he was represented by Sam Bockarie, the temporal head of the RUF.

For the first time since the inception of the war, the RUF gained entrance into Freetown and the people of Freetown some of whom⁶⁹ had never had the true taste of the conflict watched in surprise as they saw the RUF moving into Freetown. There was widespread condemnation of the coup within and outside Sierra Leone. Organisations such as the United Nations, Organisation for African Unity (OAU), Commonwealth and ECOWAS sent strong words to the regime asking them to give way to the democratic process that had started in the country.

⁶⁵ It became obvious in 2000 that the RUF was not keen on respecting the Lome Peace Agreement. The RUF started attacking cities as they started moving towards Freetown. Civil society feeling frustrated with what was happening staged a demonstration at the residence of Foday Sankoh on Spur Road. The body guards of Sankoh opened fire on them and killed about 18 demonstrators. Eventually, the protesters entered the residence of Sankoh but Sankoh had escaped by then. However, he was arrested the next day and taken to the Pademba Road Maximum Security Prison.

⁶⁶ Speech given by Corporal Tamba Gborie on the 25th of May 1997.

⁶⁷ Major Johnny Paul Koroma was in prison because of an alleged coup plot he was said to be master minding against the SLPP government.

⁶⁸ See: <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=b8lJUtjHy6o%3d&tabid=160> (accessed on the 25th of June 2013)

⁶⁹ There was a high number of IDPs in Freetown who had suffered from the war. That is why 'some of whom' was used.

The regime was not prepared to listen, despite the fact that they met with representatives of the Kabba government in exile and the international community in Conakry, Guinea. This meeting was geared towards developing a road map for the return to democracy.⁷⁰ It became obvious after the Conakry Peace Accord⁷¹ failed that the AFRC had to be forcefully taken out. In February 1998, ECOMOG, Kamajors and SLAs loyal to the Kabba government in exile forced the AFRC/RUF from Freetown⁷². AFRC/RUF fighters looted and vandalized communities as they made their way out of the city.

It became obvious that a significant portion of the army was not loyal to Kabba. On his return Kabba exacerbated the situation by announcing the disbandment of the army as he had lost faith in them. This led to many soldiers believing that Kabba was out for revenge. Interviewees who were part of the army then stated that this led them into joining those in the bush as they no longer had any option. Thus, the SLA took a new role in the conflict as their marriage with the RUF continued in the bush.

The AFRC like the other factions violently pursued their war efforts. This created fear and tension among Sierra Leoneans who started running away from the provinces to Freetown to seek a safe haven as the RUF/SLA remobilized for an onslaught across the country.

On the 6th of January 1999 AFRC and RUF staged a major attack on Freetown. The attack on the city left thousands of people dead, amputated, mutilated or raped with over 7000 homes burnt. It was the biggest attack ever in the war and it changed the course of the war as the government and the international community started thinking of seriously discussing peace with the RUF instead of pursuing the war. It was evident that the government could not militarily defeat the AFRC/RUF. Thus, the AFRC became a key player during the Lome Peace Agreement with their leader Johnny Paul Koroma given the position of chairman of the Council for the Consolidation of Peace (the council derived its mandate from the Lome Peace Agreement).

At the end of the conflict, AFRC like the other factions went through DDR. 8869 AFRC soldiers were disarmed, demobilized and reintegrated (Humphreys and Weinstein 2004:13). When the SCSL was set up, some of the leaders of the AFRC - Johnny Paul Koroma, Alex Tamba Brima, Ibrahim Bazy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu - were indicted for War

⁷⁰ The Conakry Peace Talks is fully discussed in Chapter 3.4.

⁷¹ Contents and details are explained under peace agreements.

⁷² See: http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/Newsletters/irinw_12898.html (accessed on the 25th of June 2013)

Crimes, Crimes against Humanity and Violations of International Humanitarian Law⁷³ by the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Johnny Paul Koroma fled the city before he was arrested and Alex Tamba Brima, Ibrahim Bazy and Santigie Borbor Kamara received 50, 45, 50 years jail sentences respectively.

Civil Defence Force (CDF)

The CDF consisted of different groups such as the Kamajors (from the South-East), Gbethis and Kapras (from the North), Tamabros (Korankos from the North) and Donsos (from the East).⁷⁴ All of them initially⁷⁵ consisted of traditional hunters who wanted to protect their communities from the RUF. The Kamajors was the largest and the main CDF during the conflict. Much more is known of them than of the other groups as the others were only active in their communities.

The Kamajors was a “grass roots” militia that was reputed to have magical powers that rendered them powerful with their bodies being “bullet proof”. They were to “abide by many rules, the consequences of breaking the rules was destruction of the bullet proofing.”⁷⁶ One of the rules was not to touch a woman” (Marcus 2009: 1). In some communities they were seen as immortal with stories circulating of their mystical powers. The various groupings of armed militias that became known as the *Kamajors* can be traced back to the hunters, or *Kamajoisia*,⁷⁷ of local communities in the South-Eastern parts of Sierra Leone. The *Kamajoisia* supposedly possessed specialized knowledge and were tasked with using this knowledge in the protection of their communities against all dangers of the forest (Taylor 2012: 6).⁷⁸

The Kamajors became very influential and started playing a leading role after Ahmad Tejan Kabba became president in 1996. Their coordinator Chief Sam Hinga Norman was appointed

⁷³ Also see: <http://www.e-ir.info/2012/04/19/exploring-the-recruitment-and-use-of-child-soldiers/> (accessed on the 24th of June 2013)

⁷⁴ See the Indictment of Chief Sam Hinga Norman by the SCSL ‘Case No. SCSL-03-01’. Also see: <http://www.issafrica.org/pubs/Monographs/N0116/Monograph116.pdf> (accessed on the 24th of June 2013)

⁷⁵ The Kamajors later recruited young people who were not hunters but wanted to protect their communities.

⁷⁶ See: <http://lexglobal.org/files/Colloquium%20-%20WGR%20A.pdf> (Accessed on the 30th of June 2013)

⁷⁷ According to Patrick. K. Muana *'Kamajoi or kamasoi* literally means "a past master at doing mysterious things." Muana, Patrick K. "The Kamajoi Militia: Civil War, Internal Displacement and the Politics of Counter-Insurgency." *Africa Development* 22, no. 3 (1997): 77 - 100. 78. Also see: <http://www.politics.pomona.edu/penglebert/tradition-MED.pdf> (accessed on the 23rd fo July 2013)

⁷⁸ Also see Hoffman, Danny. (2011): *"The war machines: young men and violence in Sierra Leone and Liberia"* Journal of Peace Research, Duke University Press, 112

into the cabinet of Kabba (Deputy Defence Minister) and this further augmented the status of the Kamajors.

The role played by the Kamajors have been viewed with mixed feeling with some people looking at them as heroes while others have characterised them as villains. Hassan Kamara, a resident of Moyamba, accused the Kamajors of attacking innocent civilians, looting food and property *“I witnessed on many occasions lootings and killings done by the Kamajors. In most cases they attacked and killed people that were not from the Mende tribe. This gave the war a certain tribal edge that it previously did not have.”*

This view was expressed mostly by interviewees from the North who were in the South-Eastern regions of the country during the conflict. Atrocities committed were coupled with carnages committed against women who were seen as ‘war rations’ (Marcus 2009:1). However, Taylor (2012:1) argued that rather than a predatory, greed-based group who practiced forced recruitment, the *Kamajors* displayed a very nuanced and changing political motivation, based primarily on notions of community defence with an intimidating and complex relationship with local communities.

At the end of the conflict 37, 216 Kamajors went through DDR (Humphreys and Weinstein 2004: 13) while some were reported to have auto-demobilized.⁷⁹ Most of the Kamajors went back to their communities of origin unlike the other fighting forces. However, like the RUF and the AFRC, the Kamajors were also indicted by the SCSL for war crimes, crimes against humanity and violations of international humanitarian laws. Those indicted were Chief Sam Hinga Norman⁸⁰ (the National Coordinator), Allieu Kondowa (High Priest) and Moinina Fofana (director of the force and the leading general).

Specific charges included “unlawful killings, physical violence, looting and burning, terrorizing the civilian population and collective punishments and use of child soldiers.”⁸¹ Chief Sam Hinga Norman died during the course of his trial and Moinina Fofana and Allieu

⁷⁹ Based on interviews with former middle level Kamajor commanders.

⁸⁰ Chief Sam Hinga Norman was serving as the Minister of Internal Affairs when he got indicted. Before that he served in the army and rose to the rank of a captain. He also served as Liaison representative and Chiefdom Spokesperson in Mongeri, Valunia Chiefdom, as Regent Chief of Jaiama Bongor Chiefdom. See: the Indictment of Chief Sam Hinga Norman by the SCSL ‘Case No. SCSL-03-01’ Freetown, Sierra Leone.

⁸¹ See: <http://www.sc-sl.org/Press/pressrelease-051104.html> (accessed on the 1st of July 2013)

Kondowa were sentenced by the court to six and eight years imprisonment respectively and are currently appealing their sentences.

West Side Boys

The West Side Boys was a faction that broke away from the AFRC. It emerged after the January 1999 invasion of Freetown and consisted mostly of young soldiers. According to Utas and Jorgel (2008: 492) the West Side Boys were “children of soldiers that grew up in the Wilberforce Barracks in Freetown”⁸² and that “a partial explanation for the name ‘West Side Boys’ was their background in the Western Area of Sierra Leone.”⁸³ Moreover, “many had been based at the barracks in Western Freetown (chiefly Wilberforce but also Juba and Cockrill). The main reason for the ‘West Side’ name was, however, the music of the American rapper Tupac Shakur.”⁸⁴

Tupac Shakur had influence over many young people in Sierra Leone and the most popular of his songs that were heard all over the country included Hit them up, Me Against the World, All Eyes on Me and Only God Can Judge Me. The anger and frustration that Shakur sang with permeated some young people of Sierra Leone who came to see him as a revolutionist who stood up for the downtrodden. The West Side Boys appeared to be deeply touched by the messages of Shakur and apart from listening to his songs they continued fighting against the system.

Santigie Marrah, formerly of the West Side Boys, explained the influence of the songs of Shakur on the West Side Boys “*We listened to the songs of Tupac all the time, we drank alcohol, smoked marijuana and danced. Basically, he was like a prophet to us. Shakur was to us what Bob Marley is to others. We thought that the whole world was against us and all we could do was to fight back.*”

Momoh Conteh⁸⁵ believed that the love Junior Lion had for Tupac had influence on the coinage of the name ‘West Side Boys’. Junior Lion was one of the key leaders of the group

⁸² Utas, M (2008): "The West Side Boys: military navigation in the Sierra Leone civil war", The Journal of Modern African Studies

⁸³ Ibid

⁸⁴ Ibid

⁸⁵ Momoh Conteh is a former West Side Boy. Interview conducted on the 5th February 2013 in Freetown, Sierra Leone

and he was the “commander of the Dark Angel Battalion.”⁸⁶ After the West Side Boys (alongside the RUF/AFRC) got removed from Freetown, the West Side Boys stationed themselves at the outskirts of Freetown. Okra Hill became one of their main stations. They continued attacking the localities closer to them even after the Lome Peace Agreement was signed.

According to Human Rights Watch (2003:14), “at the behest of Johnny Paul Koroma, the West Side Boys in May 2000 briefly fought on the government’s side to prevent the RUF from re-entering Freetown. However, they continued to commit human rights abuses, and in August 2000 abducted eleven British soldiers of the International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT) and one SLA officer. In September 2000, the West Side Boys bases were destroyed during an operation by British paratroopers to free the captured soldiers. Numerous West Side Boys, including their leader (Foday Kallay), were arrested and incarcerated.”⁸⁷ However, most of them including Foday Kallay have been released from the Pademba Road prison.

3.3 Recruitment patterns

Two major forms of recruitment were common in Sierra Leone, voluntary or forced recruitment. At the start of the conflict, there was a high rate of volunteerism but this dwindled as the conflict continued and the RUF started attacking innocent people. Common factors that encouraged people to volunteer included poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, revenge, belief in the ideology of the RUF, desire to get rid of the APC government and peer pressure.⁸⁸

Of all the factors stated above, poverty, unemployment and the desire to get rid of the APC became the most stated factors during interviews conducted for this study. Traditional leaders in the South-East were said by some interviewees to have provided their children to be soldiers in the RUF. They believed that the war was to get rid of the APC and bring back the SLPP, a party of their choice that was dissolved when Sierra Leone became a one-party state in 1978. A significant percentage of the CDF volunteered to be combatants. For them, they

⁸⁶ Prestholdt, J (2009): “The afterlives of 2Pac: Imagery and alienation in Sierra Leone and beyond”, *Journal of African Cultural Studies*

⁸⁷ See: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/sierraleone/sierleon0103.pdf> (accessed on the 1st of July 2013)

⁸⁸ While these factors come from the interviews conducted, it is also important to see Brett, R and Specht, I (2003): ‘Young Soldiers Why they Choose to Fight’ ILO, Switzerland.

wanted to protect themselves and their communities and also to re-install the SLPP (after it was overthrown in 1997 by the AFRC). Those who volunteered were seen as real men in their communities while those who refused to join were seen as unmanly. This may have put pressure on many in the affected areas especially young people who formed the bulk of the CDF.

Of the 140 interviewees, 63 volunteered to be fighters while 77% were abducted (this was the case mostly for those who were with the RUF/AFRC/West Side Boys). Reasons why the fighting forces abducted people included: to have fighters, load carriers, cooks, spies and sex slaves. All the fighting forces recruited children and, when interviewed, former middle level commanders stated that children were easier to deal with, became very loyal after being conscientized, rarely thought of running away, were very fierce fighters that people were scared of and they did not care about dying.

These factors are similar to what Romeo Dallaire (2010) wrote *“In conflicts around the world, there is an increasingly popular weapon system that needs negligible technology, is simple to sustain, has unlimited versatility, and an incredible capacity for both loyalty and barbarism. What are these cheap, renewable, plentiful, sophisticated, and expendable weapons? Children.”* Dallaire identified these factors as key to the recruitment of children in conflicts around the world. Other African countries where children have been recruited for similar reasons include the Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Liberia, Republic of Sudan, Republic of South Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Nigeria, Mozambique, Mali, Cote d’Ivoire and Angola.

An effective method used by the forces to get fighters become loyal to their course was to have them commit atrocities in their local communities. This created a sense of fear and non-desire to return on the part of the combatants. This had serious psycho-social implications on those who were made to commit such atrocities. Several years after the conflict some fighters could still not see themselves going to their communities of origin.

Like children, women were also sought by the forces especially the RUF and the AFRC/West Side Boys. Key reasons why they were abducted included to serve as sex slaves, combatants, spies, cooks and load carriers. Victoria Kanneh⁸⁹ a former RUF abductee stated in an interview *“I was made to do many things while with the RUF. I started as a cook, became a*

⁸⁹ Interview conducted on the 4th of February 2013 in Freetown.

spy and later the wife of our local commander.” Like Kanneh, Isatu Jalloh⁹⁰ who was abducted by the West Side Boys on the 20th of January 1999 served in various roles ‘I was a load carrier (ammunitions) when we left Freetown but was trained to shoot and carry a gun when we reached Masiaka.”

In the entire period of the war abduction formed the main source of recruitment as the different forces wanted a regular source of recruiting fighters. For most of them (with the exception of the Kamajors) there was a very slim possibility to get volunteers as people became scared of them and the way they were pursuing their war efforts. In particular, this was the case after the January 1999 attack on Freetown. The focus changed from seeking to recruit more fighters to maintaining those that were already in the fighting forces. By then many fighters were tired of fighting and wanted to find a way out of the conflict.⁹¹

3.4 Peace Agreements

In the quest for peace in Sierra Leone three peace agreements were signed. These peace agreements are the Abidjan, Conakry and Lome peace agreements.

Abidjan Peace Agreement

After three years of NPRC rule and with no sign of peace in sight, civil society actors and political parties⁹² organised a National Consultative Conference at the Bintumani Hotel in Freetown.⁹³ This consultative conference was geared towards setting a road map to peace (as the war was ill-pursued with the rebels gaining grounds everyday) and democracy. Captain Strasser promised to move the country towards a democratic path-way and set-up a time table for election.

However, as plans were unfolding there was a palace coup d’états on the 16th of January 1996 which saw Brigadier Julius Maada Bio⁹⁴ succeeding Captain Valentine Esegro Melvin Strasser as head of state and chairman of the NPRC. Captain Strasser was sent into exile in Guinea.

With the support of the International Community Bio initiated talks with the RUF. The talks progressed with the RUF eventually meeting with NPRC officials in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire.

⁹⁰ Interview conducted on the 4th of February 2013 in Freetown.

⁹¹ Based on interview conducted on the 5th of February 2013 with a former commander in the RUF. Identity with held as requested.

⁹² By then the ban imposed by the NPRC on political parties had been lifted.

⁹³ This was the first Bintumani conference referred to as ‘Bintumani 1’ and it took place in August 1995.

⁹⁴ Brigadier General Bio was the deputy head of state and also the deputy chair of NPRC.

This was the first time in the course of the war that Sierra Leoneans saw Foday Sankoh on national TV. To most of them he was only a mythical subject. In between the talks elections⁹⁵ were held in Sierra Leone.⁹⁶ The SLPP won the election with their flag bearer Ahmad Tejan Kabba becoming president. Upon assuming the presidency he continued the Abidjan talks with the RUF.

Subsequently, the Abidjan Peace Agreement was signed on the 30th of November 1996. It consisted of 28 articles that made provision for cessation of hostilities, establishment of a Council for the Consolidation of Peace, the establishment of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants programme, security sector reform and other elements of post-war reconstruction. The OAU, ECOWAS, UN and Commonwealth served as moral guarantors.

However, it “became obvious shortly after the agreement was signed that the RUF was not committed to it. Sankoh refused to send representatives to the critical demobilization and disarmament committee, thereby undermining the work of the Peace Commission, and making it difficult for the government to proceed with the disarmament process. He also refused to meet with UN representatives in Cote d’Ivoire, and opposed the decision to send a 720-member United Nations peacekeeping force to help secure the peace. He called instead for a smaller force of 50 to 60 members.” (Bangura 1999:1).⁹⁷ With Sankoh now appearing to be a spoiler of the peace process (and with the belief that his removal will help the peace process) he was arrested and detained in Nigeria in March 1997. It was alleged that he was caught with a pistol at the airport but it was obvious that General Sani Abacha was supporting the efforts of Tejan Kabba to end to the conflict.

The arrest of Sankoh created tension within RUF as they became divided on the direction the movement should take. The leaders in Freetown that were part of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (led by Philip Palmer, Ibrahim Deen Jalloh and Fayia Musa), wanted the RUF to respect the peace accord while those in the bush (led by Sam Bockarie and Issa Sesay) did not want the RUF to take this position. Subsequently, “those in the bush got the upper hand when seven senior RUF officials, including two commissioners of the CCP, and

⁹⁵ The RUF was against the holding of the election and they perpetrated violence against the voters with several cases of amputations reported.

⁹⁶ The RUF was against the election and even Bio started a ‘Peace Before Elections’, however, civil society was against any move geared towards delaying the transition to democracy. A Bintumani II conference was called up in which civil society decisively asked Bio to conduct the election.

⁹⁷ See: <http://reliefweb.int/report/sierra-leone/unrisd-reflections-1996-sierra-leone-peace-accord> (Accessed on the 15th of February 2013) Also: Bangura, Y (1999): ‘Reflections on the 1996 Sierra Leone Peace Accord’ United Nations Research Institute on Social Development, Geneva Switzerland

Sierra Leone's ambassador to Guinea were abducted.”⁹⁸ The “two commissioners were on an official mission to hold consultations with RUF members in Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Ivory Coast. They were kidnapped as soon as they arrived in RUF-controlled territory at Nongowa, in Kailahun District.”⁹⁹ Eventually, the seven senior RUF officials were killed.

This saw Sam Bockarie emerging as the temporal head of the RUF, the complete collapse of the Abidjan Peace Agreement with the country pushed again into another phase of violence.

Conakry Peace Agreement

As stated in chapter 3.2 the Conakry Peace Agreement is a product of the May 25th 1997 coup d'états of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). It was principally geared towards making provision for the transfer of power to Tejan Kabba who was in exile in Guinea.

After serious engagement by the International Community, the AFRC regime decided to meet with the government in exile in Conakry, Guinea. This was preceded by the formation of a Committee of Five set up by ECOWAS to ensure the smooth transition to democracy. The Peace Plan made provision for “an immediate ceasefire - Kabbah's re-instatement by 23 April 1998, but with a "broadening" of his power base to reflect the interests of all parties, Continued UN and ECOWAS embargoes on arms, fuel, and travel by members of the AFRC, Disarmament and integration of the armed groups competing for power from 1 December 1997, Commencement of humanitarian assistance operations from 15 November 1997, Repatriation of refugees from 1 December 1997, Immunity from prosecution for the May coup leaders’ (IRIN 1998). The Committee of Five also agreed with the AFRC that RUF leader Foday Sankoh, imprisoned in Nigeria, should be released and allowed to return to Sierra Leone to "contribute" to the peace process.”¹⁰⁰

However, shortly after the signing of the agreement it became clear that there was a lack of trust the AFRC and the government in exile. Johnny Paul Koroma in several interviews stated that Sankoh should be released immediately, that the timeline for DDR was not realistic, the national army should not be disarmed and that the Nigerians were not neutral and AFRC forces should not surrender to them. Kabba on the other hand hinted that he was not properly

⁹⁸ See: <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Archives/slnews0397.html> (accessed on the 21st of June 2013)

⁹⁹ See: <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Archives/slnews0397.html> (Accessed on the 21st of June 2013)

¹⁰⁰ See: http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/Newsletters/irinw_12898.html (accessed on the 24th of June 2013) Also: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for West Africa’ “West Africa Background Briefing on the Conakry Peace Accord” Abidjan, La Cote d’Ivoire

consulted on the agreement with the AFRC, he further revoked the amnesty granted to the AFRC and he stated in an interview that “he would be compelled to punish the AFRC leaders in ‘exemplary fashion.’”¹⁰¹

Supporters of the government in exile believed that the AFRC was buying time to further entrench their government and was not prepared to hand over power to Kabba. Colonel Samaila Dadinkowa the then Aide de Camp (ADC) to Brigadier Maxwell Khobe (head of the ECOMOG contingent in Sierra Leone and later head of the Sierra Leone Army) had this to say when interviewed:¹⁰² *“As the different parties were gathering in Conakry to develop and sign the peace plan, military intelligence learnt that Johnny Paul Koroma already had a four year governance plan that was being prepared. We also got information that the AFRC leadership that was in Conakry felt intimidated by the Committee of 5 and by Chief Tom Ikimi. So they signed for the sake of signing, they wanted to buy time to stabilise their government and turn Sierra Leoneans to their side. What they did not realise was that many Sierra Leoneans were no longer prepared to be ruled by a military regime.”*

The Kamajors became frustrated by the lack of progress made with the peace plan and they started attacking AFRC positions in the South-East of the country. In February 1998, ECOMOG, soldiers loyal to the Kabba government with the support of a private British security firm Sandline attacked Freetown and chased the AFRC out of power. Kabbah was restored on the 10th of March 1998 and a trial process was immediately initiated for the AFRC officials that were arrested. 24¹⁰³ senior leaders of the AFRC were executed on the 19th of October 1998 while others were undergoing treason trial.¹⁰⁴ They were released from prison when the AFRC/RUF overran Freetown on the 6th of January 1999.

Lome Peace Agreement

The war intensified across Sierra Leone after the AFRC was removed from Freetown by ECOMOG and forces loyal to Kabba. However, this strengthened the marriage between them and the RUF and after few months they started marching towards Freetown. The AFRC/RUF

¹⁰¹ See: http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/Newsletters/irinw_12898.html (accessed on the 24th of June 2013)

¹⁰² Telephone interview conducted on the 17th of February 2013.

¹⁰³ See on those executed: http://www.bayefsky.com/general/a_56_40_vol_ii_2001.pdf (accessed on the 26th of June 2013)

¹⁰⁴ Those that were undergoing treason trial included the late president Joseph Saidu Momoh, Victor Foh-current ambassador to China and the late Osho Williams. They were released when the AFRC/RUF break into the Pademba Road prison on the 6th of January 1999.

gained the upper hand against the SLA and ECOMOG as there was a deep divide between the two. A senior officer¹⁰⁵ in ECOMOG then stated “*Within the Nigerian army Maxwell Khobe was a junior officer to ECOMOG commanders like Gen Abu Amadu that were in Freetown. However, he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General by Sani Abacha and became the Chief of Defense Staff of the Sierra Leone Army due to an arrangement between Abacha and Kabba. Abu Amadu and others were not happy to see themselves working directly with Khobe as equals. So the relationship between SLA and ECOMOG became sour. This was most crucial in the area of intelligence exchange. Most of the intelligence sources sent to ECOMOG by Khobe and his team were ignored by ECOMOG. RUF/SLA took advantage of this gap and fastened their move on Freetown.*”

Subsequently, the rebels were able to navigate their way into Freetown on the 6th of January 1999. This was the worst attack in the history of the war; it was a mix of the attacking forces wanting to take control of the city and at the same time revenging on the general populace for supporting ECOMOG against the AFRC regime. Apart from the attack on civilians several Nigerian soldiers that were caught behind enemy lines were also killed by the rebels.

Col. Samaila Dadinkowa stated “*Soldiers had to be brought from Nigeria to help us take back the city. For us the Congo Cross Bridge was the cut-off point. If the rebels had passed that point it would have been difficult to remove them from the city. They would have also caused a lot of havoc in the Western areas of the city. We started pushing them back when we received reinforcement. It was very tough but we succeeded amidst the loss of lives and properties.*”

After retaking the city, it became obvious to the government of Sierra Leone and the International Community that the joint forces of ECOMOG, SLA and Kamajors would not be able to militarily defeat the RUF/SLA. Also, the position of the Nigerians was changing, Sani Abacha who was supporting the war effort in Sierra Leone passed away and Nigeria started the transition to democracy. The people of Nigeria were also tired of seeing their relatives dying in Sierra Leone. Also, more than 70% of the country was under the grip of the rebels. The only way out for Kabba was to go to the diplomatic table and discuss peace with the belligerent factions.

¹⁰⁵ Telephone interview conducted on the 17th of February 2013.

The peace effort was supported by the Clinton administration that sent in their Special Envoy to Africa Rev. Jesse Jackson¹⁰⁶ to meet with Kabba. Kabba went with Jackson to Lome where they held discussions with Foday Sankoh on “18 May 1999 under the auspices of President Gnassingbe Eyadema.”¹⁰⁷ The discussion led to the signing of a cease-fire agreement that paved the way for the dialogue that commenced on the May 25 1999 which led to the developing and signing of the Lome Peace Agreement on 7 July 1999.

The Lome Peace Agreement had 37 articles and they mostly included the provisions made in the Abidjan Peace Agreement which are: cessation of hostilities, establishment of a Council for the Consolidation of Peace, design and implementation of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants programme, security sector reform and other elements of post-war reconstruction. Article 26 made provision for the setting up of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to address the violations of human rights, Article 5 made provision for the inclusion of the RUF into a government of National Unity with Foday Sankoh given the following positions:

“The Chairmanship of the Board of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development (CMRRD) as provided for in Article VII of the present Agreement shall be offered to the leader of the RUF/SL, Corporal Foday Sankoh. For this purpose he shall enjoy the status of Vice President and shall therefore be answerable only to the President of Sierra Leone.”¹⁰⁸

Article 9 granted amnesty to Foday Sankoh¹⁰⁹ and members of the different factions as could be seen below:

1. “In order to bring lasting peace to Sierra Leone, the Government of Sierra Leone shall take appropriate legal steps to grant Corporal Foday Sankoh absolute and free pardon.
2. After the signing of the present Agreement, the Government of Sierra Leone shall also grant absolute and free pardon and reprieve to all combatants and collaborators in respect of

¹⁰⁶ See: <http://www.sierra-leone.org/slnews0599.html> (accessed on the 29th of June 2013)

¹⁰⁷ See: <http://allafrica.com/download/resource/main/main/id/00010143.pdf> (Accessed on the 29th of June 2013). See: <http://www.sierra-leone.org/ceasefire051899.html> (Accessed on the 29th of June 2013). Eyadema was the chair of ECOWAS at that time.

¹⁰⁸ See: http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2000/01/06/000094946_99122006282964/Rendered/INDEX/multi_page.txt (accessed on the 29th of June 2013)

¹⁰⁹ See: <http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/ASR/10No2/Malan.html> (accessed on the 29th of June 2013)

anything done by them in pursuit of their objectives, up to the time of the signing of the present Agreement.”¹¹⁰

The amnesty was for crimes committed from the inception of the war to the time the agreement was signed. The United Nations was against the amnesty clause as it does not recognise amnesty provided for crimes committed during the conflict. In as much as Francis Okelo “the UN representative signed the agreement so as not to derail the process he added a caveat that the UN will not recognise the amnesty.”¹¹¹

Like the Abidjan Peace Agreement, the Lome Peace Agreement was faced with several challenges. The RUF became antagonistic towards the Peacekeepers as the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations reported:

“From its induction in Sierra Leone, Sankoh had displayed an antagonism which proved implacable to the UN Mission (UNAMSIL). He denounced its deployment as illegal and inconsistent with the Lomé Agreement, done without his agreement and threatening to his party. Every effort made to explain the link between UNAMSIL and Article XVI of the Lomé Agreement was met with pretence at understanding only for UNAMSIL to be denounced again shortly thereafter. With that posture, RUF obstructed UNAMSIL from deployment throughout the country, protection of innocent Sierra Leoneans and others from gross violation of their human rights and assisting the extension of the authority of the Government of National Unity throughout the country.”¹¹²

It appeared that Sankoh was looking at the peacekeepers as inimical to his desire to ultimately take power in Sierra Leone. The RUF continued causing mayhem and finally

¹¹⁰ See: http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2000/01/06/000094946_99122006282964/Rendered/INDEX/multi_page.txt (accessed on the 29th of June 2013). Also see: <http://www.cgsc.edu/carl/download/csipubs/OP28.pdf> (accessed on the 29th of June 2013)

¹¹¹ Elagab, O.Y (2004): "The special court for Sierra Leone: some constraints", The International Journal of Human Rights

¹¹² Reported to 3rd JIC meeting, 13 May 2000, quoted in Bright, Dennis (2000) "Implementing the Lomé Peace Agreement", op. cit., p. 2. J. See: <http://web.mit.edu/polisci/research/wip/Fortna.pdf> (accessed on the 30th of June 2013) Also quoted in Shola Omotola. (2008): "Assessing Counter-Terrorism Measures in Africa: Implications for Human Rights and National Security." *Conflict Trends*, African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), Pretoria, South Africa, Vol. 11 (2), p.g. 43. See: <http://www.c-r.org/accord-article/implementing-lom%C3%A9-peace-agreement> (accessed on the 30th of June 2013)

overstepped itself when it took 500 UN peacekeepers hostage on the 1st of May 2000. While this was going on the RUF started marching towards Freetown for a final onslaught. However, they were stopped by elements of the AFRC/West Side Boys. This frustrated the people of Sierra Leone who were totally fed-up with the pranks of Sankoh. On 8 May 2000 civil society mobilised the populace for a demonstration at his Spur Road residence. Sankoh's security guards opened fire on them killing about 18 people. Despite this, the people were able to reach his residence and vandalized it. Sankoh escaped but was arrested and detained few days later.

To put a complete end to the hostilities and to resuscitate the Lome Peace Agreement RUF was encouraged by leaders of ECOWAS to come up with a new leadership. It should be noted that before the 8 May incident Sam Bockarie had left Sierra Leone (after falling apart with Foday Sankoh) with some of his fighters for Liberia. Thus, General Issa Sesay became the new leader of the RUF. He met with officials of ECOWAS and the government of Sierra Leone in Abuja, Nigeria on 10 November 2000 to sign a cease-fire agreement. Sesay developed a good working relationship with the government and the ECOWAS Committee of Six and also showed his commitment towards bringing lasting peace to Sierra Leone. This paved the way for a smooth DDR process with the RUF fully participating.

3.5 Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-combatants

The DDR process in Sierra Leone went through three phases. Phase one was initiated after the reinstatement of the Kabba regime in 1998. Phase II was a result of the Lome Peace Agreement. Phase III was initiated after the Abuja Agreement (Sesay 2010).

Phase 1: DDR

As indicated above, in 1998 ECOMOG and the remaining loyalists within the Sierra Leone Army removed AFRC after a very intensive battle kicked the AFRC regime from Freetown. The government ceased the window of opportunity to encourage combatants to come forward and disarm. About 5000 combatants went through the process and they were kept in places such as the National Stadium in Freetown that served as disarmament and demobilization sites.¹¹³ Most of those who disarmed were former soldiers of the army who joined the AFRC.

¹¹³ This was due to the fact that the government had not pre-planned a DDR programme. Ex-combatants were asked to partake in DDR when the government had made no preparation for the process.

“Of the 5000 only about 3,200 combatants were disarmed and these were mainly ex-Sierra Leone Army (SLA)/AFRC who surrendered to ECOMOG (2,994 AFRC and ex-SLA; 187 RUF; and 2 CDF). Of this total number, about 189 were child soldiers”¹¹⁴ (Zongwe 2002: 2).

A targeted approach was used with the eligibility criteria based on the possession of and ability to deal with a weapon: to dismantle and assemble it. As this could only be done by actual fighters it excluded those who played support roles (cooks, sex slaves, spies, load carriers etc.) and dependents who relied on the combatants for survival.

The programme was halted when Freetown was attacked on the 6th of January 1999 by the RUF/AFRC. Most of those who were in the assembly sites escaped for their lives; joined the RUF/AFRC fighters or were killed.

Phase II

Article 16 of the Lome Peace Agreement made provision for a DDR programme. It stated:

“1. A neutral peace keeping force comprising UNOMSIL and ECOMOG shall disarm all combatants of the RUF/SL, CDF, SLA and paramilitary groups. The encampment, disarmament and demobilization process shall commence within six weeks of the signing of the present Agreement in line with the deployment of the neutral peace keeping force.

2. The present SLA shall be restricted to the barracks and their arms in the armoury and their ammunitions in the magazines and placed under constant surveillance by the neutral peacekeeping force during the process of disarmament and demobilization.

3. UNOMSIL shall be present in all disarmament and demobilization locations to monitor the process and provide security guarantees to all ex-combatants.”¹¹⁵

While the provisions made are not very detailed on the economic and social aspects of the proposed programme, it was very clear in the area of political reintegration. The RUF was promised political inclusion and transformation into a political party. Also, as stated in the Agreement (1999) “*The Chairmanship of the Board of the Commission for the Management*

¹¹⁴ <http://www.ddr-humansecurity.org.uk/images/DDR%20Case%20Study%20Sierra%20Leone.pdf> (accessed on the 1st of July 2013)

¹¹⁵ See: http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2000/01/06/000094946_99122006282964/Rendered/INDEX/multi_page.txt (accessed on the 29th of June 2013)

of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development (CMRRD) as provided for in Article VII of the present Agreement shall be offered to the leader of the RUF/SLA, Corporal Foday Sankoh. For this purpose he shall enjoy the status of Vice President and shall therefore be answerable only to the President of Sierra Leone.”

The agreement reaffirmed in its preamble the imperative to end hostilities as a basis for transition to sustainable peace, democracy and development. Following this resolution, the parties agreed in part one to the cessation of hostilities, and established a Ceasefire Monitoring Committee (CMC) and a Joint Monitoring Commission (JMC) to oversee its effective implementation (Omotola 2008:38). Phase II of DDR was launched “in October 1999, as indicated in the Lomé peace agreement, with financial support from a Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) as well as by Emergency Recovery Credits and a Post-Conflict Fund grant (CICS 2008:7). The eligibility criteria were the same as those used in Phase I.”¹¹⁶

Many setbacks were faced and they included “initial non-compliance with peace agreements, programme restructuring, etc.” (UNOSAA 2005: 23).¹¹⁷ The RUF appeared to be dissatisfied and recalcitrant; this became obvious when they started attacking, abducting and killing United Nations peacekeepers. This was compounded with “institutional gaps, combined with a crippling post-conflict economic, social and political environment which provided the backdrop to the DDR programme. Poor governance systems at the central and local levels created a context within which other conflict factors flourished, for example, disgruntlement of unemployed youth and former combatants.”¹¹⁸

Further discussions among the different stakeholders led to another ceasefire agreement in Abuja, Nigeria on the 10th of November 2010. The agreement recommitted the RUF and the other factions to the cessation of hostilities and the DDR programme. The DDR commission with the support of the international community recommenced the programme. This phase is known as Phase III.

Phase III

Phase III is the most significant of all the DDR stages in Sierra Leone. Led by the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants (NCDDR), it was supported by the UN Peacekeeping Force that was the largest number ever

¹¹⁶ See: <http://www.ddr-humansecurity.org.uk/images/DDR%20Case%20Study%20Sierra%20Leone.pdf> (accessed on the 1st of July 2013) Also see:

<http://escolapau.uab.es/img/programas/desarme/ddr/ddr2009i.pdf> (accessed 3rd July 2013)

¹¹⁷ Ibid

¹¹⁸ Ibid

deployed in a country by then (the force eventually amounted to over 17,000 personnel). “71,000 combatants, including around 7,000 children (under 18 years old) were disarmed and demobilized in Sierra Leone.”¹¹⁹ The eligibility criteria were broadened during this phase with the NCDDR seen working with the different stakeholders to ensure that those who played support roles and the dependents of former combatants go through DDR and benefit from the assistance provided. Despite this, a significant number were still excluded as DDR implementers in the field had their own criteria that excluded mostly women and children. Phase III will be divided into the different stages (Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration) to ensure clarity on the implementation process.

The table below shows the stages in which the programme strategy was developed.

Table 1:

Components	Disarmament (1)	Demobilisation (2)	Help with reintegration	
			Reinsertion ¹²⁰ (3)	Reintegration (4)
Aim	Disarmament of all groups in order to strengthen security and facilitate return to civilian life and the authority of government	Recognition of former combatants as civilian individuals and the provision of initial assistance for a return to civilian life	Aid to former combatants to cover their basic needs	Provision of opportunities to acquire basic skills in order to find work
Help given	Transfer of former combatants and their families to Demobilisation Centres	- Provision of food and utensils - Medical check-up - Psychological orientation - Interviews - Identification	Payment of 300,000 Le (around \$150)	Aid package: - Formal education - Vocational training - Public-sector employment - Agriculture - Others
Timescale	1 day	Between 3 and 21 days	Basic help for 3 months	Between 3 and 9 months, according to choice
Place	Disarmament Centre	Demobilisation Centre	Settlement region; Regional Reintegration Offices	Settlement region; Regional Reintegration Offices
Responsible body	UNAMSIL, under instruction from NCDDR	NCDDR	NCDDR	NCDDR

Source: Catalonia School for a Culture of Peace 2006:5¹²¹

¹¹⁹ See: <http://www.c-r.org/accord-article/work-not-war-youth-transformation-liberia-and-sierra-leone> (accessed on the 1st of July 2013)

¹²⁰ Note that reinsertion is a component of demobilization.

¹²¹ See: <http://www.escolapau.org/img/programas/desarme/mapa/sierrai.pdf> (accessed on the 3rd of July 2013)

Disarmament

During this phase weapons were collected from the different factions. The collection process was conducted in 45 reception centers that were established all over the country by the UN Peacekeepers. According to Solomon and Ginifer (2008:10) it was conducted in five phases:

- “The assembly of combatants: receiving, screening, and processing ex-combatants;
- Collection of personal information: the collection of personal identification and data, information, registration, and the verification of weapons or ordnance delivered by the ex-combatants;
- Verification, collection and disabling weapons and ammunition prior to their destruction;
- Eligibility certification: Verification and authorisation of the ex-combatants by UN observers for their inclusion as beneficiaries in the DDR programme;
- Transporting screened and disarmed combatants from disarmament sites to demobilisation centres.”¹²²

To avoid frictions, specific zones (reception centers) were designated for each group. Putting them in the same centers would have created tension and a potential outbreak of violence. The process commenced in Kambia and Port Loko and spread across the country. Fighters from all factions in the different parts of the country participated even though some centers received more weapons than others.

In total, “42,330 weapons and more than 1.2 million rounds of ammunition were collected, all of which were subsequently destroyed. This number represents a ratio of 0.35 weapons per person demobilised and bears no relation to the number of former combatants, meaning that a significant number of small arms and light weapons were still in circulation in the country. As a result, other disarmament initiatives were introduced in tandem with the DDR programme, such as Community Arms Collection and Destruction Program (CACD)”¹²³ and “Arms for Development both supported by UNDP and implemented by the police Interim Commission for the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons¹²⁴ (now a commission) (ACCD and AECID 2006:6). Communities were used as key stakeholders in these initiatives (UNDP, and the Police worked with religious, traditional and other community leaders). They were

¹²² Also see: <http://www.ddr-humansecurity.org.uk/images/DDR%20Case%20Study%20Sierra%20Leone.pdf> (accessed on the 1st of July 2013) Also see:

<http://www.escolapau.org/img/programas/desarme/mapa/sierrai.pdf> (accessed on the 3rd of July 2013)

¹²³ See: <http://www.escolapau.org/img/programas/desarme/mapa/sierrai.pdf> (accessed on the 3rd of July 2013)

¹²⁴ Ibid

sensitized on the essence of encouraging their communities to bring forward weapons that were still in their possession.

The initiatives led to the collection of 4773 firearms over a period of 8 years that were destroyed in Makeni in September 2012.¹²⁵

Demobilization

The reintegration phase was divided into two stages:

- The formal and controlled discharge process where ex-combatants went through screening, counselling, profiling, etc.
- Receiving of discharge papers, identity cards, reinsertion package and transportation to communities of origin or choice.

Cantonment sites were established in accessible areas for the demobilization of ex-combatants. However, interviewees stated that the sites were in bad conditions and the circumstances under which they lived were miserable. Housing, toilet, water, food and security provisions were poor. However, this could not be surprising as Sierra Leone was coming from a decade of a very brutal conflict with most of the infrastructure available badly destroyed. Even in the capital Freetown social amenities and infrastructures were scanty.

Interviewees also stated that the timeframe for demobilization in some areas was very short (ranging between 1 to 2 weeks). Isatu Kallon¹²⁶ commented that it was not helpful to her as she left the site without even getting to understand what she was doing there.

Jumu Jalloh¹²⁷ had this to say about the demobilization programme he went through: “I expected to have sessions with experts who will tell me what the demobilization process was about, have thorough screening done which will include medical screening, with people discussing with me my plans for the future. Basically, I was on my own. Some of my colleagues were as confused as I were. We noticed that those dealing with us were quite urgent to see the programme come to an end than to see us become very comfortable with the programme and prepared to enter society once again.”

¹²⁵ See: <http://awoko.org/2012/09/26/4773-firearms-symbolically-destroyed-in-makeni-city/> (Accessed on the 17th of September, 2013)

¹²⁶ Interview conducted on the 24th of February 2013 in Kailahun.

¹²⁷ Interview conducted on the 25th of February 2013 in Kailahun.

At the end of the demobilization stage 54,000 beneficiaries that voluntarily registered received payment of Transitional Safety Allowances (TSA). Children did not go through demobilization; they were taken to Interim Care Centers (ICC) developed by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and other specialized agencies.¹²⁸ This was due to the fact that children are not recognised as fighters and because of their age they need special care and should not be mixed with adult combatants.

The demobilization phase was geared towards breaking the structures of the armed forces and also to ensure that the hold that the forces have over their soldiers is completely dissolved. It was easier to ensure this with the RUF and AFRC/West Side Boys as most of them went into different communities (communities of choice). With the Kamajors it was very challenging as they went back into the same communities.

Reintegration

At the end of the disarmament and demobilization phases the NCDDR had 70,871 ex-combatants registered for reintegration (Humphrey and Weinstein 2004: 13).

Table 2:

NCDDR Totals	
SLA/AFRC	8869
RUF	24,338
CDF	37,216
Others	448
Total	70,871

Source: Humphrey and Weinstein 2004: 13

The demobilised soldiers became “eligible to receive reinsertion or resettlement support, which included a transport allowance and basic household needs on return to their

¹²⁸ Children should not go through demobilization. Immediately they are identified as children they should be taken out of the group and given to expert agencies that will take them through processes designed for children.

communities.”¹²⁹ The support provided saw them through the transition phase into their reintegration programme. The reintegration phase was divided into social and economic components.

Economic Reintegration

To provide ex-combatants with an alternative source of livelihood several activities were designed and implemented. These activities included vocational and technical skills training, provision of tools for those interested in agriculture, formal education programmes including adult education and accelerated learning programmes (for older children), business skills training and quick impact projects (QIPs). Institutions such as the then German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) now German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) supported the development of technical and life skills training in different areas. They provided their beneficiaries with trainings that should enable them begin and manage their own businesses. GTZ had several field and office staff implementing activities related to reintegration. (Ginifer 2003: 42). UNDP also played the lead support role to the NCDDR as they provided technical and financial support without which the process would not have taken off the ground.

However, activities designed were not based on opportunity mapping and market surveys. Thus, the job market was inundated with skills that were not needed. This created a significant challenge for ex-combatants as they were unable to compete for decent forms of employment. Also, activities designed for women were stereotypical, for instance, most of the trainings women and girls went through consisted of gara-tye dying, soap making, basket weaving and tailoring. Furthermore, the service providers had very limited capacity to undertake the skills training that they were contracted to undertake. Alongside this, the private sector was not fully engaged to ensure that they support the employment drive that ensued after the reintegration of ex-combatants.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ See: <http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No80/Chap2.html> (accessed on the 4th of July 2013)

¹³⁰ Based on interviews with government officials who worked on DDR. Identity withheld as requested.

Social Reintegration

The social reintegration component of the reintegration phase was geared towards ensuring that ex-combatants are accepted or re-accepted into their communities of choice or origin.¹³¹ At the same time, it was also geared towards fostering reconciliation between ex-combatants and receiving communities. This effort fed into the overall reconciliation process in the country. Some of the activities undertaken promoted justice, gender and psycho-social related issues (UNOSAA 2005:23).

To prepare ex-combatants for the potential challenges to be faced in their local communities, “ex-combatants were targeted by NCDDR prior to their return. Pre-discharge counselling emphasised community orientation, with a special re-entry plan for ex-combatants. This social adaptation and development plan was developed jointly by NCDDR and other international organisations. Ex-combatants were also brought to *ad hoc* community reconciliation meetings in various parts of the country. In potentially serious cases, where war crimes were alleged, NCDDR acted as a facilitator with traditional leaders to facilitate the return of ex-combatants”¹³²

To build on the activities undertaken existing social capitals were used such as religious and traditional leaders. They were engaged to support the reintegration of ex-combatants. In some communities ex-combatants went through traditional cleansing ceremonies to rid them off the ‘perceived evil that was in them’. Such traditional transitional justice mechanisms were supported by the introduction of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The NCDDR “also encouraged ex-combatants to undertake tasks that were beneficial to communities, such as civil works, street cleaning, and helping to rehabilitate shelter. They also supported adult education programmes, civic and peace education, music, sports groups, and other projects that helped to rebuild social capital.”¹³³

The social reintegration component of the DDR was implemented with lesser challenges faced than initially anticipated as the communities to a large extent willingly re-accepted the ex-combatants. Nonetheless, some ex-combatants are still faced with stigmatization and stereotypes in certain communities.

¹³¹ Some ex-combatants went to different communities from those they came from as they had committed horrendous atrocities in those communities before leaving them. They were afraid that their community members and families would seek revenge.

¹³² See: <http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No80/Chap2.html> (accessed on the 4th of July 2013)

¹³³ Ibid

Financing of the DDR programme

The disarmament and demobilization phases were mostly financed through the Department of Peace Keeping Operations Assessed Budget. This is a fund provided for a mission, normally for a period of one year. It covered “personnel costs, equipment for construction of DD sites, infrastructure and logistics, operational costs, transportation, rations (food supply), civilian clothing and other non-food items, DDR training, information and sensitization activities and reinsertion support.”¹³⁴

The reintegration phase was financed with funds from voluntary contributions made by donor countries (trust and bi-lateral funds), in-kind contributions by UN agencies, World Bank grants and other assistance received by the government of Sierra Leone.

The support from the Multi-Donor Trust Fund through the World Bank was \$ 36.5 million¹³⁵ as could be seen in the table below.

Table 3:

Multi-Donor Trust Fund Donor	Estimated value (millions of dollars)
Canada	1.9
Denmark	0.4
EU	9.0
Germany	6.8
Italy	0.4
Japan	2.3
Netherlands	7.5
Norway	1.5
Sweden	0.7
Switzerland	1.5
United Kingdom	2.4
USA	1.9
TOTAL	36.5

Source: Catalonia School for a Culture of Peace 2006:4

Other key contributors included Japan that provided \$3 million in 2002 (ACCD and AECID 2006:4)

¹³⁴ See: http://unddr.org/docs/Operational_Guide_REV_2010_WEB.pdf (accessed on the 4th of July 2013)

¹³⁵ See: <http://www.escolapau.org/img/programas/desarme/mapa/sierrai.pdf> (accessed on the 3rd of July 2013)

Challenges faced during the implementation of DDR

According to a 2005 conference report by the Government of Sierra Leone and UNOSAA the programme faced the following challenges: “a. misunderstanding of the eligibility criteria, b. prolonged period of encampment c. limited access to parts of the country to start reintegration activities d. limited availability of credible and capable implementing partners e. inadequate support to dependents of ex-combatants and women associated with fighting forces f. the weak programme link between DDR and RRR.”¹³⁶

Another major challenge that gravely affected the programme was the implementation of a twin track transitional justice mechanisms “The Special Court for Sierra Leone and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission”¹³⁷ parallel to the demobilization and reintegration phases. They created a sense of fear on the part of the ex-combatants who thought that they were going to be prosecuted for war crimes. Several NGO and CBOs were contracted to conduct sensitization programmes geared towards educating the ex-combatants about the TRC and SCSL and to further get them understand that that only key leaders were going to be tried by the SCSL.

The Post-Conflict Reintegration Initiatives for Development and Empowerment (PRIDE), an NGO, played a leading role during this period. One of its founders (Lawrence Santigie Sesay) had this to say when interviewed¹³⁸ “*The SCSL was started at the wrong moment, the government and the international community should have waited until the reintegration component had commenced. The combatants refused to go through the programme until they were convinced that they were not going to be tried. We went through all the districts of Sierra Leone to have discussions with them and allay their fears and doubts.*”

Despite this, several combatants refused to go through the programme and they either moved to Liberia or auto-demobilized.¹³⁹ Also, the country was faced with massive destruction and social amenities were either bad or non-functional. Communities lacked the capacity to absorb the returning ex-combatants and there was a high sense of fear and distrust for ex-combatants

¹³⁶ RRR means Resettlement, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction. The RRR programme was geared towards assisting IDPs, refugees return and resettle in their communities. It was also geared towards helping to rebuild local communities and provide them with the basic facilities that enabled people to live in decency and dignity. It complemented the efforts of the DDR programme as it implemented activities that fostered reconciliation and stimulated local economies.

¹³⁷ See: <http://www.ictj.net/downloads/Handbook.pdf> (accessed on the 10th of July 2013)

¹³⁸ Telephone interview conducted on the 6th of April 2013.

¹³⁹ Auto-demobilization is the process of self-demobilizing. Combatants who do not want to go through a DDR programme personally take care of their reintegration process. They get reintegrated into a community of origin or choice without any help from the DDR programme.

within the local communities. Coupled with this, the economy of the country was in a bad shape and it could not support the reintegration process that was started.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Question

A careful examination of the background above led to the research being centred on three main issues (1) the current socio-economic conditions of ex-combatants (2) the differences and similarities between pre-war, war and current statuses (3) how effective was the DDR programme in ensuring the full-socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants.

Based on this the research question was derived and it could be seen below:

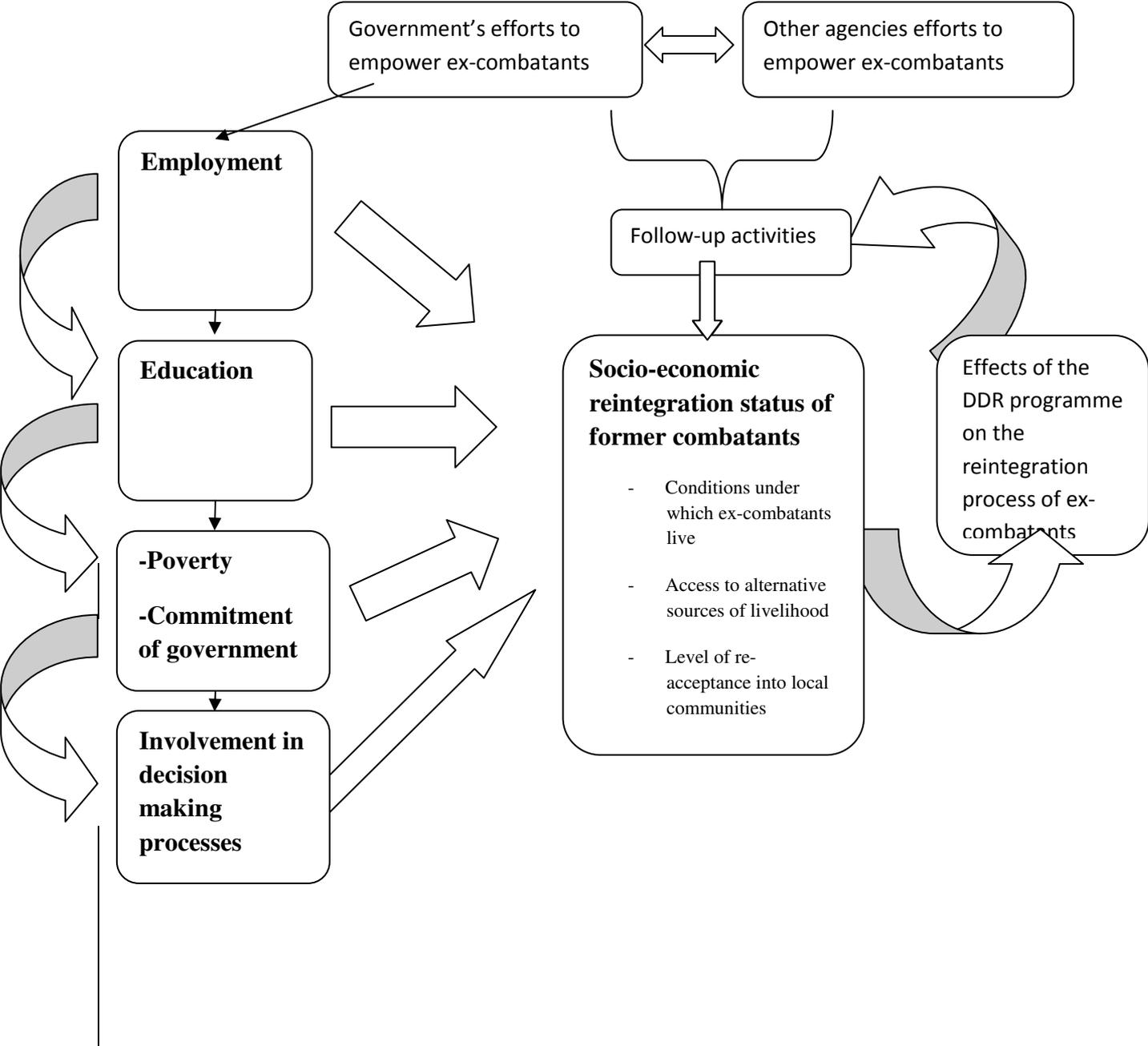
How effective is the socio-economic reintegration process of ex-combatants in Sierra Leone?

Sub questions

The under mentioned are the sub questions of the research:

- 1) What are the current socio-economic conditions of ex-combatants?
- 2) What types of socio-economic activities are ex-combatants involved in? Is their present status better than before the war?
- 3) What are some of the challenges faced by ex-combatants in their reintegration process?
- 4) In what ways can the reintegration process be enhanced to discourage the re-engagement of ex-combatants in violence?

4.2 Conceptual Scheme



4.3 Operationalization of Major Concepts

Combatant: For the purpose of this study a combatant is a person who played an active or passive role in the different fighting forces during the conflict in Sierra Leone. These roles include combat roles, serving as a cook, spy, bush wife, sex-slave, load carrier etc.

Ex-Combatant: A person “who has assumed any of the responsibilities or carried out any of the activities mentioned in the definition of ‘combatant’, and has laid down or surrendered his/her arms with a view to entering a DDR process. Former combatant status may be certified through a demobilization process by a recognized authority. Spontaneously auto-demobilized individuals such as deserters may also be considered ex-combatants if proof of non-combatant status over a period of time can be given.”¹⁴⁰

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants: A process that contributes to security and stability by taking weapons from the hands of combatants, taking the combatants out of military structures and helping them to integrate socially and economically into society by finding civilian livelihoods.¹⁴¹

Reintegration: The process by which ex-combatants “acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open time-frame, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility, and often necessitates long-term external assistance.”¹⁴²

Social Reintegration: The process through which ex-combatants are re-accepted into their communities and feel that they are part of the community. The objective of social reintegration is to facilitate the transformation of demobilized soldiers from military service to productive members of their respective communities. The social reintegration assistance should promote reconciliation and make contributions to continued social cohesion in the communities of settlement and in the society at large. The main activities can comprise of “pre-discharge orientation, information and sensitization of the target groups, implementing partners, home communities, the public at large support and enhancement of¹⁴³ referral

¹⁴⁰ See: <http://unddr.org/iddrs/01/20.php> (accessed on the 1st of July 2013)

¹⁴¹ Ibid

¹⁴² Secretary General of the United Nations note to the General Assembly, A/C.5/59/31, May 2005.

¹⁴³ See: <http://unddr.org/docs/project%20document%20Puntland%20DDR%20-%20nov%2003.pdf> (accessed on the 1st of July 2013)

services at different levels, strengthening of relevant specialized services” (Sudan National Reintegration Strategy 2007: 12).

Economic Reintegration: “The process through which the ex-combatants households build up their livelihood through production and other types of gainful employment. Reintegration programmes assist with the provision of viable economic and durable livelihood reintegration support that ensures the long-term economic viability of reintegration for ex-combatants such as vocational training, education, business development advice, on the job, basic entrepreneurship, adult literacy and numeracy trainings”¹⁴⁴ (Sudan National Reintegration Strategy 2007: 12).

Reintegration Programme: The assistance ex-combatants receive to make their transition from combatants to civilians successful.

Reintegration Process: Is the transition process ex-combatants go through with or without assistance. It starts at the end of the reintegration programme and continues for several years. The post-war recovery process positively affects or promotes the reintegration process of ex-combatants. If the economy is not transformed to enable it create employment possibilities and reduce the level of poverty, ex-combatants will find their reintegration process to be very challenging.

Livelihood: “The capabilities, assets (including both material and social assets) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, and maintain or improve its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base.”¹⁴⁵ In this study, “livelihood is about the alternative (if any) sources of employment available to ex-combatants and their ability to access the means of production.”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ See: <http://www.bicc.de/general/events/devcon/kingma.html> (accessed on the 1st of July 2013)

¹⁴⁵ See: <http://unddr.org/iddrs/01/20.php> (accessed on the 1st of July 2013)

¹⁴⁶ Ibid

4.4 Methodology

The study was rooted on the philosophical foundation of subjectivism. Subjectivism claims that no objective reality exists and that there are many ambiguous realities and that the researcher is not neutral or independent of the researched (Summer, A. and Tribe, M. 2008:59-63). The theoretical perspective is interpretivism which enabled me have an interactive and open-minded study and further acquire a good knowledge of the subjects researched. The methodology of this study was a multi-method approach of small scale ethnographic research and questionnaires. The main method employed was semi-structured interviews and structured questionnaires. Pie charts were created out of the questionnaires administered to ensure easy understanding of the findings. Also, the stories of some of the interviewees are presented as they were stated by them; this positively drew out the findings from the ethnographic approach. The field work brought me very close to the researched and I was able to better understand the challenges they face on a daily basis.

Reflection – researcher’s own reality

I worked on the reintegration of ex-combatants for over 6 years (2000-2006) as the Public Relations/Child Protection Officer of the Post Conflict Reintegration Initiatives for Development and Empowerment (PRIDE). During this period I met with ex-combatants in all the districts of Sierra Leone and I listened to their fears, their doubts and at the same time their hopes, wishes and aspirations. I had hope in the promise of a better tomorrow for them. We encouraged them to give up their weapons and give peace a chance and at the same time promised them a better and decent future.

After the DDR, my thoughts were stringed on the possibilities that the post-war reconstruction efforts would create the space for the former combatants to move away from the poverty and destitution in which they were trapped. Six years after my interaction with them I decided to go out in the field again and assess their transformation process. Thus, I based my PHD research on them. I was interested in seeing the different turn their lives would have taken as the country continues to build on the fragile peace that exists. I became deeply touched by the stories I heard from the first set of former combatants in Freetown and the similarity in the stories became stronger as I travelled across the country. Some of these stories are presented in the findings section of this thesis. Despite the stories told, I was struck by the patience, the quietness and the inner struggles of the ex-combatants. I was mostly listening to what they were not saying; I looked into their eyes and could hear more words than they were saying to me. I compared the conversations I had with some of them 6 years ago to the ones we were having during the interviews. Nonetheless, I presented their words as they said it for the readers to have a clear understanding of what they are going through.

4.5 Location of the Research

The research was conducted in the 14 districts of Sierra Leone: In the Western Area: Freetown Rural and Freetown Urban, In the Southern region: Bo, Bonthe, Moyamba and Pujehun. In the Eastern region: Kenema, Kono, Kailahun. In the North: Bombali, Port Loko, Kambia, Koinadugu and Tonkolili. The study took a national twist as it became necessary to have an idea of the challenges faced in all the different areas of the country. While this may not give a definite conclusion on the status of all ex-combatants it presents the realities of some ex-combatants in all the 14 districts of the country.

Areas in the different districts visited are:

Table 4:

District	Locations visited
Freetown Urban	Kingtom, Brookfields, Guard Street, Mountain Cut, Government Wharf, Kissy, Calaba Town. Government agencies and other institutions were visited during field consultations.
Freetown Rural	Goderich, Waterloo, Newton, Lakka and Tombo
Bo	Baoma, Badjia, Gbo, Kakua, Lugbu and Selenga
Bonthe	Bum, Jong, Imperri and Sogbini
Moyamba	Kaiyamba, Fori, Dasse and Kagboro
Pujehun	Kpanga Kagonde, Gallines Perri and Makpele
Kailahun	Njalahun, Kissi Tongi, Kissi Teng, Dea, Yawei and Penguia
Kono	Lei, Gbense and Tankoro

Kenema	Nongowa, Tunkia, Niawa Lenga, Wando and Langurama
Bombali	Biriwa Tambakka, Sanda Loko and Paki Masabong
Kambia	Mambolo, Samu and Tonko Limba
Port Loko	Maforki and Loko Massama
Koinadugu	Neya, Diang, Nieni, Sulima and Mongo
Tonkolili	Kalansongoia, Gbonkolenken and Tane

The locations were carefully selected based on discussions the researcher had with stakeholders that worked on reintegration related issues or that currently work on issues related to national development. In their work, they meet ex-combatants and thus have good knowledge of where they could be found. They provided valuable information on the best locations to be visited. Also, the areas gravely affected by the war and communities that faced severe challenges when ex-combatants returned were visited. Coupled with this, ex-combatants interviewed provided information on communities to be interviewed. The ‘snowballing’ method took effect in every district and several ex-combatants that were interviewed were met through their former colleagues.

4.6 Unit of Analysis

The target population consisted of government agencies, ex-combatants, local community members, representatives of international NGOs, members of local NGOs and members of community based organisations.

A total of 140 ex-combatants were interviewed in the 14 districts¹⁴⁷ of Sierra Leone (10 per district), 140 community members were interviewed (10 per district). 30 inter-governmental agencies (United Nations, ECOWAS and Mano River Organisations), government agencies

¹⁴⁷ The districts are Freetown Rural, Freetown Urban, Bo, Bonthe, Moyamba, Pujehun, Kenema, Kono, Kailahun, Bombali, Port Loko, Kambia, Koinadugu, Tonkolili.

(line ministries and commissions); INGOs and NGOs were interviewed in Freetown, Bo, Kenema and Makeni. The agencies and organisations targeted are organisations that provided services to ex-combatants during the DDR programme phase and they continue to work on development related issues in local communities across the country.

The entire country was targeted so as to have a good understanding of the differences and similarities faced by ex-combatants. The community members were also targeted as families and community member have a key role to play in the reintegration process of ex-combatants. This was important as they provided information on the social coping mechanisms and networks existing in their communities, relationship with ex-combatants, challenges faced by ex-combatants, issues related to stereotypes etc.

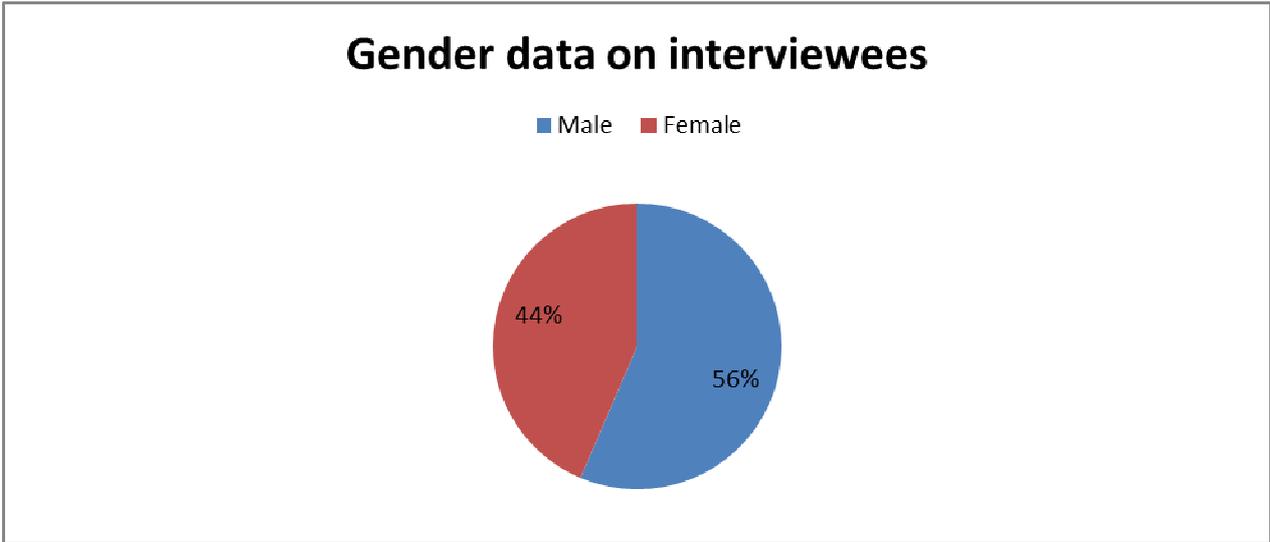
Government agencies were targeted to assess the support they continued to provide to ex-combatants and local communities after the end of the reintegration programme. They were also targeted to enable the study assess what they could have done to further assist the ex-combatants in their transition after the DDR programme.

Specific INGOs were targeted as they were involved in the reintegration programme and they still provide services to local communities where ex-combatants were reintegrated into. The services they provide currently are not reintegration related but the study wanted to assess how the services trickle down to the ex-combatants and indirectly assist their reintegration process. A detailed list of organisations visited where they operate can be found in Annex 2.

5. Findings

This chapter presents the findings on the social status of former combatants. The findings are divided into the status of male and female combatants to provide a clear understanding of how they are going through their different reintegration processes. Chapter 5 is divided into the current social status and chapter 6 into the current economic status of former combatants. The graph below indicates the percentage of male and female combatants interviewed.

Table 5:

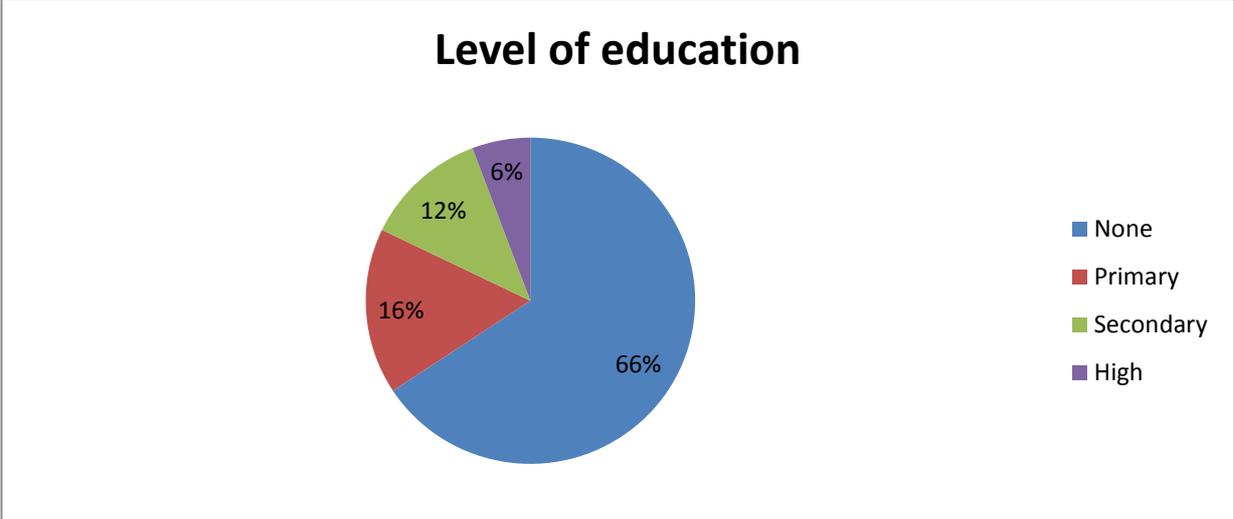


In all the communities visited male and female ex-combatants were interviewed and they also partook in focus group discussions. A good balance of male and female interviewees was ensured to make sure that the differences in experiences faced by the two sexes are captured in the study.

A significant percentage of the interviewees have a very low level of education as indicated in the graph below. 66% of the interviewees have never attended formal school, 16 % attained primary education, 12% secondary education with 6% having attained higher education.

While those with primary education attained them before the war, all of those with higher education stated that they acquired them after the war. The two common institutions that interviewees with higher education stated they attended were Fourah Bay College (FBC) and Milton Margai College of Science and Technology (MMCET). Peace and Conflict Studies (FBC and MMCET), Social Work and Business Studies (MMCET) are among the three courses that the former combatants studied.

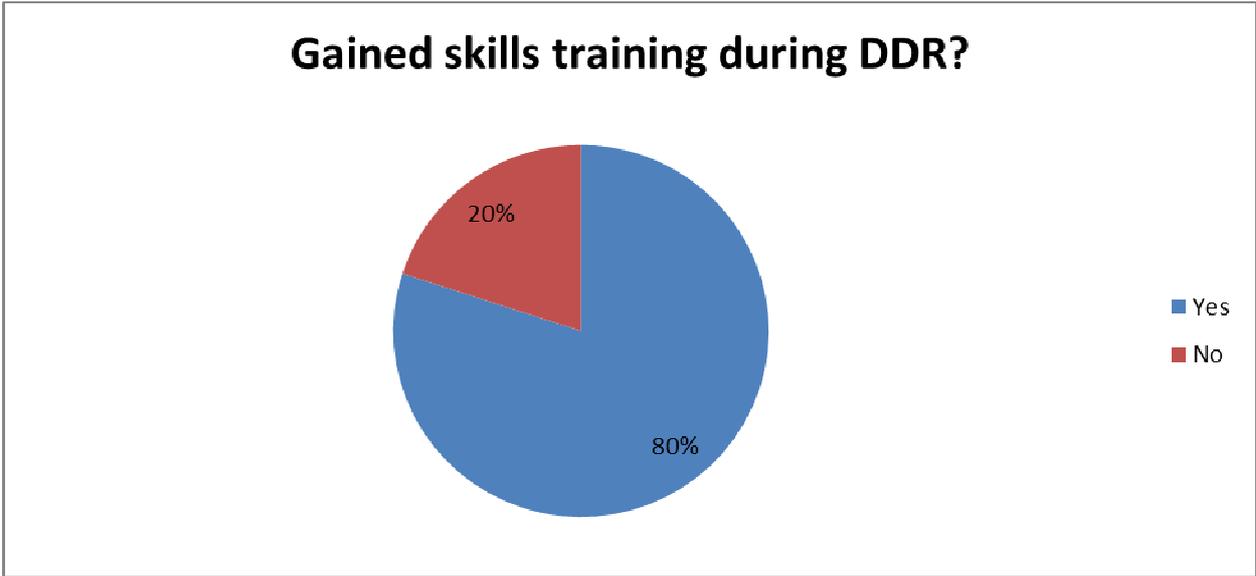
Table 6:



There is a huge disparity in the educational level between former male and female combatants. For instance, female combatants constitute only 1% of the 6% with higher education. Of the 16% with secondary education women only constitute 2%. During interviews and focus group discussions denial of access to education, early marriage and poverty were stated to be the key reasons for the high rate of illiteracy among girls before the war.

The DDR programme in Sierra Leone made provision for skills training for former combatants as part of their socio-economic reintegration assistance. This was geared towards enabling them access alternative sources of livelihood that will help the live in decency and dignity. 80% of the interviewees indicated that they partook of such trainings with 20% indicating that they did not partake in trainings.

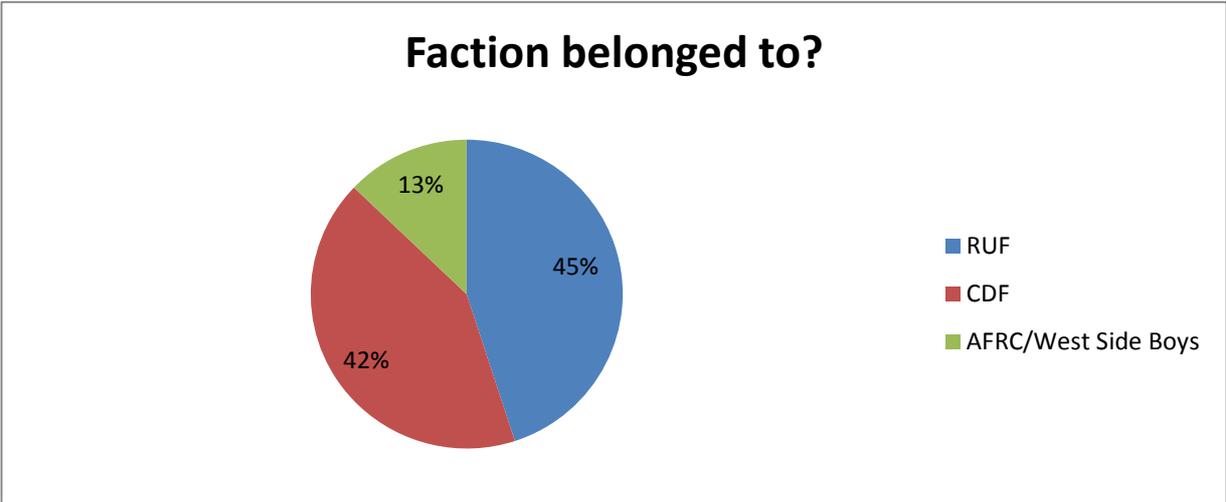
Table 7:



It was realised during the interviews that those who did not go through the training either auto-demobilized or did not fit the set eligibility criteria especially women, family members and those who played support roles.

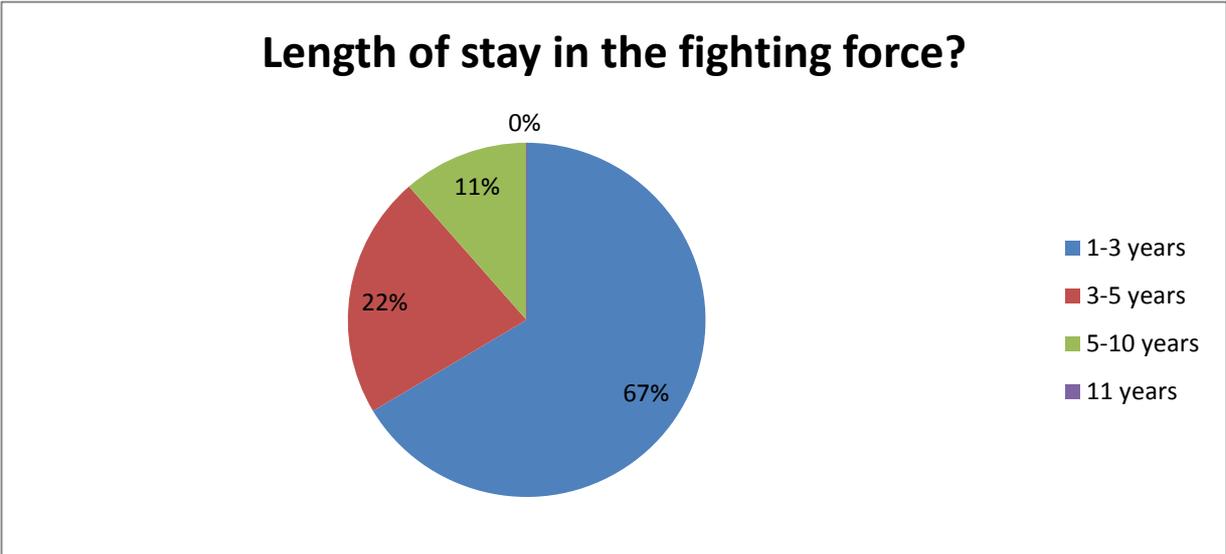
Interviewees were sourced from all factions that partook in the conflict as could be seen in the graph below. While the number of former female combatants interviewed from the other factions was very limited, the number from the RUF was quite high with over 60% of the interviewees being females. It was also easier to reach former members of the CDF than former members of the RUF and AFRC/West Side Boys. This was mostly due to the fact that the Kamajors hailed from the same local communities, social structures and networks. Also, they are regarded in their communities as heroes unlike the other factions that were regarded as villains.

Table 8:



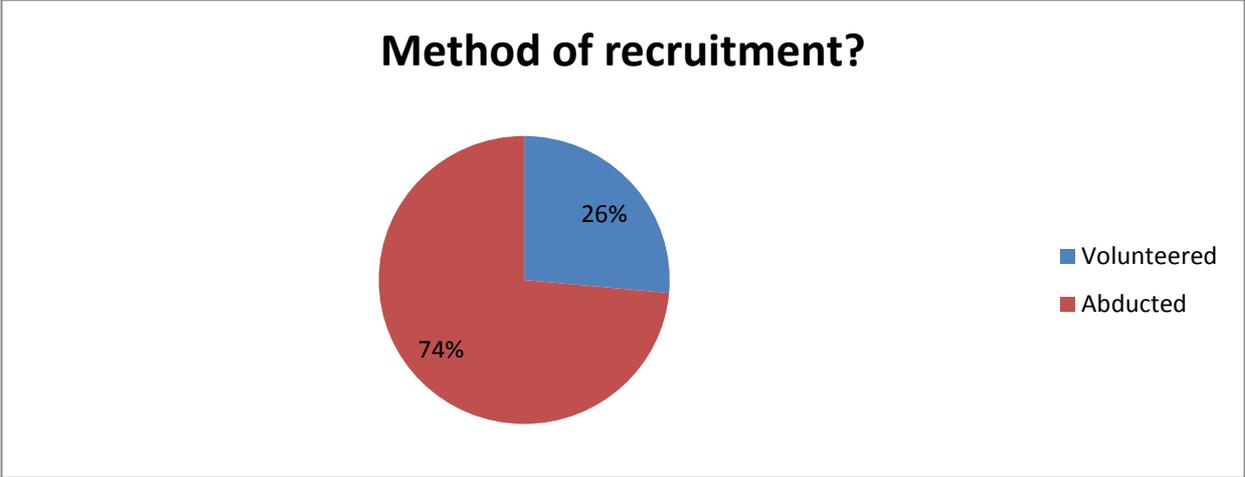
Combatants were recruited during the entire course of the conflict and at the same time some factions became part of the conflict at different points of the conflict. For instance, the AFRC/West Side became involved in the conflict after the 25th of May 1997 coup d'états. Thus, combatants became recruited at different points in time, some at the start, some in the mid-point and some at the tail end of the conflict. 67% of the interviewees were combatants for periods ranging from 1 to 3 years, while 22% stayed between 3 and 5 years and 11% remained combatants between 5 and 10 years. No combatant was reached that stayed the full length of the conflict.

Table 9:



The different factions used two major forms of recruitment, voluntary or forced recruitment (abduction). 74% of the interviewees stated that they were forcefully recruited while 26% stated that they volunteered. Most of those who volunteered were part of the CDF while the bulk of those who were part of the RUF and AFRC/West Side Boys were forcefully recruited.

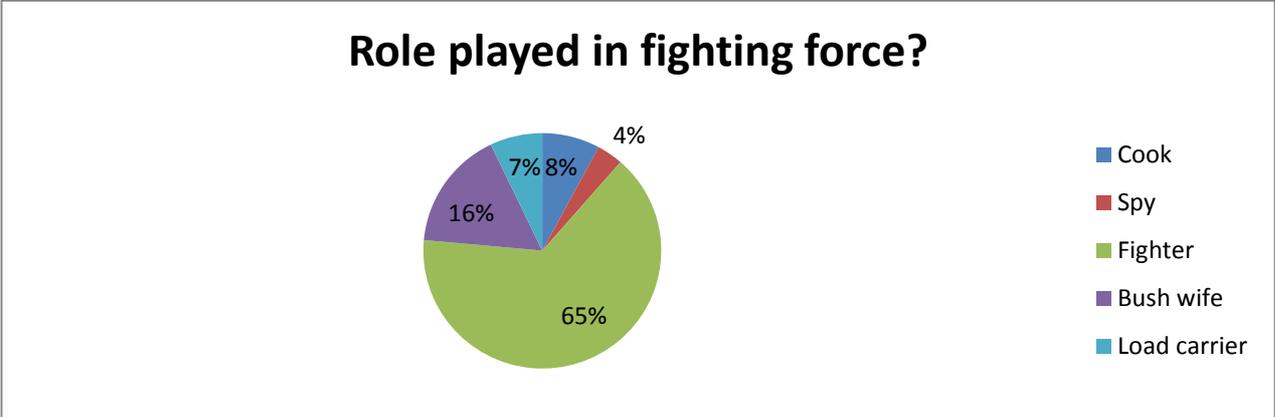
Table 10:



Reasons stated for volunteering into the fighting forces included poverty, culture of war, revenge, protection of self, family and community, political ideology, illiteracy and unemployment. Unemployment and poverty ranked as the two leading motivational factors for volunteering.

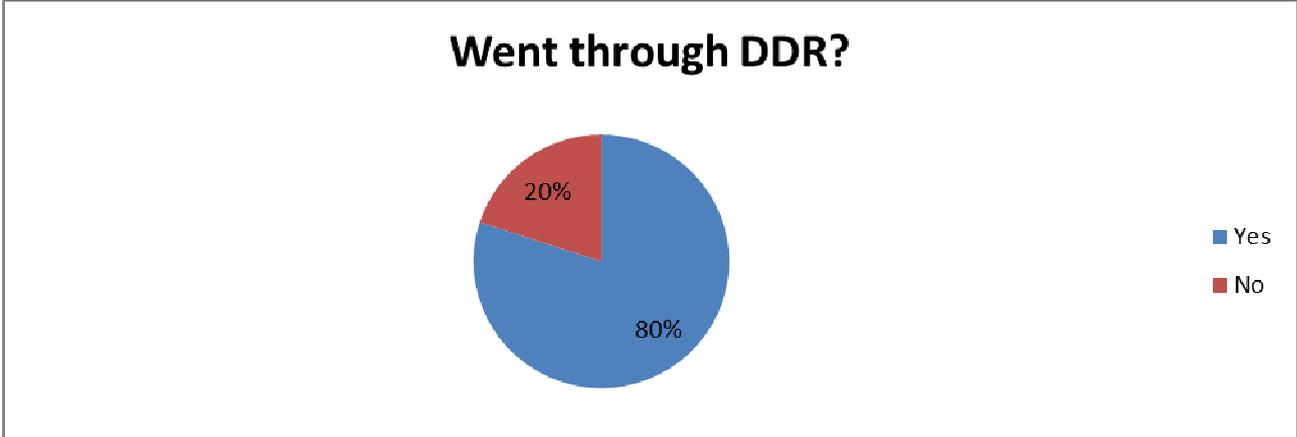
Interviewees were involved in different roles in their various factions. As illustrated in the graph below, 65% of all the interviewees were fighters with most of them being middle level commanders. 16% served as bush wives, 8% as cooks, 7% as load carriers and 4% as spies.

Table 11:



Some of the spies, bush wives and load carriers auto-demobilized as some reported being marginalized during DDR or did not want to be identified as combatants. Nonetheless, 80% of the interviewees (as indicated below) stated that they went through DDR with 20% stating that they did not go through it for the above stated reasons.

Table 12:



Apart from those who auto-demobilized due to marginalization related reasons there were some that auto-demobilized because of fear and lack of understanding as to what the DDR process entailed. The introduction of the Special Court for Sierra Leone was cited as one of the key reasons that led to some ex-combatants auto-demobilizing themselves. They were afraid that they were going to be arrested and prosecuted while going through DDR. Also, some ex-combatants were not aware of the fact that there was the option of them moving to communities of their choices. They believed that DDR was going to take them back into their communities of origin. Most of them had committed atrocities in their communities (the RUF forced recruits to commit atrocities in their communities to discourage them from running away from the force) and wanted to move as far away from them as possible.

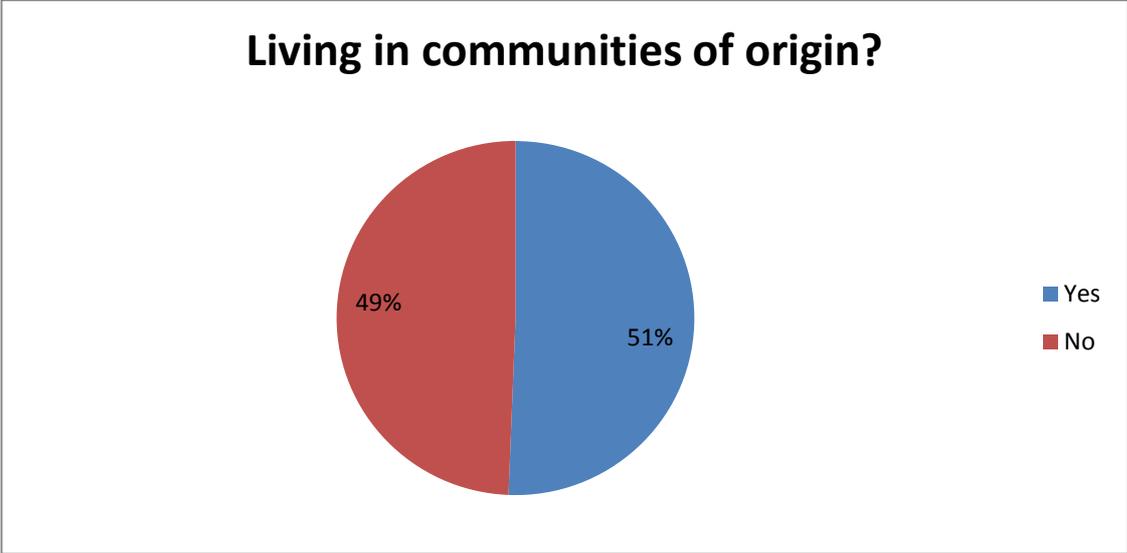
5.1.1 Current social status of former male combatants

The reintegration programme implemented several activities that were geared towards assisting the former combatants peacefully co-habit with community members in their communities of origin or choice. Some of the activities implemented were also geared towards improving their social status. Parallel to projects for ex-combatants, community members were targeted to ensure that they accept or re-accept the former combatants into

their settings. Several key questions were asked in interviews and focus group discussions with the answers provided presented in this section.

It was observed that almost half of the interviewees (49% as could be seen in the graph below) are not living in their communities of origin; rather they are living in communities of choice.

Table-13:



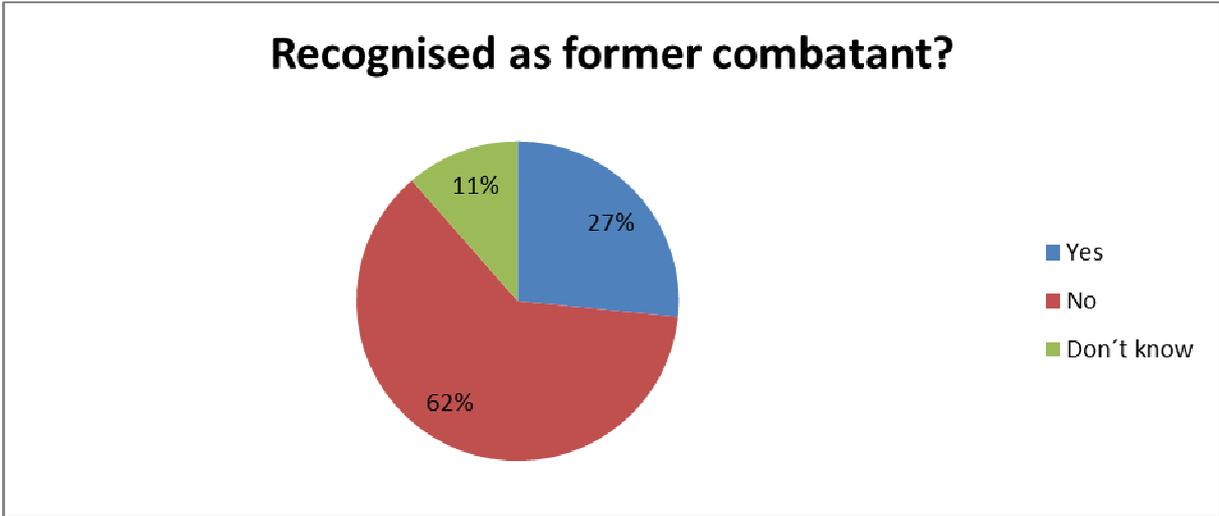
A significant percentage of those that did not return to their communities of origin stated that they had committed unforgivable atrocities there and were scared to face their relatives. This was mostly the case of RUF and AFRC/West Side Boys. One of the interviewees¹⁴⁸ described what he did in his community: *“I killed my mother and sister, set my uncle on fire and had his daughter sing and dance while he was crying for help. I know she will never forgive me and I do not want to ever look her straight in the eyes again as I will go crazy. Memories of my past acts haunt me every day.”*

Unlike the RUF, almost all the former CDF members interviewed are living in their communities of origin. This is due to the fact that they were looked at as heroes and were readily welcomed back in their communities. In certain cases they (some Kamajors) never actually left their communities as they formed protection units that secured their people.

The graph below illustrates that 62% of the former male combatants interviewed stated that they are not recognised as former combatants in their communities, while 27% stated that they are recognised as former combatants and 11% do not know if they are recognised as such.

¹⁴⁸ Interview conducted in Freetown on the 20th of March 2013. Identity withheld as requested.

Table 14:

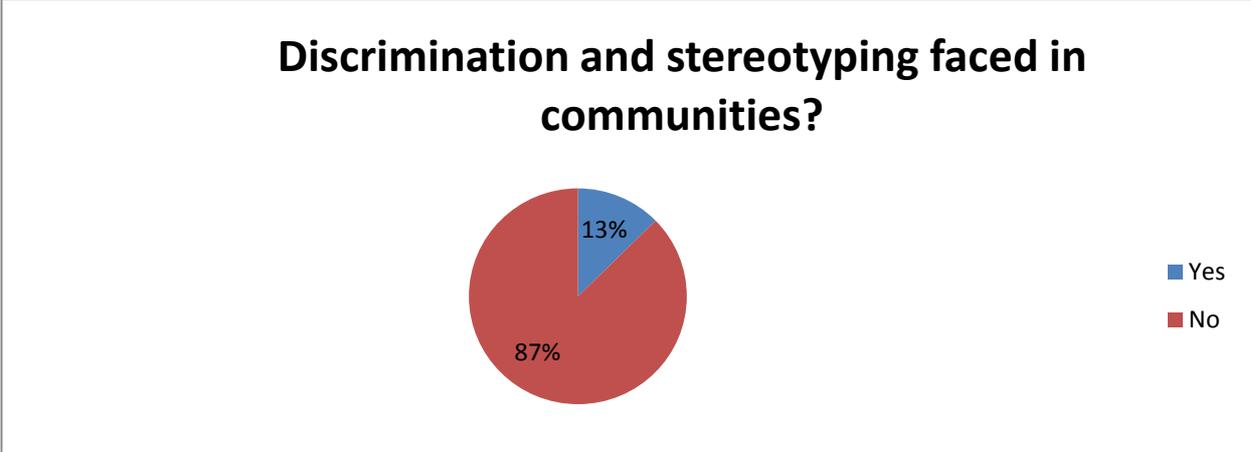


Those who are not recognised as former combatants are those who did not return to their communities of origin. Santigie Kalokoh¹⁴⁹ in Kambia expressed his frustration: *“You will never know that people still look at you as a former combatant until something happens. Recently I had a quarrel with a lady and she was quick to tell me that I should not have been reaccepted into the community as I have done scary things and might hurt people again if I continue staying there. I felt sad and unhappy as even those who did not know that I was part of the RUF now know.”*

13% of the male interviewees indicated that they face discrimination and stereotyping in their communities. Two of the interviewees who assist their friends with their motorcycle and taxi businesses stated that they are regularly referred to as “DDR drivers” and should “not be trusted.”

¹⁴⁹ Interview conducted on the 15th of February 2013 in Kambia.

Table 15:

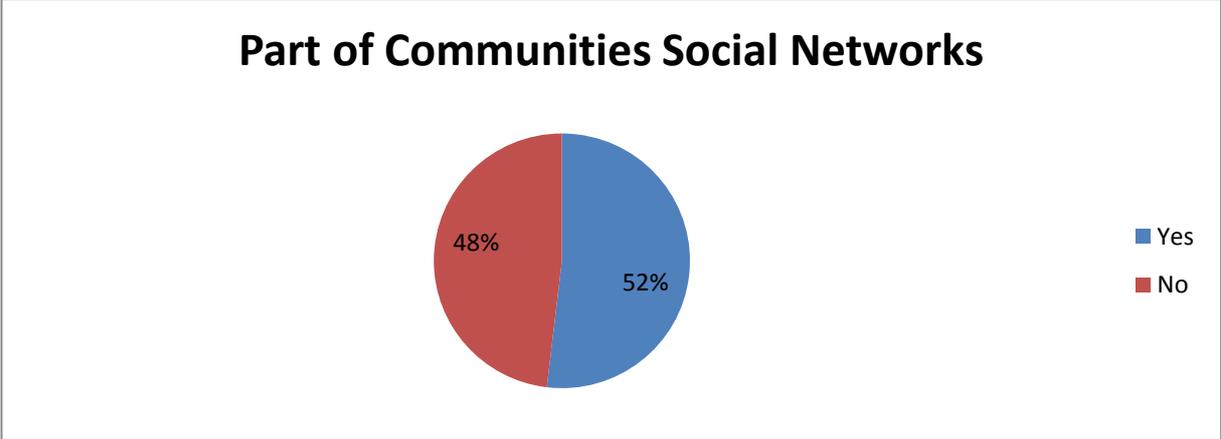


Ishmael Sankoh¹⁵⁰ formerly of the West Side Boys stated that he has tried to secure a loan to begin his motorcycle taxi business but those he meet always refer to his past life as a reason they will not deal with him. He feels that the reconciliation and forgiveness that was preached during the DDR has not sunk into some people.

The graph below indicates that 52% of the former male combatants are part of social networks in their communities while 48% are not. Some of the networks that former combatants are part of are youth clubs, community based organisations and religious groups. Common reasons among the former male combatants for not being part of social networks within their communities include not being interested, feeling insecure and becoming withdrawn from society. Unlike former CDF members these factors are very common among former RUF and West Side Boys members.

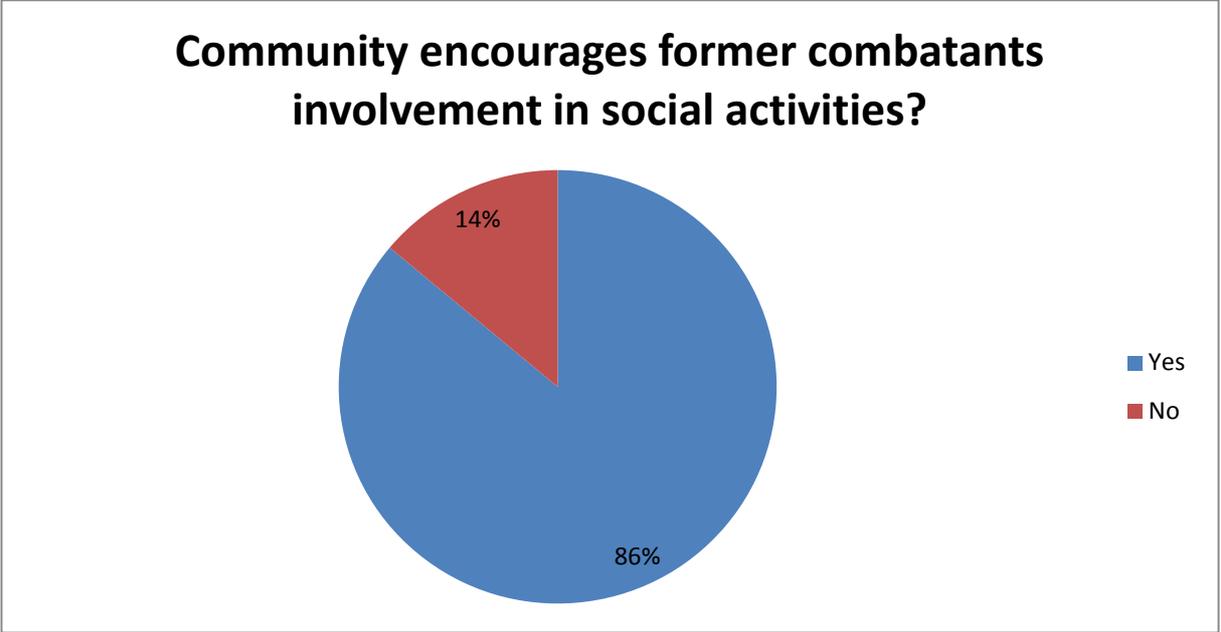
¹⁵⁰ Interview conducted on the 21st of March 2013 in Freetown.

Table 16:



86% of the former male combatants stated that the communities in which they live make no effort in encouraging them to involve in social activities.¹⁵¹ In as much as the status of most of those (ex-combatants) that are not within their communities of origin are not known, the former combatants stated that the status of those who are origins of those communities are known but they are rather left on their own.

Table 17:

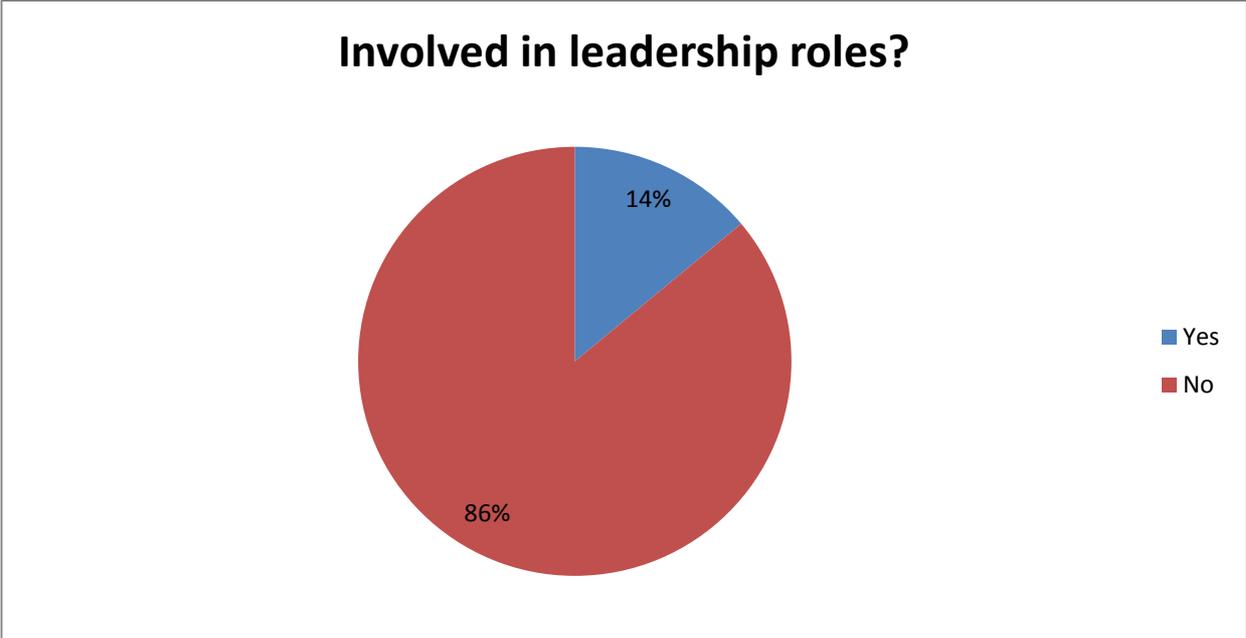


¹⁵¹ Note that while 52% of the ex-combatants indicated that they are part of social networks, the graph above is indicating that only 14% feel that their communities are encouraging their involvement into social networks. This does not mean that they are discouraged; the 52% reflects the efforts of some ex-combatants to be part of social networks.

However, Patrick Songa¹⁵² a former CDF middle level commander stated that he is aware that “in places like Kailahun, Pujehun and Moyamba the communities for a couple of years after the war made conscious efforts to make ex-combatants feel as part of their society’. This he said has changed “as people no longer focus on the war but on moving forward as a nation.”

14% of the interviewees stated that they are involved in leadership roles. These roles include being youth, community and religious leaders. 12 out of the 14% of these leaders are in the South-Eastern parts of Sierra Leone and are former CDF members. It became obvious that former CDF commanders are highly revered in their communities. Moijue Kallon¹⁵³ a resident of Pujehun commented: “the former Kamajors still respect their former commanders much more than they respect local authorities. When we have an issue with them we go to their former commanders as it will be resolved faster than when one goes through the chiefs.”

Table 18:



5.1.2 Current social status of former female combatants

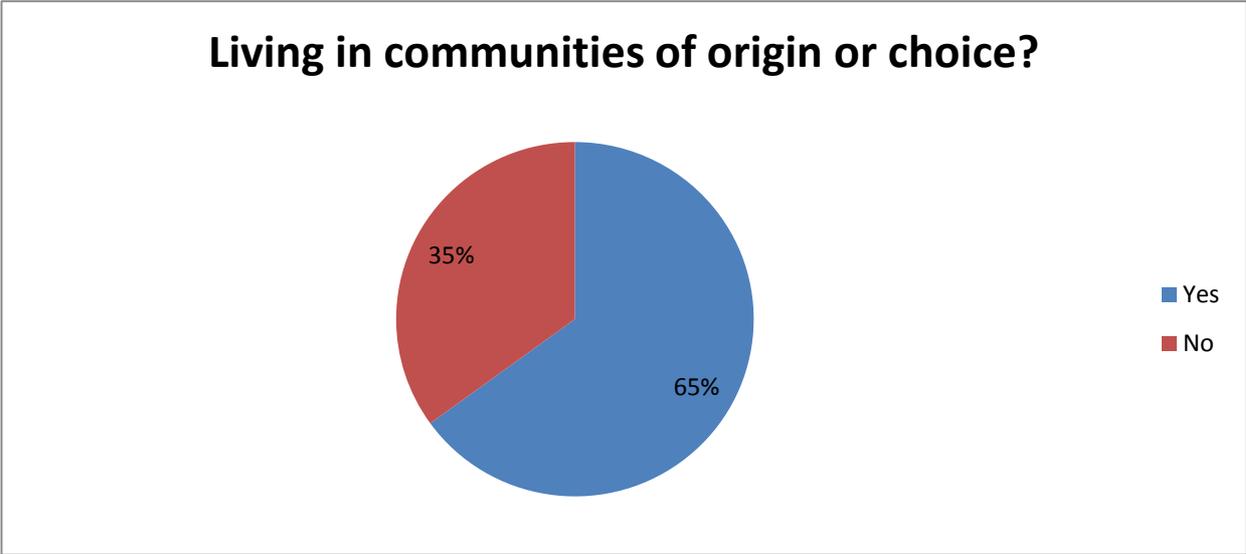
This section specifically draws out the social status of former female combatants as they go through their reintegration process. Unlike the former male combatants there are more former female combatants (interviewees) who stay within their communities of origin. The graph below indicates the percentage to be 65% while 35% moved to communities of choice.

¹⁵² Interview conducted on the 15th of March 2013 in Moyamba.

¹⁵³ Interview conducted on the 20th of March 2013 in Pujehun.

Similar to the male interviewees, reasons provided for not returning to communities of origin included fear of revenge for crimes committed and fear of stereotypes and marginalization. Some of the reasons provided for returning to communities of origin included need for social support from family, desire to reconcile with family and having no other place to go to. Neneh Kallay¹⁵⁴ expressed her reasons as follows: *“In spite of the fear the only place I thought of returning to was my village. I knew I could not hide or run from my people forever, so I made up my mind to go and face the shame and disgrace of my past actions. Surprisingly, they accepted me and I am one of them again.”*

Table 19:



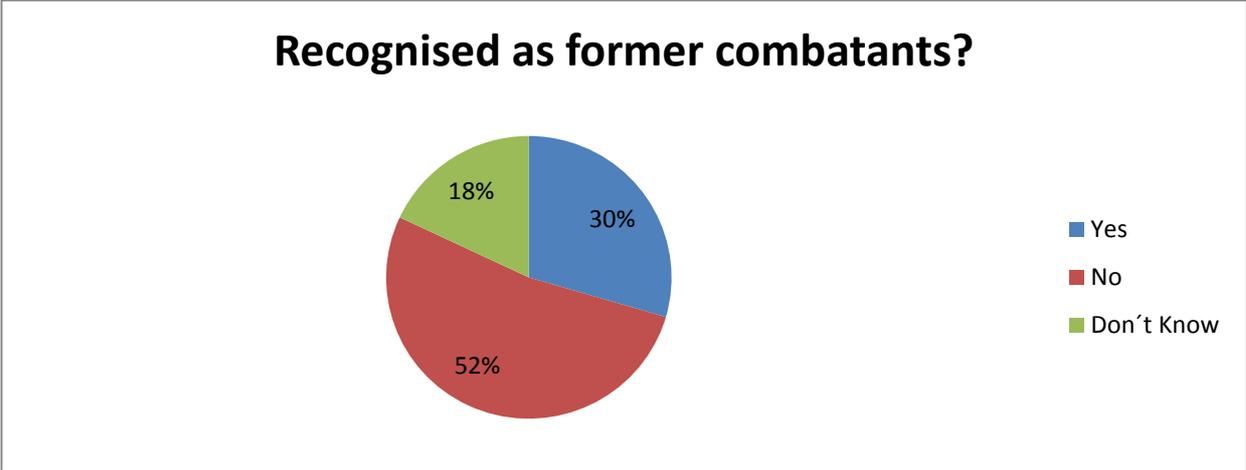
52% of the former female combatants stated that they are not recognised as former combatants while 30% stated that they are recognised as former combatants and 18% stated that they do not know if they are recognised as such. However, a great number of those who stated that they are recognised as former combatants indicated that they are reminded of their past mostly in unpleasant ways especially when something goes wrong in their communities. Ami Sankoh¹⁵⁵ in Kambia recounted her very recent experience: *“I wanted to secure a piece of land for agriculture and I made my desire known to the elders in my community. However, I did not know that there was another community member with similar interest for the same piece of land. She mobilized community people against me (asking the elders not to give me the piece of land) saying that I am a former combatant and also not married.”*

¹⁵⁴ Interview conducted on the 3rd of February 2013 in Bo.

¹⁵⁵ Interview conducted on the 15th of February 2013 in Kambia.

Aisha Kallon¹⁵⁶ of Pujehun stated that she still sees people pointing at her when she passes in her town and overhears them talking about her involvement with the RUF. She stated that this has serious psycho-social effects on her as she is constantly reminded of her past, despite the fact that she wants to leave that behind her and move on.

Table 20:

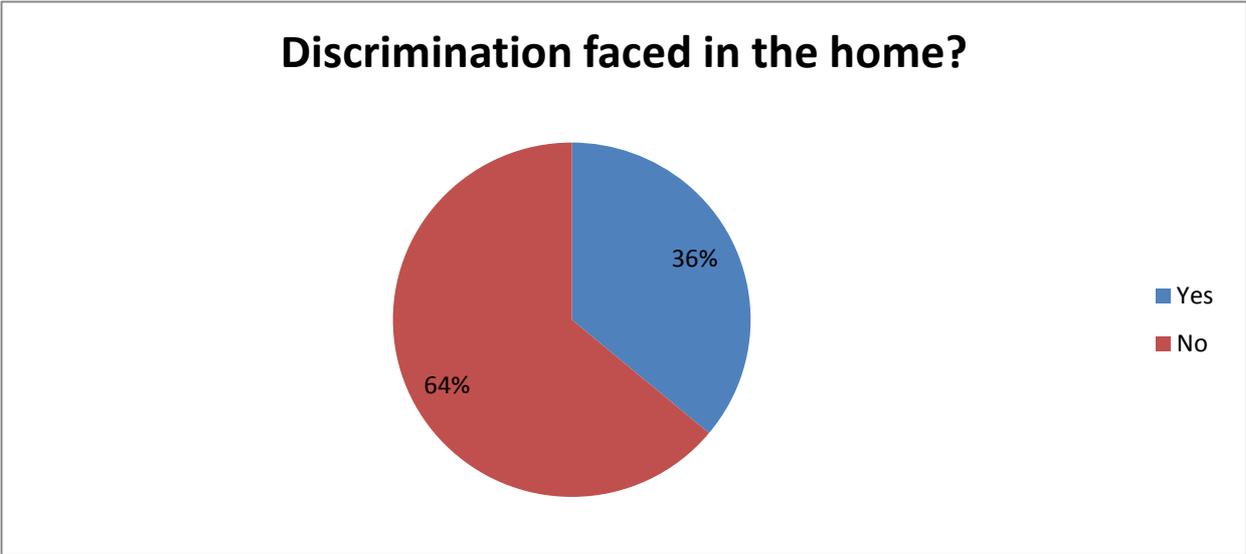


As illustrated in the graph below, 36% of the interviewees stated that they face discrimination in their homes and in some cases domestic violence. Some of the violence they face includes physical and psychological abuse. This they stated puts them under serious stress, pressure and tension and they are never happy. Some reported that they are still seen as bad influence to other members of their family. These members are normally warned not to get close to them. Rugiatsu Bangura¹⁵⁷ is a victim of such marginalization and domestic violence. She cried while explaining her ordeal: *“My house is like hell. My relatives treat me like a stranger. I am the first to get up and the last to go to bed I do all the household chores but yet still I cannot drink from the cups they drink or eat from the plate they eat from. They call me names and the children are not allowed to come close to me as they say I have blood on my hands. This drives me crazy but there is nothing that I can do.”*

¹⁵⁶ Interview conducted on the 21st of March 2013 in Pujehun.

¹⁵⁷ Interview conducted on the 24th of March 2013 in Freetown.

Table 21:



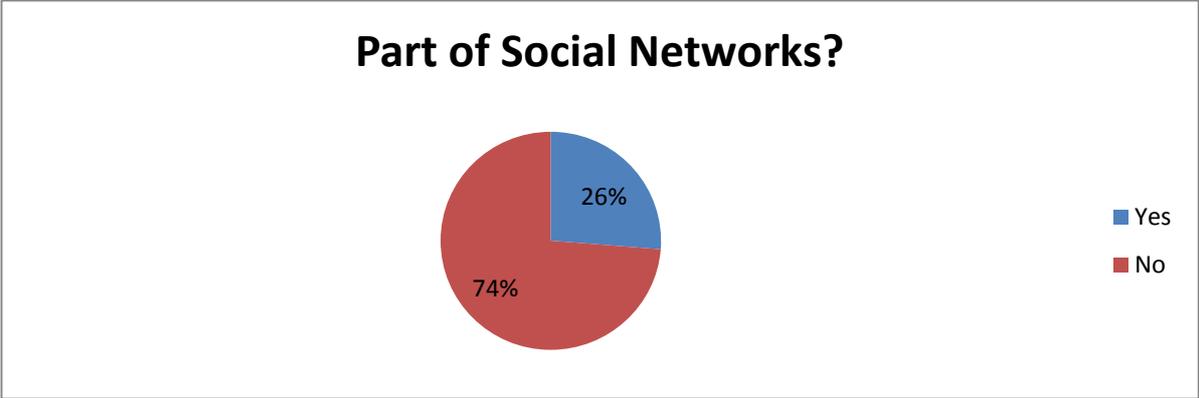
Fatmata Sesay¹⁵⁸, formerly with the AFRC/West Side Boys, stated that her family has never fully reaccepted her after she left the faction. She said *“I was denied access to every bedroom in the house and have to sleep in the living room with my child. They constantly remind me that my child has no father and was born in the bush. My child is not allowed to play with the other children in the house. I have lived like this for the past 10 years, I cannot afford to leave because I have no job that will enable me rent a room.”*

Like other former combatants, Fatmata is caught in the pool of poverty and has no control over what she wants to do or not do. She cannot fend for herself or her child as she lacks access to the means of production. At the same time she is not educated or trained so she cannot seek or secure any source of employment. Thus, leaving her family’s house is not an option as she has no other means of survival.

There is a huge disparity in terms of male and female ex-combatants involved in social networks. While 52% of former male combatants are part of social networks, only half of that percentage of female interviewees are involved in social networks as could be seen in the graph below.

¹⁵⁸ Interview conducted in Freetown on the 20th of March 2013.

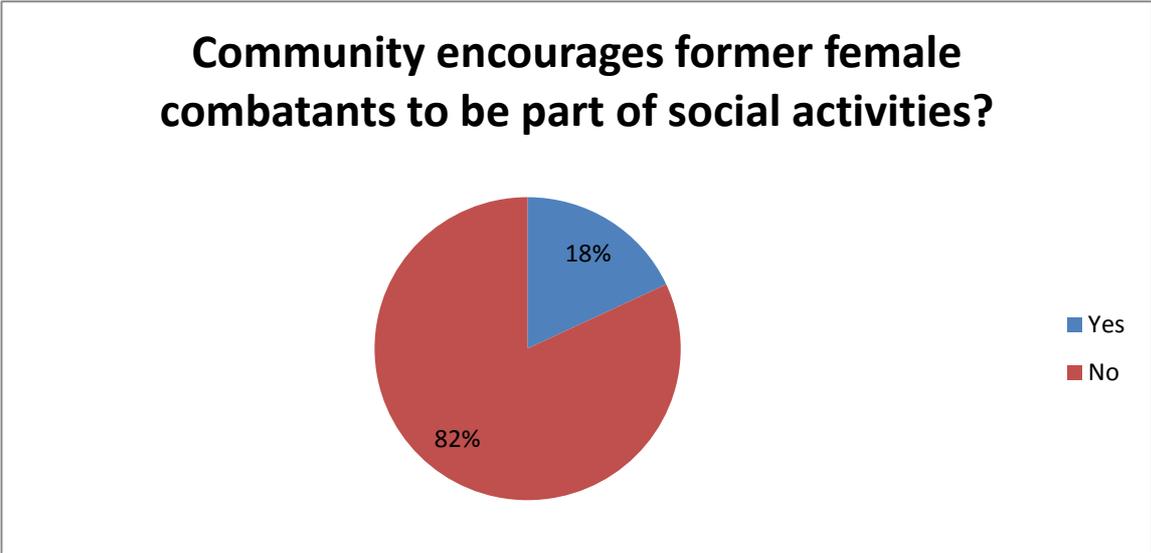
Table 22:



26% of the female interviewees play roles in youth and community based networks. However, most of the female interviewees stated that the networks they are involved in are not aware of their past. The few whose identities are known indicated that they are fully integrated into their networks. Reasons such as fear of rejection, lack of self-confidence, fear of being recognised and lack of the desire to be part of networks were among the key reasons for non-involvement in social networks by some of the female interviewees.

18% of the female interviewees stated that the communities in which they reside encourage them to be part of social activities. This percentage is very low when compared to the 82% who stated that their communities do not encourage former female combatants to be part of social activities.

Table 23:



A crucial issue looked into that has great impact on the social reintegration process of former combatants is the access they have to social amenities and institutions. These social institutions include health, educational institutions and recreational facilities. 43% of the female interviewees stated that they have no access to social amenities and institutions while 57% stated that they have access. Nonetheless, the access is said to be very limited and in most cases interviewees could not afford to pay for services delivered by health and educational institutions. This is especially the case in local communities in the interior of the country. A key social facility lacking in most communities especially among young interviewees is that of recreational facilities and youth centers. Hawa Sillah in Magburaka¹⁵⁹ stated: *“We have no recreational facilities and this does not help us to overcome the stress and frustrations we face. Also, we have always been in need of psycho-social counseling centers that will help us cope with our past but they are just not available. This makes our lives very difficult and in most cases unbearable.”*

The statement of Hawa reflects the reality of many communities even within Freetown. 10 years after the war, Sierra Leone still has only one trained and qualified psychiatrist, Dr. Nahim.¹⁶⁰ Also, the psycho-social component of the DDR programme was said to be very weak and ineffective.¹⁶¹ Much has not changed despite all the reforms that have taken place. This is slightly different in the case of the educational sector which through the SABABU¹⁶² education project built several schools even though the very basics in terms of uniforms and books are expensive for the parents to secure-school fees are free at the basic education level. Recently, a free health care service system was initiated by the government for pregnant women and lactating mothers (former female fighters are also benefiting from it). However, these facilities lack trained and qualified personnel and also the required drugs are not available in them.

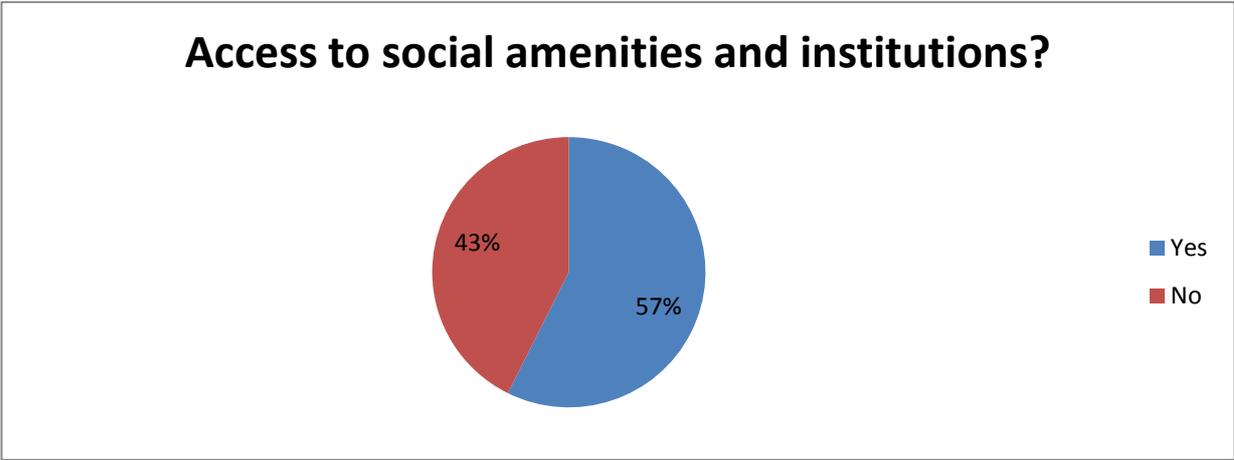
¹⁵⁹ Interview conducted on the 10th of April 2013 in Magburaka.

¹⁶⁰ It is rumoured that he retired in July 2013. If this is the case then the country is left with no trained and qualified psychiatrist.

¹⁶¹ Interview conducted with Joe Patrick Amara on the 24th of December 2012 in Freetown. Can you indicate his expertise on the matter?

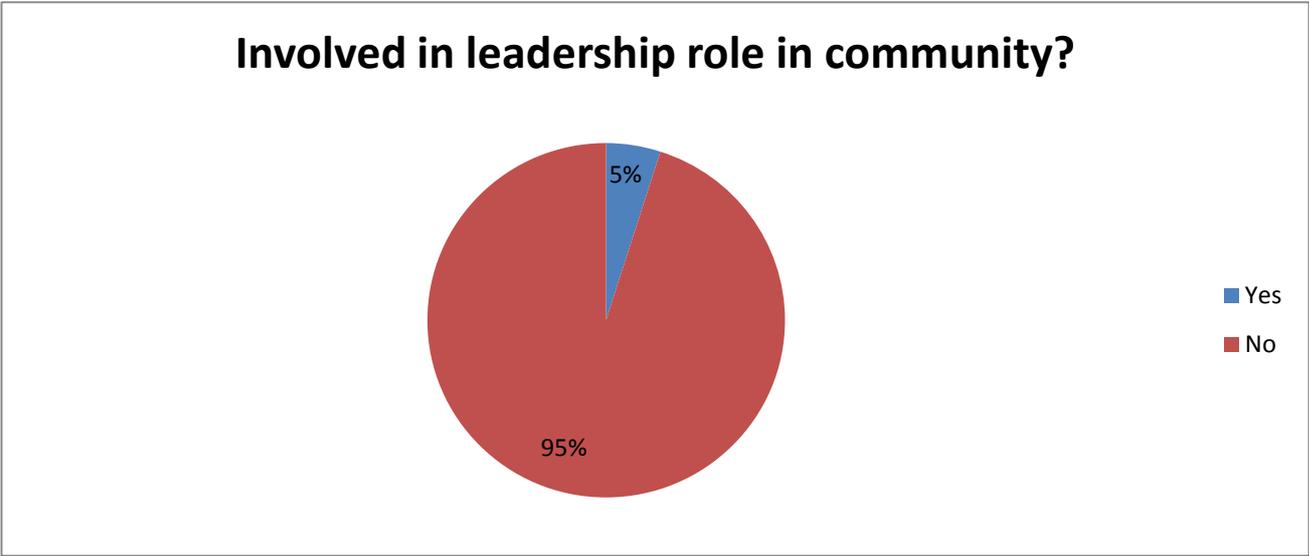
¹⁶² The SABABU Education project was introduced at the end of the project to help rebuild the education system of the country and also promote access to education in local communities across the country.

Table 24:



In looking at leadership roles that the female interviewees play, only 5% stated as indicated in the graph below that they play leadership roles in their communities. The roles they play are mostly within youth organisations and religious groups. 95% of the female interviewees stated that they do not, and have never played any leadership role in their communities.

Table 25:



Interviews with other women (who are not former combatants) in local communities led to the confirmation that the limited leadership roles played by women is not limited to former female combatants. The patriarchal structures of local communities have entrenched the position of women taking the back seat. As Amie Tholley of the UNICEF office in Makeni

stated, “many men believe that women should be seen and not heard when it comes to decision-making processes in local communities.”¹⁶³

63% of the interviewees stated that they would like to be involved in decision-making processes but they feel that trying to push their way through will turn attention to them. Also, a significant percentage of the interviewees stated that the poverty and economic hardship they face leave them with little confidence or willingness to get involved in leadership or decision making processes. Yatta Kallon¹⁶⁴ sadly concluded with these words: “*Surviving is a challenge; I just want to live and not make my life any complex by taking on issues that will only create tension and hatred for me in my community. I am sick and tired of fighting or struggling for the very basic rights I should enjoy in life.*”

The feeling expressed by Yata Kallon which is based on her current context was expressed by several interviewees as one of the reasons why they took up arms. While Yatta has resigned to fate, other interviewees have not and they crave for the change that will enable them feel as part of their societies with them playing meaningful socio-political roles in fostering growth and development.

5.1.2 Conclusion

The DDR programme had many initiatives that were bent on fostering the social reintegration of former combatants thereby enabling them peacefully co-habit with community members, with community members fully re-accepting them. While there may be said to have been very few cases of tension between former combatants and community members, it became evident during field consultations that the social reintegration process of former combatants is still faced with several challenges. These challenges include stereotypes, marginalization, lack of access to social amenities and institutions, fear of being recognised (those in communities of choice), no access to psycho-social support, domestic/gender-based violence and lack of access to land. The challenges faced have seriously affected the transformation process of ex-combatants as they are constantly reminded of their recent past. This constant reminder and inability to move away from the past heightens the stress and trauma levels among the former combatants.

¹⁶³ Interview conducted on the 27th of December 2012 in Freetown.

¹⁶⁴ Interview conducted on the 3rd of January 2013 in Kailahun, Eastern Sierra Leone.

It became evident during the research that there are much more female combatants living in their communities of origin than former male combatants. From observation and interviews (in communities visited) it was concluded that more female than male ex-combatants went back to their communities of origin. The main reasons for this include: need for social support from family, desire to reconcile with family and having no other place to go to.

The social reintegration process of former CDF combatants is faced with lesser challenges than the process undergone by former RUF/West Side Boys. This is due to the fact that the CDF was and still is looked at as a patriotic force that fought in the interest of the people of Sierra Leone while the RUF was looked at as unpatriotic perpetrators of violence targeted against innocent people.

Most of the former CDF combatants are recognised in their communities and looked at as heroes. Former RUF/West Side Boys interviewees recognised in their communities have faced castigations and stereotyping. This is mostly the case in smaller societies than in larger ones. In places such as Kailahun, the Fambul Tok project led by John Caulker continues to reconcile ex-combatants with community members. It takes a similar reconciliation pattern like that of the TRC but at family and community levels. There are organisations that provide support to communities especially in crucial areas such as Kailahun. These organisations include MARWOPNET, WANEP and Conciliation Resources. However, the number of activities is very limited and the resources available to implement them are also inadequate. Thus, the gains made by the DDR initiatives have been lost in the years after the programme.

Some female combatants are still faced with discrimination, marginalization and in some cases domestic violence in their homes and communities. However, it should be noted that other women in communities visited stated that they are also faced with discrimination and marginalization. The challenge that former female combatants spoke frequently about during interviews is the lack of access to land in some parts of the country especially the north.

There are more male interviewees involved in social networks and leadership positions than female interviewees. Female interviewees feel less empowered, less capacitated and less confident to be involved in social networks or become involved in leadership or decision-making roles. Coupled with this, stereotypes and stigmatizations form principal reasons why many former female and also former male combatants shy away from such roles and responsibilities.

5.2. Current economic status of former combatants

The reintegration programme provided the former combatants with skills training, educational support (this support also included Accelerated Learning Programmes, ALP¹⁶⁵) especially for former Children Associated with Armed Forces and Groups (CAAFAGs), agricultural equipments, involvement in quick impact projects etc. QIPs are short term programmes that were geared towards not only stimulating local economies but also to readily put cash in their pockets and food in their houses. They included the rehabilitation or (re)construction of public facilities tht were of immense significance to local communities. These include roads, markets, farms, wells, and public toilets. QIPs also served as a reconciliation mechanism as they brought together former combatants and community members, thereby causing them to work together for the first time. This section presents the findings on the economic reintegration process, it examines the ex-ccombatants' current economic status and compares their current and pre-was statuses.

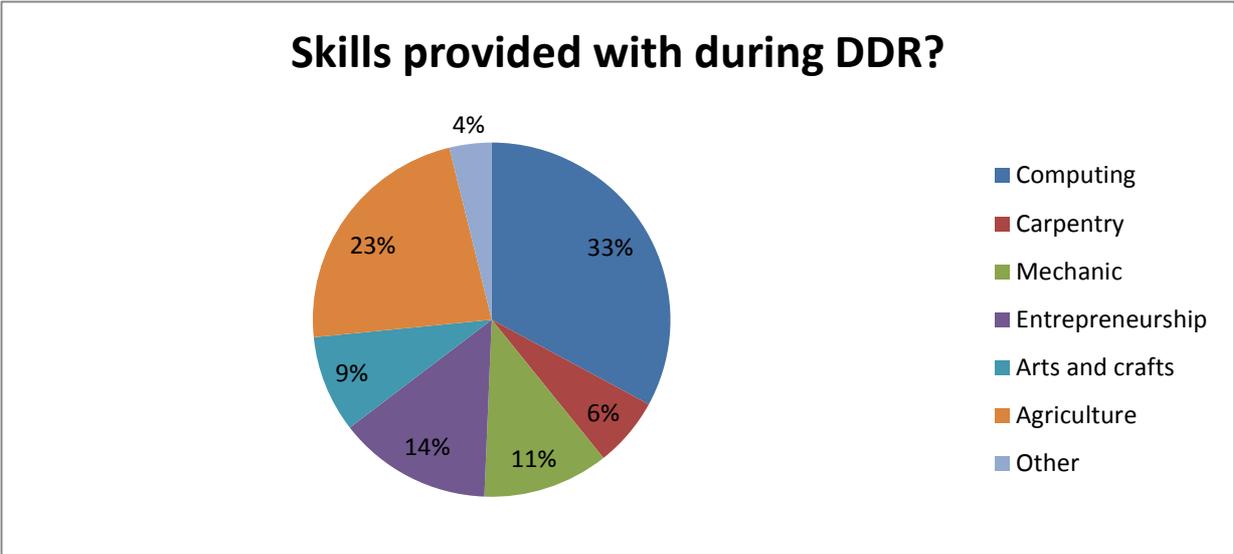
5.2.1 Former Male Combatants

This section specifically presents the findings on former male combatants. The graph below presents the skills trainings provided to former male combatants during the reintegration phase of DDR¹⁶⁶. The graph indicates that 33% of all male interviewees undertook computing training, 23% undertook agriculture related trainings, 14% entrepreneurship, 11% mechanic, 9% arts and crafts, 6% carpentry and 4% stated other forms of training which included mason and bricklaying. However, 65% of the male interviewees stated that the time provided for training which ranged from 3 to 6 months was not sufficient for them to master the arts in which they were trained. This left them with insufficient skills to either seek employment in the stated skills or to start up their own businesses.

¹⁶⁵ ALP is a catch-up mechanism for older children who would like to return to school. The key objective of ALP is to assist children to be able to be in the same class with their age mates instead of staying in classes where they have children they are by far older than. Thus, they are provided with specialists in child education and special programmes and calendars that foster their education.

¹⁶⁶ It should be noted that all the ex-combatants who went through the DDR were provided with skills training and the kind of training provided to an ex-combatant was determined during the profiling stage (which takes place during demobilization and at the beginning of the reintegration process). Ex-combatants indicated during profiling the kind of economic activity that they would like to get involved in and the profiler discusses the available realistic economic options and then the kind of training to be provided to the ex-combatant is decided.

Table 26:

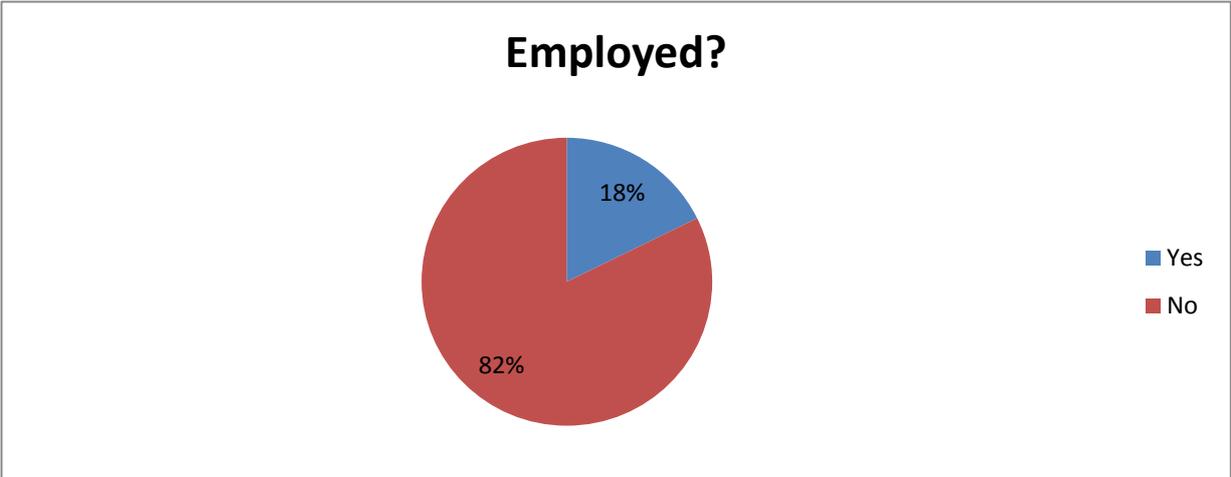


82% of the male interviewees stated that they are unemployed (as indicated in the graph below) and have been seeking but could not secure employment since the end of the DDR programme. Some indicated that they have resorted to cleaning up restaurants and washing dishes so they could secure a plate of food or some money for cigarettes. Saidu Marah¹⁶⁷ in Koinadugu expressed his frustration: *“We thought things could get better after the DDR training but they only got worse. Now I live a very miserable life and I cannot take care of myself or my child. I have to wash up the clothes and dishes of people so I can have food for us to eat. I was trained to use a computer but never touched one until the programme ended. We were using a card board for demonstrations as we only had one computer in the school. Now I cannot find a job and this is killing me.”*

Other interviewees including staff of organisations that provided services to ex-combatants during the reintegration phase confirmed the story of Saidu. They stated that the grave challenge faced was the weak capacity of the service providers. The service providers did not have the required equipment or skills needed to train former combatants. Thus, the former combatants left the training schools more confused on the way forward than when they entered the training schools.

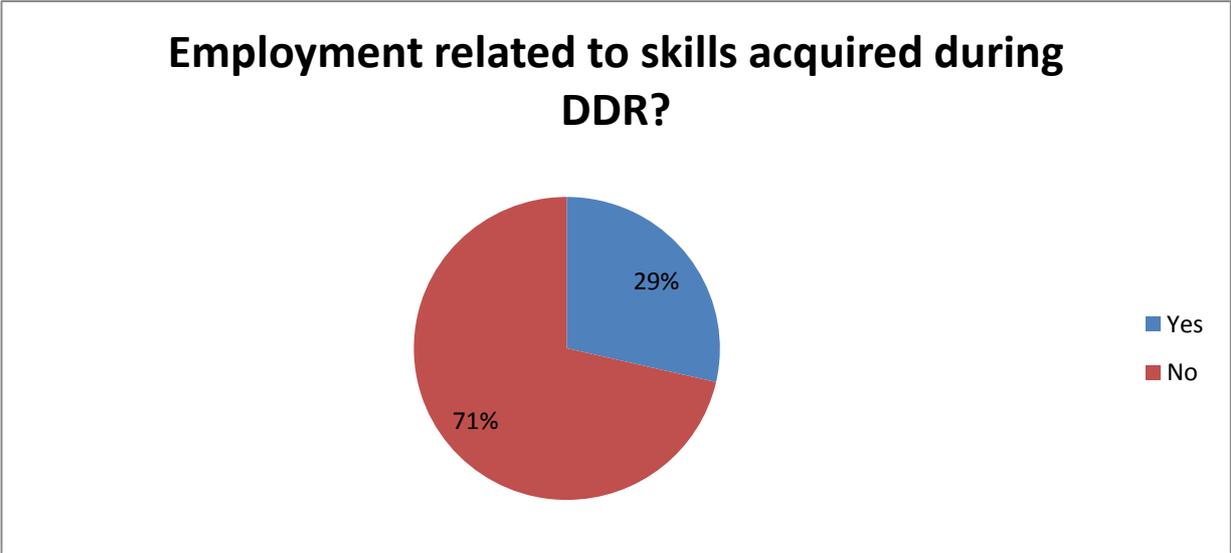
¹⁶⁷ Interview conducted on the 24th of January 2013 in Koinadugu.

Table 27:



The 18% employed are mostly those who sought employment in agriculture and arts and crafts (which were skills acquired during DDR and they constitute the 29% indicated in the graph below. To be clearer, the 29% are actually the ex-combatants who gained employment due to the skills they gained from the DDR trainings) and those with such skills are in the northern and eastern regions of the country. Agriculture is the biggest employer in Sierra Leone as it provides over 70% of employment opportunities (Restless Development 2012: 3). There was no interviewee who acquired computing skills that secured a job in computing as the case was for those who partook in mechanic and mason trainings. However, a few are involved in petty trading which is common in all the districts of Sierra Leone.

Table 28:

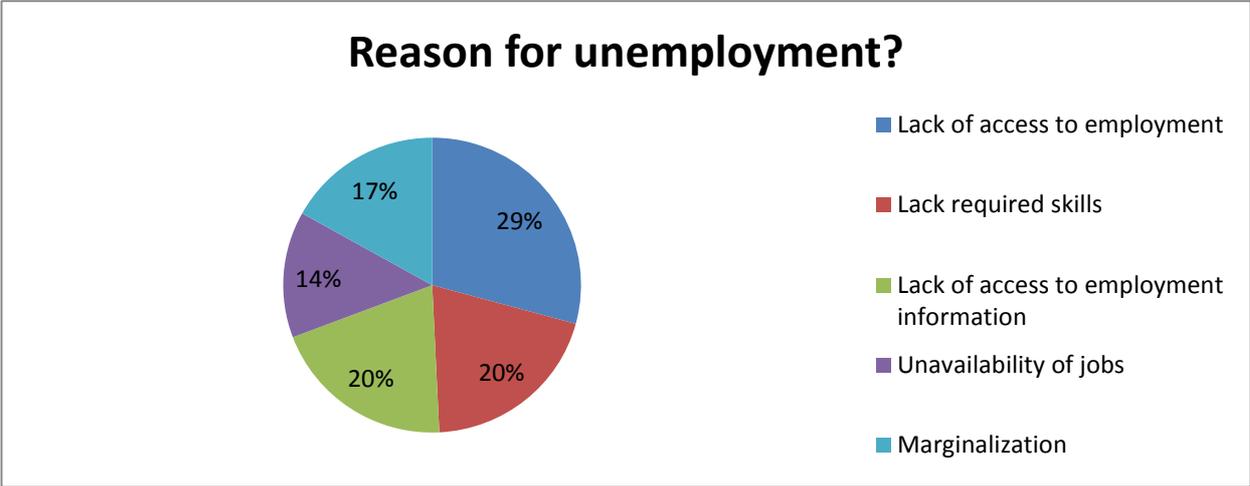


Several reasons were proffered for the unemployment that the former combatants are faced with. These reasons as illustrated in the graph below include lack of access to employment (29%), lack of skills required to seek and secure employment (20%), lack of access to information on employment opportunities (20%), unavailability of jobs (14%) and marginalization (17%). Moijue Kallon¹⁶⁸ a former Kamajor now living in Freetown stated that it is almost like there is a deliberate attempt to ward them off employment opportunities. *“We cannot find any information on employment, in fact we do not know how to find them, when you find information, they say they need work experience, where can one get the experience when one has never been employed. My brother, this is like having a bad dream that one cannot wake up from.”*

Similar frustrations were expressed by Patrick Aruna¹⁶⁹ formerly of the West Side Boys: *“Jobs are just not available. Sometimes our past also does not help. When the potential employer realizes that you are a former combatant they stop talking to you. My past cannot be hidden as people in my community know who I am.”*

The lack of access to employment opportunities widens the cycle of poverty into which the former combatants were reintegrated into.

Table 29:



In as much as the study focuses on former combatants it should be noted that complaints related to unemployment are not limited to them. Other young and not so young people complained during interviews of unemployment and how it affects their lives. Their situation is quite similar to those of former combatants. The difference is the stigmatization and

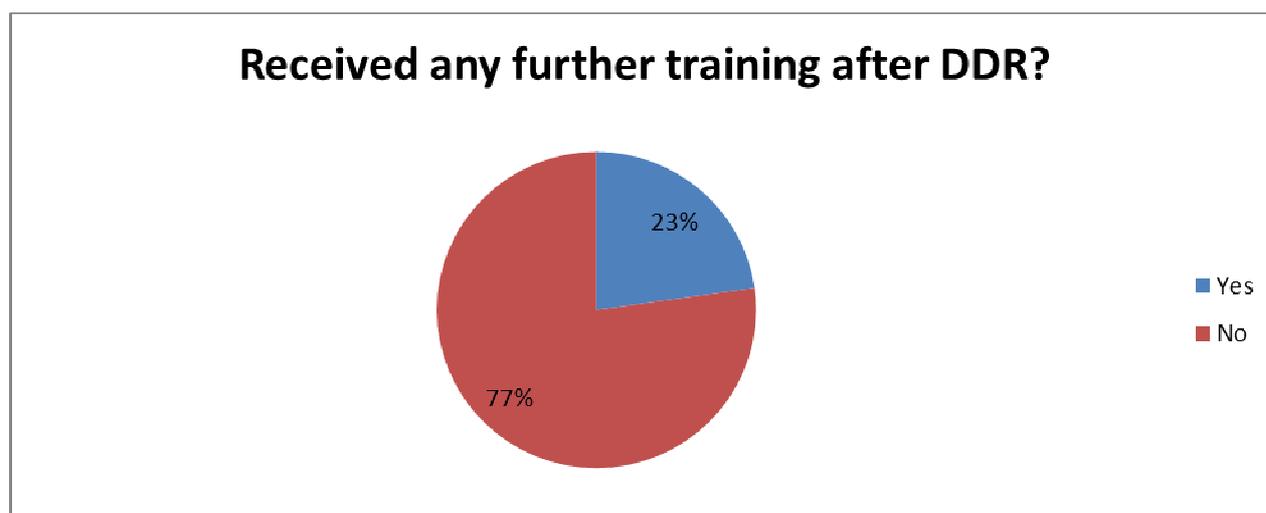
¹⁶⁸ Interview conducted on the 5th of January 2013 in Freetown.

¹⁶⁹ Interview conducted on the 6th of January 2013 in Freetown.

marginalization faced by the former combatants. Young graduates could not hide their sense of frustration and among them John Momoh¹⁷⁰ a very eloquent young graduate from Fourah Bay College had this to say: *“I had high hopes of accessing a job and living a happy life when I left FBC. My hopes were dashed away after one year of applying for a job and getting no positive response. 6 years after I left FBC the only job I have had was to manage a store for 6 months. I am a very unhappy and traumatized man and this sense of unhappiness augments every day as my situation becomes desperate.”*

As the lack of required skills was proffered as a reason for unemployment, it was observed that only 23% of the interviewees had undergone extra trainings after the DDR programme. 77% stated that they had not undergone any form of training and this has not helped their quest for a sustainable source of livelihood. These trainings were provided by INGOs and NGOs such as the Mano River Women’s Peacebuilding Network (MARWOPNET), West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), BRAC Microfinance Sierra Leone and Finance Salone with a focus on peacebuilding, agriculture and entrepreneurship.

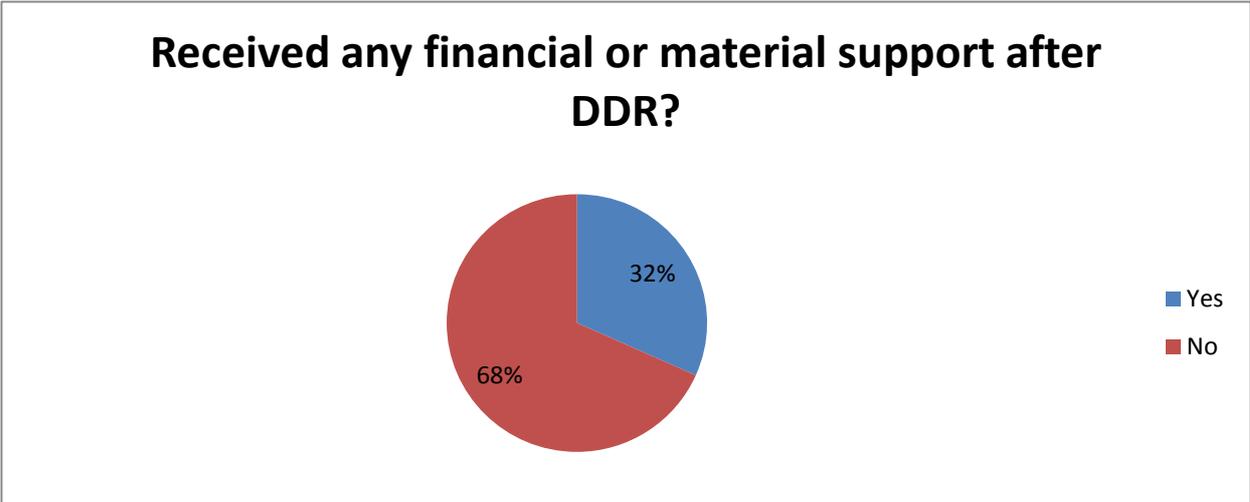
Table 30:



32% of the male interviewees stated that they have received financial and material support after DDR. The support is mostly in the form of seeds, tools and cash to work on agriculture. 68% stated that they have not received any form of support after DDR. All of the interviewees who have received support are resident in the interior of the country. Interviewees in major cities and Freetown have not received any form of support. This is due to the fact that the focus of (I)NGOs is on local communities than on bigger cities.

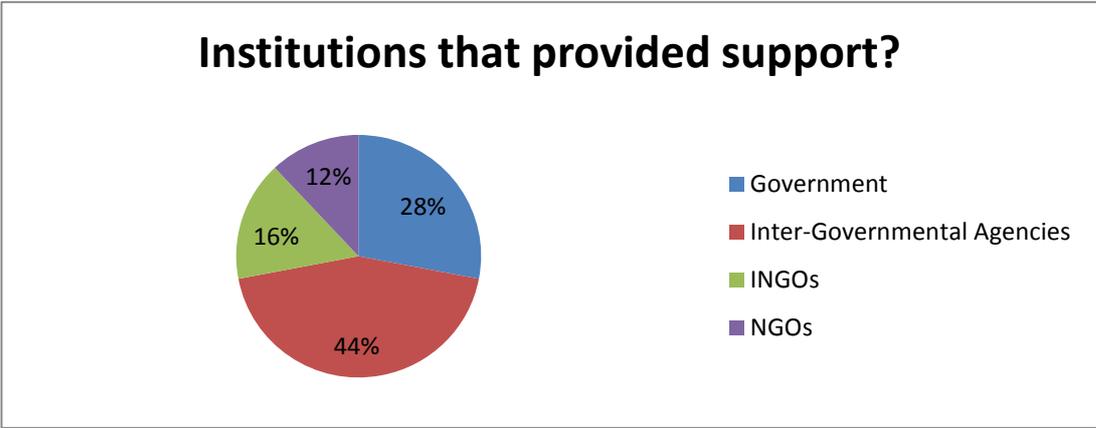
¹⁷⁰ Interview conducted on the 6th of January 2013 in Freetown.

Table 31:



44% of interviewees who have received financial and material support stated that they received the support from inter-governmental agencies especially World Food Programme (WFP) through their 'food and cash for work' projects, provision of seeds, farming implements, drying floors and storage facilities. 28% from governmental agencies such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS), 16% INGOs which include World Vision and Care International, 12% stated that they received support from local NGOs mostly supported by the above named inter-governmental, governmental agencies and INGOs. However, the forms of support initially received have diminished and some interviewees stated that they are rendered ineffective by this as it hinders their ability to pursue farming related activities.

Table 32:



The crucial question of whether the current economic status of the interviewees is better off than before the war had 80% of the interviewees stating that their pre-war economic status was better off than their current economic status. To them, they were reintegrated into poverty, they are faced with hardship and destitution as they cannot access decent forms of employment that will enable them move themselves and their families from poverty. A significant percentage (over 68%) stated that they were involved in agriculture and were having steady productions before the start of the war and also before it affected their communities. Others who were quite young when the war started stated that there was food in their households even though their families were faced with poverty. Ibrahim Kamara¹⁷¹ a former RUF middle level commander living in Freetown had this to say when interviewed: *“Sometimes one gets tempted to commit suicide. Life is unbearable. My current economic status is very unhealthy; in fact I only exist as I am not living. When one cannot get a job, cannot afford even one basic meal then that person is a dead man walking.”*

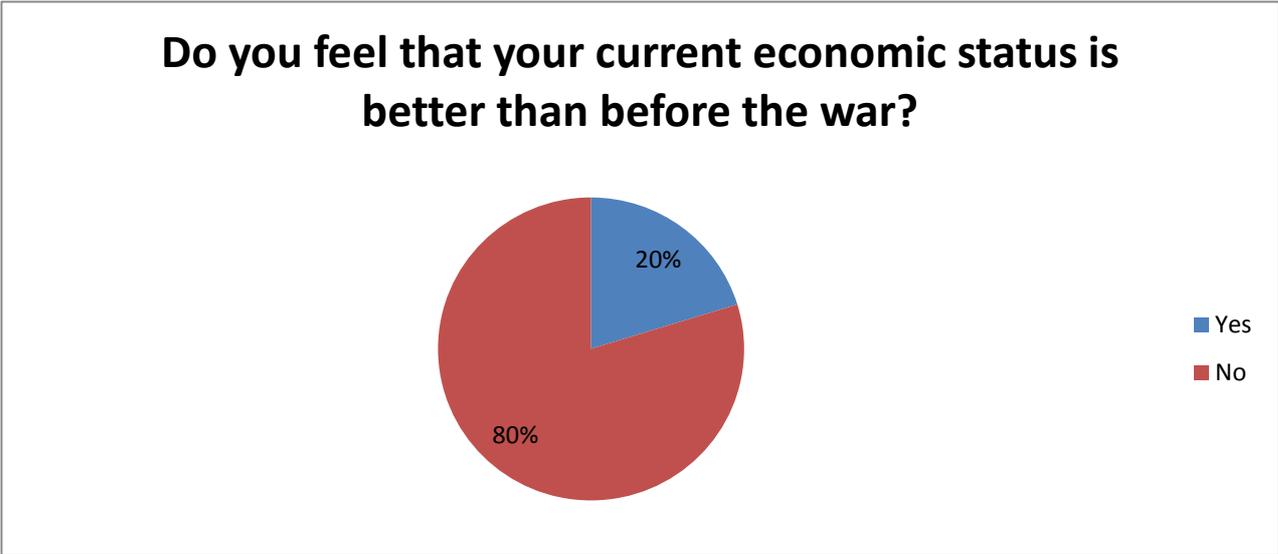
Alimamy Kalokoh¹⁷² stated “I used to have a job before the war. Now I do not have a job and I have the feeling that I will never get one. I do not have a house to sleep in; I sleep at the Victoria Park with birds and rats. When you ask about economic status, all I can say is that there is no status; there is only hunger and homelessness. I hold hope in the fact that I will find peace when I die for this world has failed me.”

Like the above stated comments, a significant percentage of ex-combatants expressed dissatisfaction with their current conditions and are not optimistic of the future.

¹⁷¹ Interview conducted on the 5th of January 2013.

¹⁷² Interview conducted in Freetown on the 6th of January 2013.

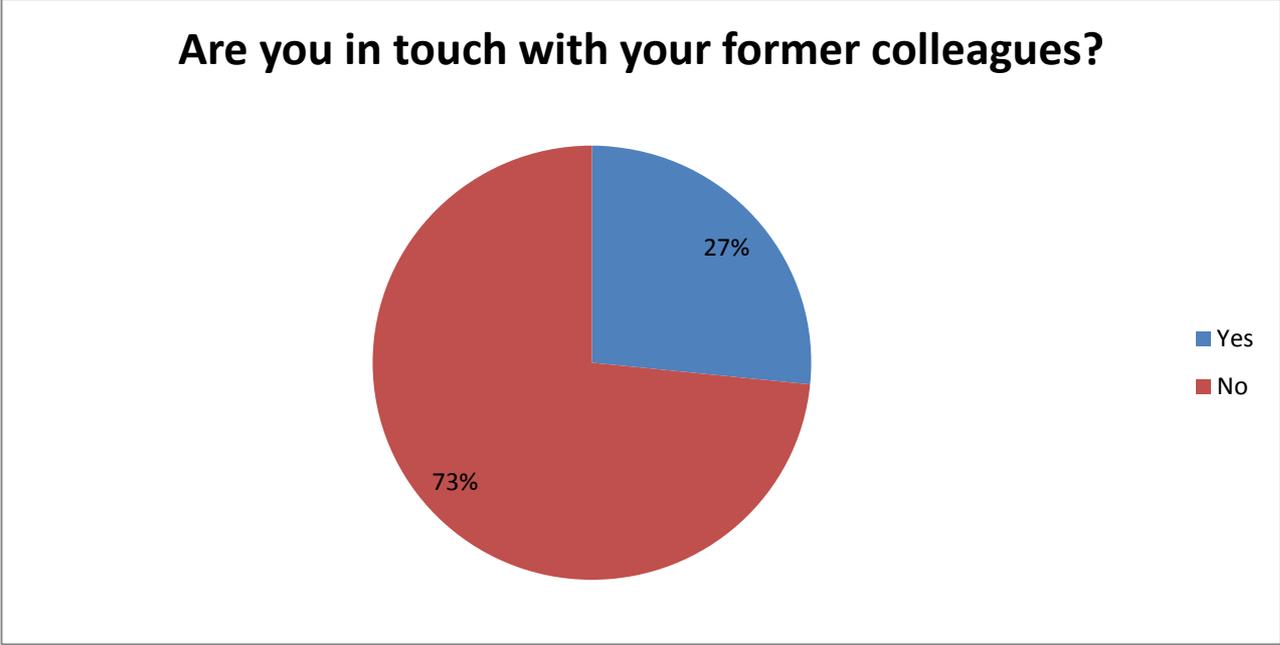
Table 33:



27% of the former combatants stated (as indicated in the graph below) that they are in touch with their former colleagues while 73% stated that they are not in touch with them. The bulk of those who are in touch with their colleagues are former CDF combatants. There are few from the RUF and West Side Boys who are also in touch with their former colleagues. In Freetown there are joints where they hang out especially at the Government Wharf vicinity. A former RUF combatant¹⁷³ presented his reason why he always tries to be in touch with his former colleagues: *“Our former colleagues are the only true friends we have in this world. They are the only people who do not try to judge us. We all go through the same situation in life and we meet to drown our pains and sorrows. We share experiences and damn the world. We watch each other’s back and no one else matters to us.”*

¹⁷³ Interview conducted on the 8th of January 2013 in Freetown.

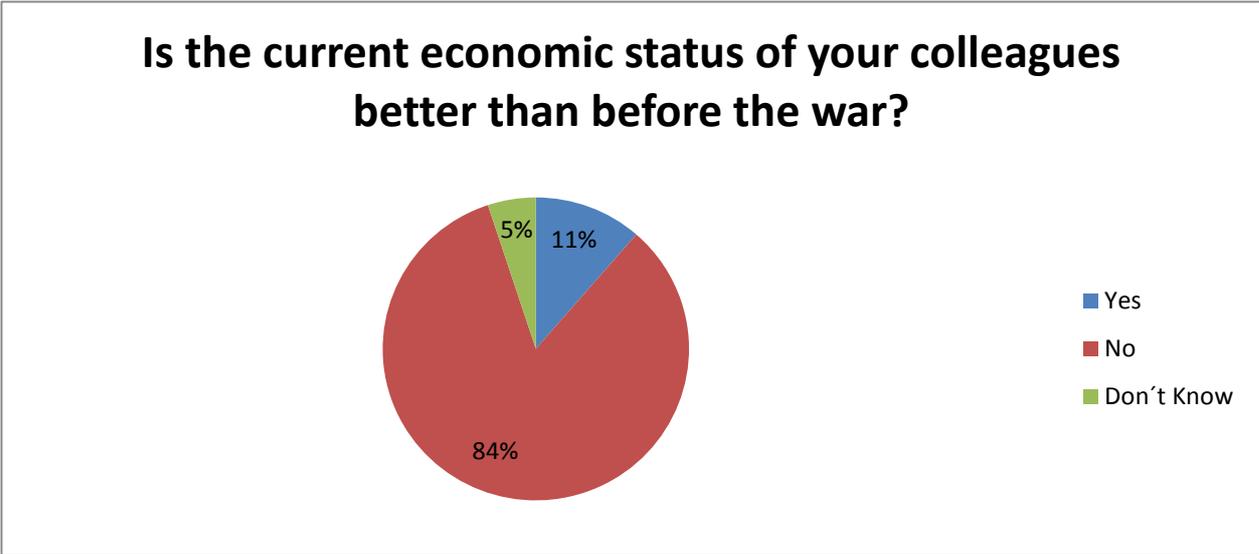
Table 34:



Based on information provided by the interviewees it was realised that the economic status of their former colleagues is not better than it was before the war. As illustrated in the graph below, 84% stated that their former colleagues' economic status is worse than before the conflict, while 11% stated that they are better off than before the conflict and 5% stated that they do not know if their status is better than before the conflict¹⁷⁴. The 11% that stated that the status of their colleagues is better now than before the war indicated that some were able to secure jobs as security guards or were now petty traders.

¹⁷⁴ Those who stated that they do not know if their economic status is better off than before the conflict were recruited as children. They cannot fully recount the lives they lived before the conflict.

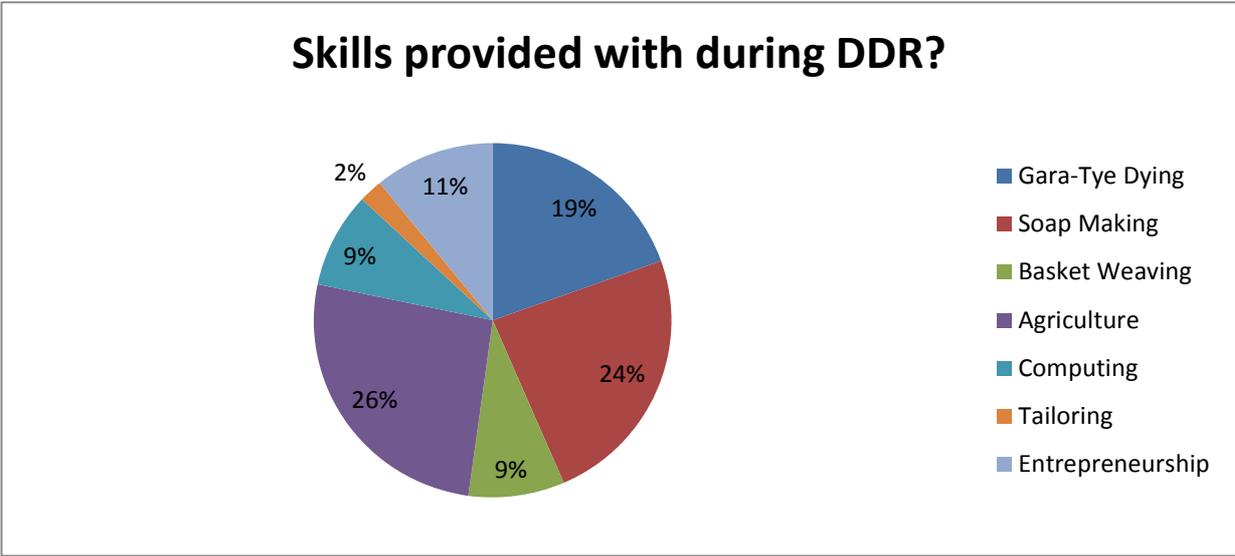
Table 35:



5.2.2 Former Female Combatants

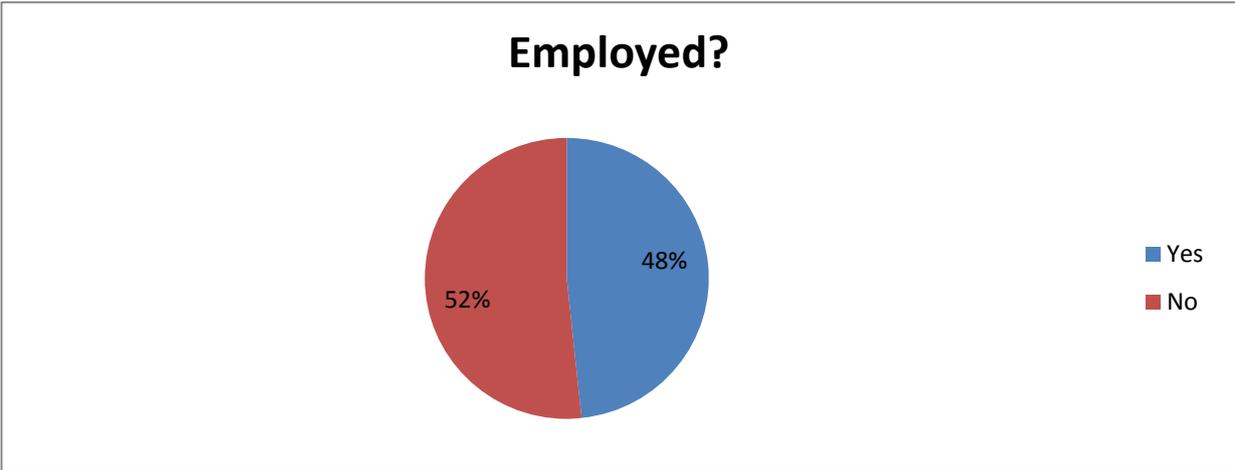
This section presents the findings on the current economic status of former female combatants interviewed. The graph below indicates most of the trainings provided to former female combatants during the reintegration phase of DDR. 26% of the interviewees received training in agriculture, 24% in soap making, 19% in gara-tye dying, 11% in entrepreneurship, 9% in computing, 9% in basket weaving and 2% in tailoring. Most of the activities designed for training are activities that women commonly undertake in local communities. Critics of the DDR programme stated during interviews that there was a serious case of stereotyping. Activities designed for women and girls were not based on the actual needs of the beneficiaries but on what the designers felt they needed. These activities include gara-tye dying, soap making, tailoring and basket weaving. 30% of the interviewees stated that they would have preferred to get involved in more technical trainings (other than trainings in gara-dying, soap making and basket weaving) but were left with little or no option.

Table 36:



The graph below indicates that 48% of the interviewees stated that they are employed, while 52% indicated that they are unemployed. This is far more impressive when compared to the male interviewees with only 18% employment.

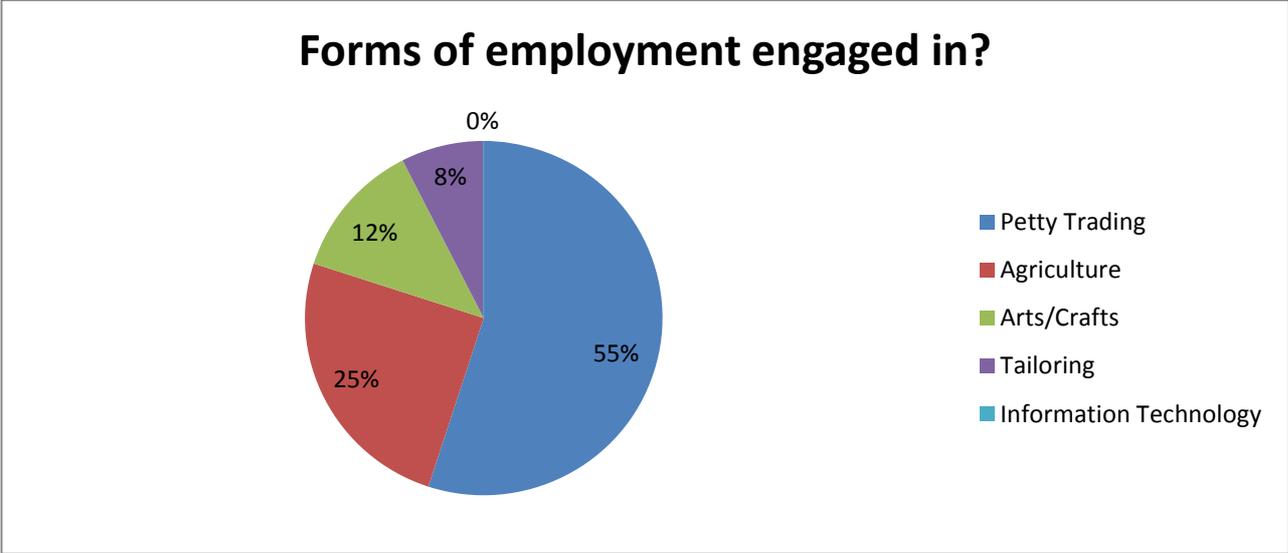
Table 37:



The graph below indicates the forms of employment that former female combatants are involved in. 55% of the interviewees who are employed are engaged in petty trading, 25% in agriculture, 12% in arts and crafts, 8% in tailoring and there was no interviewee that is

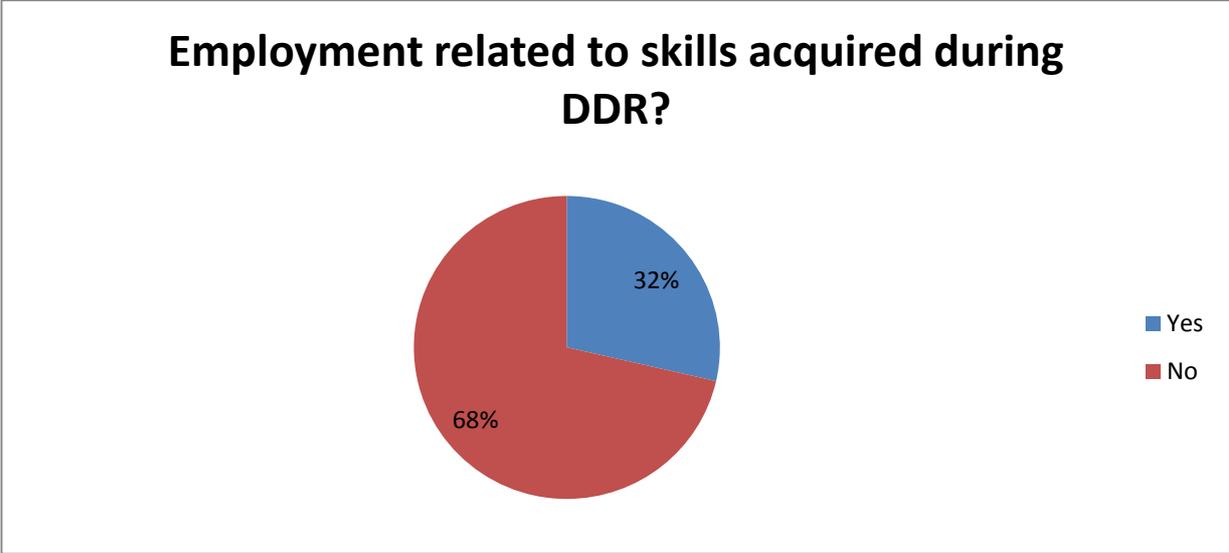
involved in information technology. Involvement in information technology was checked as 9% of the interviewees partook in computer training. It was observed that almost all of those who were trained in agriculture are involved in agriculture or agriculture-related activities. The same is also true for those who were trained in arts and crafts and tailoring. Most of the interviewees also indicated that they are self-employed as they own and manage the businesses they are involved in.

Table 38:



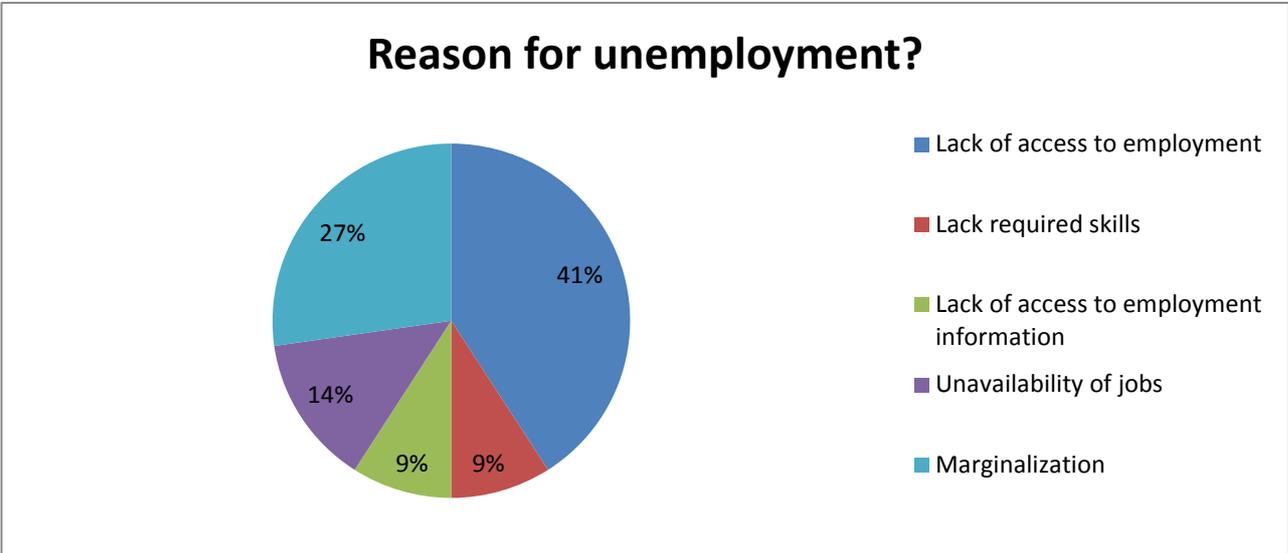
As could be seen in the graph below, 32% of the female ex-combatants indicated that the jobs they have are related to the trainings acquired during DDR.

Table 39:



The graph below presents what the unemployed interviewees perceive to be the reasons for their unemployment. 41% indicated that they lack access to employment, 27% indicated that they are marginalized by potential employers because of their former status, 14% indicated that jobs are unavailable in their communities and even when there are jobs there is high competition for them so they end up not getting a job. 9% indicated that they cannot compete for jobs because they lack the required skills. The trainings provided during DDR is said to be insufficient to enable them secure available jobs. Also, some of them do not have any form of formal education and cannot read or write. This significantly affects their chances of competing for and securing decent forms of employment. 9% indicated that they do not have any source of information on employment opportunities available in their communities. This they blamed on the non-availability of job information centers in their communities. With the exception of the stigmatization faced the reasons for unemployment provided by other young people (non-former-combatants) interviewed are similar to the reasons stated by the ex-combatants. Like the former combatants those non-former-combatants with employment are self-employed and are involved in agriculture and petty trading.

Table 40:



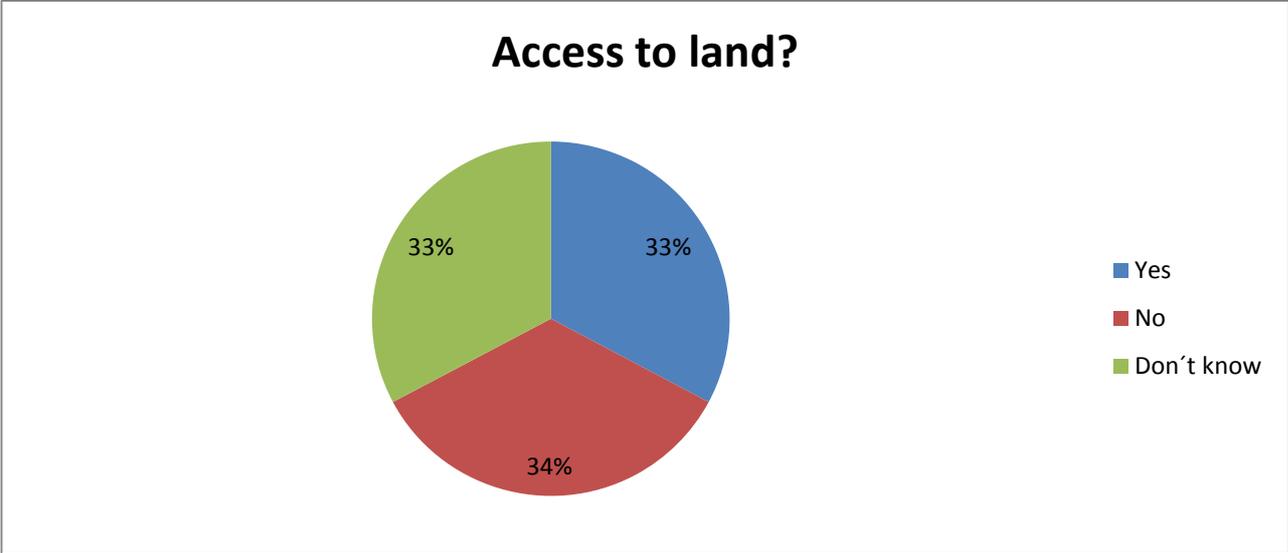
Land is of fundamental importance especially to ex-combatants who are or would like to be engaged in agriculture. Accessing and owning land has been a challenge especially to women

even in pre-war and war-affected Sierra Leone. However, in 2007 gender bills¹⁷⁵ were passed into laws that are geared towards protecting and promoting the rights and welfare of women. These laws are opening the socio-economic and political space for women. Despite this, 33% of the interviewees stated (as indicated in the graph below) that they have no access to farming lands in their communities, while 33% stated that they have access, with 34% stating that they do not know if they have access. The area of the country where women face more challenges is the Northern Province.

In Kambia, Hawa Sankoh¹⁷⁶, a former RUF combatant, expressed the challenge she faces: “Land is said to be for men, women can only work on the land of their husbands or families. Some elderly women own lands they either inherited or have over the years secured from their families. Young and unmarried women like me cannot even discuss owning a land. This affects my involvement in agriculture as I am tired of working on the land of my family.”

In some parts of the country including the Northern and the Southern regions, land is being rented for a fee or a percentage of the harvest. Securing a piece of land based on the agreement of paying a certain percentage of the harvest is seen as tricky by some of the interviewees as they are not certain of what the yield would be after harvest.

Table 41:

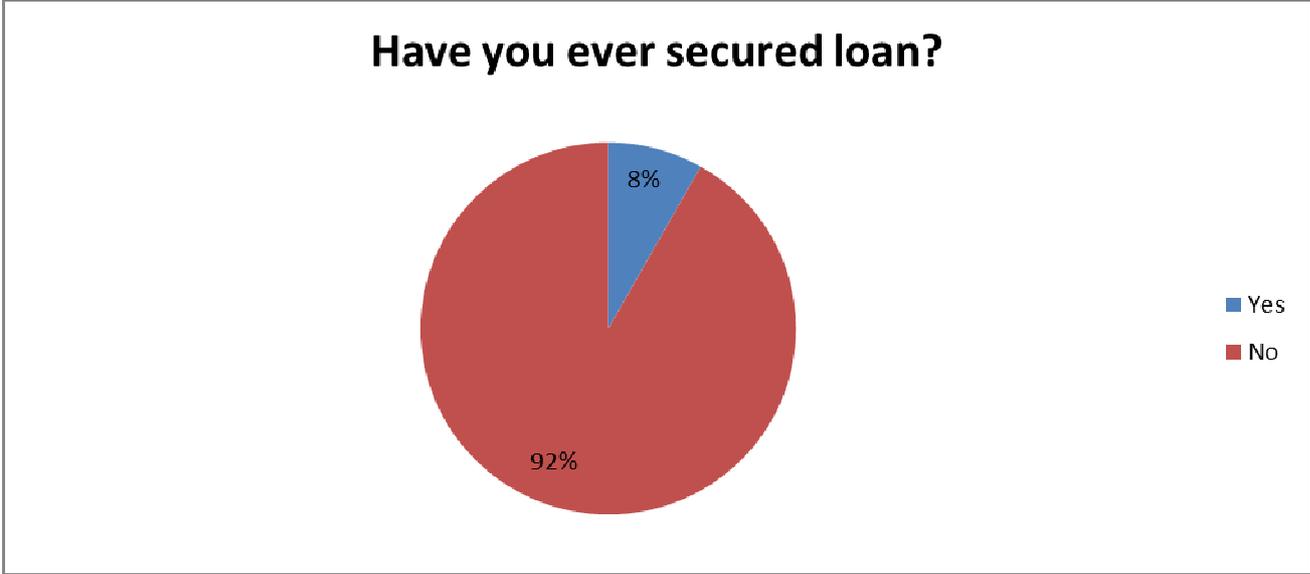


¹⁷⁵ The government in 2007 through the House of Parliament legislated the ‘three Gender Acts’ namely Registration of Customary Marriages and Divorce Act; Domestic Violence Act; and the Devolution of Estates Act as partial domestication of the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

¹⁷⁶ Interview conducted on the 15th of February 2013 in Kambia.

Getting involved in business requires having a start-up capital. However, start-up capital is difficult to secure as ex-combatants are mostly poor people who do not have savings or collateral to secure a loan. Thus, they have to look out for loans to begin a business they may want to get involved in. Only 8% of the interviewees (as indicated in the graph below) have succeeded in securing loans since the end of the DDR programme, while 92% have not secured any form of loan. Out of the 92%, 51% have tried and failed in their bid to secure a loan while 41% have never tried to secure any form of loan. Two of the lead institutions that have provided loans to the interviewees are BRAC and SEND West Africa (microfinance institutions). The loans secured have assisted some of the interviewees to begin tailoring, arts and crafts workshops and petty trading. 4% out of the 8% of the interviewees that have secured loans are in the Kailahun district.

Table 42:¹⁷⁷



82% (see graph below) of the interviewees stated that their current economic status is worse than their pre-war economic status. When questioned as to why they believe this to be the case, the reasons they proffered included: inability to afford three basic meals, inability to pay for housing and other shelter related bills, inability to pay medical bills and school fees for children, no form of employment, and faced with stigmatization and stereotypes. Yeama Kalokoh¹⁷⁸ accounted: *“I go for days without a proper meal and when things become very*

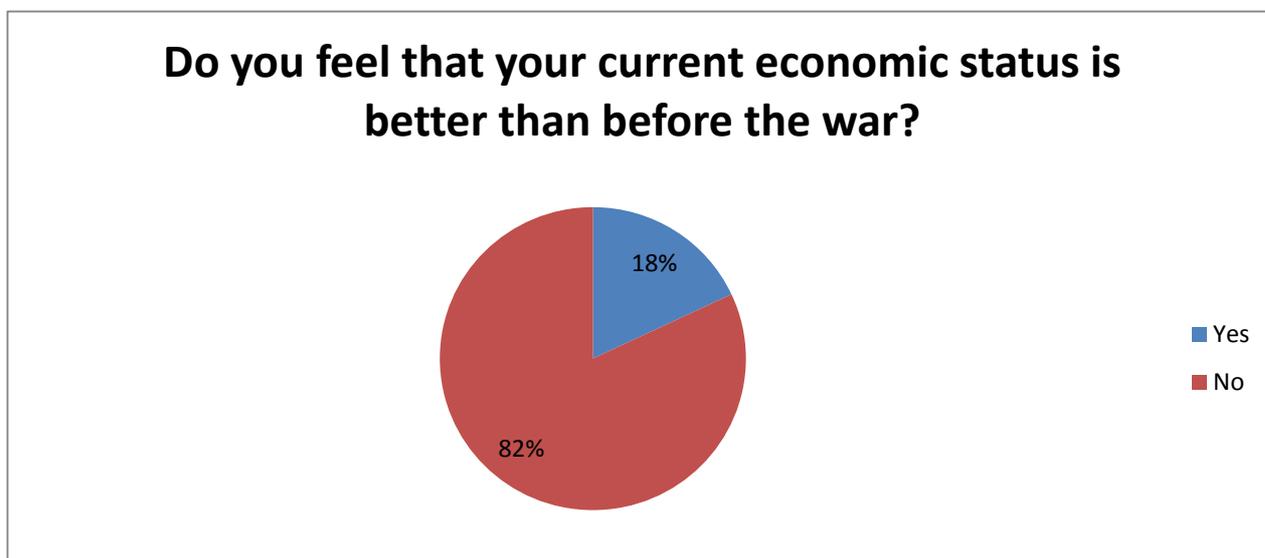
¹⁷⁷ Kindly note that this question was asked when it was realised during field consultations that there were regular referrals to loans related issues among former female combatants. Thus the question is not in the questionnaire as it was developed separately.

¹⁷⁸ Interview conducted on the 23rd of January 2013 in Freetown.

tough I sometimes turn to prostitution to be able to get money and food. Even though I hate selling my body, it is the only means of survival that I have.”

Other interviewees stated that they had families before the war and they were living in communities where they could at least get some basic food to eat. Also, after being recruited during the war, they were able to fend for themselves with the help of their guns, now they stated that they have no one to turn to for help. Josephine Kargbo¹⁷⁹ explained that they were lied to by the DDR Commission: *“They made us believe that our lives would get better when we drop our guns; this they knew was never going to be the case. They lied to us. However, they are not the idiots; we are the idiots as they believed their lies and gave them our guns.”*

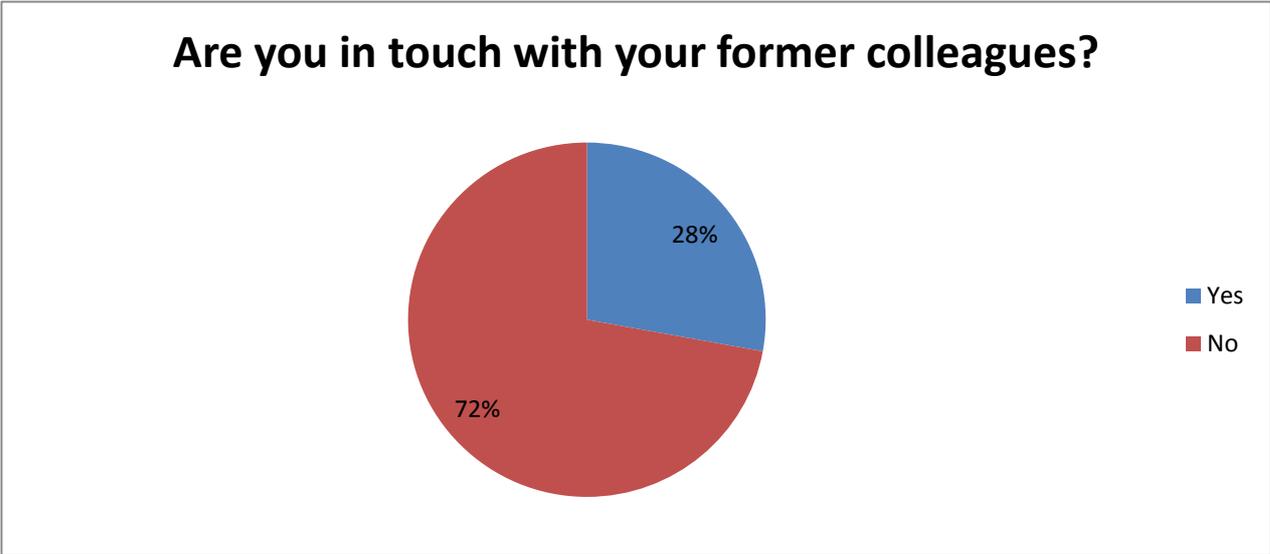
Table 43:



As depicted in the graph below, 28% of the ex-combatants stated that they are in touch with their former colleagues while 72% stated that they are not in touch with them. Most of those who are in touch with their colleagues reside in South-Eastern regions and the Western Area. While in the case of male interviewees the greater percentage of those who are in touch with former colleagues are former CDF combatants, in the case of the female interviewees the greater percentage are former RUF (62%) and West Side Boys (27%) .

¹⁷⁹ Interview conducted on the 7th of January 2013 in Segbwema, Eastern Sierra Leone.

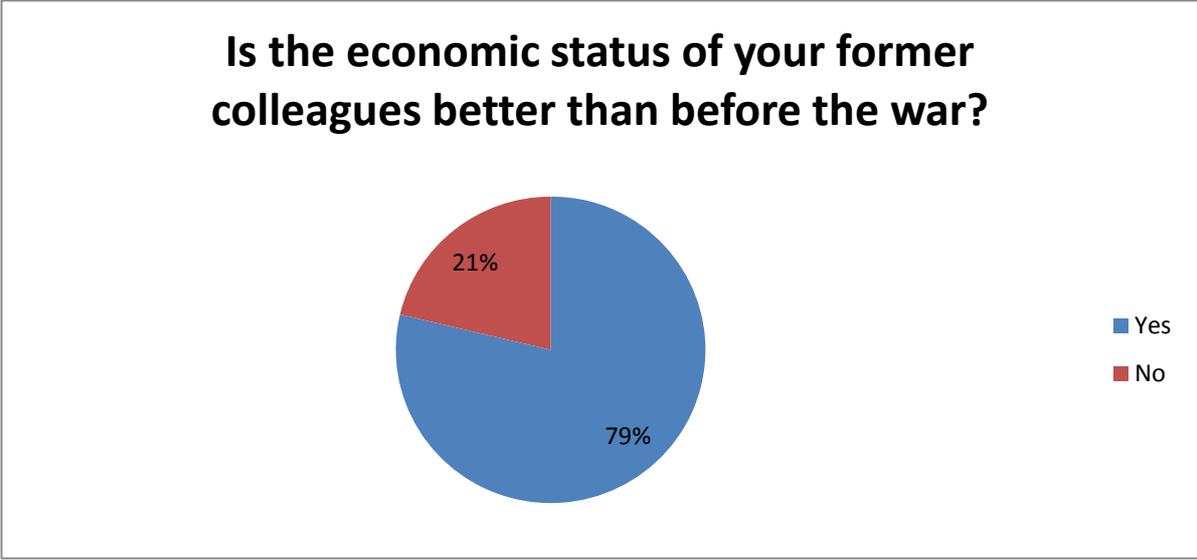
Table 44:



79% (as could be seen in the graph below) of the interviewees stated that the economic status of their colleagues is worse than it used to be before the conflict. They stated that most of their colleagues are faced with the same challenges that they face and some are even worse off than they are. Fatu Kallon¹⁸⁰ explained what is happening or has happened to some of her former colleagues: *“I have seen some of my friends die from common illnesses such as malaria and typhoid. They could not afford to buy medications that are very basic and cheap. I have friends who still suffer from war-related causes but cannot afford to seek medical assistance.”*

¹⁸⁰ Interview conducted on the 6th of January 2013 in Pujehun, Southern Sierra Leone.

Table 45:



Like the male interviewees the female interviewees are of the conviction that the socio-economic conditions in the country are unfavourable to their reintegration process. Thus, the female combatants believe that they were reintegrated into poverty as the economy does not have the capacity to absorb the ex-combatants and provide them with employment opportunities. Former female combatants are faced with some of the challenges as former male combatants. However, their reintegration process is made much more difficult by the additional gender-related challenges posed by society on them.

5.2.3 Conclusion

The economic status of the bulk of the interviewees is worse than it used to be before the war. This position was also taken by former CAAFGs who were not economically productive before the war. They stated that their families could at least afford to provide them with food and shelter.

It was observed that some of the other ex-combatants interviewed during field consultants live under very difficult economic conditions. They lack employment and cannot compete for decent forms of livelihoods because they lack the required skills or education. Coupled with this, ex-combatants are faced with lack of access to information related to employment, marginalization and limited availability of employment opportunities. The lack of trust in ex-combatants on the part of potential employers also gravely affects the employment potentials

of former combatants. However, the high rate of unemployment is not limited to former combatants, other people in the country (especially young people) are also affected and cannot fend for themselves or their families.

The skills training provided to ex-combatants during DDR has not helped many of the ex-combatants as they were either too short or ill-organised and badly delivered. A significant percentage of the ex-combatants interviewed have not found the trainings they partook in to be useful to their reintegration process. Even those who are employed at the moment complained of how limited the trainings were. Also, some of those who are employed or self-employed are engaged in activities that are unrelated to the trainings undertaken.

Key provisions that could have assisted the economic reintegration process of former combatants that are lacking are: provision of employment centres that will provide information on employment, conduct follow-up trainings for ex-combatants, link potential employers and employees, constructively engage the public and private sectors to create employment opportunities and employ former combatants etc.

Instead of making the above stated provisions to aid the reintegration process of former combatants, ex-combatants were basically left on their own after the reintegration programme came to an end. Even those who were interested in going to school (especially children) did not have post-DDR arrangements made for their education. Accelerated Learning Programmes (ALPs) for the older children came to an abrupt end at the end of the DDR programme and also adult education programmes also came to an end. Such programmes would have propelled a significant proportion of the beneficiaries to higher education, thereby enabling them achieve an educational level that would have allowed them to compete for livelihood opportunities.

Also, very limited financial/material support has been provided to some ex-combatants after the DDR programme. Loans, trainings and equipments which are key to ex-combatants becoming self-employed have been provided only to a limited number of them. While this support is invaluable to those that have benefitted from it, it makes very little difference to the overall economic condition of ex-combatants as a significant percentage have not received any assistance.

Ex-combatants expressed a lack of faith in the system and recent political events (2007 and 2012)¹⁸¹ showed that they can easily be re-recruited by any person or group that can afford to pay them. While it may be argued that Sierra Leone enjoys stable peace and security, one may be tempted to counter-argue that ex-combatants 'do not eat peace'. The poverty they have been reintegrated into has denied them the very basic things they need in life that will enable them live in peace: food, clothing and shelter. These basic necessities that some may take for granted, the former combatants look at as luxury.

¹⁸¹ During the 2007 elections the leaders of the major political parties APC and SLPP mobilised ex-combatants and used them as body guards and as thugs in their parties. This created tension in the country and the international community and local actors appealed to the parties to stop the use of ex-combatants by political leaders. Similar appeals were made during the 2012 elections when the two parties started remobilising ex-combatants to use them as bodyguards.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Final Conclusions

This study was able to draw out the realities faced by former combatants 10 years after the conflict in Sierra Leone. Seven years ago (2005) the DDR programme led by the NCDDR and supported by the International Community came to an end and it was referred to by many experts as a success story and an example for other countries to follow. Indeed, Sierra Leone has not relapsed into a violent conflict and it continues to strengthen the pillars of democracy, rule of law and human rights which are of immense significance in the peacebuilding process. However, it became evident during the study that for several former combatants who were the key targets of the DDR programme, life is not as good as they had hoped it would be. In fact, most of them stated that their lives are miserable and that they are worse off than they were before and during the civil conflict.

The current challenges faced by the former combatants are hinged on certain failures of the DDR programme which are discussed below. Planning for the last phase (third phase) of DDR was short and ineffective. The key concern was to collect the weapons from the combatants and demobilize their structures with little consideration put into their socio-economic reintegration. Coupled with this, the local communities that were a key stakeholder in the reintegration process of former combatants were not constructively engaged. Thus, some communities either became spoilers to the process or were at best indifferent to it. At the same time, activities designed were not context-specific as the realities on the ground were not known by those who designed the reintegration programme and needs assessments of the ex-combatants and receiving communities were not done.

As is the case with all post-conflict countries, the structures and institutions in the country were badly destroyed and this created a case in which the number of service providers available was very limited. As explained by reintegration experts such as Joe Patrick Amara and Idowu Ibishomi¹⁸², alongside the challenges stated above, the service providers lacked the facilities, trainings and equipments needed to train the former combatants. Even in places where such facilities were available, the number of ex-combatants to be trained far exceeded the number that the facilities could handle. This had a negative impact on the training

¹⁸² Interviews conducted in 2011.

programmes as ex-combatants were left with little capacity to compete for decent jobs or even begin their own enterprises.

In most cases, especially for women, trainings provided were stereotypical and gender insensitive. For instance, some trainings were based on activities considered by society to be only for women. These included gara-tye dying, soap making and weaving. Trainings were not based on the opportunities available in local communities. This is also due to the fact that opportunity mappings and market surveys (the reintegration programme designers had limited knowledge on the significance of opportunity mapping and market surveys when designing trainings and employment-related activities for ex-combatants) were not carried out as part of the assessments done for reintegration. Thus, in most cases, former combatants were provided with trainings that had no readily available employment market. One of such trainings provided was computing. It was clear to those who profiled the ex-combatants that most of them were illiterate and it will take a long time before they could go close to a computer but they still continued to train them in computing. This created the challenge of ex-combatants provided with what was not useful to them.

The timeframe was also short as trainings were done between 3 to 6 months. For agriculture and tailoring this may not be too bad but for technical jobs the period was too short. However, there was a limited budget and timeframe for the NCDDR and they did not go further than the planned timeline.

The harsh realities of a post-conflict setting faced the ex-combatants after the DDR programme. Most of those interviewed indicated that they could not find a job or even compete for one when it is available. They lack the skills required and the bulk of them have very limited formal education as they only gained primary education. This places them in a difficult situation as they have to take care of themselves and their families. Most of those interviewed cannot afford one basic meal a day and they have to resort to odd jobs to enable them get food and shelter.

The major forms of employment for interviewees employed are agriculture and petty trading (for the women it is mostly petty trading). Some of those who are unemployed have been trying to seek loans or micro-credits that will serve as start-up capitals but have not been able to do so. The key reasons why they cannot secure such loans are that they have no collateral, cannot have people to serve as guarantors for them and in some cases the loans are tailored in such a way that young people could not meet the set criteria. Despite this, some have secured

loans through organisations like BRAC, SEND-West Africa, Finance Salone and Hope Microfinance Salone. These organisations provide micro-credits and financial trainings to women, low income earners and small enterprise owners.

In some parts of the country, especially in the Northern and Southern regions, accessing land is a huge challenge to young and unmarried former female combatants. However, such restrictions are not only limited to former female combatants as the societies are patriarchal and women and girls have been continuously marginalised for decades. This limits the economic potential of the former combatants as they cannot partake in the key economic activity (which is agriculture) in their community. Some move to other communities where they could access lands that are either rented or are owned by acquaintances.

The economic status of the former combatants negatively impacts their health and other statuses. For instance, they cannot afford to pay for medical bills when ill and some even reported (as indicated in the findings) that they have seen some of their former colleagues die from curable diseases such as malaria, dysentery, diarrhoea and typhoid. Some of them still suffer from war-related physical and mental conditions (psycho-social related issues are discussed below) such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Vesico-Vaginal Fistulae (VVF), Schizophrenia, or loss of limbs but cannot afford to seek medical assistance. Some are reported to be dying or have died in silence.

The social status of former ex-combatants is equally marred with challenges. Inasmuch as a significant number of the male interviewees live in communities of choice rather than communities of origin, the reverse is true for female interviewees. Nonetheless, interviewees that are recognised as former combatants in their communities reported being stigmatised and are faced with stereotypes. This creates a sense of being unwelcomed and insecure.

While (unlike other countries like Angola and Mozambique) Sierra Leone has been faced with very little confrontations between ex-combatants and receiving communities, it should be noted that very little reconciliation activities were implemented after the TRC and the SCSL. The only known initiative that is still in progress is the Fambul Tok project. The lack of such initiatives makes it difficult for some former combatants to return to their communities of origin. This is still a major concern especially among former RUF combatants. Unlike former RUF combatants, former Kamajors are mostly found in their communities of origin as they are still seen as heroes.

Some combatants did not go through DDR, they either auto-demobilized or moved on to other conflicts in the region (Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire). Those that went to Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire are returning to Sierra Leone and are finding it difficult to reintegrate while those who auto-demobilized are finding it difficult to go back to their communities of origin as there is no formal support process to ensure this. Thus, they are on their own in the major cities striving to survive in the midst of the uncertainties that they face.

Due to the limited psycho-social support that the ex-combatants received during reintegration (those who auto-demobilized received no support) some turned to drugs and alcohol. There is a high rate of drugs and alcohol consumers among especially the former RUF and AFRC/West Side Boys (Bangura, Specht 2012). Some interviewees working in government agencies stated that there is a correlation between the use of drugs and the increase in the crime rate in major cities.

Some ex-combatants are shying away from society because of the limited psycho-social support they received. 10 years after the conflict they can still not cope with the normal society. This is why some resorted to drugs and alcohol abuse. With drugs and alcohol they can temporarily shelve away the realities faced.

The challenges faced in the reintegration process show that DDR is only a minute part of the overall post-war reconstruction process. If the other components and institutions (such components include the economy, rehabilitation, institution-building, the fight against corruption, investment in the education and health sectors, observance and respect for the rule of law and human rights, etc.) do not function effectively then the reintegration process of former combatants will be greatly affected.

In the face of all these challenges, it can be concluded that some of the ex-combatants are still vulnerable and could be re-recruited to perpetrate violence (this can be backed with the fact that in 2007 and 2012 elections politicians mobilized them to perpetrate elections violence. They were easy to recruit and at the same time prepared to create chaos). They are desperate, poor, hungry and in need of employment. It could be concluded that they were reintegrated into poverty and the overall reconstruction process has not been able to fully absorb the ex-combatants and make provision for their successful reintegration. This has to a large extent reversed the gains of the reintegration programme.

6.2 Recommendations

To overcome the challenges highlighted in the findings and conclusion sections of this study, several actions have to be taken by the different stakeholders involved in the post-war reconstruction and nation-building ongoing in Sierra Leone. These actions include:

Further Research

The research brought up very interesting issues that call for further studies that should critically look into them. These issues are:

- The post-war recovery process in Sierra Leone
- The nexus between unemployment and conflict in Sierra Leone
- Transitional justice programmes (traditional and Western) and the reintegration process of ex-combatants in Sierra Leone

It is obvious that DDR is only part of the overall post-war reconstruction process and if the other components of the process do not work properly it is bound to fail. It is important that a study is done that will examine the entire reconstruction process with the successes and failures of the DDR programme also assessed.

The nexus between unemployment and conflict also has to be further studied. While looking at this, the mechanisms put in place by the different stakeholders to reduce unemployment should also be examined. In particular, unemployment should be looked at in relation to young people as they are the most vulnerable group with a high propensity to get involved in violence and chaos.

During field consultations it became evident that there are still ongoing transitional justice processes (for e.g. Fambul Tok) in some communities especially in the East (Kailahun). Inasmuch as data were collected on these processes, they are insufficient to give a very clear understanding of the impact created. This has to be also coupled with the impact of the TRC and the SCSL and their legacies. Transitional justice mechanisms have to be studied with a special reference to ex-combatants and receiving communities in the post-conflict setting.

Government

The government with the support of international and local actors such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), National Youth Commission (NAYCOM), National Commission for Social Action and the University of Sierra Leone should conduct a nation-wide study on the current socio-economic status of former combatants. This study could be carried out with a similar study on the state of young people in Sierra Leone. It will put the government and other stakeholders in a better position to design programmes and projects that are geared towards making a positive difference in the lives and welfare of Sierra Leoneans, especially young people.

The study on the socio-economic status of young people and former combatants should be followed up with a nation-wide opportunity mapping and market survey. Opportunity mapping and market surveys as required to provide a link between the profile of the ex-combatants and the opportunities existing in the market (Specht 97:9). It is an exercise that is geared towards providing a good understanding of the actual economic opportunities existing in a community. With the findings and recommendations of the mapping and survey exercises, the government and other stakeholders would be in a position to have a strategic focus on how to assist Sierra Leoneans to become either employed or self-employed. Organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme and Restless Development (a UK-based INGO with a branch in Sierra Leone) have started working on conducting market surveys but on a very small scale. Such initiatives could be built upon on a national scale.

To assist Sierra Leoneans to access employment or become self-employed, the government should concentrate on three areas: agriculture, entrepreneurship and career development. The reasons why these three sectors should be concentrated on are:

- (a) **Agriculture** is the biggest employer in the country; despite this, it is still under-engaged as it has the potential to create more job opportunities. People still focus on subsistence farming instead of cash crop production; at the same time Sierra Leoneans have not explored the potentials of value chain development especially those that are agro-based. Young people focused investment in agriculture will reduce the rate of unemployment and subsequently the crime rate in the country. Also, more ex-combatants would be induced to return to the interior of Sierra Leone and engage in agriculture. This would reduce migration into major cities, reduce congestion and its

related risks and also the crime rate in especially Freetown. Agriculture, is the biggest employer in the country and it has the potential of providing employment opportunities to a significant percentage of former combatants if the government and other stakeholders would invest in it. In line with this, former female combatants have to be provided with access to land and given the required support needed to establish themselves in agriculture and related activities.

(b) Entrepreneurship: Many young Sierra Leoneans have the willingness to go into business, but are faced with the challenge of accessing start-up capitals. Providing young people with the support needed to enable them begin and own their own businesses will also help to reduce the level of unemployment and subsequently the frustration, poverty, idleness and crime rate in the country. To ensure this, the government with the support of the private sector should establish a ‘National Youth Development Fund‘ like those established in Uganda and Zimbabwe (Restless Development 2012). This fund should be designed with the key objective of providing young people with start-up capitals. This will significantly and equally benefit former combatants and other young people in local communities.

(c) Career Development: Under this component, the government and other stakeholders should develop life skills and vocational training schemes through which young people would gain the skills required to seek employment. This component should be backed with internships, job placement, apprenticeships and other employment possibilities. It should be noted that the private and public sectors would be of strategic significance in providing employment opportunities to young people. However, they have to be mobilized and sensitized on the role(s) they are expected to play.

Investment in the employment sector has to go alongside investment in the education and health sectors. In the area of education, accelerated (fast track) learning programmes and adult education have to be established for adult learners. This will enable them read and write which is of great use in the areas of entrepreneurship, career development or agriculture. Adult learners would be in a position to keep record of their business and make informed decisions.

It was observed during field consultations that some of the former combatants still suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and other psycho-social conditions related to the conflict. These challenges faced have a negative impact on the lives of those affected and also present a great

risk to those in their communities. An effort should be made by the government and other stakeholders to identify those affected and provide them with the medical assistance they require. There are several existing cases and these include victims and perpetrators of violence during the conflict in the country.

The decentralization process should ensure that the socio-political space is opened to all sexes and groups of people. Young people and women should be encouraged and allowed to participate in decision-making processes within their local communities and also at the national level. The constant marginalization of young people creates tension between them and their elders, these tensions sometimes lead to young people migrating to the cities.

Also, as part of the decentralization process, the stakeholders should ensure that basic social facilities and amenities are provided to local communities. These include schools, hospitals and recreational facilities. While there are schools and clinics built in some communities there is an absolute lack of recreational facilities. The lack of such facilities helps to augment the stress and tension in especially young people who need an outlet. Facilities that should be created are games and youth centers.

While it is obvious that Sierra Leone needs time to fully recover from the relics of the conflict, it is also obvious that the pace it is going at is very slow and frustrating especially for the former combatants. However, if the above stated recommendations are taken into consideration, the former combatants and other Sierra Leoneans would be in a position to access alternative sources of livelihood and also contribute to the socio-economic and political development of their country. For them the critical challenge faced is unemployment, illiteracy and poverty. With education and employment they will become less vulnerable to the call of those who rally them for chaos and mayhem.

Former Combatants

Ex-combatants should not shy away from mainstream society: It was observed that some ex-combatants are living very reclusive lives. This is due to the fact that they do not trust the societies in which they live and they have not been provided with the kind of psycho-social support that they needed to prepare them for their re-entry into normal societies.

In relation to the paragraph above, many ex-combatants have been unable to grab the few opportunities available in their communities because they do not have the spirit to compete for them. Ex-combatants should be encouraged and supported to see themselves as normal

human beings that are now part of normal societies. This calls for sensitization and psycho-social assistance from qualified psycho-social personnel who are supported by the government or other stakeholders. While it may be argued that undertaking such initiatives in a post-DDR setting may be challenging, these initiatives could be undertaken not exclusively for ex-combatants but more generally for Sierra Leoneans in need of such support.

As stated in the conclusion section there is a high rate of drugs and alcohol consumers among especially the former RUF and AFRC/West Side Boys. Psycho-social support provided should also be tailored towards supporting them to stop substance abuse. However, the ex-combatants should be made aware of the role they personally have to play to make this happen.

Civil Society

Civil society has a crucial role to play in the reintegration process of ex-combatants. Organisations like Fambul Tok identified the challenges faced in the reconciliation process between ex-combatants and receiving communities and they started a traditional transitional justice mechanism that is of great significance to the peace process in the country. Other civil society organisations should assess the challenges faced by ex-combatants and other young people within local communities and then pressure the government to work towards moving them away from the poverty and destitution they live in.

It is obvious that the major challenges faced by ex-combatants and other civilians are unemployment, illiteracy, lack of access to social institutions such as schools, housing, medical facilities, recreational facilities, lack of access to capital etc. Civil society should ensure that the government takes tangible steps in meeting the demands of the people. If such demands are met, Sierra Leoneans would be able to live in decency and dignity and this will strengthen peace and tranquillity in the country.

Civil society should also work towards ensuring that the stigmatization and stereotypes faced by ex-combatants are overcome. The stigmatization faced is one of the reasons for the withdrawal from society by some ex-combatants. Campaigns against stereotypes in local communities have to be mixed with gender and social justice related campaigns. This is because women are most affected.

Such campaigns have to be also linked with similar initiatives geared towards opening the social and political space for all Sierra Leoneans including youth, women and people with disabilities.

International Community

International and intergovernmental organisations that supported the DDR programme in Sierra Leone still have a role to play in the reintegration process of ex-combatants. Some of the roles they could play include:

They should continue supporting the employment and education initiatives undergoing in the country. While some of the initiatives are channeled through the National Youth Commission, it should be ensured that they are results-oriented and those benefitting are young people in actual need.

UNDP should ensure that the opportunity mapping exercise it has undertaken in some districts should be done on a national scale. Opportunity mappings provide the actual guidance needed to make interventions that could be based on the actual opportunities available in local communities. This should be done in line with market surveys that will inform the target groups of the actual needs of the market.

One of the greatest needs in Sierra Leone for all categories of Sierra Leoneans is access to health facilities. Former combatants and other Sierra Leoneans are in need of psycho-social support. The international community could support the process of overcoming the mental health challenges faced in the country by supporting the training of psycho-social experts and developing health institutions that they will work with in helping Sierra Leoneans in need of assistance.

While there may be the question as to how funds could be secured to finance such broad recommendations, it should be noted that such initiatives could be successfully implemented if there is the political will. Similar initiatives have been discussed and promised in the government's Agenda for Prosperity (GoSL 2013) as part of its economic recovery and nation building programme. The government and other relevant stakeholders should work on achieving the promised initiatives rather than just making promises.

If the above stated recommendations are looked into they will help move the ex-combatants out of the poverty they have been reintegrated into. Also, it will help other Sierra Leoneans faced with similar challenges to access employment and other socio-economic opportunities.

Subsequently, it will reduce the current state of frustration and tension in the country especially among young people.

Also, other countries such as Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo should learn from the lessons of Sierra Leone. A key lesson is that DDR exercises are costly and they should be well planned with sufficient resources secured to have effective and sustainable reintegration programmes. If this is not done the countries stated above will in the future face the same challenges Sierra Leone is facing at the moment.

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8. Annex

Annex 1: Research Questionnaire

I am trying to find out what the current socio-economic status of the ex-combatants is 10 years after the war in Sierra Leone, what they did while during the DDR process; and what they are doing at the moment in terms of employment. I am doing this to know how employment opportunities provided by DDR are helping to transform the lives of the ex-combatants. Please help me by sharing information on your DDR process.

1. Interviewer	<i>Did you have interviewers other than yourself?</i>
2. Interviewee	
3. Date	
5. Village	
6. District	
7. Age	
8. Contact details	

9. Sex: Male [] Female []

10. Level of Education:

None	Primary	Secondary	High	Skill

11. What faction were you part of.....?

12. How long did you serve as a combatant?

13. Did you volunteer to become a fighter or were you forcefully recruited?

a) Volunteered

b) Forcefully recruited

14. What role did you play?

a) Fighter

b) Spy

c) Cook

d) Bush wife

e) Load carriers

f) Other, Please specify.....

15. Did you go through DDR?

a) Yes

b) No

16. If yes, what year did you go through DDR?

.....

17. Are you currently living in your community of origin or choice.....?

18. Do you face discrimination in your community?

a. Yes

b. No

19. Do people in your community still recognise you as a former combatant?

a. Yes

b. No

c. Don't know

20. What kind of training were you provided with during DDR?

.....

21. Are you currently employed or self-employed?

Yes No

22. If no, why

not.....?

23. If yes, are you working in the area related to the training provided during DDR? Please specify what work you are doing?

24. If no, why not.....?

25. Do you feel that your current socio-economic condition is better off than during the pre-war period?

a) Yes

b) No

26) Do you play any leadership role in your community?

a) Yes

b) No

27. Have you received any support after DDR?

a) Yes

b) No

28) If yes, what kind of support.....?

29) From what kind of organisation do you get support?

a) Governmental

b) INGO

c) NGO/CBO

30. Are you still in touch with some of your former colleagues?

a) Yes

b) No

31) If yes, is there economic status better than before the war?

a) Yes

b) No

c) Don't know

Annex 2: Organisations visited during field consultations

No	Organisation	Location
1	National Commission for Social Action (NACSA)	Freetown
2	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Freetown, Kenema
3	United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL)	Freetown
4	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	Freetown, Makeni
5	World Food Programme (WFP)	Freetown, Kenema
6	Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL)	Freetown, The Hague, Netherlands
7	Ministry of Internal Affairs	Freetown
8	Ministry of Defence	Freetown
9	Ministry of Health and Sanitation	Freetown, Kenema, Bo, Makeni
10	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs	Freetown
11	National Human Rights Commission	Freetown, Bo
12	Handicap International	Freetown
13	Defence for Children International (DCI)	Freetown
14	Center for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL)	Freetown
15	Care International	Freetown
16	OXFAM UK	Freetown
17	Finance Salone	Freetown
18	BRAC Microfinance Sierra Leone Limited	Freetown
19	Peace and Conflict Studies Programme, University of Sierra Leone	Freetown
20	Department of Political Science, University of Sierra Leone	Freetown

21	German Agency for International Agency (GIZ)	Freetown
22	National Youth Commission (NAYCOM)	Freetown
23	United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	Freetown
24	Conciliation Resources	Freetown
25	Concern Worldwide	Freetown
26	Campaign for Good Governance (CGG)	Freetown
27	Sierra Leone Association for Journalists (SLAJ)	Freetown
28	Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA)	Freetown
29	Freetown City Council	Freetown
30	Association of Okada Riders	Freetown, Kenema, Makeni and Bo

Annex 3. Declaration of authorship

I hereby declare that I have written this thesis without any help from others and without the use of documents and aids other than those stated above. Furthermore, I have mentioned all used sources and have cited them correctly according to the citation rules defined by the Chair of Microeconomics. Moreover, I confirm that the paper at hand was not submitted in this or similar form at another examination office, nor has it been published before. With my signature I explicitly approve that HHL will use an internet-based plagiarism detector which screens electronic text files and looks for similar pieces on open-access websites as well as similarities in work previously submitted.

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