

The psychological rehabilitation cycle for a CHILD ASSOCIATED WITH ARMED FORCES AND GROUPS

Introduction:

Psychological care is somewhat of a long process for giving support or providing therapy to someone affected by trauma, as a result of various situations which affect him or her physically, emotionally, physiologically and socially, hence requiring a comprehensive response or holistic care.

0. Introduction: Identification criteria

- Cape Town principles for the demobilization of children associated with armed forces and groups.

The category of children to be demobilized must encompass the term “child soldier” in its broadest sense, as laid down by the official document of the 1997 Cape Town Principles in South Africa. According to that approach, the term “child soldier” denotes any person under 18 years of age who is part of a regular or an irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, messengers, and anyone accompanying such groups, other than family members.

The definition includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and for forced marriage. It does not, therefore, refer only to a child who is carrying or has carried arms.

Criteria (continued)

- EAFGAs: Children Associated with Armed Forces and Groups. The category of children to be documented must encompass the term “child soldier” in its broadest sense, as laid down by the official document of the 1997 Cape Town Principles in South Africa. According to that approach, the term “child soldier” denotes any person under 18 years of age who is part of a regular or an irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including cooks, porters, messengers, girls recruited for sexual purposes and for forced marriage and anyone accompanying such groups, other than family members.

1st Stage:

The IDTR process:

I: Identification

D: Documentation

T: Tracing (family tracing)

R: Reunification of family or community (CTO)

Stage II: Psychological care, taking into account pre-defined criteria

- ☐ Psychological counselling
- ☐ Psychological aftercare
- ☐ Psychological assistance
- ☐ Mediation
- ☐ Reunification
- ☐ Socio-economic/educational reintegration
- ☐ Family and social/community reintegration

Psychological counselling

- ON MEETING THE VICTIM
- The service provider or psychosocial assistant starts by:
- Greeting the survivor courteously;
- Putting him or her at ease;
- Ensuring that he or she is seated comfortably;
- Introducing him- or herself to the person;
- Using the language which the survivor speaks;
- Giving reassurances about confidentiality;
- Ascertaining the survivor's identity;
- Identifying his or her problem without commenting;
- Understanding his or her expectations; and
- Setting out the options for care without affecting the person's choice.

Psychological counselling (continued)

Definition: To listen means to take in and to accept what the other person is telling us for his or her own reasons.

It is also the ability to rephrase and summarize what that person is saying.

- 1.2. COMPONENTS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELLING

- There are generally three components to counselling:

- A. The event (the factual account)

- The victim speaks about or recounts what happened to him or her in the course of the incident, allowing the psychosocial worker or therapist to find out what exactly occurred and to immerse him- or herself in the situation.

- B. The feelings

- The victim or traumatized person speaks about his or her feelings, allowing the psychosocial worker to explore the distressing emotions and the fear voiced and to identify the person's needs.

- C. The repercussions

- The therapist delves into and analyzes past traumatic events in order to dispense holistic care.

Psychological aftercare

In the course of psychological aftercare, appointments are scheduled by mutual agreement with the client to assess the therapy. At this stage, the person is seen on a regular basis, with frequent consultations entailing individual therapy (interview with a psychologist) and group therapy (support group and group debriefing) to talk about traumatic experiences.

Psychological assistance

- ASSISTANCE

There are a number of buzzwords for psychological assistance: help, support, care, to guide, to encourage, to treat, to go forward together, to aid...

- Assistance denotes a non-directive approach, meaning that the traumatized person or victim is actively involved in choosing the solution, i.e. proposals and suggestions are made, but the decision is not taken for the person. The victim is given the opportunity to have a part in solving the problem so he or she can bounce back.
- In sum, assistance is a gradual process.

Mediation

Mediation is one of a number of alternative solutions aimed at settling disputes through negotiation between the parties to a conflict, so that they reach an amicable settlement with the help of a third party tasked with facilitating dialogue and communication between them, and with helping them to find a solution which is in the interests of all parties.

Mediation (continued)

The process aims to:

- restore harmony within the family or community and relationships which have been shattered by the incident which affected the parties;
- give both parties peace of mind in their families and their communities;
- heal the internal wounds of both parties to the conflict;
- provide psychosocial support as part of the care provided to both parties (the focal point does not take the side of the victim or the perpetrator);
- pre-empt instances of rejection by society or the family, or of violence;
- open up new possibilities for family and community life through support in the form of advice; and
- foster the integration of the parties into their family and social environment.

The stages of mediation

The mediation process

The session is introduced to the conflicting parties:

The mediator sets out the mediation agreement accordingly and offers mediation sessions, which are attended by all parties to the conflict. Family mediation, however, requires several stages before reaching a solution which suits the interests of all parties.

The process generally consists of four stages:

1. Group session bringing together the conflicting parties;
2. Private and individual meetings;
3. Exchange of offers and demands;
4. Final meetings.

Reunification

After mediation, the facilitators/social workers and the psychologist may reunite the child or young person with his family; this stage will require managing behaviour because distressing emotions may arise (crying, running away, rejection, stigmatization....)

Socio-economic reintegration

- ❖ Participatory identification of IGA [income-generating activity] needs
- ❖ Facilitators guide and involve beneficiaries in their choice of IGA
- ❖ Learning a trade or building capacity; may last six [months] to one year
- ❖ Training in business plans, management tools
- ❖ Distribution of kits
- ❖ Follow-up and assistance after they are distributed;
- ❖ Coaching in capacity building
- ❖ Information about joining the *Muso*

Socio-economic reintegration (continued)

- The following subjects were covered in training, as was the concept of entrepreneurship and IGA management:
- The “five fingers” of a successful income-generating activity
- To illustrate the five vital ingredients of a good IGA, let us consider a hand, with, of course, five fingers; each finger represents a different component which improves the activity. It is just a matter of remembering that each finger represents a different component.
- **PRODUCT:** What are you going to sell. How to ensure the necessary quantity and quality?
- **LOCATION:** Where are you going to put your IGA?
- **PROMOTION:** How are you going to attract and keep your customers?
- **PRICE:** The price needed to cover costs, reinvest in the activity and generate income?
- **PROTECTION:** Which management strategies are used to minimize losses and inefficiency?
- The following *modus operandi* encompasses the stages corresponding to five fingers of a hand:
- How to select the product? By analyzing the settings: cultural customs, eating habits and the local market, suppliers, potential customers, personal acquaintances, etc.

Socio-economic reintegration (continued)

- How to decide the business's location? By analyzing the needs of families at the markets in town, near schools with other traders, etc.
- How to promote a product? By displaying notices, by establishing a good customer base and asking customers to tell their friends, by giving discounts from time to time, by offering more than competitors, by advertising on the radio, etc.
- How to set prices? (By performing a cost-benefit analysis), looking at competitors, analyzing product demand, identifying the profit margin, etc.
- How to protect your activity? By developing a management system: keeping accounts, stock-taking, keeping money in a safe deposit-box, by ensuring the business is sustainable, etc.

Socio-economic reintegration (continued)

- Risks and opportunities associated with an IGA:
- What is a risk? An event or circumstance outside of a person's control which may stall or impede the activity.
- We give examples of risks which may be associated with small businesses: war, fire, looting, lack of raw materials, lack of customers at the market, lack of financial means for purchases, lack of good management, etc.
- What is an opportunity? A possibility which contributes to the success of the IGA.
- We explain and give examples of opportunities associated with small businesses: dues paid by members, access to loans (see, for example, MUSO [community-based savings and credit group]), the development of new markets, innovative products and activities, improvement of the IGA: (in the range of products to be sold), particularly for the purpose of flexibility and to adjust to the pace of the socio-economic situation.

Family and social/community reintegration

This stage is the decision to return to the family and community, which always tends to entail rejection as a result of the behaviour of the former EAFGAs, who have become accustomed to killing, stealing, raping and being prostituted.

We also run community therapy sessions to rebuild the community's trust in the EAFGAs.

We also discern a change from a social point of view because they are able to be of benefit to their family and community through the IGAs they have been given. They are able to marry and even pay the dowry and support their family, which marks a change. We can say that the person has recovered or has, in a psychological sense, been rehabilitated and that reintegration has been successful.

Conclusion

Psychotherapy for former EAFGAs can last **three years at the most** but can also take longer, depending on the individual victim's resilience.

In sum, the provision of psychological assistance to young people associated with armed forces and groups is very complex because of a number of discernible behavioural disorders, such as drug and alcohol dependency and hypersexuality.