

UNICEF DRC

**Evaluation Report
2007-2011 Programme for the Reintegration of
Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups in the DRC**

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Abbreviations

ADB	African Development Bank
ADF-NALU	Allied Democratic Forces – National Army for the Liberation of Uganda
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CAAFAG	Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups
CBCPN	Community-Based Child Protection Network
CNDP	<i>Congrès national pour la défense du peuple</i> [National Congress for the Defence of the People]
CPA	child protection agency
CPWG	Child Protection Working Group
CRB	<i>Croix Rouge de Belgique</i> [Belgian Red Cross]
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EUSEC	European Union Security Sector Reform Mission DRC
FAC	<i>Forces Armées du Congo</i> [Armed Forces of the Congo]
FARDC	<i>Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo</i> [Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo]
FDLR	<i>Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Rwanda</i> [Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda]
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IGA	income-generating activity
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISF	Integrated Strategic Framework
IU-NDDRP	Implementation Unit of the National DDR Programme
ISSSS	International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MDRP	Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme
MONUC	United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MONUSCO	United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MRM	Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism
NCDDR	National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
NDDRP	National DDR Programme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NODR	National Office for Demobilization and Reintegration
RCD	<i>Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie</i> [Rally for Congolese Democracy]
RWP	Rolling Work Plan
SCUK	Save the Children UK
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SSR	Security Sector Reform
STAREC	Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan for War-Affected Areas
STD	sexually transmitted disease

TPCC	Technical Planning and Coordination Committee
TPO	Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN IDDRS	United Nations International DDR Standards
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VC	vulnerable children
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank

Executive Summary

This report documents the results of an evaluation of UNICEF's programme on the reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups between 2007 and 2011. The evaluation was conducted in Kinshasa and in the provinces of Equateur, Ituri and North Kivu in June-July 2011.

UNICEF's role has changed considerably since 2007, owing to the suspension of the operations of the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR) between July 2007 and the end of 2008 – when it was reorganized as the Implementation Unit of the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (IU-NDDRP) – and the end of direct Special Project Funding under the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (MDRP). To cover needs, UNICEF has bridged the gap left by the withdrawal of international NGOs, as well as leading and coordinating the activities. Even when the IU-NDDRP resumed operations in 2009, with a much reduced staff and infrastructure, it no longer had the capacity to coordinate the activities for children, or to run the operational side for children. Once again, UNICEF had to scale up its direct and indirect involvement, without, however, being in a position to significantly influence the approaches.

According to UNICEF's database, in June 2011, 32,804 children had been registered as released from armed forces and armed groups.

Owing to a combination of factors – the agreement between UNICEF and the IU-NDDRP (which indirectly restricted UNICEF to the scope of the NDDRP); the limited number of specialized local and international agencies; the chronic shortage of UNICEF child protection specialists (especially in eastern DRC); and the changing geopolitical and strategic situation in the country – the recommended approaches have still not been fully implemented.

Consequently, UNICEF has not fully played its role in ensuring that the DDR process or a parallel informal process protects children's rights more effectively. Areas for particular improvement include:

- in North Kivu, efforts to reach children (especially girls) released from armed forces and armed groups who do not go through the formal demobilization process;
- the design and use of the child database jointly managed by UNICEF and the IU-NDDRP; despite UNICEF's efforts, the database is more useful for donor reporting than for analysis or programme-planning purposes;
- the inclusion of vulnerable children in the projects to ensure a protective environment for all children;
- the types of support for socio-economic reintegration, which should be holistic and less standardized, tailored to the situation of each child and designed for long-term reintegration;

- advocacy against child recruitment and use by the armed forces (FARDC) and armed groups.

On the operational side, the evaluation found that support for local NGOs has yielded more conclusive results than support for international NGOs, offering:

- More sustainability
- More community-based approaches
- Higher-quality reintegration assistance

However, a shortage of staff in the east of the country considerably reduces the quality of projects (little monitoring and weak coordination, which creates a certain ambivalence between other actors' expectations and their wariness).

Given the scaling-back of the IU-NDDRP, the international community's withdrawal from the issue (to focus on recovery and reconstruction instead) and the Government's increasingly vehement denial of child recruitment by the FARDC, the situation cannot be considered resolved:

- child recruitment and use persists, including by the FARDC;
- reintegration assistance has yielded few results, since many children released from armed forces and armed groups via formal or informal processes are not reached by the programmes;
- child recruitment and use persists, including by the FARDC;

The evaluation makes recommendations on the political, institutional, operational and strategic aspects of the programme.

On the political front, UNICEF should intervene at the highest level, for example through the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) Task Force, and team up with other influential actors to engage in advocacy, in particular to urge the Government to commit to drafting and implementing an action plan in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions 1539, 1612 and 1882 on the elimination of child recruitment and use by armed forces and armed groups. On the institutional front, from October 2011, the IU-NDDRP will no longer have funding or a department for children. UNICEF and the IU-NDDRP need to discuss a transitional arrangement with other ministries to ensure harmonization, monitoring and oversight of the all the actors, in particular the political and military authorities, to ensure compliance with the procedures in the official process for the verification and release of children. Special attention should be given to the future of the database, to ensure that the information it contains will not be used against the children and their families.

On the operational front, UNICEF should be able to resume leadership of the protection agencies, assisting the ministry or ministries that will take over from the IU-NDDRP and provide coordination aimed at seeking solutions to the challenges facing the programme and reviewing the procedures, together with capacity-building for the operational actors.

That discussion and readjustment should involve all the actors and be national in scope but with a special focus on the east of the country, because that is where most children are recruited and released currently. Having staff dedicated to that task would be welcome.

The new approach of supporting local NGOs clearly reflects the lessons learned from past years. That choice should be followed through with training and coaching in administrative management and technical aspects for international and national NGOs that have developed expertise, and support for child protection agencies (CPAs) that can conduct field monitoring and oversight.

To strengthen the programme as a whole, staff capacity needs to be strengthened and updated; experience capitalization and dissemination of lessons learned; seeking longer-term funding, which is more appropriate for reintegration assistance and prevention work; monitoring and evaluation of the programme and its impact; and improving the database for programme planning by expanding it to cover to all actors and other vulnerable children.

On the strategic front, the Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan for War-Affected Areas (STAREC) should not eclipse the need to maintain prevention and response actions against child recruitment and use by armed forces and armed groups in the DRC.

Therefore, alongside a continuing emergency response programme, the issue of the reintegration of children released from armed forces and armed groups should be incorporated into the broader Protective Environment Framework of UNICEF's Child Protection section.

- The procedures of the operational framework on children should be reviewed and continue to apply to the release of children (maintaining a government authority and child protection procedures and rules);
- Reintegration should gradually be incorporated into the broader programme developed by the Child Protection section, in particular the "protected communities" approach, which would enable longer-term monitoring and actions to benefit other vulnerable children;
- Building a protective environment facilitates prevention, but more advocacy towards donors is required to increase the quotas of vulnerable children eligible for the projects.

Introduction

This report documents the results of an evaluation of UNICEF's programme on the reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups between 2007 and 2011. The evaluation was conducted in Kinshasa and in the provinces of Equateur, Ituri and North Kivu in June-July 2011.

More specifically, while taking into account political, security and economic developments, the strengths and weaknesses of all the actors involved, and the need to continue to support children affected by conflict, this evaluation pursues two aims: (1) to measure progress in the reintegration of children and against the recommendations of the previous evaluation; and (2) to establish a baseline for the next two-year cycle of the programme.

The programme's relevance is assessed in terms of its place in the socio-political and institutional context, partnership choices, and changed needs since the previous evaluation.

The programme's impact – which should be measured by prevention and reduction of child recruitment and use by armed forces and armed groups, and by the effective reintegration of the children – remains hard to measure, for want of evaluation tools and mechanisms. Some indicators nevertheless emerge from the interviews and meetings with beneficiaries.

The effectiveness and efficiency of the programme are evaluated in terms of the numbers of children reached and their characteristics, the activities implemented, the successes and failures, and the opportunities and obstacles and the solutions adopted to overcome them.

The programme's sustainability is viewed from the perspective of programme planning, namely the incorporation of the programme into the broader child-protection approach alongside the continuance of an emergency response capacity.

After an introduction on the methodology used, the report presents an overview of the socio-political and institutional context in which the programme has been operating thus far and the activities implemented by UNICEF and its partners.

The report then reviews and analyses the activities, strategies and approaches, identifying the lessons learned from experience.

Lastly, the evaluation makes general and specific recommendations for the next cycle of the programme.

Methodology

According to the terms of reference for the evaluation, "the expected outcomes of the CAAFAG programme defined in the RWP and AWP since 2007 shall be the basis for the evaluation of progress achieved".

Expected outcomes of the country AWP 2011-2012: PCR: By the end of 2012, the children and their families will have better access to quality social, legal and protection services through strengthened national and community mechanisms / IR 5.5 In situations of humanitarian emergency and violence, girls, boys and women affected by conflict and violence receive/benefit from an appropriate response and have their rights guaranteed / Indicator: percentage of children associated with armed forces and armed groups identified who are reintegrated (G:B)

Activities and approaches evaluated

The activities and approaches covered by the evaluation (in agreement with UNICEF when the methodological plan was submitted) are those inherent in any programme on the prevention and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups, specifically:

- **Activities aimed at the prevention of child recruitment:** advocacy; the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on grave violations committed against children in times of armed conflict; working/negotiating with armed forces and armed groups; contributing to the fight against impunity; community capacity-building to reduce child recruitment;
- **Activities at the various stages in the release and reintegration process:** identification/verification procedures; release/separation; interim care; family tracing and reunification; social, community and economic reintegration assistance, and school enrolment or informal education;
- **Activities designed to make the programme more operational:** situation analyses or (individual and collective) estimates; monitoring and evaluation; data collection and management; capacity-building and support for actors; developing tools; harmonizing approaches; coordination; mobilizing actors (building networks); funding modalities;
- **Activities to reach and respond to the needs of children who require special attention:** girls, children who have self-released, etc.

In accordance with the terms of reference of the evaluation, child, family and community participation and gender inequality were taken into account across all the activities.

Data evaluated

Although the effective reintegration of the children is the main goal of the interventions, monitoring of UNICEF's programme has so far focused on delivery of the programme activities (i.e. programme outputs), typically counting the number of children who have had access to one or more services and the number of activities delivered. No monitoring/evaluation tool or system has been set up to measure the impact of the activities (i.e. the reintegration of the children released from armed forces and armed groups – as programme outcomes) by assessing the children's situation after the delivery of the services.

Moreover, as can be seen in the chapter on monitoring and evaluation, the quantitative data on the activities implemented and the numbers of children reached vary widely, depending on whether they come from IU-NDDRP or from UNICEF, and even between different UNICEF sources, which considerably reduces their reliability.

Consequently, in the absence of wholly reliable, systemized, data,

- to assess the implementation of the activities, the evaluation handles with caution the figures provided and relies on those that seem the least questionable;
- to assess the impact of the activities, the evaluation is based on qualitative data from monitoring reports by UNICEF and partners, and on interviews and focus groups with beneficiaries, partners and other relevant actors.

Data collected by the evaluation

After a document review (of UNICEF programmes and annual reports, the most recent donor proposals and studies), field data were collected – with UNICEF’S approval when the methodological plan was submitted – through project visits in Equateur, Ituri and North Kivu Provinces, semi-structured interviews and discussion groups (see annexed schedule of visits and meetings).

Document review:

- UNICEF programmes (RWPs and AWP), donor proposals, implementing partners’ projects and the operational framework of the NDDRP: to gain an understanding of the programme as a whole and the various projects connected to it, so as to determine the scope of the evaluation and to assess their relevance in the light of the national and provincial contexts.
- Monitoring reports, implementing partners’ reports, internal UNICEF reports and donor reports: to assess the scope of the activities and the results reported by UNICEF and its partners. These documents were compared with the accounts of the beneficiaries and actors and with observations during the field visits.
- Documents (studies, guidelines, etc.) relating to the approaches and the coordinating and reporting mechanisms (CPWG, MRM, etc.), whose purpose is to make the programme more operational: to assess the relevance and technical quality of the programme and the actors’ capacity to adjust their approaches to enhance effectiveness.
- Monitoring and evaluation tools used by UNICEF, the implementing partners and other actors (partners’ evaluation questionnaires, monitoring reports, UNICEF database, etc.): to evaluate the extent and quality of monitoring and evaluation of the projects currently run by UNICEF and its partners.

Project visits in Equateur, Ituri and North Kivu. Those provinces were chosen – in consultation with the post-conflict emergency officer in Kinshasa – because of the scale of recruitment there, the diversity of approaches, the locations of partners’ interventions (rural and urban), and the available time. The visits were an opportunity to:

- meet beneficiaries (children, families, members of community networks) to hear their perception of the situation and their evaluation of the success or failure of the activities to reintegrate children and/or prevent recruitment, and the impact of the activities on their situation;
- observe interim care (interim care centres and foster families) and training activities (no other activity in progress could be observed) to observe the conditions in which the staff from the implementing agencies work and the way some of the activities are conducted and to gain an idea of the attitude of staff towards beneficiaries and other actors;
- gather information about the vulnerability of the children and on any other issue that affects their environment (geopolitical, institutional, socio-economic, etc.).

Meetings/interviews (semi-structured) at the national and provincial levels:

- With the heads and staff of the implementing agencies, to know and understand their approaches. For each activity, questions were asked about: the modalities and conditions of implementation; the resources used; the reasons some approaches were prioritized over others; impact, successes, failures, opportunities, obstacles, and potential solutions to improve effectiveness and efficiency in terms of success and needs coverage. Questions were also asked about the quality of the support received from UNICEF for their activities and any other support they benefit from (funding, training, coordination, etc.);
- With the government partners, technical entities and other stakeholders, to know and understand the roles and responsibilities of each, their interests in and perspectives on the issue, the other projects and their connection and possible complementarity with UNICEF's programme. Questions were also asked about the terms of partnership and coordination with UNICEF and other partners: successes, challenges and suggestions.

Discussion groups:

- Meetings were held with mixed groups of children (girls and boys at all stages of the reintegration process, including children several years after delivery of the services) to hear their perception of the projects targeting them; assess the extent of their participation in the various stages of the process; and identify/draft, in a participatory manner, indicators of the impact of the activities, in particular the reintegration activities.
- Meetings were held with staff members who work at all levels of intervention to record the lessons learned from experience and check their understanding of the project and the programme as a whole, and to identify/develop, in a participatory manner, indicators of the impact of the activities, in particular the reintegration activities.

Method used to assess the activities and approaches

The assessment of activities and approaches was based on a comparison of the accounts of the beneficiaries met, the reports released by the partners, the tangible results shown and described by the partners during visits, and the discourses of other actors intervening on the issue. The situation of children released from armed forces and armed groups was compared with that of the other children in the community to assess the impact of the reintegration activities.

With the partners, the relevance of the choices made was examined in terms of the arguments presented, and the effectiveness of their activities was assessed in terms of the successes they were able to demonstrate. Moreover, their capacity to adapt their projects as the situations have changed was assessed, as well as their vision of the future, and their self-sufficiency (in terms of resources, skills, integration into the environment).

With the beneficiaries, their history from recruitment to present was covered, with the aim of determining their perception of the situation, the existence and effectiveness of any assistance they received at each stage of the process, the impact of that assistance, their level of satisfaction, the obstacles and challenges they face and their suggestions.

The quality and relevance of the assistance provided to the beneficiaries was observed during the visits, in particular the conditions offered, staff attitudes and behaviour, the appropriateness of the services offered and the living conditions of the population.

1- What has been done

This evaluation covers the UNICEF programme since 2007, but it is worth remembering that child protection agencies, UNICEF chief among them, began to implement prevention and response programmes on child recruitment and use by armed forces and armed groups in the DRC in 1997, in the context of successive conflicts, which continue to this day, primarily in the east of the country.

To better understand UNICEF's interventions since 2007 and the framework within which they are delivered, below is a brief history of the actions implemented in the DRC.

1.1 Different types of intervention depending on the geopolitical context, the CPAs present and the availability of funding

Between 1997 and 2004: ad hoc interventions and drafting of the NDDRP

Between 1997 and 2002, activities included advocacy and awareness-raising, as well as removal/release, interim care, family reunification and reintegration assistance in various forms, covering roughly 2,000 children. Those activities represented the implementation of government pilot programmes and commitments made under peace and ceasefire agreements (from the Lusaka Accord in 1999 to the Sun City Accord in 2003), but were also the product of ad hoc negotiations with armed forces and armed groups, evacuations

during epidemics, and parents' advocacy to secure the release of their children. Five milestones are:

- May 2000: The Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie [Rally for Congolese Democracy] in Goma (in the east of the country) issued a decree banning the recruitment of children under 18 and undertaking to demobilize children among their troops.
- June 2000: Decree-law 066 was signed on the demobilization and reintegration of vulnerable groups serving in combatant forces in the DRC.
- 13 January 2001: The National Office for Demobilization and Reintegration (NODR), a government coordinating body for the demobilization and reintegration process, was established by an order issued by the Ministry of Human Rights. The order was revoked a few months later to make the NODR an inter-ministerial body overseen by the Ministry of Defence as well as by the Ministry of Human Rights.
- March 2001: The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child were signed.
- June 2001: The Government announced interim measures to stop the recruitment of children under 18 by the FAC, to stop children under 18 being sent to the frontline, and to stop the use of children for purely military tasks, including weapons handling.

In 2003, in fulfilment of the Sun City Accord, the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme (NDDRP) was drafted by the Technical Planning and Coordination Committee (TPCC), and the presence of international NGOs that intended to implement activities targeting CAAFAGs intensified.¹ Between 2003 and 2004, under UNICEF's leadership, all of the child protection agencies that were supporting release, interim care and family reunification activities for children under the "interim" demobilization programme developed a consultation framework and coordination systems that would operate under the NDDRP. UNICEF was then given responsibility for coordinating the participatory drafting of an "operational framework on children" that would be incorporated into the NDDRP. This included standards and procedures for all actors, an awareness-raising programme, a coordination mechanism, a system for training CPA staff, and preparation of rapid-response teams.

Between 2004 and 2006, implementation of the NDDRP: the period with the highest demobilization of ex-combatants

In 2004, the NCDDR, which had taken over responsibility for coordinating the activities for children from the TPCC and UNICEF, was put in charge of monitoring compliance with the rules and procedures, and responding to the needs of children in geographical areas not covered by international NGOs. A division of NCDDR was given specific

¹ By the end of 2004, Save the Children, the IRC, CARE, IFESH, the CRB, COOPI, World Vision International, War Child UK and War Child Holland were present, as well as a large number of local NGOs working in partnership with those agencies.

responsibility for children, and local offices of NCDDR were opened in some regions of the country.

In early 2005, the NDDRP, combined with a programme to integrate combatants into the regular armed forces, began in earnest. According to the IU-NDDRP, some 186,000 out of an estimated total of 300,000 combatants went through the process during the first phase (between 2005 and mid-2007). Of that number, some 102,000 were demobilized (including 27,000 children) and 84,000 were integrated into the FARDC. During the same period, some 79,000 FARDC soldiers were sent to the eastern provinces and there were an estimated 20,000 combatants in armed groups that did not have access to the demobilization or the integration processes who retained children in their ranks.²

From then on, the child protection agencies mainly implemented interim-care and family-reunification activities for children, prioritizing collective social and community reintegration activities, with very few activities supporting individual socio-economic reintegration. The majority of the activities were funded by the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) managed by the World Bank (special projects), as was the NCDDR for the whole NDDRP.

- In March 2006, according to a DAI evaluation funded by the World Bank, 21,827 children had been released (of which 3,538 girls), including 10,732 by UNICEF, 17,305 children had been reunited with their families, 604 had completed the process, and 12,511 were in the process of reintegration. We can thus see that the reintegration activities had barely begun by that date. The majority of the children reunited with their families were still waiting for the reintegration activities they had been promised as beneficiaries of the NDDRP.
- In December 2007, according to IU-NDDRP statistics, under the programme 30,594³ children had been released from armed forces and armed groups. Of them, 23,060 had been reunited with their families, 16,722 had benefited from economic reintegration assistance, 6,531 were enrolled in school and 10,191 had received training. IU-NDDRP estimated that 6,000 children were waiting for reintegration assistance activities.

Alongside the response programmes, a Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on grave violations committed against children in times of armed conflict was established (in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions 1539 and 1612) in late 2005 under the joint responsibility of UNICEF and MONUC. An official launch took place with the Government in 2006, and the first report was submitted in 2006.

Between 2007 and 2010: persistence and re-emergence of localized conflicts, rapid integration of armed groups, and a decrease in actors and resources

Since 2007, despite the NDDRP and military integration, various conflicts have emerged, persisted or intensified. The main ones are: the conflict with the Congrès national pour la défense du peuple [National Congress for the Defence of the People] (CNDP) and the continuing presence of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda [Democratic

² Figures supplied by the IU-NDDRP during the evaluation.

³ According to the UNICEF database, 16,903 children had been released by the end of 2006 and 19,995 by the end of 2007.

Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda] (FDLR) and the Mai-Mai militias in the Kivus; the appearance of Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) groups in northern Orientale Province (especially in Haut-Uélé); the persistence of militias in Ituri, despite the arrests of Thomas Lubanga in 2006 and Germain Katanga and Ngudjolo Mathieu in 2007; and the clashes between communities in Kungu territory in Equateur in 2009. Those conflicts continue to drive child recruitment, create areas of insecurity and trigger mass population displacements, hampering reintegration activities.

In July 2007, NCDDR was dissolved and superseded by the IU-NDDRP, which went through restructuring until the end of 2008. Several international NGOs withdrew during that time, notably the IRC from Ituri, and CARE from Maniema. UNICEF therefore resumed the leadership and coordination of the child protection agencies, with key partners (chiefly SCUK, IFESH and MONUC) in regions where UNICEF was not present. UNICEF also provided funding for several strategic partners (CRB, IFESH and SCUK) after the end of MDRP funding for NGOs. In terms of programme content, to compensate for some of the shortcomings of the previous period, UNICEF emphasized individual reintegration assistance for the children who had been waiting since demobilization, while continuing to respond to the care, family tracing and reunification needs of newly released children. According to the UNICEF database, 2,792 children were released in 2007 and 3,185 in 2008.

In late 2008-early 2009, the IU-NDDRP began operating in earnest and a number of demobilization activities resumed with the launch of an accelerated military integration process. That process made it possible to identify and release a large number of children from armed groups (some 1,300 children were separated from armed groups between January and March 2009, and 2,792 over the whole year of 2009, according to the UN MRM database).⁴ At the same time, however, the process missed many children: owing to a lack of planning, the child protection agencies were not informed in time and consequently were not present at all of the screenings. Some children, who were released/separated subsequently, reported that the commanders of the disbanded armed groups had kept them hidden. Moreover, the accelerated military integration actually triggered a new wave of child recruitment, owing to the absence of a system of mixing troops and commands in the FARDC and to the armed groups' push to swell their ranks in order to gain more leverage and negotiate higher ranks for their members.

As a result of the restructuring, the IU-NDDRP – now under the direct control of the Ministry of Defence (and no longer under inter-ministerial responsibility as NCDDR had been) – had to operate with far fewer resources and capacities than NCDDR. Reneging on their commitments, the DRC Government and the ADB did not contribute any resources to the IU-NDDRP, which effectively became an implementing agency for the World Bank's programme, taking no initiatives beyond that programme. In particular, the IU-NDDRP set up a database whose sole function is to report on the programme's activities; the department specialized in children was integrated into an IU-NDDRP division for vulnerable persons; and the provincial-level child focal points were abolished. At the same time, the withdrawal of international NGOs continued, with the pullout of the CRB, War Child and IFESH. The IU-NDDRP, which no longer had the capacity to run operations for children, signed an agreement with UNICEF to implement its activities targeting children.

⁴ Source: Proposal to the Swedish Government (May 2010).

In 2010, despite the persistence of child recruitment, especially in the east of the country, UNICEF suspended its partnership with Save the Children UK – one of the biggest partner NGOs in the area – because of problems with fund management and programme implementation. As a result, SCUK pulled out of some regions and activities were severely hampered, especially in the Kivus and Ituri. Those activities had only just resumed at the time of this evaluation, implemented by local NGOs that had been partners of SCUK and are now partnered with UNICEF.

Given the immense needs, some international NGOs have appeared or reappeared. Their activities are focused not only on CAAFAGs but also on protection and community reintegration of the most vulnerable children, in particular girls who had been victims of sexual violence. They are TPO in South Kivu, the International Criminal Court (ICC) in Ituri, World Vision International and War Child UK in North Kivu – to mention only those of which this evaluator was aware. In North Kivu, the ICRC, in addition to the family tracing and reunification work it has been doing since 2004, also plans to develop a small-scale programme of socio-economic reintegration assistance for children released from armed forces and armed groups and other vulnerable children. And the ILO has developed several best practices in economic reintegration for children released from armed forces and armed groups in the DRC, based on its small-scale pilot interventions.

1.2 UNICEF's role

Before the restructuring of NCDDR/IU-NDDRP, which began in July 2007, the World Bank's funds for children in the NDDRP were divided between international NGOs, UNICEF and NCDDR. UNICEF played a fairly conventional role under a partnership agreement with the DRC, primarily providing:

- support for the Government to develop and implement the children-related aspects of the NDDRP and child protection more broadly;
- implementation of operational responses through partners to bridge gaps in needs coverage and experiment with approaches;
- advocacy towards state and international bodies defending the higher interests of children,
- spaces for collaboration and consultation with other actors to make actions more operational: e.g. with the Child Protection section of MONUC; the implementation of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on grave violations committed against children (MRM 1612); and the signing of an agreement with the ICRC on inter-provincial and cross-border family tracing and reunification.

Since 2007, owing to the suspension of the activities of the IU-NDDRP (between July 2007 and the end of 2008) and the end of direct MDRP funding via special projects, UNICEF's role has changed considerably:

- Several international NGOs have withdrawn because of insufficient funding to continue, while others have persisted but have had to scale back their activities. To ensure coverage of needs, UNICEF has had to bridge the gap in funding and build

new partnerships financed by a combination of the Pooled Fund, the national support committees and its own resources.

- In addition to bridging the gaps in terms of response, UNICEF has also had to take over leadership of the activities and coordination with partners such as SCUK, IFESH and MONUC.

In 2009, even when the IU-NDDRP resumed its activities, it was severely weakened in terms of staff and infrastructure and no longer had the capacity to coordinate the activities targeting children or to run the operational side for children. Once again, UNICEF had to increase its direct and indirect involvement, but without being able to influence the approaches:

- In terms of coordination, in 2009 UNICEF had to fund several IU-NDDRP posts with specific responsibility for children in key regions. Also in 2009, a Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) was set up within the Global Protection Cluster and led by UNICEF at the national and provincial levels to coordinate the activities of humanitarian actors (in the Beni area, where there is no UNICEF representation, the CPWG is co-led by SCUK and MONUC). The CPWG was set up to compensate for the weak capacity of the IU-NDDRP, coordinate the child protection agencies and attract resources by incorporating the protection of CAAFAGs into annual humanitarian action plans. But the unclear status of the IU-NDDRP, which is still present and – at least on paper – still in charge of coordinating the process, despite its weaknesses, prevents the CPWG from playing that role at the local level.
- Regarding the implementation of response activities across the country, UNICEF – which was already playing that role in practice – was called on by the IU-NDDRP. But instead of receiving funding directly from the World Bank, UNICEF had to sign an agreement with the IU-NDDRP, which positioned it as the implementing agency of the NDDRP, and thus limited its freedom to take a different approach with the armed forces and armed groups concerned by the NDDRP⁵ from the one prescribed in the programme funded by the World Bank. The agreement also placed UNICEF in an ambiguous position because the IU-NDDRP decided to put UNICEF in charge of all the procedures relating to children, even though it does not have the official authority or legitimacy to do so. The agencies that are not funded by UNICEF have no reason to comply with its guidelines or approaches or to provide it with information, while the military bodies do not have to comply with UNICEF's requests either. Consequently, the actors expect UNICEF to play a role that it is not officially in a position to perform. Furthermore, the actions implemented by the agencies that do not have to report to UNICEF are not overseen by anyone and do not always comply with a harmonized approach (e.g. placement of children in interim care centres, supply of kits and provision of reintegration assistance that do not comply with the standards and procedures defined by the operational framework). Lastly, since the IU-NDDRP now records only the data supplied by UNICEF, the national statistics do not include information about children processed by other agencies.

⁵ NB The NDDRP does not apply to foreign or Congolese children released from the LRA, the ADF-NALU or the FDLR; accordingly UNICEF has more freedom to use the approach it prefers with them.

Approaches

The various approaches to which UNICEF refers appear in the guidelines in national and international documents on the protection of CAAFAGs, in particular the Paris principles and Paris commitments (2007); the United Nations' Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS); and the operational framework on children incorporated into the NDDRP. These approaches include:

- ***The rights-based approach:*** Children should be released from armed forces and armed groups unconditionally (i.e. their release should not be contingent on peace talks, security sector reform, a national DDR programme, etc.). All children released, whether via the official process or by their own means, should be assisted: with reintegration, psychosocial support and security (e.g. if they wish, they must be registered and receive a document certifying their release from armed forces or armed groups signed by the regional military command).
- ***The holistic approach:*** All aspects of the rights of the child should be taken into account. For the child protection agencies, this is reflected in a multi-sector approach and access to basic services and implies a inter-sectoral effort for UNICEF.
- ***Child and community participation:*** Communities can be involved in identifying child beneficiaries of the project and in discussions on community reintegration processes, such as forgiveness ceremonies. The children should be fully involved in defining their reintegration project, evaluating it and readjusting it if necessary, and consulted collectively to monitor and evaluate the programmes and readjust them.
- ***Inclusive approach:*** The programmes should take into account other vulnerable children from the communities affected by the conflict. In general, this approach is a good opportunity to reach girls who do not want to be known as CAAFAGs, which carries discrimination, and to convey the message that the assistance offered is not a reward for ex-combatants.
- ***Community-based approach:*** This involves strengthening community infrastructure and entities that enable community integration, in particular in the programmes in the DRC to support the rehabilitation of schools, centres or playgrounds and community facilities that can facilitate the reintegration of children and youth.
- ***Programme implementation that is always unconditional and has a long-term vision*** from the outset.

1.3 Situation in June 2011

The legal framework of the 2011 programmes is as follows:

- the DRC has signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict;
- the International Criminal Court has been asked to investigate the situation in Ituri and since 2006 has been prosecuting a number of militia leaders for the war crimes of conscripting and enlisting children under the age of 15 and using them to participate in hostilities;
- since 2005, a Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on grave violations committed against children in times of armed conflict has been in place in the DRC under the auspices of MONUC (renamed MONUSCO in July 2010) and UNICEF in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions 1539 and 1612;
- the DRC passed the Child Protection Act in January 2009, which clearly prohibits the (voluntary or forced) recruitment of children under the age of 18 in the national armed forces (article 71).

In geopolitical terms, since the Government decided to end further integration of armed groups into the FARDC, no new demobilization is planned and armed groups are currently considered outlawed. The activities related to the official demobilization of children are therefore likely to considerably decrease, reduced to identification through the last regimentation processes supported by EUSEC.

Despite continuous denunciations in successive reports, the Government, while acknowledging the problem off record, continues to publicly deny the presence of children in the FARDC. The MRM on grave violations committed against children has been in existence since 2006, but no action plan has yet been designed and signed by the Government to end child recruitment and use in armed forces and armed groups despite the support offered by MONUSCO and UNICEF.

Institutionally, the IU-NDDRP will terminate its activities for children before the end of the year. World Bank funding will dry up in September 2011, so the IU-NDDRP will focus on reintegrating adult ex-combatants, with ADB funding. Consequently, the activities for children will no longer be run by the IU-NDDRP. Even if, in accordance with the legal framework for child protection (in particular, the 2009 Child Protection Act), the Government should continue to approve the release of CAAFAGs and care for children released, it will no longer support those actions through the NDDRP, and the regional military commands can probably no longer be relied on to issue demobilization papers in every case. Future institutional arrangements remain unclear, in particular which ministries and departments will take over responsibility for the activities targeting children released from armed forces and armed groups, the child database, and liaison with the military chief-of-staff. UNICEF should be able to recover some room to manoeuvre when it is no longer bound by the agreement with the IU-NDDRP, but will have to identify new interlocutors in the Government to pursue its programme.

Strategically, the specific context of conflict resolution and national recovery offers several frameworks with varying degrees of relevance to the issue:

- the NDDRP, which remains the country's official framework for demobilization, and the operational framework on children⁶ that is part of it and sets forth the standards and procedures for children, in particular the process for separating children from armed forces and armed groups (issuance of release documents, registration, etc.);
- the United Nations' Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF), whose stated objective is "to end the ongoing conflict in the eastern region of the country, to consolidate peace in other areas, and to accelerate the process of national recovery, reform and development";⁷
- the Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan for War-Affected Areas (STAREC), supported by the United Nations' International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS), in the context of which UNICEF developed its Programme of Expanded Assistance for Returnees Plus ("PEAR+"), which aims to support the revitalization of communities to ensure the transition from emergency assistance to rehabilitation and development by supporting sustainable return of displaced persons by providing an integrated assistance package (health, WASH, education and protection);
- peacekeeping, UN Security Council resolutions and the role played by MONUSCO, in particular its Child Protection section, DDRRR section and the conditionality of their support for the FARDC;
- the various programmes to support FARDC integration and training processes and security-sector reform (e.g. EUSEC's support for training and regimentation of the FARDC and MONUSCO's support for the FARDC's operations in the eastern part of the country with some conditionality);
- annual humanitarian action plans implemented in accordance with humanitarian reform;
- the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (2012-2017), in particular stabilization and peacebuilding, which is covering the transition, which should be the framework for the economic, educational and community reintegration activities.

⁶ For foreign children released from Congolese armed groups and all children (Congolese and foreign) released from foreign armed groups (e.g. LRA, FDLR, ADF-NALU), who are not covered by the NDDRP, standards and procedures on care, family tracing and reunification have been developed on the basis of the mandates of agencies such as the ICRC, MONUSCO DDRRR, WFP and UNHCR.

⁷ DRC mid-term review final report, 2010.

The operational situation

In 2010, having learned lessons from past experiences (in particular, a disastrous partnership with the NGO SCUK), taking into account the weaker presence of international NGOs, and eager to ensure more sustainable reintegration of children, UNICEF decided to develop a new type of partnership with local and international NGOs. Chiefly, this consists in funding local NGOs to implement prevention and response activities, and funding international NGOs to strengthen and monitor the local NGOs.

The coordinating void left by the IU-NDDRP will have to be filled, probably by the CPWGs, which are of varying effectiveness in the provinces. Nothing has yet been decided about the ownership of the child database currently managed by the IU-NDDRP under the auspices of the Ministry of Defence.

Currently, programmes for CAAFAGs are running in the provinces of North and South Kivu, Equateur, Ituri, Maniema, Bas-Congo, North Katanga and Western Kasai.

According to UNICEF's data, of the 32,804 children released from armed groups since 2002, 24,823 who are now adults and 6,062 who are still minors have not received reintegration assistance as planned. Considering that data on reintegration assistance delivered to children have only been recorded since 2009, the number of children released from armed forces and armed groups currently "waiting" for the reintegration assistance promised them can be estimated at around 3,000. Moreover, we estimate that roughly 3,000 children are newly recruited each year.

1.4 Some programme statistics

In terms of the number of children released from armed forces and armed groups who have been reached by any programme, the data supplied by the IU-NDDRP differ from those supplied by UNICEF. Furthermore, owing to the recurring problem of duplicate records in the database and other errors of interpretation of the statistics supplied by the partners, even data supplied by UNICEF at different dates are not always consistent, and never match the figures of children released from the 1612 database (see chapter on Information Management).

For example, in June 2010, according to the IU-NDDRP, the total number of children recorded as having been released from armed forces or armed groups was 37,885. But one year later, in June 2011, the UNICEF database gave a figure of 32,804 children released from armed forces and armed groups.⁸

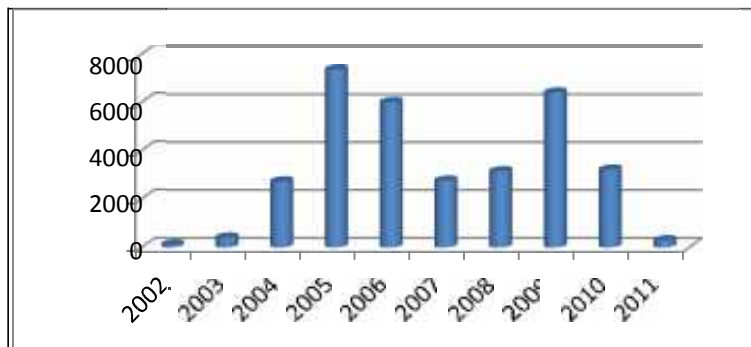
In the absence of comprehensive data from the IU-NDDRP, for the sake of prudence, this evaluation relies on the most recent data updated by UNICEF.

⁸ Statistics supplied for the evaluation by Bosco Simbi Kenda, in charge of the UNICEF database.

UNICEF data supplied in June 2011 on children released and recorded in the database since 2002 across all programmes (these figures do not include children released from the LRA supported by UNICEF and its partners).

Province	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
Bandundu				18	129						147
Bas-Congo			13	44	11	52	130	6			256
Equateur			937	2224	2168	357	363	1	414	7	6471
Western Kasai	2		1	451	1	2	66		157		680
Katanga			73	23	281	15	69	243	121		825
Kinshasa							127	60			187
North Kivu		2	475	902	1032	900	837	3479	1485	275	9387
Orientale		81	790	3535	1989	1331	1541	1896	829	16	12008
South Kivu	119	330	468	244	460	135	52	792	243		2843
Total	121	413	2757	7441	6071	2792	3185	6477	3249	298	32804

Number of children released from armed forces and armed groups recorded since 2002



Partnerships and number of children reached by the projects

To attempt to highlight the changes in activities implemented (in terms of the volume of activities and number of children reached, as well as the partnerships and resources committed), the national office and provincial offices (Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, Equateur) were asked to provide a summary of the projects by partner and by year.

The provincial-level data supplied do not match the country-level data. There may be several reasons for this, such as the fact that, according to the authority table, some projects are processed at the level of the province or area only and not reported to Kinshasa (see chapter on Information Management). Since the data supplied by the provincial offices are more detailed and match the data in the 2011 database more closely (but not exactly because not all the projects run from January to December in the same year), those are the data used in this evaluation (Ituri does not appear because that office did not supply the relevant information).

The table below recapitulates the numbers of children released from armed forces or armed groups and vulnerable children reached by the projects, the budgets and the average timeframes of the projects.

	Number of CAAFAAGs reached	Number of VCs reached	% of VCs reached/ CAAFAAGs	Allocated budget	Cost per activity and per NGO project	Average timeframe of funded projects
2007	2,869	963	33%	USD 3,160,847	USD 825	8 months (3-12 months)
2008	2,822	265	9%	USD 1,111,707	USD 360	7 months (3-12 months)
2009	6,630	629	9.5%	USD 3,260,278	USD 449	7 months (3-12 months)
2010	Approximately 4,500 ⁹	899	25%	USD 4,139,393	USD 919	7 ½ months (2-14 months)
Total	16,821	2,756	17%	USD 11,672,225	USD 694	

Moreover, according to a comparative summary of planned and implemented activities compiled by the manager of the database in 2009 (December 2009 report), between 2007 and 2009 there were approximately 5,000 activities per year that reached about 5,000 CAAFAAGs and 1,000 vulnerable children (VCs).

	Activities targeting CAAFAAGs	Activities that reached CAAFAAGs	Activities targeting VCs	Activities that reached VCs	Total planned activities	Total implemented activities	% of activities implemented
2007-2008	9,169	4,587			9,169	4,587	50%
2008-2009	9,492	4,964	5,541	733	15,033	5,697	38%

⁹ The data in the *Applicatif de Suivi de la Réinsertion* (ASR) [reintegration monitoring application] database entered to date by the partners on the ground indicate 3,571 children. But some partners, like AVREO, AFEDM and MIDIMA, were trained on the database only recently. If we count the children they have supported but not yet entered in the database, the figure is closer to 4,500.

For a more accurate picture of the duration of the partnerships implemented to date, the table below recapitulates the data supplied by the provincial offices. The crosses represent the months covered by a partnership agreement with UNICEF.

NGO	2007	2008	2009	2010
Equateur				
APEE	XXXXXXXX			XXXXXXXX
Caritas Molegbe	XX	XXXXX		
Caritas Basankusu	XXXXXXXXXXXX	XX		
Les Aiglons	XXXXXXXXXX			XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
CRB		XXXXXXXXXX	XXX	
AASD			XXX	XXX XX
North Kivu				
Don Bosco	XXXXXXXX		XXX	XXXX
Caritas Goma			XXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX
CAJED	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXX XXXXXXXX	XXXXX XXXXXXX
SCUK	XXXX XXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	XX
PAMI		XXXXXX		XXX
South Kivu				
BVES	XXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
AVREO		XXX		
AFEDE				XXXXXXXX
MIDIMA			XXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX

Overall funding

The donor proposals and reports to donors since 2009 supplied to the evaluation yield the following information:

Donor	Budget (duration)	Number of beneficiaries	Average cost per beneficiary
Belgian Government	USD 1,351,351 (12 months)	800 beneficiaries	USD 1,689
French Government	USD 1,150,015 (18 months)	6,300 CAAFAGs (4,500 new)	USD 182
EU-NDRP/World Bank	USD 4,700,000 (24 months)	→ 8,000 CAAFAGs (3,000 new)	USD 587
Swedish Government	USD 4,200,000 (24 months)	3,250 CAAFAGs and 3,250 CVs	USD 646
USAID (LRA children)	USD 750,000 (12 months)	6,300 CAAFAGs and 300 VCs	USD 750
Total	USD 12,151,366	22,600 children	USD 537/child beneficiary

2- Policy and programme analysis

The following policy and programme analysis covers four key objectives of UNICEF's programmes targeting CAAFAGs:

- Preventing child recruitment and facilitate the release of children from armed forces and armed groups;
- Supporting children between their release from armed forces and armed groups and their reintegration;
- Reaching and responding to the needs of children requiring special attention: girls, self-released children, etc.;
- Making the programmes more operational.

2.1 Preventing child recruitment and facilitating the release of children

Enabling factors in child recruitment

This section outlines some of the push and pull factors in child recruitment.

Some children are abducted, in particular in areas of ongoing conflict where armed groups remain active (even newly integrated under the banner of the FARDC), and when they had been recruited previously because they represent a "workforce" that is already trained. Depending on the circumstances, they are abducted to perform menial chores (e.g. portering when armed groups are on the move: the youngest children are recruited for that

role) or for military tasks. Girls are abducted as wives, cooks, porters and sometimes also for military tasks. Sometimes children are captured from militias by the FARDC (e.g. in Ituri) and *de facto* incorporated into the regular army. Only a minority of the children released from armed forces and armed groups in 2010 and 2011 reported having been used as combatants; most were used in non-combatant roles, as porters, spies, etc.

Some children enlist voluntarily. The motivating factors that emerged from interviews and studies are:

- Children whose families are unable to look after them because of poverty or family breakdown, and children who have been taken in by extended family that see them as a burden. These children and teenagers are seeking a protective environment;
- Ideological motivations, a sense of duty or feelings of revenge for humiliations or atrocities suffered at the hands of a different ethnic group (especially in Equateur), as well as the influence of peers who already belong to armed groups;
- A lack of educational or economic opportunities: children/teenagers have to leave school and are expected to provide for their families or contribute to family income but do not manage to find a gainful livelihood;
- The appeal of military power and adventure, even though in peacetime a military career tends to be low-status and considered a last resort for people who do not know what else to do;
- Running away from difficult situations (family conflict, forced marriages, being wanted for crime, etc.).

It is worth emphasizing that the vast majority of the children interviewed who had enlisted voluntarily and did not want to demobilize reported that, after they were released and even when they had difficulty reintegrating, they realized that life with armed forces or armed groups was alienating and harsh compared with civilian life. The choice not to re-enlist subsequently depends on the opportunities available to them. The factors in voluntary re-enlistment are therefore highly contingent on the success of their reintegration into the community.

Prevention actions should therefore focus on the two sides of recruitment: the motivations of the children and the communities, and the behaviour of the “recruiters”. This will require, mainly:

- measures to change the practices of armed forces and armed groups: negotiations/training/awareness-raising (e.g. stressing the fact that it is the recruiters who will be held responsible – and consequently punished – for the recruitment of a child, even if the child enlisted voluntarily);
- putting pressure on the perpetrators of recruitment, whether through (national or international) justice systems or through diplomatic pressure (UN Security Council resolutions, MRM, conditionality of donor and UN support for the Government, etc.);

- security measures (issuance of demobilization papers,¹⁰ reunification in areas considered the safest);
- support for the children most at risk of recruitment, including children already released from armed forces and armed groups, to facilitate their socio-economic and community integration or reintegration;
- community-based activities of peace education and rewarding non-violent conflict resolution.

Changing the practices of armed forces and armed groups

During the first phase of the NDDRP, when armed groups were integrated into and combined with the armed forces, they acknowledged broadly that there were children in their ranks and ostensibly complied with the requirements of separation and non-recruitment. Awareness-raising activities for armed forces and armed groups were an important aspect of the programmes at the time and the prospect of integration into the FARDC encouraged all the groups to be cooperative.

Since 2006, **awareness-raising activities** have no longer been part of the planned activities of UNICEF partners that are directly involved with CAAFAGs. Some awareness-raising actions are nonetheless run in collaboration with UNICEF or to complement UNICEF's actions, in particular by MONUSCO and UNHCR within the framework of security sector reform or the Humanitarian Action Plan. However, those activities relate to human rights in general, and do not target children specifically. It is worth stressing that as yet there is no specific awareness-raising activity on the thorny issue of underage girls in armed forces and armed groups.¹¹

More binding legislation, in particular the 2009 Child Protection Act, which sets 18 as the minimum age for voluntary or compulsory enlistment in the FARDC (and provides that the Government must take care of children released from armed forces and armed groups). The few prosecutions to date at the national level (military courts)¹² and international level (the ICC trial on Ituri) have helped strengthen familiarity with those provisions. But the ICC, which indicted Thomas Lubanga in 2006, has still not issued a judgment, and impunity of the warlords remains the rule. Because the conflict is ongoing, armed groups – sometimes now operating under the banner of the FARDC – continue to recruit children. Aware that the practice is prohibited and keen to avoid prosecution, the groups that do report in for the integration process abandon the children – who return to their communities without going through the demobilization process – sometimes re-recruiting them later.

The conditionality of MONUSCO's support for the FARDC is helping to slow child recruitment. MONUSCO maintains a list of perpetrators of violations: if any are included on the staff planned for an operation, MONUSCO will not support the operation. UNICEF

¹⁰ Including for children released from the LRA.

¹¹ At the time of the evaluation, a child-protection module was being developed as part of a project under the sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) pillar of MONUSCO's coordination of Security Sector Reform (SSR). The module is expected to be approved officially by the Ministry of Defence in October 2011.

¹² Only for sexual violence, but still not for child recruitment and use.

pushed for that conditionality during the discussions on the design of the ISF, as reflected in the 2010 mid-term review report: “In the current situation, MONUSCO has a ‘natural’ tendency to prioritize peacekeeping and is not always as aware of the long-term considerations as the members of the United Nations Country Team would have liked. Through continuous high-level engagement with MONUSCO, UNICEF has nevertheless managed to have its mandate firmly incorporated into the ISF. However, UNICEF must ensure that it continues to be heard. In a later phase, when the situation in the DRC has stabilized more durably, UNICEF could play a bigger role in a potential peacebuilding mission.”

Access to combatants during the regimentation process supported by EUSEC (in particular, the issuance of biometric cards to troops integrated into the new brigades) also offers an opportunity to exercise some control over the presence of children, although it remains limited. The senior EUSEC officers, the MONUSCO military commanders and the diplomatic staff at some embassies of countries that support the professionalization of the national armed forces are reluctant to acknowledge the presence of minors in the FARDC, arguing that there are no children on the official lists of the troops registered and issued with biometric cards and that the definition they use is not the same as that used by child protection agencies.

Before the NDDRP and the ISF, some child protection agencies, including UNICEF, made and maintained contact with armed forces and armed groups, which enabled them to raise awareness among the troops and engage in advocacy against child recruitment and for the release of children. However, since the launch of the NDDRP and the integration of the UN agencies under the umbrella of the ISF, those contacts now seem to be “reserved” for MONUSCO, which has the peace and security mandate. But since MONUSCO has not developed satisfactory relations with all of the armed groups, as announced in the 2008 donor proposal to the French Government, UNICEF needs to “expand its contacts with armed groups” to prevent child recruitment and to encourage the release of children. In this regard, the evaluation notes that a Mai-Mai militia in South Kivu agreed in July 2011 to release and transfer the children in their ranks, which was the result of lengthy advocacy work by MONUSCO and UNICEF.

The **MRM on grave violations committed against children**, co-led by UNICEF and MONUSCO (in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1539 and 1612), offers a channel for documenting cases of violations and providing evidence that recruitment and other violations are continuing, even if the actors on the ground do not always report the cases that come to their attention, either because they prioritize response over reporting, or because their presence on the ground shrinks dramatically when their funding is suspended, or because the reporting chain of the MRM is not properly understood – despite frequent training, because of even faster staff turnover – or because some of the information falls below the standard of verification required for inclusion in the MRM 1612. However, despite numerous Security Council injunctions in response to evidence of recruitment by the FARDC, the Government persistently refuses to acknowledge the facts, attributing them solely to armed groups or to individual soldiers. The process of drafting and committing to the implementation of an action plan to end child recruitment in armed forces and armed groups has yet to be initiated by the Government at a high level. Advocacy work has been done via the MRM towards partner embassies (in particular, the French embassy, which supports the Paris principles), the European Union delegation (in connection with the EU Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict), and the EUSEC

command, but with few results, because those actors are only minimally engaged on the issue, in sharp contrast to their international commitments. In particular, the high-level representatives of UNICEF DRC do not appear to have taken any steps to remind the Government of the importance of that commitment.

Moreover, **the Child Protection section does not have regular contact with the military chief-of-staff or the Ministry of Defence.** It was only in February 2011 that the officer in charge of the MRM 1612 initiated collaboration with a colonel from the Civic and Patriotic Education Department (SECP) who represents the Ministry of Defence on a working group on children at the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights (CIDH).¹³ The SECP – which was set up at the the Ministry of Defence in 2004 at the outcome of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue – also liaises with MONUSCO and EUSEC on training for the FARDC (including a project to produce training manuals on “ethical” issues, including child protection); with STAREC on training in the issue of sexual violence; and with the ICRC on issues relating to international humanitarian law. The Child Protection section should establish a framework for regular liaison with the Ministry of Defence/the new departments that will take over from the IU-NDDRP to facilitate access for advocacy.

The fact that UNICEF agreed to report to the IU-NDDPR (which comes under the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence) on the implementation of the CAAFAG programmes demonstrates the its decision to align its activities with the Government’s policies in order to continue to respond to the needs of children released from armed forces and armed groups and to benefit from World Bank funding. However, that position severely restricts UNICEF’s opportunities for advocacy to promote the cause of children outside the rules of the NDDRP, which UNICEF has agreed to apply.

Moreover, within the framework of the UN ISF, MONUSCO should logically be responsible for advocacy towards the Ministry of Defence, because of its privileged relationship with the FARDC chief-of-staff, UNICEF should not leave MONUSCO that “monopoly” because the latter’s mandate is peace and security issues, whereas **UNICEF is the only agency in a position to defend the cause of children, before, during and after MONUSCO.**

Measures targeting children and communities

In the light of the enabling factors in children’s voluntary re-enlistment, **the inclusive approach** provided for in the operational framework on children – which sets forth that educational and economic reintegration activities should target other vulnerable children in the communities – is one of the known ways to prevent the voluntary enlistment of some at-risk children, by restoring a protective environment for them. However, that approach is not applied fully in the UNICEF-backed projects. The project descriptions and statistics show instead that the prevention and reintegration actions include far fewer vulnerable children than children released from armed forces and armed groups. The limited inclusion of other children at risk of recruitment in the communities – which amounts to reserving access to the programmes to children released from armed forces and armed groups and registered as such (considering those children as the priority beneficiaries of the NDDRP)

¹³ Advocacy work began in 2010 with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which co-organized the launch of the MRM in 2006. Before that date, MONUSCO did not allow child protection advisors, who were considered as limited to providing technical assistance, to broach the issue, considered highly political.

– actually spurs recruitment by giving preferential treatment to children and youths released from armed forces and armed groups. That perception is confirmed by the reports that some young people released from armed forces and armed groups feel more entitled to reintegration assistance than the other youths in the community because they have “served” under arms.

Moreover, **a study of re-recruitment** of children who have been through the process could provide valuable insights into the enabling factors in re-recruitment and ways to prevent it. Yet, to date, no such study, based on the experience of child returnees, seems to have been undertaken with a view to improving understanding and tackling the factors in re-recruitment. When demobilized children are registered and provided with documents, the information collected about the circumstances of their re-recruitment is not always recorded or entered into the database for analysis.

Regarding forced recruitment, it has been demonstrated on a number of occasions that **demobilization papers** and an official birth certificate proving that a child is under-age also provide fairly effective protection against re-recruitment (depending on the region and the armed group), especially when those documents are shown as part of advocacy work supported by community leaders or local organizations. The evaluation notes that the regional military commands in contact with MONUSCO, UNICEF and the IU-NDDRP can mostly be relied on to issue demobilization papers, in accordance with the procedures set forth in the NDDRP’s operational framework on children. Despite delays in some areas (especially the far north) where the actors are not present, and the reluctance of some individual commanders, children who are verified and registered are issued with demobilization papers before being reunited with their families and returned to their communities, except children released from the LRA. The children interviewed in Ituri said the certificates were of use, especially against the risk of capture and imprisonment by the FARDC. The evaluation found that in North Kivu self-released children were not registered as CAAFAGs and did not receive demobilization papers that might have helped them. Moreover, no direct link seems to have been established between the civil-status-registration programme and the CAAFAG programme to facilitate the issuance of identity documents proving a child’s age when those documents have been lost or never existed.

Regarding **community mobilization**, the programme evaluation conducted in 2006 highlighted UNICEF’s preference for a community-based approach to the reintegration of CAAFAGs. Even in Equateur, where community-based child-protection networks (CBCPN) seem to be more established and where some community infrastructure has been supported to facilitate the children’s reintegration, there is no tangible evidence of the effectiveness of that approach in terms of prevention. Indeed, although some programmes include community awareness-raising activities, the population’s perceptions of child recruitment and of the role that children should play in families are not always the same as those of the child protection agencies. In particular, the communities may perceive older children (teenagers) as having to provide for themselves and help their families instead of being a “burden”.

Moreover, CAAFAGs, especially when they enlisted voluntarily, are rarely seen as victims; instead they are perceived as (potential) criminals, who will cause trouble in their families and communities (prompting some communities to turn to the child protection agencies for solutions). In this regard, I quote from a monitoring report written by André Moussa, a child protection specialist based in Equateur Province, after he visited Gbadolite

in October 2008: “The commanding officer said he was happy with the intervention because, in his opinion, based on his experience in other provinces, the demobilized children represented less of a danger or a burden”. Given those perceptions, the child protection agencies have little chance of being heard if their discourse is based only on legal provisions that assert children’s vulnerability, which appears far removed from reality for the communities. Capacity-building for communities to reduce child recruitment is therefore less well served by “imposing” conceptions based on a Western interpretation of the rights of the child than by discussions and “negotiations” to reach a common understanding of the dangers and damage caused by the recruitment of children and teenagers by armed forces and armed groups; of the importance of reintegrating those who have been released; and of the role that those children and youths (boys and girls) can play in their communities. Using the testimonies of children and youths and developing activities that give them a voice in their communities are factors that can facilitate those practices.

As a counterweight to the observation made above, the evaluation found that, in communities whose leaders are fully involved in tackling child recruitment – for example, the southern sector of Bunia in Ituri, where the militias are in contact with the communities – the continuous presence of local agencies and the involvement of the communities in child protection committees rolling out activities of integration and interim care (foster families) encourage the prevention of child recruitment and facilitate community reintegration.

Regarding the **safety of the areas to which the children return**, in some cases there have been strong disagreements between the actors when it comes to assessing the level of insecurity in the areas where the children could be reunited with their families, in particular between the ICRC (more cautious), the families and the children (eager to be reunited and less cautious) and local agencies (caught between the two). What emerges from the information collected by the evaluation is that the likelihood of re-recruitment does not depend on only one factor, but on a combination of factors, which include security of the area of return. The decision to reunite a child in a given area should therefore strike a balance between the assessment of the security of the area and the other factors that help protect children, in particular: the opportunities for socio-economic integration; the degree of acceptance by the community of return; and the families’ capacity and intention to protect the children (weaker when children are reunited with extended family rather than with their nuclear family).

Lessons learned:

The discussions with children, families, communities and child protection agencies reveal that voluntary child recruitment and re-recruitment has multiple causes and that the socio-economic situation of the children and their families is a core issue. **Assisting the socio-economic reintegration of children released from armed forces and armed groups and targeting other children at risk of recruitment are therefore key** to prevention work with children and communities.

As for changing the behaviour of armed forces and armed groups, **UNICEF has a major role to play, which should not be sidelined when programmes are incorporated into broader strategies** and not surrendered out of a concern to be able to continue responding

to needs through the programmes. UNICEF needs to accomplish several things at once: ensure its voice is heard at the highest level to defend the cause of children; ensure that the programmes respond effectively to all children and not to the narrower interests of the World Bank; and expand contacts on the ground with armed forces and armed groups, in collaboration with other influential actors, such as MONUSCO, the ICRC, EUSEC and some community leaders.

2.2 Providing support for children between release from armed forces and armed groups and reintegration

The NDDRP's operational framework on children describes the DDR process for CAAFAGs in detail. The main stages of the process are:

- identification and release formalities (including verification, disarmament and registration);
- interim care when necessary;
- family tracing and reunification;
- socio-economic and community reintegration assistance.

Identification and release formalities

The NDDRP reflects two processes through which children are released from or leave armed forces and armed groups:

- Children demobilized as part of broader demobilization of ex-combatants. That process predominated between 2004 and 2006 during the first phase of the NDDRP and in the second phase with the accelerated integration of armed groups. Currently, when no official demobilization or integration procedure is planned (even if Mai-Mai armed groups are still being integrated, for example in Walikale Territory), the only opportunities to demobilize children officially are the regimentation process in the FARDC when EUSEC is present and cases of children captured during fighting between the FARDC and militias and armed groups.
- Children who self-release or self-demobilize or are abandoned by armed groups. Children often run away, for example during fighting, or are abandoned by armed groups, especially under the pressures of fighting, famine or fear of prosecution. Most girls return home in this way and do not wish to be identified as CAAFAGs to avoid being stigmatized. These children usually suffer from rejection, stigmatization, discrimination and vulnerability (risk of re-recruitment) and have difficulty reintegrating. The NDDRP's operational framework on children stipulates that these children can go directly to the official bodies or child protection agencies to be verified, certified and included in programmes.

In general, the evaluation observes that **the official coordination framework has enabled harmonization between all the actors** and facilitated children's access to the programmes

organized for them. Of particular note are the availability of trained verifiers at the partner agencies and the success of the verification methods used, the collaboration between actors, and the transfer of children from demobilization centres to interim care locations.

The evaluation flags **some problems with the combined adult/child process**. Verification is difficult in “mass” demobilization processes, and some adults pass themselves off as children, especially when there are no reintegration programmes for adults. Those behaviours create problems for care because of pressure from adults demanding to receive what they consider their due, and overcrowding in the interim care centres. The combined adult/child process inevitably generates comparisons, frustrations, demands and conflicting messages about the programme for children. When children compare their situation with that of the adults who were demobilized at the same time as them, they see the programme as a reward, and reintegration as a system of handouts for “entitled” beneficiaries.

Current opportunities to identify children are: the integration process where armed groups are incorporated into the FARDC (even if it is now officially suspended); the regimentation process (where EUSEC is present); and training events, such as at the Lukusa centre in Kisangani, or in Kamina. But a degree of resistance within the FARDC (complicated by the absence of a clear chain of command) – and even within EUSEC – to accepting the presence of identification and verification officers requires ongoing advocacy on the part of UNICEF and MONUSCO. As the section on the background to the programmes indicated, large numbers of troops were missed by the process during the first phase of the NDDRP. Moreover, especially since the ICC has brought charges for child recruitment and use, some commanders seem to be abandoning children in order to avoid indictment.¹⁴ Since MONUSCO does not have access to all the armed groups – as indicated in the section on prevention – it is even more necessary for UNICEF to expand its contacts with the armed groups.

The system of issuing demobilization papers to the children before they are reunited with their families has worked well, despite the resistance of some commanders towards whom the agencies (chiefly MONUSCO) are continuing advocacy.

The evaluation found, however, that the agreement between UNICEF and the IU-NDDRP, which delegates all the procedures involving children to UNICEF, is causing some problems in areas where UNICEF is not present and does not have a partnership, and other agencies process the children released from armed forces and armed groups. In the far north, MONUC facilitates the transfer of files between those agencies and UNICEF, but the issuance of demobilization papers takes much longer and delays reunification, and the children are not registered in the database.

¹⁴ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the CRC – RDC – 48th session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child – 23 October 2007, para. 214: “Paradoxically, the progress that has been made in suppressing conscription of children has made it more difficult to take stock of the children still present in various groups involved in the process of reorganization of the army. Fearing that they may be prosecuted for conscripting children, most commanding officers who decide to take part in the reorganization simply abandon the children who were still present in their ranks. This in turn deprives those children of the benefit of social and economic reintegration activities. This has been noted especially in Katanga, South Kivu and Equateur Provinces. It must needs be acknowledged as well that the persistence of zones of fighting increases the risk that children will be conscripted. That is so in Ituri and the Kivu provinces, where there have recently been reports of abduction of some thirty children, including girls.”

Furthermore, when children are relocated – i.e. for reunification with their families in places other than the one where they were demobilized, their files are rarely forwarded between agencies and the children are registered more than once in the database, or have to be re-registered.

In principle, the formal identification, verification, certification and registration mechanism governed by the NDDRP is also available to **children who have self-released** (registration, issuance of demobilization papers, and reintegration assistance). However, according to the IU-NDDRP, if the mechanism were actually applied across the board in the communities where children self-released, the programme would be overwhelmed and would be unable to assist all the children, or even identify which of them had genuinely been associated with armed forces and armed groups. Consequently, the IU-NDDRP instructed the child protection agencies not to undertake proactive identification of those children, but only to respond to requests and needs brought to their attention, and to allow children who are clearly at risk and who have already been verified by the mainstream verification process to be registered and have access to the available assistance.

Whereas in all the other provinces, self-released children have been registered since 2007 – when the child protection agencies devoted more energy to the reintegration of children (identification done with the help of the communities in Equateur, for example) – in North Kivu, the instruction was understood differently, and self-released children were never registered as CAAFAGs, despite their requests and even in situations where they clearly needed support (except for one exceptional case after an advocacy campaign for the children of a whole community). The agencies that identified them therefore could only enable them to have access to reintegration assistance as “vulnerable children”. None of those children were issued with demobilization papers, and the “quotas” of vulnerable children were filled by children self-released from armed forces and armed groups, further restricting access to assistance for girls who do not want to identify as CAAFAGs. Moreover, estimates based on the number of children registered in the database have been even more wrong because they do not reflect the reality of the issue and needs.

Another problem with identification and demobilization through formal processes is the **impossibility of reaching girls**. An examination of comparative statistics of boys and girls shows that only in Ituri Province is there some equality of access, thanks to the proactive approach of the NGO COOPI, which runs targeted activities for child mothers in need of support and vulnerable girls in the communities. Many studies have shown that girls, who are usually rejected by their communities for having been associated with armed forces or armed groups, prefer to come forward through non-stigmatizing programmes and can be identified among vulnerable children and teenagers, through women’s groups and peer groups, and confidentially through activities for all girls.

Lessons learned

The key lessons learned from the experience are:

- The collaboration between agencies and the fact that the process is officially recognized are crucial. Most importantly, liaison with MONUSCO, EUSEC, the FARDC and armed groups facilitate the identification of children and the issuance of demobilization papers that protect children;

- Given the volatility of events, with the risk of recruitment or demobilization contingent on negotiations, a trained team should be kept on standby in the event of mass demobilization. Renewed training for verifiers to ensure that new staff members are able to conduct thorough verifications, in particular in the event of mass demobilization, is desirable;
- A community-based approach facilitates the identification of self-released and vulnerable children (especially girls).

Interim care

The programme has provided care for a majority of the children released through the formal process. Two systems of interim care have been set up: interim care centres and foster families.

In the Kivus and the Kasais, most interim care has been provided by interim care centres, whereas in Equateur and the city of Dungu, most children have been placed with foster families.

COOPI found it necessary to place girls in interim care centres rather than with families from the community to facilitate their transition and reintegration through immersion in a place where they were valued and where their past would not be judged because “communities traumatized by war and divided by feelings of revenge are not in a position to play that therapeutic role” (COOPI, 2007). But that view has changed over time: on the one hand, the communities in Ituri have better support capacity than before, thanks to the improvement in the security situation, and, on the other, the weakness of the approach in terms of community integration has prompted COOPI to review its approach and consider a bigger role for foster families in the community integration process.

Child protection agencies nevertheless stress that “difficult” cases – children with aggressive behaviour – require specialist care, which families are rarely able to provide.

In Equateur, **the experience with foster families has been highly positive** and has encouraged foster families to become organized independently through associations. The lessons learned from their experience are that interim care in foster families requires: day centres; close follow-up by case managers; communication with the other actors; follow-up checks; recognition of their role; and support. Foster families are fully involved in discussing the reintegration plan with the children. The evaluation found, in particular, that because the children are “dispersed” in different families, this form of care seems to be less conducive to “rebellion” by the children, as long as they are occupied during the day in day centres instead of remaining idle.

In some cases, **foster families also offer a safer environment**, as indicated by this extract from the 2010 mid-term review report: “The innovative approach of the DDR programme, consisting in placing CAAFAGs with foster families for interim care, has been essential to the protection response for the children released from the LRA since December 2008, whose placement in a centre could have put them in danger of an attack by the group”; as well as André Moussa’s 2008 report on Gemena: “To avoid giving the various groups a reason to show up in the city and on the wise advice given to us by the Gemena brigade

commander and the head of the MONUC field office, we decided not to group the children in an interim care centre in order to prevent the situation from getting out of hand.”

Various actors have repeatedly reported – and the evaluation has observed – that **not all transit-centre supervisors are properly trained**. This results in negligence and child abuse, such as punishments for bedwetting or disobedience; and unsupervised, idle children, who are left without future prospects or information about the next steps in the process.

Although reports suggest that interim care centres are preferable to foster families when the numbers of children are large, experience shows on the contrary that having **large numbers of children in interim care centres raises numerous difficulties**. The main obstacles for the agencies seem to be: having a sufficient “reserve” of families willing to foster children in case of need, and setting up day centres to complement that form of care.

The main problems raised by interim care are related either to prolonged stays of children owing to delayed reunification (or delayed issuance of demobilization papers), or to the lack of prospects offered to the children when supervisors do not discuss a reintegration plan with the children or do not provide psychosocial support.

Lessons learned:

- Foster families seem to be more flexible, more integrative and more responsive to needs (even emergencies); can keep children for longer (if reunification is delayed) and do not require costly infrastructure. However, they do require day centres where the children can receive guidance and support, with case managers responsible for individual follow-up of the children together with the families, and properly trained supervisors to support the children and families.
- Owing to the lack of experience of some supervisors, the low quality of some interim care centres, and the potential for violence in any institutional care, there is a risk of child abuse (and/or neglect). It is therefore important to set up inter-agency referral and investigation systems, to receive alerts and to investigate and respond where necessary, with all the requisite precaution and confidentiality.

Family tracing and reunification

Owing to their association with armed forces and armed groups, the children generally need assistance to facilitate long-term reunification with their families. Since one of the factors in children’s voluntary recruitment is a lack of protection within their families, it is essential to attempt to improve family protection after the children return, especially when the family is not the nuclear family and the children are not making the financial contribution expected of them.

Within the framework of the NDDRP, those activities are organized either by child protection agencies (usually within the geographical area covered by the agency) or by the ICRC (tracing outside the geographical areas covered by the agencies or when there is no agency performing that task).

In general, the statistics show **a high rate of success with reunification**. However, a number of problems have been flagged by various actors:

- Firstly, either out of incompetence or carelessness, or under pressure from the large number of children in the interim care centres, some agencies (especially in North Kivu) have conducted “active tracing” by taking groups of children to the places where their relatives are thought to be, then leaving them there with their families without any preparation, verification or mediation procedure. There are even reports of cases of children left by the roadside some distance from their home villages, without any other form of support. Unsurprisingly, those methods have resulted in numerous failures, of which the agencies – which do not monitor those cases – are not necessarily aware.
- Moreover, the most common problem reported by the agencies is their inability to monitor the children for a sufficient amount of time after reunification. The main reason cited is a lack of resources to travel to all the areas where children have been reunited with their families, but also a lack of focal points in the communities, especially when the actions are run by international NGOs that are not well established in rural areas. The evaluation finds that in areas covered by community-based mechanisms, even if monitoring is not proactive, focal points are available in case of needs expressed by the children and can provide advice and mediation when necessary.
- The evaluation also notes a huge disparity between the ICRC’s procedures and those of the child protection agencies, with the ICRC generally being slower because it applies more stringent conditions for the authorization of reunification and provides more substantial reunification kits (with tools, items that can be used to start a small business, or school supplies).

For several months now, the ICRC has been running group information sessions and individual interviews with children during the interim-care period to prepare them for family reunification. Information sessions – which are otherwise rarely offered in interim care centres – are a vital opportunity to hear children’s misgivings and questions about returning, prepare them better and thus increase the chances of successful reunification.

Lessons learned:

- Family and child preparation, mediation and monitoring are crucial. Parents and children’s opinions of the security situation can be useful in the assessment of the risks of reunification in a sensitive area.
- Successful reunification also depends on successful reintegration assistance.
- Quality liaison between the agencies that organize care and those involved in family tracing and reunification will enable the latter to be more familiar with each child’s history and any misgivings about reunification and make more appropriate choices.
- To be fully operative, monitoring systems must be linked to a referral and response capacity to protect vulnerable children, and easier access to basic services. This requires providing support in terms of transport and basic supplies.

Reintegration assistance

The reintegration of children in their communities enabling satisfactory development and psychosocial well-being is **the goal of all the care processes for children released from armed forces and armed groups**. Successful reintegration is the result of a combination of complementary integrated activities and reflects different perceptions of recruitment and the role that children and youths are expected to play in the family and community. Some of those perceptions – gleaned from the interviews conducted for the evaluation – are:

- Child protection agencies' perception: children and youths are victims whose rights must be restored. They should be able to return to school or, for older children, have work, and their families should provide them with the protection they need.
- Communities and families' perception: children who return should contribute to the family. Their role is to help provide for their families and not be dependent, and to be submissive and obedient. Communities in Equateur, for example, have asked for intervention with these children, not as vulnerable children but as dangerous/disruptive elements in the community, because they are unable to accept the authority of adults and because other people are wary of them.
- Children who enlisted voluntarily and who were demobilized together with adults think that the Government, which decided to demobilize them, owes them assistance so they can recover their former status, in particular the means to support their families. They feel entitled to privileges because they have “served and fought”. They are aware that their communities might have a different opinion and that the success of their reintegration will depend on a change in their behaviour (they must regain the trust of their families and communities by demonstrating good behaviour, working hard and deferring to their elders).

All agree that **the reintegration of children and youths can be considered successful when two conditions are fulfilled**: the family and social aspect (good relations in their families and communities) and the educational and/or economic aspect (the children should be occupied, either by study or an economic activity that enables them to provide for themselves and/or contribute to family income).

In general, the way the NDDRP has been applied, as a **programme of “handouts” for entitled beneficiaries**, has led most actors (including the child protection agencies) to see reintegration assistance as an entitlement, which takes the form of the same standardized kit for everyone. The practice of using the lists of registered children to identify beneficiaries rather than applying vulnerability criteria has heightened the population's perception that children who have been associated with armed forces and armed groups are rewarded, and has excluded children who demobilized informally. That view is fuelling expectations that the programme cannot meet, because of comparisons with what is offered to adults on one side, and promises by various agencies on the other, leaving the latter overwhelmed by the demands of the children and families concerned.

Since, as has been observed, difficulties with integrating into their families and communities are a cause of voluntary enlistment, the activities to support reintegration should therefore attempt to address those issues. It would be more useful if **reintegration**

assistance targeted the children most at risk of re-recruitment and was adapted to individual realities, holistic, inclusive and non-standardized. The 2006 evaluation stressed: “The most impressive approaches are those that combine immediate benefits (desperately wanted by the beneficiaries) with the long-term impact of a protective environment and care provided by the community (sought by UNICEF).”

Moreover, as all the lessons learned have shown, socio-economic and community reintegration is a **long-term process** that cannot be reduced to a few months or even a year of training and a one-time payment or donation of equipment. However, since the beginning of the NDDRP, the child protection agencies’ focus on interim care and family reunification, and disruptions in funding have caused **long delays in the process** that should lead to the children’s reintegration. For example, André Moussa’s report in March 2008 highlighted the impatience of the children released from armed forces and armed groups in Ikela: “In 2004, the Belgian Red Cross rolled out the release and reintegration programme for CAAFAGs in southern Equateur Province, with MDRP/World Bank support. The activities were implemented in Tshuapa and Equateur. However, all the available funding was spent by 2006, leaving thousands of children waiting for reintegration. In late 2007, UNICEF submitted a project to the Pooled Fund to continue the intervention in Equateur. A project with the Belgian Red Cross was signed with co-funding from UNDP to address the situation in Tshuapa, but implementation did not begin until March 2008.”

One of the consequences of that discontinuity is that many of the children who were released several years ago have since become adults and no longer have access to the activities to support reintegration, which is causing high tension between them and the agencies and social workers.

Several interdependent factors contribute to successful reintegration in a protective environment for the children:

- Social and community factors;
- Children’s access to basic services,
- Schooling, education, training, and the ability to generate income and provide for themselves.

Even though the 2006 evaluation stressed UNICEF’s emphasis on **community integration**, the results have been mixed. The evaluation finds that, in areas where local organizations are in charge of reintegration assistance, community mobilization and participation tend to be more developed. That is most evident in Equateur, but is also the case in the southern sector of Bunia, where AJEDEC is involved, rather than COOPI, which is very weak on community integration. Although SCUUK focused its action on community integration in the Kivus, the community-based child protection networks proved highly dependent on the aid provided, compared with more local existing networks like FESCO, the Red Cross, PAMI and Les Aiglons.

On the community side, the experience of Les Aiglons in Gemena shows that several factors are worth considering: the inclusion of other vulnerable children in the community; the identification of beneficiaries with members of the community; the organization of community leisure facilities; sector associations and cooperatives that mix children

released from armed forces and armed groups with other community members; and mediation work by volunteers.

COOPI suggests there is also a need to foster a culture of benevolence towards children released from armed forces and armed groups and other vulnerable children.

Owing to their association with armed forces and armed groups, these children (both boys and girls) have considerable **medical** needs: for substance abuse, combat injuries, reproductive health and the sequelae of various types of violence and abuse. While they are in interim care, the children generally receive a medical check-up and satisfactory health care with priority access to certain health care services. By contrast, access to those services in the areas where the children are reintegrated is highly variable.

UNICEF should tackle that concern through an inter-sectional approach involving its Child Survival and Child Protection sections. But no such approach is planned, for example, in the inter-sectionality between the various components of the 2008-2012 programme.

Regarding integration into school and other education, we observe that a percentage of the younger children have been able to enrol in school (since 2009, 50% of the children aged under 15 benefited from assistance for school enrolment). Moreover, the support for schools has enabled some children to complete a whole level of schooling. Additionally, a decree from the Ministry of Education has allowed some older children to enrol in primary school.

However, despite the recommendations of the operational framework to encourage schools to keep children for longer or to develop extra activities to enable children to remain in school, many children are no longer in school because **support** under the programmes **is limited** to one year. The ministerial order mentioned in the proposal to the French Government is rarely applied in practice: “To enable these children to reintegrate into school, a ministerial order provides for a period of exemption from school fees.¹⁵ They are exempt until the end of secondary schooling. The system can be supported by renovating premises, supplying equipment and supporting income-generating activities, managed by schools with the involvement of parents’ associations.”

We also observe that since secondary schooling is not supported by the programme, some teenagers’ aspirations for education have not been met.

Moreover, back-to-school support and remedial education supported by UNICEF’s Education Section have not been offered to children released from armed forces and armed groups, even though many of them have the right profile for that kind of programme.

The activities to support **socio-economic reintegration** that began in 2007 also include self-released and other vulnerable children in the community (except in North Kivu). Associations have been trialled and networks of trainers developed in some localities. But the child protection agencies’ lack of expertise in socio-economic reintegration, combined with programme constraints, have produced **inconsistent and inconclusive results**. This type of support, like the rest of the programme, suffers from its design: handed out in the

¹⁵ Democratic Republic of the Congo, Education Ministry, Ministerial Order No. MINEDUC/CABMIN/EPSP/2002 of April 2002 exempting demobilized child soldiers from school fees and other fees payable to the Ministry of Education.

form of standardized kits rather than being tailored, holistic and integrated. The outcome is that many children are unable to provide for themselves, which creates new vulnerability. Some comments raised by the actors (more details are given in the ILO report released in June 2011):

- Little analysis of the socio-economic environment or market research is done, and the activities are unsuited to the local market;
- Vocational guidance is often brief and limited to a choice between a few pre-defined types of activity;
- Self-employment support is virtually non-existent, which has led to numerous failures with start-up materials given to children (in the IGA programme);
- The materials supplied to the children are often of poor quality;
- As Hans Roeske's report (ILO, June 2011) stresses, the time frame for training and post-training support in the programmes is too short compared with the needs for skills development: "Limiting an economic reintegration project to one year, while justified in terms of UNICEF's constraints, is problematic: experience has shown that, in order to be sustainable, some IGAs, in particular those that require long-term training, requires a period of support that, together with the training period, far exceeds one year. A one-year project document obviously cannot offer the kind of long-term support that is vital to sustain reintegration. These project documents therefore seem to recommend an approach that is doomed to failure. Not only does the post-training support for young people starting up underestimate the time required, but any delay in the preceding stages generally means that the post-training phase is either cut short or does not happen at all."
- Partnerships with training centres are underdeveloped and not always open to children released from armed forces and armed groups compared with other children (e.g. a carpentry training course in Bunia provides medical cover and meals for other children from the community, but not for the children released from armed forces and armed groups supported by COOPI);
- Even bigger difficulties have been observed with training and monitoring for children scattered in rural areas, where the emphasis has been on start-up materials and short training courses (e.g. in soap-making);
- Post-training support is limited or non-existent.

In some cases, however, effective mentoring by motivated skilled tradespeople has produced positive results. And economic reintegration activities developed **through cooperatives or associations with members of the community** have enabled better community integration, positive recognition and higher income generation (albeit still low).

Aware of the gaps in socio-economic reintegration, UNICEF initiated **a partnership with the ILO** in 2010. At the time of the evaluation, the partner agencies in North Kivu received training in 2010 and coaching sessions based on existing projects in 2011. The

heads of the agencies are satisfied with the partnership because they feel better equipped, but no practical application has yet been developed to demonstrate its effectiveness.

Lessons learned:

- Training boosts children's self-esteem, even when it does not lead to economic success.
- Family and social/community acceptance of the children is linked to their capacity to provide for themselves and become self-sufficient.
- Better community integration facilitates the success of economic activities and employment and vice-versa.
- In line with the holistic approach recommended generally for the reintegration of children, education is complementary to vocational training, by offering children an opportunity to develop self-esteem, knowledge and opportunities for the future. In this regard, we observe that many children use the proceeds from their economic activity to pay for education (e.g. evening classes). Support for integration into school or other education should therefore not be offered as an alternative to vocational training and economic reintegration but as complementary.
- Socio-economic reintegration support requires a specific approach and expertise that are unfamiliar to child protection agencies. CPAs need training in this area or need to work with expert agencies to complement their own activities.

2.3 Reaching and responding to children with specific needs

Reaching girls

According to the 2010 mid-term review report: "Girls associated with armed forces and armed groups account for a minority of the children released and reintegrated through the formal DDR programme. That can be attributed to numerous obstacles: armed groups may be more reluctant to release girls, and girls may be more reluctant to identify themselves as having been formerly associated with an armed group, because of the additional stigmatization they suffer. Girls recruited by armed groups are assumed to have been used for sexual purposes and consequently face more challenges in being accepted by their families and communities and in marrying subsequently. In addition to the psychosocial and livelihood difficulties experienced by boys, girls require specific medical and psychological attention for the sexual violence to which they have been subjected."

In response to that finding, which is far from new (it was identified in a 2004 study on girls associated with armed forces and groups in the DRC by Beth Verhey), and despite the fact that the issue of girls was one of the six priorities established at the national workshop in 2010, few actions have been developed that target girls.

The only province where girls and boys enjoy fairly equal access to the programmes is Ituri, where the NGO COOPI has taken a pro-active approach to include girls. This is achieved primarily through identification/tracing via listening points open to all, child-

friendly spaces, and non-stigmatizing activities targeting vulnerable children or vulnerable girls from the communities. In Gemena, girls are prioritized in the quotas of vulnerable children who can access the programme.

We note also that more awareness-raising is needed to encourage armed forces and armed groups to release girls.

Moreover, girls generally have different care needs from boys. Primarily, they need care for their babies (for girls who are mothers), medical care for STDs or the impact of repeated sexual abuse, and family and community mediation. Aside from the project developed by COOPI, the evaluator did not come across any of these girl-specific activities on her visits.

Lastly, as the NGO COOPI found in a 2007 study, integration into the school system and/or vocational training is important for girls, because it enhances self-esteem and respect from the community, even if it does not lead to a sufficiently lucrative activity.

Lessons learned:

Girls' access to the programmes can be improved only through a proactive approach that combines confidentiality with girl-specific responses.

Vocational training and access to education are vital for girls because they boost respect from the community and self-esteem.

Reaching self-released children

For fear of being overwhelmed by large numbers of self-released children, the IU-NDDRP and UNICEF have taken the approach of including these children only when they ask to be included in the programmes or when they display manifest vulnerability or problems with integration. The extract from André Moussa's report (June 2008) below confirms this:

“The 161 self-released children live in localities around Gemena (see *Table: Living environment of 161 self-released children*). The children were identified, verified and certified by staff of the NGO Les Aiglons during the monitoring of CAAFAGs supported under the project that is now coming to an end. The mission [...] enquired about the circumstances in which the self-released children were identified and verified. It turns out that they followed their peers who were participating in vocational training and approached the staff of Les Aiglons and the community volunteers directly, asking to be included in the training. The staff of the NGO Les Aiglons relied on the statements of the self-released children, the statements of the other demobilized children on the training course and testimony from the community to verify the children. The mission asked Les Aiglons not to conduct an identification and verification campaign of self-demobilized children, given the difficulties inherent in such an undertaking.

Recommendations for all CPAs: Do not conduct identification and verification campaigns of self-released children in Equateur Province, given the difficulties inherent in such an undertaking. Abide strictly by the rule that self-released children who approach a CPA can be included in current reintegration projects if failure to provide that support will increase their vulnerability or compromise their integration into the community.”

In North Kivu, that recommendation has been interpreted differently: self-released children who exhibit manifest vulnerability have never been registered as CAAFAGs but included in the limited quota of vulnerable children.

While the evaluator understands the reticence of the IU-NDDRP, owing to the risk of not being able to respond to all of the needs, that position has a number of negative consequences in terms of child protection:

- a large number of children released from armed forces and armed groups are not recorded in national statistics;
- a large number of “invisible” children have not benefited from protection, if only the issuance of demobilization papers;
- the funds available for other vulnerable children have been used for self-released children instead of for prevention and to broaden the targets;
- the programme looks even more like a reward for CAAFAGs who have come through an official demobilization process.

2.4 Making the programmes more operational

Data collection and management

The NDDRP provides for a system of data collection and management, based on data sheets and a database.

Between 2004 and 2009, information from the programmes for children released from armed forces and armed groups was centralized in **two databases**:

- A database shared by several international NGOs (IFESH, CARE, IRC and Save the Children) designed to facilitate family tracing procedures, then to gather information with a view to improving the programmes;
- A database managed by NCDDR, then by the IU-NDDRP, which contains information from monthly data sheets on the children certified and supported by the child protection agencies.

In 2009, the IU-NDDRP put UNICEF in charge of centralizing the data on children. The data come from the NGO database, which remained under SCUk’s responsibility, and from the IU-NDDRP database, operated by UNICEF but for which the IU-NDDRP is responsible at national level.

The system provides a general estimate of all the programmes for CAAFAGs. But it **has a number of limitations**:

- Theoretically, the IU-NDDRP and UNICEF use the same database, since the two institutions communicate regularly to synchronize their work. In practice, however, the IU-NDDRP’s figures are much higher than UNICEF’s. The database managed by the IU-NDDRP probably contains many duplicate records;

- Information on the reintegration assistance provided to children has only been recorded since 2009;
- Not all the partners have been properly trained to provide reliable data;
- The partners do not collect and record all the data (for example, data on family reunification often seem to be missing);
- Since 2009, the data have been supplied only by UNICEF's partners. Information about the children reached and activities implemented by other agencies is absent;
- Vulnerable children are not recorded in the database;
- The filters in the database are limited to the information required by the World Bank to justify expenditure (number of children reached, activities implemented). They not offer any information about the circumstances of recruitment, the children's progress, the success of the support provided, or even the characteristics of the children. Although that information is entered into the database, it needs to be transferred to other software programmes, such as Excel or Access, in order to be analysed.
- The agencies can supply data but cannot compute statistics without transferring the data to other software. Rarely knowing how to do that, some agencies prefer to draw up lists in parallel to the database for their own use (monitoring of children, verifications, etc.). Moreover, the IU-NDDRP's local offices do not know how to use the child database.
- The agencies rarely use the statistical data sent monthly by the person in charge of the database for UNICEF.

Consequently, owing to (i) the unreliability of the data supplied by the agencies, (ii) the persistence of duplicates and (iii) the limitations of the data and the analytical filters:

- The system cannot be used to monitor the use of funds by the partners;
- The data supplied by UNICEF are constantly being modified;
- The database cannot be used for programmatic purposes;
- The system cannot be used at the local level for monitoring or for reviewing or estimating needs, even less for planning activities. For example, because a large number of demobilized children became adults while waiting for reintegration assistance, the IU-NDDRP advised its adult programme partners to prioritize those young people in the support provided to adult associations. But the local offices of the IU-NDDRP that managed the partnerships did not have access to the lists of children who had become adults while waiting for reintegration assistance to ensure they were included in the adult programmes. Similarly, when a child is relocated, the new agency does not have access to the child's file and consequently tends to record the child a second time in the database.

The **system could be improved** by adding filters for programmatic needs, by giving the local partners access to those filters, and by raising partners' awareness of the usefulness of the information management system.

Moreover, even if they are not currently used, since large amounts of data are recorded in the database managed by the IU-NDDRP it is important to ensure that the database is transferred to the appropriate ministry, both for programmatic reasons and for the protection and security of the children. The evaluation alerts UNICEF to **the risk that the database will be transferred to the Ministry of Defence**, which oversees the IU-NDDRP, and used to gather intelligence on children who formerly associated with armed groups opposed to the Government.

Alongside the database connected to the programmes, **the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism** on grave violations committed against children in times of armed conflict (1612 MRM) centralizes verified data on child recruitment and use, usually by recording children released from armed forces and armed groups, as well as other grave violations of the rights of the child. The two databases are not interconnected and are not intended to be because they do not have the same purpose. For ethical reasons, however, all of the cases documented under the MRM connected to SC Resolution 1612 should – to the extent possible – be referenced and included in the programme database. That is not the case, because some partners still do not report cases to the 1612 MRM and the figures arrive later *en bloc* for the donor reports.

The MRM database is used to track trends in child recruitment and use and other grave violations of the rights of the child (sexual violence, abduction, murder and mutilation, etc.) and to identify the parties to the conflict that are committing the violations in order to inform advocacy work. The links between the MRM and the programme relate not to the data collected but to the capacity of the programmes to respond to the vulnerabilities identified by the MRM and the creation of an ethical obligation between the documentation of cases and the provision of care for the child victims of the violations.

Monitoring and evaluation

To manage all of the programmes, monitoring and evaluation activities should be conducted regularly by UNICEF, to track the results of the programmes and adjust them if necessary. Two types of data should be analysed: (1) programme implementation and (2) medium- and long-term impact.

Several tools are generally used **to monitor programme implementation: the information collection and management system, partners' narrative reports and field trips.**

UNICEF's decision to fund local NGOs, which can offer more sustainable activities, has the disadvantage of increasing the number of partners to be monitored. Yet it is evident that the systems current in use are far from reliable:

- Owing to long distances and instability in some regions where it intervenes, UNICEF does not have enough staff to monitor all the activities (see the summary of trip reports supplied by UNICEF staff for the evaluation, annexed);

- UNICEF staff continue to use the trip-report format, which is better suited to UNICEF's financial audits than to programmatic needs. No monitoring tool has been developed to report systematically on trips;
- The reports supplied by NGOs do not use a standard format, which would make it easier to aggregate and analyse the information;
- Project information is not systematically classified and useable;
- The information in the database is not wholly reliable because the person in charge of the central database does not check for duplicates or other errors.

Consequently, it is difficult for UNICEF to provide reliable data at the country and provincial levels, and UNICEF's reports usually contain wrong information.

For example, the project summaries supplied to the evaluator at country level differ considerably from the summaries provided by the provincial offices:

Data supplied by the national office (minus the partners except those in North Kivu, South Kivu and Equateur):

	Total CAAFAGs reached	Total VCs reached	% VC/ CAAFAG	Allocated budget	Cost per child	Average duration of projects
2007	4,662	1,213	26%	USD 4,376,346	USD 592	9 months (6-12 months)
2008	4,064	2,150	53%	USD 4,602,764	USD 741	7 months (1-12 months)
2009	4,158	1,927	46%	USD 4,819,959	USD 792	9 months (6-12 months)
2010	2,181	1,617	74%	USD 1,212,670	USD 319	9 months (6-12 months)
Total	15,065	6,907	46%	USD	USD 683	

Data supplied by the offices in North Kivu, South Kivu and Equateur consolidated using the same model

	Total CAAFAGs reached	Total VCs reached	% VC/ CAAFAG	Allocated budget	Cost per child	Average duration of projects
2007	2,869	963	33%	USD 3,160,847	USD 825	8 months (3-12 months)
2008	2,822	265	9%	USD 1,111,707	USD 360	7 months (3-12 months)
2009	6,630	629	9.5%	USD 3,260,278	USD 449	7 months (2-12 months)
2010	3,571	899	25%	USD 1,504,178	USD 336	7 months (2-14 months)
Total	15,892	2 756	17%	USD 9,037,010	USD 485	

It is often the case – as with the recapitulative table of country-level data – that the figure given for the number of children reached by the programmes in fact represents the number of activities implemented for children. Indeed, the same child might benefit from several services offered by different partners, and thus be counted more than once. Therefore, the figure given in column 2 probably does not reflect the number of children reached by the programme, as annual reports or reviews tend to claim, but the number of activities

implemented for children. Furthermore, although it is tempting to report it as such, the cost indicated in column 6 is not an average cost per child for all the services delivered, but an average cost per activity.

Similarly, both the 2008 annual report and the draft agreement between the IU-NDDRP and UNICEF stated that 4,657 children were released from armed forces and armed groups in 2008, and UNICEF's proposal to the Belgian Government indicated that 4,746 children were released from armed forces and armed groups in the same year, whereas the database reveals 3,185 children were recorded in 2008.

→ **The information from the database after duplicates have been eliminated is probably more accurate and should be cited more consistently in reports and studies.**

Moreover, it is clear that UNICEF staff do not have the time or the tools to monitor the activities. **The option of funding international NGOs to train and monitor local NGOs therefore seems appropriate.**

With regard to **monitoring programme impact**, as mentioned in the introduction, neither UNICEF nor the IU-NDDRP has yet developed tools to measure the impact of the programmes on the children.¹⁶

However, as the 2006 evaluation already recommended, an evaluation system is vital: "Serious attention needs to be paid to designing indicators for the DDR programme, especially for the reintegration component, which are essential for demonstrating the impact of UNICEF's work. The regular reports that provide figures on the programme's results for donors lack precisely that type of data. It is more persuasive to show that a project is moving forward against one or more baseline indicators than to report the gross number of CAAFAGs who have been through an interim care centre, for example."

→ This would involve regular measurement of how far the child beneficiaries of the project have progressed in their reintegration, using indicators shared by all the actors (see Baseline survey proposal – monitoring/evaluation of the reintegration of children released from armed forces or armed groups).

The common indicators should be aggregated and analysed at the provincial and country levels.

A survey of this kind could be conducted one or twice a year with the same children (either a sample or all the children affected in a given zone).

To be viable, it would require a network of trained community focal points covering the zone, and financial resources to cover the cost of travel.

¹⁶ The World Bank and the IU-NDDRP, working with the DRC's national statistics office (INS), conducted a survey of the impact of their reintegration programmes on a random sample of 2,086 men, 322 women, 1,109 children and 720 community members, with a common questionnaire designed by the World Bank (without specific questions for children or women). An invitation to tender was launched to identify an organization that could analyse the data collected and report the findings. The results are due to be released in mid-2012.

Experience capitalization, creation of tools, capacity-building and staff training

A staff training system was introduced in 2004 and run until 2006 to ensure that staff at the child protection agencies had a minimum level of training in and knowledge of the standards and procedures.

As mentioned earlier, there has been some turnover of staff and organizations since that time, and the level of training among staff is highly variable.

Moreover, although the programmes have had access to a large number of children in a variety of circumstances since 2004, very few studies of the children have been conducted. The agencies did not use that opportunity of access to information, for example, to identify the factors in recruitment with a view to developing more effective prevention, or the issues affecting girls specifically. Only some human rights organizations, like Amnesty International, HRW and the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, have published studies on CAAFAGs, but local and country-level agencies do not seem to make much use of them. According to UNICEF's 2008 proposal to the French Government in 2008, the agency had planned an experience capitalization, but was not able to undertake it: "Objective 4: Produce a report documenting all of the best practices identified and capitalized in the area of the reintegration of war-affected children, with special emphasis on children released from armed forces, who can be seen as an opportunity." (Description of support for a project called "Supporting activities to prevent child recruitment and reintegrate war-affected children in the DRC" submitted as part of a funding application to the French Government, 2008).

- **The variety of experiences developed by child protection agencies since 2004 should be identified and documented** and the lessons learned disseminated to all the actors, as has been attempted on a small scale, at a workshop in 2009 on best practices on interim care and specific activities for girls, and at the ILO training sessions in 2010 and 2011, which were limited to a few organizations in the Kivus.

The CPWG, co-led by SCUK and UNICEF at country level, has initiated a number of relevant discussions on the programmes for CAAFAGs, in particular a discussion about community networks. However, these issues are not discussed at all at provincial level, where CPWG meetings are held infrequently, because UNICEF staff do not have the skills or an understanding of the value of the CPWG framework.

- **The CPWG framework should be utilized**, as foreseen in its terms of reference, for example through a commission dedicated to CAAFAGs (see Coordination). The idea would be to facilitate exchanges between actors and to review together the mechanisms with a view to improving them, to organize joint training programmes, and thus enhance everyone's skills and the quality of the activities.

Issues to be explored could include: psychological support, interim care standards; support for socio-economic reintegration; community mobilization; contact with armed groups; data collection and management; and programme monitoring and evaluation.

Partnerships

As discussed in the chapter on UNICEF's role, the partnership between UNICEF and the IU-NDDRP has restricted UNICEF's room to position itself outside the rules of the NDDRP.

That position has led UNICEF to "deliver services" to beneficiaries instead of building a protective environment for the children.

Other departments and ministries (Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Gender and Family, Ministry of Employment and Training) have had little to do with the programme, even though they could conduct more sustainable monitoring than the IU-NDDRP, which is entirely dependent on external funding that is about to end.

- As the partnership with the IU-NDDRP is drawing to a close, UNICEF should link actors to the "protected communities" child protection system, which offers monitoring of protection (community volunteers), a referral system, and access to basic services (certificates of indigence or other).

The partnerships with local NGOs in Equateur have delivered more results and sustainability than the partnerships with international NGOs. There are problems, however, specifically local NGOs' inability to self-finance their activities and therefore to continue to operate when funding is disrupted. Furthermore, the local NGOs were able to be effective because of direct technical support from UNICEF, with the continuous presence of a child protection officer for a year.

As mentioned earlier, international NGOs generally have the advantage of far more solid technical skills and financial capacity than local NGOs. But their activities proved to be unsustainable, even when they were supported by partnerships with local NGOs. The types of partnerships described to the evaluator by local NGOs working with COOPI and SCUUK involved subcontracting activities, in which the partners had little understanding of the process as a whole.

UNICEF's new approach of funding local NGOs to implement activities and supporting international NGOs to train, support and monitor the local NGOs seems to reflect the lessons learned from experience. A partnership with the ILO is currently being rolled out on that model in North Kivu for the socio-economic reintegration of CAAFAGs. Under the terms of the partnership, the ILO trains and coaches local NGOs.

- However, **UNICEF should be prudent and transparent** about the relations that this type of arrangement could create between international and local NGOs, in particular between SCUUK and local NGOs in North Kivu, which have already worked together in other circumstances. In that respect, it would be useful to analyse the reasons the experience in Equateur was negative, as reported in the 2006 evaluation: "While the involvement of a third party, namely War Child UK, to facilitate and supervise the activities of the DDR programme implemented by two local NGOs – APEE and AASD – can be justified in several respects, the experience on the ground has demonstrated the reverse. The problems stemming from the approach were clearly explained and examined in the 2005 evaluation report and should guide future decisions in similar situations. It is highly likely that

similar difficulties and conflicts would have arisen with World Vision, had that agency accepted UNICEF's offer to supervise the DDR activities in southern Katanga Province in 2005. In the current context, third-party supervision appears to complicate and even impede UNICEF's work, instead of delivering the expected outcomes. It would therefore be advisable to avoid third parties in future."

- **The partnership initiated with the ILO** to build socio-economic capacity should be pursued and if possible extended to all actors in all provinces.

Coordination

Owing to the ambiguous breakdown of roles and responsibilities between the IU-NDDRP and UNICEF, the withdrawal of SCUK from some of the areas where it had acted as coordinator, and poor knowledge of coordination frameworks like the CPWGs, coordination of the activities on the ground is not currently very effective.

Fortunately, the volume of activities and the number of actors to coordinate is fairly small and the existing systems are still functioning.

- However, as new actors – whose focus is not necessarily CAAFAGs – are appearing on the scene, and the institutional configuration is changing with the phasing-out of the IU-NDDRP, effective coordination mechanisms must be restored, making it possible to:

- clarify the roles and responsibilities of each of the actors
- map the different programmes
- rethink and harmonize approaches
- consider effective collaboration.

Funding

An examination of the duration of funding for NGOs in the recapitulative table in chapter 1.4 reveals that the NGOs funded almost continuously are those in charge of interim care centres in the Kivus: BVES, CAJED, Don Bosco in 2009-2010 and SCUK. The NGOs that take a family-based approach to interim care, especially in Equateur, can suspend their interim-care activities more easily to the extent that families do not need financial support when they are not fostering children.

However, **gaps in funding** between reunification and reintegration assistance (in particular between 2007 and 2009) led to major gaps in terms of coverage of needs, and a large number of children left waiting for assistance have since become adults. That situation probably facilitated significant re-recruitment, especially in the east of the country, where conflict is ongoing. Advocacy for three-year programme financing, as recommended in the Paris Principles, should therefore be stepped up.

Moreover, as Hans Roeske from the ILO emphasized in his report in June 2011, NGOs' capacity to support socio-economic reintegration and monitoring is constricted by **funding that is too short-term**, even when a CBCPN approach is taken.

The limited funding available reduces the partners' capacity for long-term vision and is not enough to ensure appropriate support:

“Limiting an economic reintegration project to one year, while justified in terms of UNICEF's constraints, is problematic: experience has shown that the sustainability of some IGAs, in particular those that require long-term training, require a period of support that, together with the training period, far exceeds one year. A one-year project document obviously cannot offer the kind of long-term support that is vital to sustain reintegration. These project documents therefore seem to recommend an approach that is doomed to failure. Not only does the post-training support for young people starting up underestimate the time required, but any delay in the preceding stages generally means that the post-training phase is either cut short or does not happen at all.” (Hans Roeske, ILO 2011)

3- Conclusion and general recommendations

As the 2010 mid-term review report recommended: “The persistence of armed groups and military operations to neutralize them, as well as violations of the rights of the child that accompany those conflicts, make prevention and emergency response strategic priorities for the Child Protection programme.”

With the phase-out of the IU-NDDRP, the withdrawal of the international community from the reintegration of CAAFAGs (to focus on country recovery and reconstruction), and the Government’s increasingly emphatic denial of child recruitment by the FARDC, the situation cannot be considered resolved:

- recruitment, including by the FARDC, is continuing;
- reintegration assistance has not been a success, since the programmes have failed to reach many of the children released from armed forces and armed groups, both through the formal process and informally;
- re-recruitment is rife in the eastern part of the country.

Regardless of the country’s geopolitical and institutional situation, UNICEF’s role in such a programme should be to:

- support and guide the policies and strategies of the Government and other actors in the best interests of the children;
- ensure that all the children concerned – especially girls and children who have self-released from armed forces or armed groups – benefit from support (through parallel programmes to the formal process, if necessary);
- identify and prevent the risks of re-recruitment;
- ensure that the process for reintegration of the children into their families and communities that is coordinated, harmonized between all actors, continuous and sustainable.

However, owing to a combination of factors – the agreement with IU-NDDRP, which restricts UNICEF to the scope of the NDDRP; the limited number of specialized local and international agencies; the chronic lack of UNICEF child protection specialists (especially in the east of the country); and the changing geopolitical and strategic conditions in the country – the recommended approaches have not always been applied in full:

- The rights-based approach: the NDDRP is influenced by politics, which hamstrings the programme’s capacity to prevent child recruitment and secure the release of children. The programme has focused on standardized operations linked to the NDDRP and has not tailored the interventions to children’s individual situations, going beyond delivering one-size-fits-all training and reintegration kits to “beneficiaries” rather than supporting children according to their vulnerability.

- The holistic approach: we note some successful examples of inter-sectionality (e.g. to facilitate enrolment in school of children released from armed forces and armed groups or the provision of medical care for children with STDs by the health services in North Kivu), but there are not enough collaborative spaces or viable referral systems with the organizations responsible for delivery of basic services.
- The participatory approach: the children and communities have generally been involved in developing the projects that concern them. In Equateur there are now more employment spaces where children released from armed forces and armed groups work with community members, but in general, little effort has been made to develop participatory spaces for children and youth in the communities;
- Continuity of the process: emergency response, the type of funding, and compliance with the operational framework have led agencies to approach reintegration as the distribution of kits, which does not allow for real continuity of the process for the children.
- Inclusive approach: the inclusion of other vulnerable children has facilitated the children's integration into the community but it remains low compared with needs, especially considering that this is the main way to reach girls and to prevent recruitment in communities located in sensitive areas. Child-friendly spaces play a vital role in prevention and identification of vulnerable children and should be expanded.
- Community-based approach: overall, the programme has helped strengthen community infrastructure and facilities, such as schools, play areas, and premises for associations and the community, which have facilitated community integration. Ongoing conflict and mass displacements have limited that type of support in the Kivus, however. The CBCPNs have shown varying rates of success; they seem to be better developed and more functional in Equateur.

UNICEF has not fully played its role in ensuring that the DDR process or a parallel informal process adequately protects the rights of children, especially with regard to:

- children released from armed groups who do not come through the formal demobilization process (especially girls);
- the design and use of the database of children, which cater more to the requirements of reporting to donors than to analytical and programmatic needs;
- the inclusion of more vulnerable children in the project, which would create a more effective protective environment for all children;
- the types of socio-economic reintegration support offered, which should be less one-size-fits-all but holistic, tailored to the situation of each child and aimed at long-term reintegration;
- advocacy about child recruitment by the FARDC and armed groups.

In operational terms, the evaluation finds that the approach of supporting local NGOs has had better results than support for international NGOs, because it is:

- more sustainable;
- more community-based; and
- provides higher-quality reintegration assistance.

But shortages of staff in the east of the country considerably reduce the quality of the projects (little monitoring and very little coordination, which generates some ambivalence between the expectations and the wariness of other actors).

Recommendations

Policy recommendations

UNICEF should intervene at the highest level – in its capacity as the co-chair of the 1612 Taskforce, with (or in consultation with) MONUSCO, or within the broader framework of its child protection mandate – with advocacy urging the Government to draft and implement an action plan to end child recruitment and use by the armed forces, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions 1539, 1612 and 1882, and to send a message to armed groups encouraging them to stop the practice also.

At the local level, it is important to make contact with armed groups to prevent recruitment and encourage them to release the children still in their ranks.

Close relations should be built and maintained with MONUSCO, EUSEC and influential diplomatic corps to put pressure on the FARDC to stop recruitment and release children.

Institutional recommendations

In October 2011, the IU-NDDRP will no longer have funding or a department dedicated to children. UNICEF and the IU-NDDRP need to think together about a handover process with other ministries that will continue to ensure the harmonization, monitoring and oversight of all the actors – especially the political and military authorities – in terms of their compliance with procedures of the official process for verification and release of children. Special consideration should be given to the future of the database to ensure that the information it contains is not used against the children or their families.

Operational recommendations

UNICEF should be in a position to resume leadership of the child protection agencies, assisting the ministry or ministries that will take over and providing coordination that focuses on seeking solutions to the challenges faced by the programme and on reviewing procedures, together with capacity-building for the operational actors.

The review and readjustment process should include all the actors and be national in scope but with a focus on the east of the country, because most recruitment and releases of children are concentrated in that region. Staff dedicated to that task would be welcome.

The new approach of supporting local NGOs closely reflects the lessons learned in past years. That choice should be pursued through:

- support for international or national NGOs that have developed expertise, for training and coaching in administrative management and technical aspects;
- support for CPAs that can conduct field monitoring/evaluation.

The system as a whole would benefit from:

- strengthening and upgrading staff capacity;
- experience capitalization and dissemination of lessons learned;
- longer-term financing more suited to reintegration assistance and prevention work;
- a system to monitor and evaluate the programme and its impact;
- improving the database for programme use, covering all actors and gradually including other vulnerable children.

Strategic recommendations

The Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan for War-Affected Areas (STAREC) should not detract from the need to maintain prevention and response actions to the problem of child recruitment and use by armed forces and armed groups in the DRC.

Thus, while maintaining an emergency-response programme, the reintegration of children released from armed forces and armed groups should be incorporated into UNICEF Child Protection's general approach of building a protective environment.

- the procedures of the operational framework should be reviewed, but the framework should continue to apply to child releases (maintaining a government authority and child protection rules and procedures);
- reintegration should be incorporated into the Child Protection programme, in particular the "protected communities", which will facilitate long-term monitoring and actions benefiting other vulnerable children;
- building a protective environment contributes to prevention, but advocacy towards donors is still needed to increase the quotas of vulnerable children eligible for the projects.

Annexes

-) Baseline survey proposal – Monitoring/evaluation of the reintegration of children released from armed forces or armed groups
-) Timeline of the evaluation
-) Actors met at national level
-) Compilation of reintegration indicators proposed by children and staff
-) Compilation of evaluation reports from 2007 and 2011 supplied by UNICEF staff on activities linked to the CAAFAG programmes

Baseline Survey Proposal – Questionnaire: monitoring/evaluation of reintegration of children released from armed forces and armed groups

The interviewee gives a response on a scale of 1 to 5 (check). The indicators measure the level of satisfaction. If the interviewee does not know how to answer, the interviewer can prompt him/her by suggesting the following scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree

Question or Statement Positive Indicator / Negative Indicator		Child's opinion					Opinion of parents or guardians					Opinion of a reference person (master tradesman, teacher or social worker)					Opinion of peers or representative members of the community					Average and Comments	
Child's psychosocial well-being																							
Feels he/she is leading a better life	The child has problems																						
The child feels good	The child is angry																						
The child is healthy	The child is sad, complains																						
The child is psychologically well	The child is sick, lives a wretched life																						
The child takes care of him/herself, is clean and well dressed	The child is defensive, wary																						
The child feels loved	The child does not feel safe																						
The child is happy, content	The child suffers	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
The child is communicative	The child has nightmares																						
The child is happy to see the visitor	The child wets the bed																						
The child expresses gratitude	The child has no motivation or hope																						
The child is positive, has plans, is motivated and courageous	The child has no plans																						
	The child is lazy																						
Child's overall situation																							

The child has not been re-recruited by an armed force or group Enjoys all of his/her rights The child is stable: he/she has stayed in his/her family and community; does not constantly change activity	The child has been re-recruited by an armed force or group (especially if voluntarily) Has returned to the interim care centre or foster family The child is unstable: he/she is no longer with his/her family and constantly moves around; often changes activity; cannot find work that offers medium-term satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
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Official Court Translation

Timeline of the Evaluation

30 May - 4 June:

Start of document review and drafting the methodological proposal

Interviews in Kinshasa with key players: MONUSCO Child Protection Advisor, IU-NDDRP vulnerable children, GADERES

6-10 June

Trip to Gemena: meetings with and visits to NGO Les Aiglons and other local actors

Half-day in Mbandaka: meetings with and visits to NGO APEE and meeting with UNICEF Child Protection staff

11-14 June

Document review (cont.)

Interviews in Kinshasa

15-20 June

Visits to NGOs and other actors in Bunia and surrounding area

21 June – 2 July

Visits to NGOs and other actors in Goma and Beni (and possibly Ruchuru or Bukavu if there is an opportunity)

Drafting monitoring indicators

13-30 July

Interviews in Kinshasa

Finalization of monitoring plan

13-30 July

In Canada, drafting and finalization of evaluation report after feedback from UNICEF

National-level actors met

Donors:

- World Bank (René Broman)
- USAID/OFDA (Sarah Rasmussen, Marcel Ntumba)

Government:

- IU-NDDRP (Valentin Dz'tso, Patricia Tuluka)
- Ministère de la Défense (Colonel Mukole)

Other agencies:

- Save the Children UK (Yann Grandin)
- MONUSCO (Judith Lavoie)
- UNDP (Polycarpe Kapuadi)
- ILO (Sophie de Coninck)
- GADERES (Clovis Kadda)
- BICE (Crispin Mulumba Lwamba)
- COOPI (Dany)

Local-level actors met

Government:

- IU-NDDRP (Gemena, Bunia, Goma, Beni)
- DIVAS (Bunia, Goma)

Partner NGOs (or future partners in a consortium):

- Les Aiglons (coordinator and staff)
- APEE (coordinator)
- COOPI (Valentina Scarpazza)
- AJEDEC (director and some members: Gety, Aveba)
- CAJED (resp and staff)
- PAMI (Joaquin Fikira and staff)
- FESCO (Jacques Buligo and staff)
- CADERCO (Blaise Bubala)
- Save the Children UK (Calvin Bitu)
- EAD (Germain Lufungula)
- ACOPE (Mopero Kamalero)
- PSM (Mumbere Kisito)

Other agencies:

- ICRC in Goma and Béni (Elodie Magnier, Jean Paolo Soto, Emmeline)
- MONUSCO in Bunia, Goma and Béni (Rashin Kanu, Léopold Kouassi, Célestine Assuie)
- ICC in Bunia (Bertin Bishikwabo, Richard Budju)
- World Vision International in Béni (Fernand Azonnannan)
- War Child in Goma (Michel Gratton and Anna Ferrari)
- SCUUK in Goma (Calvin Bitu)
- CERAO in Béni (Alphonse Kalyamba)
- ADECO in Béni (Désiré Bahati)

Reintegration indicators proposed by children and staff
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Signs of a satisfactory situation:

Since I left the army, I have been leading a better life because I am starting to play with other children and they are not afraid of me anymore

I am happy living with my parents and I don't have any problems

I get along well with the neighbours and they are not afraid of me anymore

Respect for parents – the child has rights but also responsibilities

Take care of yourself; as a student, work like the other children and be helpful in the family and have a place there

I am happy at home, I don't have any problems and I respect my parents

I want to work

Because I am living with my family, I need something to help my little brothers because I have to cover their expenses

Give up bad habits like smoking

Stop stealing to get along well with my parents and neighbours

Feel solidarity with the people in my village

Study, run a business, work in the fields, build houses

As for my programme, our life continues to improve because the instructors gave us the best complete training, especially the physical, mental, emotional, psychological and spiritual aspects, because before that we were in a bad place and we still say that it guided us and protected us in our families and in society

He goes to meet the child in his family and finds him living with his siblings and parents in an atmosphere of cooperation and love

When the parents see the person who brought back their child, they receive him with joy

He finds the child working in a trade or studying

Before I had no occupation, but now I am starting to take care of myself after the training I received from CAJED and I say thank you for the sewing machine they gave me. God bless you!

I live with my parents who are happy with my behaviour in the family because I have changed my way of living

I get along well with people because I don't have parents who can take care of me and it's not good to be in conflict with other people

Change behaviour

Play with others

Stay with my parents

Live like a civilian

Listen to parents' advice

If I live in conflict with others, my grandmother will have no peace, so I have decided to get along well with everyone

Since I was reunited with my family, I have been working and have no problems

Good behaviour makes people like you

I feel a change since I was reunited with my family because I have been helped, loved and advised

Before I had no income, but CAJED taught me how to sew and gave me a sewing machine. Today I make clothes and I earn money; thank you very much, CAJED

I thank CAJED for paying for my schooling and for the tools I received. I earn a little money and my life has improved.

I am happy because my parents love me and the whole family is interested in me

When I left the army, I changed my behaviour

I get along well with my parents and the neighbours and I take care of myself

I am on good terms with the authorities and my friends, and I feel loved by everyone

Before, I didn't have money to buy what I needed to live, but since CAJED taught me how to sew, my life has improved. I am happy now, thanks to the help I got from CAJED.

When my parents pay for my schooling and hospitalization

I respect my parents and neighbours

If I am not involved in military activities or crime, the instructor will say I am happy with my family

I say thank you for having reunited me with my family, even if afterwards I was recruited and my demobilization papers were torn up. But, God willing, you have come to take me out of the army. When we are reunited, my parents and I will be very happy.

Behaviour with the family

Getting along with other people

Protecting myself from disease

Change in behaviour

Stability

Independent activities

I can walk around freely in the community

Now I am healthy

I have forgotten the bad thoughts of the rebellion

When she starts making clothes by herself

When he finishes his business and can start helping his sister

If he can manage money and meet his needs

If he can go to other people's homes and they can come to his

If people can come and buy from him/her without fear

If people bring me clothes to sew

Understanding and respect between people

COOPI's help and the reintegration went well

He has helped us a lot in cases of need, when are we sick

In the family, we are healthy and like us, friends, you need to be submissive and obedient in your lives

You have to be honest and fair

I am welcomed by my family and treated like the other children in the family and the community

I go to school and I am continuing with my studies as usual

I am well fed and well cared for

I have had a year of school and it has gone well for me

As for my parents, I have a mum and she is very happy with COOPI because they gave us the keys or the path to slowly but surely have a human life

I thank COOPI because now I am safe, so I hope I will have a good life

COOPI received us well, protected us, returned us to our families who signed reunification certificates and gave us some reintegration kits

Since I left COOPI, I have been fairly stable with the family

I thank COOPI for facilitating the trip with no problems, fear or conflict

I received advice

Knowledge of sewing

Thank you

COOPI taught me

COOPI gave me a sewing machine

COOPI stopped me wanting to go back to the bush

What interested me at COOPI was the advice, learning mechanics, stopping me wanting to return to the bush

Psychological counselling and work on memories; repairing machines; medical care

To end this suffering, you need a good job

A child who can work after the training

A child who has opened a workshop and can support his or her family

A child who adapts to the community

Practical application of the training received

Responsibility in a family

Means of transport

If I earn money from my work

I am buying a bicycle

I train students and I live well

I am happy with the training you gave me

If the child is working well in the trade he or she was trained in

If the child can sew clothes well

If the child has his or her own trade, his or her own business

The reintegration was successful because I got a sewing machine

The reintegration was successful because now I have a good life compared with the life I had when I was in the army

It's a success because I have my own workshop

It would be good for us to receive good-quality reintegration kits

We need them to build houses for us and support our schooling

If we start to pay the people we work with, that will be a good thing

Acceptance in a group of young people from the village (resocialization)

The child is not re-recruited

The community relies on the child (he/she becomes useful)

The child is self-sufficient

Resocialization in the community

The child makes products that are consumed by the community

Self-sufficiency

The child becomes valuable in the community, according to their feedback

He/she becomes productive

The child is stable and progressing in their reintegration occupation

The child is studying normally and becoming responsible

The community is proud of the child

Some of the children are stable in their communities

Some of the children who attended the vocational training – the girl seamstresses and boy mechanics – are continuing in their occupations

The child has not returned to armed forces or armed groups

The reintegrated child is not troubled anymore

The child is continuing with the activity he/she chose for economic reintegration

The child genuinely adapts to the training

The child manufactures or produces goods after the training (self-sufficiency)

The child is well integrated in the community through children's clubs and other development associations in society

Reintegration into the community

Reintegration into the family

Children are not recruited

Able to manage his/her life plan

The chosen activity has results or is productive

Degree of acceptance and integration into the community (the important role he/she plays in the community)

Adaptation and acceptance of the child in and by the community

The child is in contact with a child protection agency to be better guided in life

The children's eagerness to have a trade

Able to perform the trade

Self-sufficiency

The child has friends and has lost the bad habits of the bush

The child eats whatever food is given to him/her

The child obeys his/her parents and has a trade he/she has chosen

To reintegrate into school, the child must be seen going to school

Living in the community and having an income-generating activity are signs of successful economic reintegration

The child who is self-sufficient, i.e. works without need for supervision (without having to be checked and watched)

The child should be cheerful and polite

The child should be motivated

The child should be healthy

The child should be physically strong

Takes care of himself/herself

The child is making excellent progress in the activities he/she chose

The child is adapting well to the community

When the child is enrolled in school and studies with other children without problems of fear or shyness

When the child has been trained in a specific trade

The child is capable of independently choosing what to do

Individual self-sufficiency

Physical, emotional and social stability

Feedback from the family, the community and even friends

The child is engaged enthusiastically in the reintegration activity

Positive feedback from the community (families and others) about the child's behaviour

The child feels joy at belonging to the community

Participation in the chosen activities

The child is still in the family he/she was reunited with

Participates in community activities organized by other children or others

Psychologically balanced and healthy

Stable in the family and the community

Continuity of the activity (income-generating activity, training or school)

Child in the family (reunification)

Child doing an activity (life plan)

Self-sufficient child (can support himself/herself)

Social stability

Psychologically fulfilled

Is progressing in the chosen activity

The child becomes polite and obedient in the family, defers to his/her parents

The child is still working (at what he/she learned)

A child who continues to study and who is still in his/her family or community

A child who is still working at his/her initial trade during reintegration into the community

A child who is still living with family or in the community

Has stable habits

He/she is performing well at the activity he/she chose (it is sustainable despite difficulties)

Relied on in the community

The child no longer wants to go back to the bush

A child who dissuades his friends from going into the bush

If the community speaks positively about the child and his/her behaviour

The child has activities with the community

Children who are now clean and well dressed

Children who are happy, not angry

The child has an occupation that brings in money

A child who is interested in what he/she does tends not to re-enlist

The child contributes to the development of his/her community

The child is not in contact with soldiers

Collaborates well with his/her community

The child participates in the community's activities

The child is now a permanent member of the family

There is a change in his/her life at every level

He is happy and communicates benevolently with his former instructors

The child participates in the community's activities

The child participates in chores at home

The community comes to see the child during his/her entrepreneurship

If the child is self-sufficient

If the child is well reintegrated into his/her community

If his/her activity is ongoing

The child lives with his/her family permanently

A change of lifestyle is observed

The child expresses gratitude to UNICEF and the CPA

He is on good terms with all of the people around him/her

He/she is very happy with the NGOs that work in his/her area

The child is present in the community

The child has an occupation in his/her community

Collaborates with other children (child of name)

Community acceptance of the child

The child's behaviour is impeccable

The child has adapted to his/her community

Integration into the community

Has made a success of the project and is innovating

Decrease in cases of CAAFAGs returning

The child is accepted by his/her community and participates in all of the community's activities

The child has an activity: school, training or an income-generating activity

The child is healthy living with his/her family

The child finds work

The child is self-sufficient

Everyone uses the child's services

The children are closer to their community

The children walk freely around the community

The children participate in various activities in their environment

The child is no longer dependent on interim care and becomes self-sufficient

The quality and quantity of the products he/she makes has improved

Has a savings account with an increasing balance

The child performs the work in the way he/she learned

The community knows that the child was at the training centre and that now he is a technician and is starting to do something

The child makes a positive contribution in society

A child who completes the training and looks after his/her equipment to earn some money

He looks after his equipment so he can earn a living by working for the community

He becomes useful in society because he has become a motorcycle driver

The child has calmed down, does not cause trouble, does not bother the people around him/her

He has become responsible, buys the things he needs, like clothes and shoes; he is clean now.

If he wants to marry or do more study, he can; he does not neglect his income-earning work

The child has become responsible in the community

The child is established and is working at the trade he/she was taught

The child is in his/her own life

If the child works well

Or if the child starts to listen to others

His/her relationship with the community

What he does or his work in the community

He/she is valued in the family

The quality of his/her work

Stability

Community and family acceptance

If he starts to fear God and show respect

If he helps and is humble with his parents

He works very well in their workshop

He is also respectful towards the family

He behaves very well in their company and at school and he has stopped smoking weed and drinking wine

Masters the training (he works very well)

Can support himself

Good behaviour in society and towards the population

A good habit

He supports himself

Is able to overcome difficulties

Has adapted to the family

No discrimination between him and the children from the community

Has put the training into practice

Positive feedback from the community about the child

Self-sufficient or sense of responsibility

The child is considered well reintegrated if he/she is healthy

Enjoying all his/her rights in accordance with the 2009 Child Protection Act

Socially, if he is happy living with his/her foster family and biological family

Change of mentality

Respect in the workshop

Capacity for self-sufficiency

Signs of unsatisfactory reintegration

Total, continuing dependence on interim care even after the training and distribution of the reintegration kits

No reintegration kits received, no functional workshop

Resumption of or involvement in activities other than those he was trained in

After finishing the training, the child has been doing nothing in the community

He just wanders around the neighbourhood

He does not even know where he left his kit

He sold his equipment and is now useless in society

He has become a thief

He is incompetent

He is weird

He wanders around asking for money

He harasses anyone he comes across

The child has become a thief after reintegration

The child lives in dire conditions

The child still wants to be in care

If the child does not work well

Or if the child does not listen

If his/her old habits do not change

If he does not support himself

If he/she is [not] valued by his/her family and community

Instability

Sells tools or reintegration kit

Starts stealing

Does not show respect to the family

Drinks a lot of wine/smokes a lot of weed

Lacks self-control

Neglects the training

Apathetic

Bad behaviour

Insolent

Commits a lot of crime

Stigmatized by the community

Let down/neglected by parents

Lack of employment in the environment

The child is given a stigmatizing nickname

Re-recruitment (especially voluntary)

Sells the work kits

Deviant behaviour (troublemaker in the community)

If cohabitation with the foster family or biological family is not going well

When he/she suffers trauma, which pushes him to return to armed forces or armed groups

And especially when he/she does not receive what children should (education, schooling, food, etc.)

Is still rebellious

Unable to take care of themselves

Lack of motivation

The children are arrested arbitrarily

Wants to return to military service

The child has no morals

The child remains dependent

The child is idle

The child is still considered dishonoured

The child rambles

The child wants to return to the army

The child is undisciplined

The child's health

The child rejects his/her community

Lack of basic social structures

Low amount of reintegration assistance

Voluntary enlistment to have another form of support

The assistance is poorly managed, causing conflicts between children

The child is marginalized, stigmatized and discriminated against by the community

The child is aggressive

The child is not accepted by his/her community (rejection)

The child is absent from the community

Problems in the community

Return to armed forces and armed groups

When he met a staff member from an organization, he said a shocking word

He is often very arrogant towards everyone

Sometimes he goes back to stealing

The child keeps being found in a state of idleness

Returns to interim care

Diminishing quality of life

If the child is leading a wretched life

If the child appears sad to the youth workers

If the child re-enlists while others are receiving support

If the child dropped out of the trade or the vocational apprenticeship

If the activity the child chose is unsuccessful

If his/her business fails

The child has no stability and wants to go somewhere else

The child does not adapt easily to the community

The child is still dependent and wants to receive from others

Returns to the interim care centre even though there is no insecurity or other problems in the community

Does not play with the other children

Has many problems with the community

Enlistment

Stealing

Drug use

The child often returns to interim care

The child goes knocking on the doors of child protection agencies asking for a reintegration programme

He is still aggressive towards the CPA staff

The community/the family reject the child

The child's bad behaviour

The child is doing nothing with the training he/she received

The child goes back to the bush

Despite the support, they continue to exhibit unacceptable behaviour, like wanting to be isolated from the others or having goals contrary to the the group's

The child is living on the street

The child joins the armed forces or armed groups again

The child abandons the reintegration activities after a few months

The child returns to an activity or a group from which he/she had been released

Total dependence

The child has become a vagrant after having wasted or poorly managed the reintegration kit and not having found an alternative income-generating activity

The child does not adapt to the community

The child refuses to reintegrate into the community

The child goes back to the street

The child receives a kit but does nothing with it

The child has not mastered the skills (the trade)

The child has gone back to the street after having received training or a kit

Avoids contact and the interview with the instructor

Physical, emotional and social instability

The child complains, is provocative and defensive

The child returns to the armed forces or an armed group

The child is wary and dejected in the community

Deviant behaviour, crime and other bad behaviour the child reports in communication

Leaves the family he/she was reunited with

Drops out of the reintegration activities

The child is stigmatized (identified with his/her former category)

Family instability

Economic difficulties (poverty, etc.)

Rejection by the community

Child in the street (rejected by everyone)

The child has no activity: failure, especially of a small business

Lack of interest in the chosen activity

Socio-economic instability

Returns to the armed forces or an armed group or to the lifestyle prior to identification

The child has stopped obeying his/her parents

The child no longer wants to work

The child destroyed and wrecked everything he/she received from the centre, consumed all of it all with his/her friends, and does not want his/her parents to talk about it

The child returns to the bush

No follow-up

The child exhibits the pride of the bush to others

There is no continuous monitoring of the children released from armed forces or armed groups

Lack of activities for the child, who is permanently idle (dependent)

Children re-recruited by armed forces or armed groups

No life plan

Is not accepted in his/her community

Does not participate in community activities

Re-recruited by armed groups

No monitoring after the training

Does not care about the reintegration programme

The child either did not receive a reintegration kit or received an inadequate kit

The child's needs on reunification are not met, e.g. children who have been trained in a trade but have no equipment to put the training to use

Inadequate training

A high percentage of children who have not received reintegration kits

When children return to armed forces and armed groups

The children who did not receive kits have a negative attitude towards the youth workers or social workers

Re-recruitment of children by armed forces and armed groups

High percentage of reintegrated children wandering around the community with no occupation

Many reunited children go back to the interim care centres, demanding items

The child continues to wander and starts to steal

The child has returned to the armed forces or armed groups

The child does not have positive feedback

The child is dependent

He has no value in the community

He has no occupation

The child is re-recruited

The child remains isolated and does not integrate into other groups or associations

The child stops his/her trade or does not progress

Re-recruitment of children by armed forces or armed groups

Stigmatization of the child in the community

Rejection (the child is not valued by the community)

A child who is unable to perform the chosen trade after training

A child who has no workshop and does nothing

A child who continues to display military behaviour in the civilian community

Sells the equipment received

Is unstable and impulsive

Dependence

If I don't buy a bicycle

Can you help us get different sewing machines? The ones we received are made in China and of poor quality.

Help us too with our schooling

We want the Congolese Government to give us a five-year exemption from tax so we can get our businesses going

Vulnerability

Insecurity

Payment of school fees

When we finish our studies, can you hire us to help the others?

Still wondering if we finish our studies and ask for work from those people who helped us at least if they can guide us

The problem is that you said you would pay reunited children's school fees, so I don't understand why you refused to pay mine when I'm in secondary school

It's not going well because I'm rude and a troublemaker

If I don't have enough money to to to school

If I don't have an occupation

If you still have a military way of thinking

If I get involved in crime in the neighbourhood

Depending on my behaviour

Nothing is working for me because I still haven't received anything

I would like to have a drum of kerosene so I can start a small business

The problem is I haven't received anything since I was reunited

The problem is I have no occupation

Another problem is we don't all have the same attitude to the instructors who give us advice

I hate it when they call me "demob" in the neighbourhood

We want the war to stop so we can tend our fields and combat poverty

I need work

The people I have good relations with, if I behave badly with them even once, it's bad

I'm unhappy that I'm not studying

I have only what I brought back from the interim care centre/CAJED

I don't even have any work to provide for myself or to help my parents

It makes me think about joining the army again

Follows the others who were in the army with the child

The child behaves badly in the community and the family

Insecurity in the environment

Vulnerability of the family

We were reunited in my family with inadequate resources: if they had been sufficient, we would have been able to earn a living easily

If I do bad things like stealing, raping, smoking and getting drunk, it means I haven't integrated into my community and others will reject me

I am happy to be back with my family, but I don't like people who don't show me respect

When I start speaking, people tell me I have a military way of thinking

Being reunited without a kit

No follow-up after reunification

We are not loved like the other children in the family (community)

The problem is I had two goats but one died from disease. I'm happy to with my family, but my presence contributes nothing, which bothers me because I don't have work

Sometimes my family tells me that since I don't work, I can't ask for anything

That's why I want to have a small business to start to pull my weight in the family and keep my parents happy

I don't like the reintegration kits: we were not given everything we need and I still don't know what to do to support myself

The machine COOPI gave me doesn't work

I am not relaxed in my parents' home

When I am sick, the family neglects me

I suffer a lot in my life

Not all the materials were given out, like the sticky gold paper and now the sewing thread

I was not told where there was a workshop where I could work well

They gave us machines that broke

They promised us money to open workshops

Then they forgot about follow-up

I suffer a lot in my family because of disagreements

I need to progress but I have no support

Since I have been in higher education, I have had trouble paying for clothes and buying the syllabus because my mother is supporting me by herself

My child is now of school age, but with the little my mother earns, she won't be able to support me and my child

Because my child is sick a lot and COOPI does not provide the support it used to, I don't go to my course for a few days to mind the child when my mother goes out canvassing

I am in doubt because the contract was for a year, so I'm not sure I will complete the two years I have left

I get by in the street by doing hard physical work, like making soap or cream, or unloading trucks.

I thought COOPI was supposed to look after each person's needs in the way they wanted, but surprisingly COOPI only took care of minor needs

I am not stable, I am suffering because I have no work to earn money

Right now I am suffering. I work in someone's field every day so I can eat. I have been evicted from my rented house. I have no work. I don't know what to do to have a stable life. I don't know where to live. I have no one to help me. You promised to increase the kits, but didn't.

Compilation of evaluation reports provided by UNICEF staff on CAAFAG programme activities

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Equateur		AM Tshuapa 03 (3) AM Gemena 06 (7) AM Basankusu 07 (2) AM/WK Gbadolite 10 (14)	AM Gemena 08 (10)	WK Bakansuku 01 (4) WK Gemena 06 (7) WK Gemena Dongo 07 (17) WK Boende Bokungu 09 (14) AM Gemena Gbado 09 (14) WK Bakansuku 09 (7)) WK South Ubangi 10 (21) WK Dongo 11 (10)	WK Boende 05-06 (14)
Ituri		FS SCUUK 02 FS Kpandroma 05 (3) FS Kpandroma 09 (3)	FM Kpandroma 08 (4) FM Kpandroma 01(4)	FS Aveba 04 (5) FM Kasenyi 09 (1)	FS Aveba 06 (1) FS Aveba 07 (2)
North Kivu		EO and PK SCUUK 05 (12)		PB Walikale 02 (7) PB Rutshuru 03 (7) PB Minova Rutsh. 04 (2) PB Mwesso 09 (3) PB Masisi 09 (3)	IB Walikale 05 (7)
South Kivu	FM Uvira 10 (4) FM Uvira 11 (2) FM Kalehe 12 (2) FM Uvira 12 (2)	FM Minova 02 (1) FM Uvira 04 (3) FM Uvira/Fizi 05 (4) FM Uvira 07 (2)	FM Uvira 01 (2) FM Uvira 05 (3) FM Bunyakiri 10 (4) FM BVES WK BVES 09	FM BVES FM Uvira Fizi 03 (3) FM BVES 04 (1) FM Uvira 05 (2) FM Mwenga 09 (4) FM Mwenga 12 (4) AE Shabunda 09 (8)	FM Shabunda 04 (7)

