Return to Childhood:
An Analysis of the Reintegration of Child Soldiers

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Abstract: Beginning with a child-rights framework guided by recommendations in the Machel report and programmatic 'best-practices' in rehabilitation "Return to Childhood" analyses the reintegration of child soldiers in three case studies, Mozambique, Uganda and Sierra Leone. Case studies were chosen for reasons including documentation availability, regional and colonial diversity within sub-Saharan Africa and difference in conflict status. The research was based on qualitative comparative analysis of policies and programming for child soldiers. Case-study governments are parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international legislation. With varying degrees of recognition for their obligation as duty-bearers, these governments created or allowed an environment that supported programming for demobilized child soldiers. The findings of this research indicate that programming which included psycho-social rehabilitation, family reunification, education and skills training resulted in varying degrees of reintegration hampered by continued instability and lack of systemic support by governments.

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"Impressive gains have been made in codifying international norms and standards for the protection and well-being of children...More needs to be done; there is a need to promote and disseminate these standards and norms, and raise awareness about them on the ground. Similarly, there is a need to put in place strengthened monitoring and reporting mechanisms to identify the violators and take measures against them." (Report of the Secretary General on children and armed conflict, 2002, p.13)

INTRODUCTION

It is estimated that 300 000 children as young as eight years old are currently engaged in armed conflict throughout the world as child soldiers (Human Rights Watch, 1999, p. 1). In Africa, it is estimated that 120 000 child soldiers exist (Human Rights Watch, 1999, p. 1). The use of children as soldiers raises many issues pertaining to children's rights, the future viability of families and communities and development in general.

Children have been documented as participating within the ranks of government forces, paramilitary and rebel groups alike. Within these groups they take on a number of roles, including "combatants...cooks, informants, porters, bodyguards, sentries and spies". (Wessells, 1997, p. 33) The use of children within the ranks occurs irrespective of sex. For the purposes of this research and analysis, the term 'child soldier' will be used inter-changeably with 'children within the ranks' in order to reflect the variety of roles both boys and girls assume while actively involved in armed conflict.

Some general explanations for the use of children as soldiers have been extrapolated from the literature in this field. Thompson (1999) provides five reasons for the inclusion of children within the ranks:

- children's energy levels;
- they are more susceptible to propaganda and therefore, more readily obey;
- their moral values are still in formation so they can, more easily than an adult, suspend moral judgments;
- with fewer skills and less knowledge about the area, they are less likely to escape successfully, and
- they don't demand pay. (p. 193)

In addition to the aforementioned roles that all children, regardless of sex, fulfill within the ranks, girls are specifically targeted in order to participate in an additional manner. The recruitment or abduction of girls to be given to male soldiers as 'wives' elicits attention as "the practice appears to occur in every conflict where there are child soldiers" (Thompson, 1999, p. 10). Inclusion within the ranks in order to fulfill the role of 'wife' increases the level of trauma experienced and violates additional rights of these girls.

Numerous ramifications arise due to the sexual victimization of girls within the ranks of child soldiers. First is the additional psychological trauma experienced by girls in this manner. Second is the potential to become pregnant, recognizing that pregnancy results in additional health concerns for girls in the ranks. Third is the increased potential of acquiring HIV/AIDS. Fourth are the implications for girls/women post-conflict as a result of their sexual victimization:

should she return to her home community or stay with her soldier 'husband' and reintegrate into his home community, while coping with local attitudes regarding her sexual exploitation after the conflict ends? This final implication can result in families

and local communities rejecting the girls as "impure or unsuitable for marriage. Desperate to survive, many former girl soldiers become prostitutes". (Wessells, 1997, p. 33)

The use of children as soldiers has been documented (Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 1999; Global Information Networks in Education, 2001) in the context of the war waged by RENAMO in Mozambique, by both the national government's armed forces and RENAMO. On the establishment of peace in the early nineteen-nineties, the national government honored its commitment to the rights of children (including for example those rights specifically violated through the inclusion of children as soldiers) in the provision of programming such as family reunification (Mausse & Nina). Non-government organizations such as UNICEF and Save the Children also began providing post-conflict services to demobilized child soldiers and war-affected children.

Children have participated as child soldiers in the Lord's Resistance Army, the National Army of Uganda, and paramilitary groups engaged in the ongoing armed conflict in Uganda (Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 1999). While this war has been primarily localized within the north, its continuance for many years has affected numerous children through their participation within the ranks and has warranted significant assistance on their behalf. Services on behalf of war-affected children, and more specifically, child soldiers have been offered in order to address the extensive impact that this has had on children, their families and communities.

Extensive documentation (Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 1999) exists on the participation of children within the ranks of the Civil Defence Force, the national army and the Revolutionary United Front within the context of Sierra Leone.

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The environment of instability within Sierra Leone has made implementing programs on behalf of child soldiers difficult and tenuous despite the continued efforts to do so by both government and non-government agencies.

Recognizing these factors and the multitude of issues faced by child soldiers the key question to be addressed in this research is:

QUESTION: Has the reintegration of demobilised child soldiers occurred within the context of sub-Saharan Africa, specifically illustrated in the cases of Mozambique, Uganda and Sierra Leone?

The concept of reintegration can hold many different meanings. For the purpose of this thesis reintegration shall be understood to mean: the return to and inclusion within family and community including participation in education and/or employment on completion of disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation programming.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Explicitly stated throughout the literature on child soldiering is the recognition and adherence to child rights legislation. The Convention on the Rights of the Child defines this issue, prescribes actions to be taken and holds ratifying states accountable for their actions related to the use of children as soldiers through reporting. It is therefore necessary to include it within this theoretical framework as it will be the basis for all other theoretical material to be employed herein.

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The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) enshrines children's rights in United Nations member states around the world. The Convention was adopted on November 20, 1989 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. To date it has been universally ratified except by two States Parties, Somalia and the United States of America.

As is the case with all human rights instruments, the CRC is a compact between ratifying states parties and their citizenry. In the case of the CRC the compact exists between governments, as duty bearers and children, as rights holders. By ratifying the Convention, governments commit to working toward the realization of its contents.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been designed to recognize all rights of children as equal; it is non-hierarchically based. Many articles are linked due to the multidimensional nature of specific themes emphasizing the interconnectedness of rights. There are four articles commonly accepted as 'guiding principles' that direct understanding and action when a 'child rights approach' is taken. They are: non-discrimination (Article 2), best interests of the child (Article 3), survival and development (Article 6) and the right to express their views in all matters affecting them (Article 12). Article 12 is commonly interpreted as the 'right to participate' in all matters that affect the child, recognizing the evolving capacity of that child, based on age and maturity, but given due weight in decision making.

The Convention does not exist solely within the realm of legislation or theory. It is concrete and practical. It was designed with an inherent structure of accountability by States Parties through periodic reporting, "two years after entry into force....thereafter every five years" (UNICEF, 1998, p. 15) to the Committee on the Rights of the Child,

entrenched within the United Nations system. Specifically, States parties are required to report on "the measures they have adopted which give effect to the rights recognized herein and on the progress made on the enjoyment of those rights" (Article 44). Additionally, this structure also allows for the input of "specialized agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund and other competent bodies as it may consider appropriate to provide expert advice on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their respective mandates" (UNICEF, 1998, p. 16) on invitation of the Committee. This allows for independent agencies, non-government organizations, researchers, or other representatives of civil society to have input into the monitoring and evaluation of States Parties in their provision of children's rights.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is also holistic in its approach. As Pais (1999) states, it

> avoids the traditional dichotomy between civil and political rights on one hand, and economic, social and cultural right on the other. It addresses the whole child and all children's rights, including the child's fundamental freedoms of expression, of religion, of peaceful assembly and association; civil rights as in the case of the right to a name and a nationality; economic and social rights, including the right to health and social security; and cultural rights, including the right to education and participation in cultural life (p. 8)

This holistic approach is possible through the four guiding principles and due to the placement of the best interest of the child at the centre of any considerations regarding their life or experiences.

Under the CRC a child is defined as "every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier". (UNICEF, 1998, p. 1) This definition is important when addressing the use of children in

armed conflict as it is one criterion on which the legitimacy of troops can be based or

refuted. It also clearly indicates for whom the rights outlined in the CRC are intended.

Article 38 of the Convention declares,

> 1. States Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for rules of
> international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts which are
> relevant to the child.
> 2. States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have
> not attained the age of 15 years do not take a direct part in hostilities
> 3. States Parties shall refrain from recruiting any person who has not attained the
> age of 15 years into their armed forces. In recruiting among those persons who
> have attained the age of 15 years but who have not attained the age of 18 years,
> States Parties shall endeavour to give priority to those who are oldest.
> 4. In accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law to
> protect the civilian population in armed conflicts, States Parties shall take all
> feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by an
> armed conflict. (UNICEF, 1998, pp. 13, 14)

In order to strengthen the CRC and the recognition of the rights of children

affected by war, an additional piece of international legislation has been presented to the

United Nations general assembly and opened for signing and ratification. The Optional

Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in

Armed Conflict, raises the age of compulsory recruitment to 18; stresses that precautions

must be taken by government forces when allowing for voluntary recruitment to insure

that it is truly voluntary, that parental consent is achieved, that the child is fully informed,

that reliable proof of age is provided; and prohibits the participation of children in any

other armed group (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2001). The

Optional Protocol entered into force in February 2002.

Article 39 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child holds signatory States

Parties responsible for post-conflict care of children affected by, or participating in,

warfare. It declares,

States Parties take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment that fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child (UNICEF, 1998, p. 12).

The International Labour Organization includes child soldiering among the worst forms of child labour. Convention 182 "Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention: Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour" (1999) has experienced the most rapid rate of ratification of any ILO convention, entering into force in November 2000 (Martin & Tajgman, 2002, p. 5). 132 States Parties have ratified Convention 182, in which its subject population is defined as "all persons under the age of 18" (International Labour Organization, 1999, Article 2). The Convention states in Article 1, "each Member which ratifies this Convention shall take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as matter of urgency" and in Article 6, "each Member shall design and implement programmes of action to eliminate as a priority the worst forms of child labour" (International Labour Organization, 1999).

Within the context of Africa, other African specific legislation has been created echoing the sentiments of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The African Union (formerly the Organization of African Unity) adopted the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, in 1990. The Charter's preamble states, "that the situation of most African children remains critical due to the unique factors of their socio-economic, cultural, tradition and development circumstances, natural disasters, armed conflicts, exploitation and hunger, and on account of the child's physical and mental immaturity he/she needs special safeguards and care" (Organization of African Unity, 1990, 1).

Within the Charter, a child is defined as "every human being below the age of 18 years" (Organization of African Unity, 1990, p. 2). Without additional distinction, pertaining to armed conflict, Article 22 requires that States Parties "shall take all necessary measures to ensure that no child shall take a direct part in hostilities and refrain in particular, from recruiting any child" (Organization of African Unity, 1990, p. 7).

In 1996, Graca Machel[1], former education minister of Mozambique, and United Nations Expert on Children and Armed Conflict, presented her "Impact of War on Children" report to the General Assembly of the United Nations. It became explicitly clear the extent to which children were suffering under the actions of the adult world through engagement in war. Included within her report, Machel detailed the extent to which children were participating in soldiering and related roles within the ranks, and the ramifications this had on the lives of those involved. Her report also outlined the key areas to be included within rehabilitation programming so as to most effectively achieve reintegration. Reunification with family and community, psycho-social therapy addressing the trauma faced by children within the ranks, education and skills training were of primary importance in programming during rehabilitation (Machel, 1996). Subsequently, at the International Conference on War- Affected Children, held in Winnipeg in 2000, the culminating event of international regional conferences on the topic, Ms. Machel updated her report, detailing progresses made in child protection in this realm and future recommendations regarding the involvement of children in war.

In April 1999, the African Conference on the Use of Children as Soldiers occurred in Maputo, Mozambique. The result of this conference was a declaration by the

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[1] Graca Machel is the former first lady of Mozambique and current wife of former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela.

representatives of national governments and civil society organizations giving priority to "demobilizing into safety all children, girls as well as boys, currently serving in the armed forces" and "ensuring the physical and psycho-social rehabilitation and effective reintegration into safety of demobilized child soldiers" (Human Rights Watch, 1999b, p. 2).

The rehabilitation of child soldiers must first begin with demobilization. Historically, formal peace treaties have not recognized the inclusion of child soldiers in combat and as a result the provision of special rehabilitation services for children following their demobilization becomes unlikely in the overall demobilization schema of national governments (Machel, 1996, p. 14). (This will be shown not to be the case in Sierra Leone in a later chapter.) It therefore becomes vital that child soldiers receive official recognition in peace treaties.

Demobilized child soldiers may face rejection from their communities or society at large due to their involvement in armed conflict. "Many teachers and parents may object to having ex-combatants enroll in schools, fearing that they will have a disruptive effect. Programs must address these wider community concerns" (Machel, 1996, p. 15). These objections are well founded due to the fact that many child soldiers have been raised in a hostile and violent environment. This may result in child soldiers finding difficulty in disengaging "from the idea that violence is a legitimate means of achieving one's aims" (Machel, 1996, p. 16). In the absence of rehabilitation programming addressing these needs "many African societies will find that a substantial number of its future citizens will be unable to raise viable families" (Skinner, 1999, p. 7) thereby affecting societal cohesion.

It is important to understand the means through which children become involved in armed conflict as this can contribute to the need for psycho-social treatment after conflict. The idea of voluntary participation of children in armed conflict is considered weak when the reasons behind a child's willingness to participate are revealed. Reasons given for voluntary participation (i.e. the death of parents, the inability to provide for basic needs, and/or revenge for the death of family members), represent significant external factors that create a sense of coercion or feeling that there us no other option but to involvement as a soldier. These external factors negate the voluntary nature of their actions, in particular because children express that they feel they have no other option but to participate. Notwithstanding this, in some circumstances, children participate in armed conflict, voluntarily, as a means of gaining status or power (Machel, 1996, p. 13).

Brett (2003) highlights five major factors voluntary[2] child soldiers indicate as the reasons they choose to participate in armed conflict. There are "war, poverty, education, employment and family", with the additional contributing factors of "ideology, ethnicity, the struggle for liberation (or against oppression) and friends". Some volunteer with the anticipation of being able to leave if they so decide (Brett, 2003, p.2). Brett goes on to explain the need to consider the nature of involvement during demobilization and reintegration as it will affect the participation and effectiveness of programming. It reflects a psychological component to soldiering for children:

> ...if someone takes responsibility for their actions, it is not necessarily helpful or
> appropriate to tell them that they had no choice, or that they were not entitled to
> take the decisions they did because they were under-age. The girl who decides to
> volunteer rather than waiting to be abducted because she realizes that by
> volunteering she gets to choose which commander to join up with...is behaving

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[2]'Volunteering' is defined by Brett as "not being abducted or physically forced to join the armed forces or armed groups" (Brett, 2003, p. 4)

rationally and deserves to be treated - and consulted - as someone who took decisions; even if the degree or nature of the 'choices' available to her are not such as were envisaged by those drafting legal definitions" (Brett, 2003, p. 5).

Involuntary participation of children occurs by way of abduction, conscription or sale. Forced conscription most often occurs amongst populations that are poor or marginalized hampering future reintegration due to psychological damage exemplified by reduced levels of trust in authority figures. The abduction of children by rebel groups is often accompanied by acts of extreme violence against family or community members instilling fear and obedience toward leaders and reducing future attempts at escape. The reintegration of children becomes complicated due to the depletion of family members and resistance by community members who have been affected by the acts of violence perpetrated by previously abducted children. In addition, some children are sold into national armed forces by their parents or guardians. On occasion, the families of children receive remuneration for the use of their child in the armed forces. These acts affect already impoverished children, and strain familial bonds.

Peddle examined a project between the Sierra Leonean government, UNICEF and the Christian Children's Fund which addressed the psycho-social needs of children involved in conflict. As has been the experience in international development regardless of the specific project examined, cultural incongruence can occur due to differences and ignorance in effect during implementation. The Peddle article examined the therapeutic modalities employed within the projects revealing a number of modalities but with an emphasis on a western psychoanalytical therapeutic form of intervention. The project encouraged children to express themselves through songs, stories, plays and pictures (Peddle, 1998, p. 47). Trauma approaches within armed conflict zones are inadequate in

that they 'medicalize problems having deep political, social and historical roots"
(Wessells, 2000, p. 4). These approaches are a further extension of western domination
and foster dependency whereas community approaches "focus more on the intersection of
social, emotional, and situational problems and have a broader orientation" (Wessells,
2000, p. 5). The goal of a community approach is to normalize activities "that enable
the normal flow of children's development, strengthen the sense of continuity, and
provide a bridge between past, present and future" (Wessells, 2000, p. 6).

In the Mozambican context, exploration concerning the inclusion of a component
of cultural affirmation in rehabilitation and reintegration has occurred. "Western
individualistic psychology had only limited insight to offer for healing. Modern
techniques were employed, but along-side of traditional ones, with the latter proving to
be more effective" (Thompson, 1999, p. 198). In addition, the western expression-based
therapies were seen to remind the child of their trauma "leaving the child in more severe
pain and agitation than before" (Thompson, 1999, p. 198). As a result traditional healers
were included in the rehabilitation efforts and included family and community members
in ceremonies that discarded the old identities of child soldiers (Thompson, 1999, p. 199).

Stavrou, Stewart and Stavrou (2000) recognize the need for the inclusion of
traditional ceremonies during rehabilitation and reintegration. They divide the
reintegration process into 4 stages: recapture or surrender, debriefing by army officials,
custody in care centers (where ex-combatants receive medical attention, training and
counseling) and finally return to family (Stavrou, Stewart & Stavrou, 2000, pp. 13 – 15).
Within these stages, services must be provided for the child, family and community

members as all parties have been affected by the involvement of children as soldiers and subsequently will affect their reintegration in some capacity.

Combining 'creative play programming' and 'skills development' through mentoring with staff animators and local men and women has been the rehabilitation and reintegration focus of the Butterfly Garden in Sri Lanka for war-affected children (Chase, 2000, p. 3). This has provided children with the opportunity to address their psychological needs at their own pace. Additionally, local teachers have participated in the program forging stronger community linkages for the children involved.

Education has been a primary focus of rehabilitation services as "educational opportunities provide structure, stability and a sense of normalcy to young people. Education programs are likely to promote prevention, protection and rehabilitation for children – particularly for adolescents, who without targeted education interventions are at increased risk of falling prey to a variety of abuses, such as soldiering, in war" (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2000, p. 1). Education is a right, as stated in Articles 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 11 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and Article 7 of Convention 182 Worst Forms of Child Labour, regardless of, and in particular during, rehabilitation of war. International humanitarian aid agencies have been advocating for the inclusion of education as the 'fourth pillar of humanitarian relief' in recognition that education is a right, and as such is included within the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 29). During the International Conference on War-Affected Children, Winnipeg, 2000, children and adolescents identified education as the highest priority for children in conflict and post-conflict situations ("From Words to Action" 2000, p. 39).

The impact of providing education for children during armed conflict is significant. "By sustaining education during conflict, societies can minimize the recovery time following the cessation of hostilities and help to build the strong human infrastructure necessary for social recovery" (Baines & Burciul, 2000, p. 4). Education has secondary benefits for families as well as the individual children for whom educational services are being provided. "An added benefit arising from the quick restoration of education is the relief this provides for care-givers at home - particularly women - freeing up their time and energies for productive activities or for the rest and recuperation time needed to heal their own war-induced psychological wounds" (UNICEF, "UNICEF Action", 2000, p.20). Bush and Saltarelli illustrate the need for caution in the provision of education during armed conflict. They explain that education can be used as a tool of violence upon already marginalized children through

- the uneven distribution of education as a means of creating or preserving positions of economic, social and political privilege;
- education as a weapon in cultural repression;
- denial of education as a weapon of war;
- education as a means of manipulating history for political purposes;
- education serving to diminish self-worth and encourage hate;
- segregated education as a means of ensuring inequality, inferiority and stereotypes;
- the role of textbooks in impoverishing the imagination of children and thereby inhibiting them from dealing with conflict constructively (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000, p. 34).

THEORETICAL DEBATE

The use of a rights-based framework for the analysis of child soldiering has benefited from the near universal acceptance of the Convention on the Rights of the

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Child, and the growing support for its Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. 'Near universal ratification' implies at least a minimal level of debate that needs to be recognized and addressed herein, pointing to some dissent within the international community in this regard. The employment of a child-rights based approach indicates a break in the way children's issues are now being addressed in contrast to the traditional notion of charitable acts on behalf of the victimized or dependent child. Within the context of development, the use of a rights based approach raises criticism from the post-structuralist/post-modern, proponents of the Post-Development school of thought. And finally, psycho-social programmatic distinctions have been made during rehabilitation between individualistic versus community-based interventions in the attempt to reintegrate child soldiers. While both can be argued as supporting the rights of children, the latter is more holistic in its approach and therefore addresses the best interest of the child more fully. The following will analyze the components of the debate that exist among these various schools of thought.

NON-RATIFYING STATES PARTIES

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: There are a number of reasons for the non-ratification of the CRC by the American government. These reasons include: pressure from the 'pro-family' lobby who interpret children's rights as an attack on traditional family values; the complexities that exist in the delegation of authority between states and federal government structures; the continued use in some states of the death penalty for juvenile offenders; the practice of recruiting child soldiers; and viewing the

accountability for international commitments (and in particular Human Rights instruments) to an external body as an imposition on American sovereignty.

Of the reasons for non-ratification of the CRC by the American government, the use of child soldiers is particularly significant as pertains to this research. The American military has historically recruited graduating high school students prior to their eighteenth birthday. Fear of "heightened pressure to stop recruiting" has contributed to preventing the American government from ratifying the CRC despite the fact that "less than one-half of one percent of the U.S. military is composed of such underage recruits" (Roth, 1998, 3). Contrary to this practice, and its implication for ratification of the CRC, the American government recently signed on to the Optional Protocol.

SOMALIA: The non-ratification of the CRC by Somalia is due to the absence of a functioning national government, not debate on its relevance or legitimacy. From the time the CRC was made available for signature until today, Somalia has not had a functioning national government, although in recent years, a provisional government has been established.

NEEDS VERSUS RIGHTS

Employing a child rights-based approach in order to address the experiences of children marks a distinct transition from a needs-based response fuelled by charity. This shift from charity to rights, not only recognizes children's claim to protection, freedoms and/or services as valid, it obligates States Parties to address the situation of all children as active citizens with a right to participate in decisions affecting them. The following

chart, taken from CIDA's Action Plan on Child Protection (2001), contrasts the

distinction between a needs-based and child-rights based approach.

NEEDS APPROACH	RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH
Works toward outcome goals	Works toward outcome and process goals
Emphasizes meeting needs	Emphasizes realizing rights
Recognizes needs as valid claims	Recognizes that rights always imply obligations of the state
Meets needs without empowerment	Recognizes that rights can only be realized with empowerment
Accepts charity as the driving motivation for meeting needs	States that charity is insufficient motivation for meeting needs
Focuses on manifestations of problems and immediate causes of problems	Focuses on structural causes of problems, as well as manifestations and immediate causes of problems
Involves narrow sectoral projects	Involves intersectoral, holistic projects and programs
Focuses on social context with little emphasis on policy	Focuses on social, economic, cultural, civil, and political context, and is policy-oriented

"The need for vaccination has been met for 80% of all children"	"The right to vaccination is denied to 20% of all children"

It is important to recognize the connection between these two approaches. "This table outlines some of the important differences between the needs and rights-based approaches. These differences should not, however, be seen as mutually exclusive, since much of the rights-based approach is built on the needs approach" (CIDA's Action Plan on Child Protection, 2001, p. 26)

POST-DEVELOPMENT

Post-structuralist/post-modern analysis posits that the use of universal human rights legislation arises out of a western European context and therefore represents the cultural evolution of that specific locale. By employing it outside of this context emphasis is placed on one culture over another and represents a form of imperialism.

While external pressure can be applied to governments to adopt international human rights legislation, the power remains in hands of the national governments to sign or reject such legislation. Justice is achieved by holding States Parties accountable for their actions or inactions following the adoption of international legislation, not imperialism. Additionally, child rights legislation has included the culturally-specific support of non-western-European bodies such as the Organisation of African Unity in their creation and adoption of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

PSYCHO-SOCIAL PROGRAMMATIC DIFFERENCES

Approaches to psycho-social rehabilitative programming for child soldiers have either attempted to assist demobilized child soldiers in dealing with the trauma experienced during their time within the ranks on an individual level, or more broadly within the context of their relationships to their home community. There are a number of factors contributing to psycho-social well-being regardless of the approach taken to aid survivors of trauma, that should be considered in rehabilitation including for example human capacity, cultural values, social ecology, physical resources and economic resources (Working with Children in Armed Conflict: A skills building workshop, January 10 and 11, 2002, pp. 28, 29).

The individual approach to rehabilitation incorporates a western, medical modality, resulting in demobilized child soldiers being treated for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD is defined by the American Psychiatric Association as the following:

A. The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following were present:
(1) the person experienced, witnessed or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others.
(2) the person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror.
Note: In children, this may be expressed instead by disorganized or agitated behaviour.

B. The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in one (or more) of the following ways:
(1) recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions.
Note: In young children, repetitive play may occur in which themes or aspects of the trauma are expressed.
(2) recurrent distressing dreams of the event.
Note: In children, there may be frightening dreams without recognizable intent.

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(3) acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring (includes a sense of reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative flashback episodes, including those that occur on awakening or when intoxicated).
Note: In young children, trauma-specific reenactment may occur.
(4) intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.
(5) physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolise or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.

C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma), as indicated by three (or more) of the following:
(1) efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings or conversations associated with the trauma
(2) efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of the trauma
(3) inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma
(4) markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities
(5) feeling of detachment or estrangement from others
(6) restricted range of affect (e.g., unable to have loving feelings)
(7) sense of a foreshortened future (e.g., does not expect to have a career, marriage, children, or a normal life span)

D. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before the trauma), as indicated by 2 (or more) of the following:
(1) difficulty falling or staying asleep
(2) irritability or outbursts of anger
(3) difficulty concentrating
(4) hypervigilance
(5) exaggerated startle response.

E. Duration of the disturbance (symptoms in Criteria B, C, and D) is more than one month.

F. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

Diagnosing child soldiers with PTSD can lead to prescriptive measures based on western medicine and psychiatry that to some degree rely on the re-examination of their experiences within the ranks. Following an approach based on western medicine and psychiatry could result in cultural insensitivity and reliance on resources that are not

sustainable (medication and western-trained psychiatrists) while potentially further

exposing the child to risk through additional trauma caused by the process of examining

and analyzing the experiences repeatedly.   Community based rehabilitative

programming for child soldiers, recognizes the affect of child soldiering beyond the

individual child. It attempts to reaffirm their place in their community through culturally

sensitive and relevant activities and relationships that will support the reintegration of the

child back into their home community. The community based approach uses traditional

ceremonies and rituals to address the trauma faced by children within the ranks often

without revisiting painful memories associated with their time within the ranks.

By comparing the key components of these two approaches it will be evident why

a community-based approach is preferable in contributing to the reintegration of

demobilized child soldiers. A community based approach is broad, integrated scope; it

has as its goal community mobilization, healing and capacity-building; its expertise is

mixed, based on insiders; open, mutual learning is its training orientation; local people

are viewed as actors and creative resources; power is shared and distributed; local culture

is in the foreground; Western psychology is viewed as needing to interweave the etic and

emic approaches; and sustainability is considered high (Working with Children in Armed

Conflict: A skills building workshop, January 10 and 11, 2002, p. 21). Whereas, a

trauma or individual approach is narrow and psychological in its scope; its goal is

individual healing and emotional integration; its expertise is outsider; its training

orientation is directive; local people are viewed as victims or beneficiaries; power is

asymmetrically focussed on NGO and national team; local culture is in the background;

Western psychology is viewed as universal and privileged; and sustainability is

considered low (Working with Children in Armed Conflict: A skills building workshop, January 10 and 11, 2002, p. 21). Additionally, the holistic nature of a community-based approach blends well when addressing the issue of reintegration of demobilized child soldiers with the principles from children's rights (non-discrimination; survival and development; participation; and best interest of the child).

Notwithstanding the debates illustrated above and due to its near universal acceptance through the process of ratification, its effective prescriptive measures, the clear allocation of responsibility pertaining to rehabilitative programming for demobilized child soldiers, and the creation of a system to monitor states parties in the fulfilment of their obligations, the Convention on the Rights of the Child supported by the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and to some extent Convention 182 Worst Forms of Child Labour will underpin the theoretical framework to guide the analysis within the proposed research.

Additionally, the template designed by Graca Machel in her report to the United Nations General Assembly in "The Impact of War on Children" will guide the research herein, including the recognition that: the move away from individualistic western dominated therapies toward culturally sensitive and community inclusive modalities as a proven more effective approach to addressing the post-conflict needs of child soldiers during rehabilitation; the needs of the individual demobilized child soldier in the context of the community where reintegration is intended, attempting therefore to restore a sense of normalcy and reduce future vulnerability to subsequent participation in armed conflict; education and skills training, in addition to psycho-social treatment, in light of the

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mandates of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, bolstering the child-community bond and create more successfully reintegration.

HYPOTHESIS

The governments of Mozambique, Uganda and Sierra Leone have formally recognized and affirmed their commitment to the rights of children through their ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; in the cases of Uganda and Sierra Leone through their additional ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, and finally in the case of Uganda, through their ratification of Convention 182 Worst Forms of Child Labour. This has made them responsible for the provision of rehabilitation programming in order to achieve the reintegration of child soldiers. Following the establishment of peace, or during on-going instability the specified governments, in addition to non-government organizations have attempted to implement rehabilitation programming for demobilized child soldiers in support of children's rights.

Thus, the following hypothesis will serve to guide the proposed research, and will be illustrated within the contexts of Mozambique, Uganda and Sierra Leone:

by adhering to commitments made to the rights of children, the reintegration of demobilized child soldiers (as illustrated through family and community inclusion, education, and employment), has successfully occurred due to effective rehabilitation programming that reflects a rights-based approach and includes

psycho-social counseling that is community-based/culturally sensitive, family reunification, education and skills training.

METHODOLOGY

This research is based on comparative and qualitative analysis through three case studies. Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Uganda were chosen as case studies for a number of reasons including:

Availability of documentation - information regarding the conflict, child soldiers, and although in a limited way regarding the gender component of child soldiering existed for Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Uganda;

Regional and colonial diversity within sub-Saharan Africa – All of the countries chosen are located in Africa south of the Sahara with Mozambique furthest south, Uganda in the east and Sierra Leone in the west. Both Uganda and Sierra Leone share a common British colonial past while Mozambique was colonized by the Portuguese. The use of these case studies highlights the issue of child soldiering as pan-African; not limited to one sub-region of the continent or colonial heritage; and

Status of conflicts – When writing began on this thesis Mozambique had enjoyed many years of peace, Sierra Leone was en route to reconstruction and the conflict in northern Uganda continued. Comparing reintegration efforts on behalf of child soldiers at various stages of conflict and peace enriched the analysis as it allowed for a deeper understanding of the efforts to realize the rights of children throughout their experiences as soldiers/citizens.

International human rights-based legislation was gathered. This primarily took the form of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocol on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. These documents frame the issue of child soldiering from a nearly universal standpoint and guided the analysis of success/failure in reintegrating demobilized child soldiers.

Mozambican, Sierra Leonean, and Ugandan policy documents regarding former child soldiers were analysed to illustrate the efforts being made to reintegrate former child soldiers. These documents elucidated Governmental commitment to the cessation of the use of children in this manner, their response in cases in which children have been included in the ranks, their attempts at reintegrating former child soldiers and hopefully the extent to which they have been successful in this capacity.

Articles by scholars on the topic of child soldiering were utilised in order to understand the issues surrounding child soldiering. In addition this information provided measures by which the reintegration of demobilised child soldiers was evaluated within sub-Saharan Africa.

Information from practitioners including non-government organisations working with demobilised child soldiers by way of articles and organisational reports were also examined. This information provided insight into the experiences by the children who have participated in armed conflict from their time in the ranks, to their participation in rehabilitation programming, and finally on reintegration back into society. These sources additionally aided in determining the success/failures in reintegration.

Finally, effort was made to include data illustrating the participation of girl soldiers/wives and to disaggregate the information collected based on sex. This will hopefully elucidate the gendered experiences of child soldiers during their time within the ranks through rehabilitation and finally in their reintegration in families and communities.

CHAPTER TWO:

A RECENT HISTORY OF CHILD SOLDIERING IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

"Of all the subjects of development, none has the acceptance, or the power to mobilize, as does the cause of children" Boutros-Ghali, as quoted by Black, 1996, p.181.

The use of children in armed conflict is neither new nor regionally specific. Due to the change in the nature of armed conflict since the Second World War the numbers of children involved within armed conflict has increased and the roles they take while in the ranks has been altered (Brett & McCallin, 1998, p. 20). The following chapter will serve as a summary of the cumulative knowledge on child soldiering, including the modes of inclusion, reasons for inclusion, and the implications of their inclusion within the ranks. Effort will be made to employ Mozambique, Uganda and Sierra Leone as case studies. Summaries of the conflicts within these locations will provide a richer understanding of each case.

MODES OF INCLUSION

In attempting to understand the way in which children become involved in armed conflict as soldiers, it becomes necessary to categorize the modes of inclusion either as voluntary or involuntary. This distinction can aid in clarifying the subsequent ramifications due to involvement within the ranks, and determine programming interventions to better assist demobilized child soldiers in the reintegration process.

VOLUNTARY CHILD SOLDIERS

It is important to address the idea of voluntary participation of children in armed conflict in the discussion of child soldiers. The idea of voluntary participation is considered questionable when the reasons behind a child's willingness to participate in armed conflict are revealed. These reasons create external pressure or a sense of coercion, nullifying the truly voluntary nature of participation.

The reasons children chose to participate 'voluntarily' have been presented in Chapter One of this thesis. These reasons include: death of family members leaving children with a feeling that they have no other choice but to join to ensure their own survival; to avenge the deaths of family members; as a means of gaining status; with the factors of ideology, ethnicity, the struggle for liberation (or against oppression) and friends contributing to their decision to be involved. These reasons point to external pressure or the existence of coercion which results in a lack of freedom leaving the individual unable to exercise effective decision making; it therefore renders the participation as not truly voluntary or at minimum diminishes the voluntary nature of their participation.

INVOLUNTARY CHILD SOLDIERS

> ...the rebels banged and chiselled away at the window frames for hours. They shouted to the girls to unlock the doors or they'd blow up the dorm. Grace, a
> fourteen- year-old, was hiding under her bed, in her nightdress, when a frightened girl opened the door and the rebels burst in. They pulled the girls from under the bed, tied them up in groups of five, and beat any who cried with rifle butts, flashlights, sticks, fists. The L.R.A. commander ordered silence as the rebels-most of whom were abducted children themselves-marched the girls out of the school and into the bush. It had rained earlier that night. Girls were slipping and falling, and were beaten for their feebleness. (Rubin, 1998, p. 57)

Involuntary participation of children in either national armies, paramilitary or

rebel groups is usually consistent with either conscription or abduction. Despite the similarities that exist in forcing children to participate within the ranks, some differences between these two methods of forced participation exist resulting in additional complications experienced by children involved. Often acts of extreme violence against family or community members accompany the abduction of children by rebel groups. This serves many purposes during the abduction. Acts of violence are useful in instilling fear and thereby obedience towards leaders amongst the new abductees.

In many cases, the new conscripts are ordered to act out the violence upon family and community members by their abductors. This effectively destroys ties between the abductees and any sense of normalcy thereby preventing future escape attempts to return 'home'. These acts will also cause future difficulties to reintegration of children post-conflict due to the depletion of family members, and resistance by community members who have been affected by the acts of violence perpetrated by abducted children.

Government troops have engaged in forced recruitment of children within their ranks. A more systematic approach has generally been employed by national armies which has included the collection of street children or vulnerable populations in marginalized areas, and forcing small communities to hand over their adolescents. These circumstances are notably less commonly associated with direct acts of violence on the communities from which the children are gathered. These acts usually target poor children, and despite the omission of acts of violence which hamper reintegration, psychological damage is associated with these types of abductions in that they reduce future bonds of trust with authority figures.

In addition, some children are 'sold' into national armed forces by their parents or

guardians. On occasion, the families of children receive remuneration for the use of their child in the armed forces. This removes the voluntary nature of participation of children in armed conflict and in addition affects children already suffering under conditions of poverty. It can also create feelings of rejection, resentment and inadequacy on behalf of the child and the parents/guardians engaging in this aspect of inclusion within the ranks.

REASONS FOR INCLUSION

As has been previously stated in Chapter One, Thompson has summarized the reasons for including children as soldiers based on their energy levels, their obedience due to their susceptibility to propaganda; their ability to suspend moral judgments; they are less likely to escape successfully; and they don't demand pay (Thompson, 1999, p. 193).

On a strategic level, by way of motivation for rebel groups, abducting a population's children effectively destroys the morale of a community or nation. Children are seen as the hope for the future and vessels through which a community can continue to survive. If a conflict is geared at destroying a nation or community's hope for the future, attacking its children is an effective means by which these ends can be met. Additionally, by attacking a nation's most vulnerable population their children rebel groups effectively emphasize the inability of a national government to protect its citizenry.

Demographics can also be seen as a contributing factor in the use of children in armed conflict. Many African nations in which child soldiering is a common occurrence

also have populations with a majority under the age of eighteen years. This is exemplified in Mozambique with 51% of its population under eighteen, Uganda with 56% of its population under eighteen, and Sierra Leone with 53% of its population under 18 (Coalition to stop the use of child soldiers, 1999, p. 1). Access to a large supply of able bodied soldiers exists under these conditions. Compounding this, in the case of Mozambique, were the reduced levels of male adult recruits due to the migratory labour system (Brett & McCallin, 1998, p. 50).

The proliferation of light weight weapons has also facilitated the use of children as soldiers. Due to the manageability of modern weapons, primarily the AK47, even small children can be effective soldiers. Lock (1999) states:

> Illicit small arms availability has become a global threat to the sovereignty of states at macro and micro levels. The full impact of the unbound small arms arsenals will only be felt in the years to come because of the magnitude of the volumes circulating already beyond effective controls. Present levels of disturbances, violence and systematic violations of human rights are but the harbinger of the societal fragmentation enabled and reinforced by the pervasive availability of illicit small arms.

The 'human rights violations' and 'societal fragmentation' referred to here and encompassed in the proliferation of small arms includes the involvement of children in armed conflict. Their participation, facilitated by light weight weapons, while psychologically traumatic, also divides families and impacts communities.

Another enabling condition for the inclusion of children within the ranks has been the lack of clear birth records. The absence of birth records can create uncertainty and justify the inclusion of children due to their perceived or falsified age. This point is not intended to illustrate the ineptness of other cultural practices, rather it is intended to illustrate the importance of birth registration, and its connection with child soldiering. It

can be illustrated in the case of Mozambique. "Of the former Renamo child soldiers analysed in the case study on Mozambique, 16% of the boys and no less than 28% of the girls did not know their own ages" (Brett & McCallin, 1998, p. 31).

Wessells (1997) summarizes the multiplicity of roles taken on by children in the ranks. These include, "combatants...cooks, informants, porters, bodyguards, sentries and spies" (p. 33). Brett & McCallin (1998) explain that children's size and agility make them more suitable for a variety of these tasks such as espionage, communications, and de-mining, over their adult counterparts (p. 20). Thus, it is very desirable to include children within the ranks during conflict.

In addition to the aforementioned roles that all children fulfill, regardless of sex, within the ranks, girls are specifically targeted in order to participate in an additional manner. The recruitment or abduction of girls to be given to male soldiers as 'wives' elicits attention as "the practice appears to occur in every conflict where there are child soldiers" (Thompson, 1999, p. 10). As a result of their sex, girls suffer sexual assault, as the role of wife in this context is likened to that of a reward for obedience of male soldiers and truly represents the use of women for sexual gratification. Rubin confirms this when it is explained that a rebel leader, en route back to base with newly abducted girls is offered financial compensation for the abductees. "Lagira didn't want money – he wanted girls" (Rubin, 1998, p. 57). While there is an absence of specific documentation regarding boys suffering sexual assault by soldiers in positions of authority, it cannot be ruled out as sexual victimization especially with males, usually results in non-reporting of incidents of this nature.

IMPLICATIONS OF INCLUSION

On inclusion within the ranks, children suffer under the brutal treatment which

they receive from their superiors in initiation rites and heavy work loads. Many children

who begin as porters are required to carry very heavy ammunition or other necessities of

war. "Children who are too weak to carry their loads are liable to be savagely beaten or

even shot" (Machel, 1996, p. 13). During their participation in armed conflict, child

soldiers have reported that they have been drugged by more senior combatants. "There

are many reports of the use of marijuana, amphetamines, crack cocaine or a cocktail of

local substances including gunpowder which made the young fighters quite ferocious"

(Skinner, 1999, p. 10).

Within the ranks of governmental armies the treatment of children is likened to

that of adult recruits. Brett and McCallin (1998) state that this treatment is "often

inhuman and degrading" beginning with initiation rites that involve "beatings,

humiliation, being treated as servants and being introduced to prostitutes and alcohol.

The degree of violence and degradation involved not infrequently leads to death

(including suicide), disablement or permanent physical, mental and emotional damage"

(p. 88).

Armed conflict affects children in many ways. Psychosocial well-being of

children within armed conflict can be specifically mediated by human capacity, cultural

values, social ecology, physical resources and economic resources (Working with

Children Affected by Armed Conflict: a skills building workshop, January 10 and 11,

2002, pp. 28, 29). The impact of armed conflict on children includes, for example,

Family separation and bereavement;
Disruptions to social networks and to care and protection arrangements;
Destitution, poverty, unemployment and material loss;
Service disruption and loss;
Threats to physical integrity and security;
Sexual violence;
Exploitation;
Threats to cultural and spiritual life and to cultural and social identity;
Massive change in division of labour, roles and responsibilities within the family and community; and
Displacement (Working with Children in Armed Conflict: a skills building workshop, January 10 and 11, 2002, pp. 7, 8).

These impacts can manifest themselves through a variety of symptomatic reactions. For example, "natural response to shock" can include "nightmares, sleep difficulties, physical symptoms (headaches, stomach aches, bed wetting), withdrawl, elective mutism, difficulty concentrating, exaggerated fears/worries, hypervigilance" (Working with Children in Armed Conflict: a skills building workshop, January 10 and 11 2002, p. 10).

Child soldiers can additionally face other psychosocial impacts due to their involvement within the ranks. These include, for example "damaged social relations, family or community rejection, spiritual distress, guilt, stigmatization, emotional detachment/withdrawal, heightened aggressiveness, lack of education and positive life skills, flashbacks, poor concentration, destruction of community networks and support, sexual disease and confusion, disability, identity issues, militaristic values, negative future orientation" (Working with Children Affected by Armed Conflict: a skills building workshop, January 10 and 11 2002, p. 31).

Numerous ramifications arise due to the sexual victimization of girls within the ranks of child soldiers. The first of these is the additional psychological trauma experienced by female abductees. Second is the potential to become pregnant,

recognizing that pregnancy results in additional health concerns for girls in the ranks. Third is the increased potential in acquiring HIV/AIDS. "Women of all ages may be victims of violence in conflict, but adolescent girls are particularly at risk for a range of reasons, including size and vulnerability. Their vulnerability is even greater in some localities where they are considered less likely to have sexually transmitted diseases and the HIV/AIDS virus" (Machel, 1996, p. 24). This vulnerability has contributed to the 3.8 million children killed by HIV/AIDS and the 13 million others orphaned by it (Machel, 2000, p. 17). Fourth, are the implications for girls/women post-conflict as a result of their sexual victimization should they return to their home community, or stay with their soldier 'husbands'. This may be further complicated as "families and local communities may reject the girls as impure or unsuitable for marriage. Desperate to survive, many former girl soldiers become prostitutes" (Wessells, 1997, p. 33).

Another complication arises from the use of children as soldiers. In a location where any child is used within the ranks, all children become suspect of participating in the conflict. Thus, the suspicion allocated toward and treatment of children in these locations, becomes less than ideal, potentially jeopardizing their well being and rights.

MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique endured over thirty years of armed conflict, from the war of independence which lasted from 1964 until 1974 to the war of destabilisation by Renamo against the Frelimo government 1977 - 1992. The ongoing cycle of armed conflict affected many generations of Mozambicans. Notwithstanding, the conflict between

Renamo and the established Frelimo government shall be the primary focus of this historical overview and examination of the extent to which children were involved within the ranks.

The Portuguese established themselves in Mozambique in the 15th century and declared colonial rule early in the 20th century. Due to political upheaval in Portugal and the pressure placed upon them through armed conflict by Frelimo, Portugal relinquished power in 1974 to a transitional government under the direction of Joaquin Chissano. In 1975, Samora Machel became president of the People's Republic of Mozambique with Chissano as Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In 1977, Frelimo declared itself a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party in order to "lead, organise, orientate, and educate the masses, thus transforming the popular mass movement into a powerful instrument for the destruction of capitalism and the construction of socialism" (Rupiya, p. 3). During the late 1970s, those frustrated by preferential treatment shown to some groups in society and policies such as forced villagisation, led Frelimo dissidents and former soldiers loyal to the colonial powers, with backing by the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organisation to form the Mozambique National Resistance (later called Renamo).

Rhodesia's involvement stemmed from their resentment with Frelimo's support of the Zimbabwean National Liberation Army (Zanla) and United Nations sanctions. During this time, Rhodesia benefited from Renamo's ability to provide them with intelligence regarding Zanla's operations. The South African Military Intelligence Directorate (MID) took over support of Renamo following the transition to Zimbabwean independence.

In the early 1980's, Renamo's numbers increased from 500 to 8 000 under South African direction, thus increasing the impact the conflict had on the Mozambican government and population (Rupiya, p. 4). South Africa was motivated by the desire to counteract Mozambique's armed support of the African National Congress (ANC) and to increase their dominance of the region. Subsequently, in 1984, an agreement was struck between the Mozambican and South African governments entitled the Nkomati Accord.

The accord bound each to the cessation of interference in each others "sovereignty and territorial integrity" through the assistance of the "armed forces...organization of irregular forces or armed bands, including mercenaries" and the elimination of any of these groups from within their respective borders (Nkomati Accord, 1984, pp. 1, 2). The Nkomati Accord eventually failed, but not before Renamo was forced to change its strategy of warfare. Civilian targets became of primary importance in order to "instil fear in rural populations...advertise the rebels' strength, to weaken symbolically the authority of the government and to undermine the rural production systems on which Mozambique depended" (Rupiya, p.5). Renamo engaged in horrific acts of violence against the Mozambican population in the process of achieving these goals. They broke down transportation and government provided services such as health care and education.

In 1986, Renamo was expelled from territories within Malawi and the Mozambican government garnered additional support from Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Additionally in 1986, leadership was transferred to Chissano following president Machel's death. Chissano continued to respond to Renamo with military force until 1989 when "12 Principles for Dialogue" was designed to facilitate the government's

participation in the peace process. Concurrently the government of Mozambique abandoned Marxism-Leninism.

Significant effort was exerted by an assortment of parties including church officials, neighbouring presidents of Kenya and Zimbabwe and the United Nations to create a lasting solution to the conflict in Mozambique. A declaration of a ceasefire occurred in December of 1990. In 1991, with formal recognition of Renamo as a political party, a General Peace Agreement was drafted. It wasn't until October 1992 that the Peace Agreement was signed leading to multi-party elections in 1994 with Frelimo taking 129 seats, Renamo 112, and the remainder falling to a rightist coalition party (Rupiya, p. 9).

The effects of the war on the Mozambican population, due to its duration and severity were numerous. Approximately 1 million deaths occurred, 5 million people were displaced, 47 per cent of the primary schools were rendered dysfunctional with a student-teacher ration of 80:1 resulting in a lack of formal education for 62 per cent of the population (Thompson, 1999, pp. 3, 4). The health care system was also dramatically affected with an under five child mortality rate five times higher than Botswana and four times higher than post-apartheid South Africa and increased likelihood of death during pregnancy for women (Thompson, 1999, pp. 3, 4). Additionally, the Mozambican countryside was heavily littered with anti-personnel landmines during the engagement in armed conflict placing the population at increased risk for death or injury long after the achievement of peace.

EXTENT TO WHICH CHILDREN WERE INCLUDED WITHIN THE RANKS IN MOZAMBIQUE

With the conclusion of the conflict within Mozambique and efforts to restore and maintain peace within the nation, significant research has occurred regarding the extent to which children were included within the ranks. Actual numbers of children involved in the conflict have been documented at 25 498 of the 92 881 soldiers demobilized who were younger than eighteen when recruited (approximately twenty-eight percent of the total number of soldiers), and of these 4 678 were under thirteen when recruited, 6 829 were fourteen to fifteen, and 13 982 were sixteen to seventeen years old (Radda Barnen). To further break down the numbers of children involved and with whom they participated during the conflict, 16 553 were part of the governmental forces despite the assertion that "recruitment of minors by the government forces was never done purposefully and did not involve very young children" (Radda Barnen) and 8 945 belonged to Renamo illustrating the use of children within the ranks on both sides of the conflict (Radda Barnen).

In their study, *Girls in Fighting Forces in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone, and Mozambique: Policy and Program Recommendations* (2003, unpublished) McKay and Mazurana analyse the involvement of girls within the ranks. "Based on demobilization data on 482 female ex-combatants, 36 percent entered the armed forces at age 17 or younger, with 17 percent entering Frelimo and 82 percent entering Renamo at 17 or younger (p. 17).

To put all of these numbers in context it is useful to understand other population totals during this time period. The total population in Mozambique in 1980 was 12 130

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000, 14 151 400 in 1990 and 19 420 036 in 2005 (National Institute of Statistics). The population aged 0 to 14 in 1980 was 5 385 500 and 6 457 200 in 1990 (National Institute of Statistics). The total population under the age of 18 in 2001 was 9 418 000 (UNICEF, 2002).

Children within the ranks in Mozambique faced horrors consistent with the description in the generalized section on child soldiers earlier in this chapter. A field officer of UNICEF contextualized the experience of Mozambican children as having been "routinely forced to kill their own parents and siblings, to watch as pregnant women's bellies are slit open and the babies carved out, to see men having their genitals sliced off before being ordered to eat them" (Neustatter, 1992, p. 1). Part of the rationale behind including children in such horrific events was to 'toughen them up' during training for combat by Renamo forces (Brett & McCallin, 1998, p. 92).

The participation of children within the ranks seems to have included a sexual division of labour, with boys primarily acting as combatants, and girls remaining within the domestic sphere of the camps (Thompson, 1999; Neustatter, 1992; Brett & McCallin, 1998). The treatment received by girls after abduction into Renamo was brutal. It included forced labour and sexual service. "Girls took on the traditional household chores (looking after the youngest ones, cooking...) and the older ones were 'promoted' to marriage" and were "violently sexually assaulted" while being threatened "with death or removal of food rations if they resisted" (Brett & McCallin, 1998, pp. 84, 85). The use of girls for sexual pleasure in the role of 'wife' was "seen by Renamo soldiers as simply their right of access to women, and a key perk' of the job, not a direct tactic of war" (Thompson, 1999, p.3).

UGANDA

The conflict in northern Uganda between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army is complicated by ethnic tensions based on historical divisions of power and wealth within the country, and a political ideology that blends an assortment of religious traditions. The ongoing conflict has resulted in accusations of human rights abuses being made against both the national government and the rebel faction. Included within these accusations has been the inclusion of children within the ranks, specifically on behalf of the Lord's Resistance Army.

The conflict in the north between the Lord's Resistance Army and the government of Uganda is not the only on-going armed conflict within Uganda but will be the focus of the analysis herein. Other rebel groups exist including the Allied Democratic Forces, the National Army for Liberation of Uganda, the West Nile Bank Front and the Uganda Rescue Front each pursuing their own goals in the political economy of Uganda. However, the northern conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army provides a substantial historical context in which the analysis of the inclusion of children within the ranks, its effects and the efforts for rehabilitation and reintegration can occur.

Under the British Colonial system, the southern population of Uganda became the basis of the civil service within the country. The national armed forces hailed mainly from the north. This resulted in more development in the south and subsequently higher levels of poverty in the north, especially amongst the Acholi people. Following independence, the division of power and wealth between the north and the south continued, and was exacerbated by armed conflict.

Independence from Britain was achieved in 1962, under Milton Obote, who remained in power until 1971 when Idi Amin took control of the country. Obote returned to power in 1980, following the successful overthrow of the Amin regime lead by opposition groups working from Tanzania and Uganda. Tito Okello, an Acholi general, ousted Obote in 1985 and remained in power until the following year when the National Resistance Movement lead by Yoweri Museveni overthrew his government. Museveni's gain of control of the country lead to a retreat of the Acholi soldiers loyal to Okello, back to the northern regions of Uganda and southern Sudan.

From 1986 until 1989, an alliance of rebels, known as the Uganda People's Defense Army, including former soldiers and other opponents of the Museveni administration, actively fought against the National Resistance Army (which later became, the Uganda People's Defense Force). One of the groups composing the rebel alliance was the Holy Spirit Mobile Force, led by Alice Lakwena, an Acholi spiritual and military leader.

The Holy Spirit Movement set out to rectify the evils perpetrated against the Acholi people by Museveni and to cleanse the Acholi people of their evil-doing. Soldiers in Lakwena's ranks were anointed with shea butter and required not to drink, smoke, steal, quarrel, or take cover in battle (Ehrenreich, 1997, p. 25). The Holy Spirit Movement was successfully quashed sixty miles north of Kampala early in 1987 by the government army with superior weaponry. Lakwena fled to Kenya.

Joseph Kony, a relative of Lakwena's, claimed to inherit her spiritual powers and formulated a new group from a contingent of those members of the Holy Spirit Movement who remained in the bush. The newly formulated Lord's Resistance Army

(LRA), continued attacks primarily on government targets and collaborators with the government until approximately 1991. At this point the LRA targets became civilian, including clinics and schools, with supplementary abductions. The Museveni government responded with "Operation North" which closed the northern provinces of Gulu, Kitgum, Lira and Apac for "intensive military operations" and included a press blackout and restricted movement between the north and south (Ehrenreich, 1997, p. 25). In 1994, attempted peace talks were foiled by mistrust and a re-escalation of violence.

Since 1995, the Government of Sudan has been accused of providing the LRA with financial assistance and a location from which it can base itself, out of reach of the Museveni government. The motivation for Sudan's involvement comes in response to Museveni's support of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). The SPLA have been engaged in armed conflict with the Sudanese government in attempt to remove them from power or achieve independence. In support of their benefactors, the LRA has additionally fought against the SPLA.

Ehrenreich (1997) indicates the goals of the Lord's Resistance Army, through the explanations of escapees, as:

> the rebels appear to view Museveni as an illegitimate leader because of his refusal to allow multi-party elections, his alleged strategy of keeping the north poor and under-developed, and his alleged dislike and mistreatment of the Acholi. The rebels still insist that they are obeying the orders of the Holy Spirit...The rebels continue to claim that they must root out "misbehaviour" and offences amongst the Acholi as part of their effort to overthrow the government and turn Uganda into a "paradise" (p. 26).

The obedience to the Holy Spirit in order to create a Ugandan paradise justifies the infliction of terror on the wider civilian population, while providing them with new recruits and supplies.

The warfare in northern Uganda has resulted in the displacement of over 400 000 people from rural communities and homes in the north and left the economy in catastrophe (Amnesty International, 1999). Many seek refuge in one of the twenty official camps located close to military detachments, being encouraged to do so by governmental policy. The displacement of the population has resulted in continuance by the Lord's Resistance Army to "raid villages to abduct children and loot food in areas where people have not moved" (Amnesty International, 1999).

Conditions within the camps are difficult. Families and individuals are responsible for providing their own form of shelter, with meagre provision of water, sanitation and food supplies. "In August 1997 the Gulu District Medical Officer estimated that 50% of children in camps were malnourished" (Amnesty International, 1999, p. 18). Although conditions vary from camp to camp, and have generally improved over time, attacks on camps by the Lord's Resistance Army have continued to occur with the condensing of resources into one location. "Often the purpose appears to be theft of relief food. In 1998 attacks were made to drive people out of camps and back to their fields in order to produce food that could be more easily expropriated by the LRA later in the year" (Amnesty International, 1999, p. 5).

Additional effects of the war in the north in Uganda span all aspects of human existence affecting all sectors of society. To begin a huge loss of life has occurred due to armed conflict. While exact numbers of victims are hard to calculate, an example of the levels of lost life can be illustrated by Human Rights Watch report. "During a single two-week period in July 1996, for instance, violence took the lives of forty soldiers, thirty-two rebels and 225 civilians. Between January 6th and 10[th,] 1997, 400 civilians

were slaughtered during a rebel attack in Kitgum" (Human Rights Watch, 1997, p. 21).

The rural economy, primarily consisting of agricultural production, has been forced to

discontinue periodically due to instability. The system of education in the rural areas has

also been drastically affected. "The rebels target schools and teachers and in Gulu alone,

more than seventy-five schools have been burnt down by the rebels, and 215 teachers

have been killed...an estimated 60 000 school-aged children have been displaced, and

during 1996, the number of functioning schools in Gulu fell from 199 to sixty-four"

(Human Rights Watch, 1997, p. 21). The health care system has also suffered under the

conditions of war in the north with raids on clinics and dispensaries, decreasing the

ability to care for the rural population in the north. Indicators of the worsening situation

for the northern population regarding health care due to the conflict can be illustrated in

the significantly higher infant mortality rate in Gulu over that of Kampala (Human Rights

Watch, 1997, p. 21).

**EXTENT TO WHICH CHILDREN HAVE BEEN INCLUDED WITHIN THE
RANKS IN UGANDA**

The conflict in northern Uganda, spanning almost two decades, has had serious

implications for the population there. Since 1986, it has resulted in approximately 400

000 internally displaced people and left the rural economy in near ruin (Amnesty

International, 1999, p. 1). It is estimated that over 12 000 children have been abducted

by the Lord's Resistance Army since the beginning of their conflict with Ugandan

government, making up ninety percent of their numbers (Amnesty International, "Playing

at war - child soldiers in Uganda"). The abduction and use of children by the LRA has

therefore aided in making possible the continuance of their struggle while violating the rights of those children and destroying families and communities within the north.

As in the case of Mozambique, it is useful to understand the numbers in light of the greater population figures during the same approximate time frame. The total population of Uganda in 1991 was 16.7 million, 19.3 million in 1995 (projected figure), 22.2 million in 2000 (projected figure) and approximately 24.7 million in 2002 (Uganda Bureau of Statistics). The total population under the age of 18 in Uganda in 2001 was 13 496 000 (UNICEF, 2002).

The LRA has shown preference in the abduction of "children aged fourteen to sixteen, but at times they abduct children as young as eight or nine, boys and girls alike" (Ehrenreich, 1997, p. 5). Typically, in the case of abducted children for the purposes of inclusion within the ranks, children who protest, resist, fail to keep up en route back to camp, become ill, or attempt escape are killed. "Their deaths are not quick–a child killed by a single bullet is a rarity. If one child attempts to escape, the rebels force the other abducted children to kill the would-be escapee, usually with clubs or machetes. Any child who refuses to participate in the killing may also be beaten or killed" (Ehrenreich, 1997, p. 5). Additionally, children escaping from the LRA with siblings still in the ranks place them at heightened risk of being killed in retaliation. This retaliation can also be meted out on other family members in the home community of the child.

Children abducted into the Lord's Resistance Army suffer under the same treatment as indicated earlier in this chapter during their time in the ranks. Since the use of Sudan became common as a space for training and operations, children are forced to march great distances during which many children die due to starvation or disease

(Skinner, 1999, p. 11). Consistent with previous information, this treatment has been documented for both boys and girls with girls taking on combative roles, and being forced into the sexual service of males as 'wives' (Brett & McCallin, 1998, pp. 83, 84).

Brett and McCallin further explain the extent to which children participate in the ranks of the LRA. "Almost all the children who stayed for over one month [before escape or capture] were given military training of parade, taking cover, assembling and dismantling a gun, shooting, and offensive tactics" (Brett and McCallin, 1998, p. 94), and "almost all the children at one time or other were ordered to torture, maim or kill other children or adults who attempted to escape or to destroy property like burning up houses. With intimidation, threats and sometimes torture, children were obeying like robots" (Brett & McCallin, 1998, p. 92).

SIERRA LEONE

The conflict under consideration within Sierra Leone began in 1991. A group of approximately one hundred fighters, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), led by Foday Sankoh, and consisting of Sierra Leonean dissidents and Liberian fighters from the ranks of Charles Taylor, crossed into Sierra Leone from Liberia in an attempt to topple the Momoh government. (Integrated Regional Information Network, December 29, 2000). Momoh was elected president in 1985. He relieved Siaka Stevens who had been in power since 1967 under a one-party system of rule despite pressure to adopt a multi-party system.

Liberia's involvement in the Sierra Leonean conflict has been two-fold. First, the

Momoh government allowed the Liberian president Samuel Doe to attack the National Patriotic Front of Liberia from Sierra Leonean soil (Integrated Regional Information Network, December 29, 2000). Additionally, Sankoh trained with Charles Taylor, and Taylor was eager to "shore up his own position and counter the influence of the regional power - Nigeria" thereby lending his support as the conflict progressed (Africa Confidential). Following the original strike by the RUF, the government responded with cross border attacks backed by Ghana, Nigeria and Liberian governmental support.

In 1992, Captain Valentine Strasser of the Sierra Leonean Army (SLA) replaced Momoh after Momoh fled from Sierra Leone under the assumption that a coup was being planned by the army. Despite the change in leadership, and forging ahead with the intended introduction of multi-party politics, the RUF continued their campaign. They were aided by disgruntled soldiers from the SLA labelled "sobels" due to their part time commitment to both soldiering and participation within rebel ranks (Integrated Regional Information Network, December 29, 2000).

In 1995, the Strasser administration hired South African based Executive Outcomes (EO), a private security company. EO, alongside Nigerian backed West African peacekeepers and the SLA, successfully defended the capital from the further encroachment of the RUF. Subsequently, EO led attacks against the RUF in the rural diamond producing areas with additional support from the Kamajors, a pro-government militia (Integrated Regional Information Network, December 29, 2000).

Strasser was ousted in 1996, by Brigadier-General Julius Maada-Bio. This occurred one month prior to the scheduled general elections. Elections were eventually held in March, with Ahmad Tejan Kabbah receiving 59.4 percent of the vote in the

second round of voting (Integrated Regional Information Network, December 29, 2000). Later that year, Kabbah and the RUF signed a peace agreement in Abidjan that included the removal of EO from Sierra Leone.

In 1997, Sankoh was arrested on arms charges after arriving in Nigeria. Later that year, Kabbah's government was toppled by Major Johnny Paul Koroma, who "suspend(ed) the constitution, abolish(ed) political parties and establish(ed) the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) including members of the Sierra Leonean Army" (Integrated Regional Information Network, December 29, 2000). After seizing power, Koroma invited the RUF to join in the leadership of the nation. Forces loyal to Kabbah hired the private British security company, Sandline to restore Kabbah to power with diamond concessions going to the financier of the operation, Rakesh Saxena, who was later arrested in Canada on forged passport charges (Integrated Regional Information Network, December 29, 2000). Sanctions on arms and petroleum products were placed on the AFRC/RUF junta by the United Nations Security Council. The junta was forced out of power in 1998, by Sandline, the Kamajors, and Nigerian- led West African troops (ECOMOG). Kabbah was subsequently returned to power, and Sankoh was sentenced to death for participating in the 1997 coup.

Freetown was attacked and partially seized by the RUF and former SLA troops in 1999, resulting in the death of at least 5 000 people, and the abduction of many others (Integrated Regional Information Network, December 29, 2000). In order to begin working toward a peaceful resolution of the conflict, Sankoh was released from prison to meet in Lome. The result was the drafting of a peace proposal by the RUF which required the release of Sankoh.

In July, the Government of Sierra Leone and RUF leadership established a peace agreement (the Lome Agreement) that allowed for transition of the RUF into a legitimate political party (Article III); granted absolute pardon and reprieve to all combatants and collaborators with the aim of their reintegration (Article IX); established of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Article XXVI); gave special attention to the needs of women during rehabilitation and reconstruction (Article XXVIII); and ensured financial resources for post-war rehabilitation and reconstruction for war victims by dedicating all "proceeds from the transactions of gold and diamonds" (Article VII). Following the signing of the agreement Sankoh and Koroma both returned to Freetown and the United Nations began deploying peacekeepers under UNAMSIL to replace the ECOMOG forces there.

UNAMSIL peacekeepers were increased in 2000 and backed by British troops. The RUF attacked and took hostage five hundred UN forces and additional weaponry. Civilian demonstrators were shot outside of Sankoh's house which led to his capture and arrest for obstructing the peace process. Sankoh's arrest resulted in Issa Sesay taking control of the RUF. The abducted peacekeepers were released and the government and RUF entered into talks that achieved a cease fire in November 2000 (Integrated Regional Information Network, December 29, 2000). UNAMISIL peacekeepers kept a strong presence in Sierra Leone with planned decreases of troops in November 2002, spring 2003 and again late in 2004 (Integrated Regional Information Network, November 1, 2002). Additional subsequent developments included President Kabbah ending the four-year state of emergency in preparation for elections in 2002 (Integrated Regional Information Network, March 4, 2002).

As mentioned above, the Lome Agreement provided for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to: "address impunity, break the cycle of violence, provide a forum for both the victims and perpetrators of human rights violations and tell their story, get a clear picture of the past in order to facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation (Government of Sierra Leone, 1999, Article XXVI). In addition to the creation of the Commission, a Special Court was created jointly by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations and began hearings in 2003 against those bearing greatest responsibility in the perpetration of human rights violations during the war. This mandate is to be applied to those "individuals aged at least 15 years" as "the children of Sierra Leone have suffered enough both as victims and perpetrators" (Integrated Regional Information Network, November 4, 2002).

Court indictments have been brought against Johnny Paul Koroma, Foday Sankoh (who died in prison in 2003 before court ruled), Sam Bockarie/RUF commander (who was killed while engaged in conflict in Liberia prior to court ruling), Sam Hinga Norman/former Minister of Internal Affairs and CDF coordinator, Allieu Kondewa/CDF Chief Initiator, Moinina Fofanah/CDF Director of War, Issa Sessay, Morris Kallon/RUF battlefield commander, Augustine Gbao/RUF security commander, and Charles Taylor (protected under political asylum in Nigeria). Indictments have included: "acts of terrorism, collective punishments, extermination, murder and violence to the lives, health and physical or mental well-being of persons, in particular murder, rape, sexual slavery and any other form of sexual violence. They are also accused of outrages upon personal dignity, conscripting or enlisting children under the age of 15 years into their groups or using them to participate in hostilities, enslavement, pillage, intentionally directing

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attacks against humanitarian personnel or peacekeepers, unlawful killings, abductions

and hostage-taking" (Integrated Regional Information Network, March 19, 2003).

Additional charges include "human sacrifice and cannibalism" (Integrated Regional

Information Network, June 27, 2003).

During the armed conflict between the RUF and the various governments of

Sierra Leone and their supporters, havoc was wreaked upon the civilian population.

Human Rights Watch (2000) estimates that during the 1999 attack on Freetown alone,

two thousand civilians were killed, while 3 000 children and 570 adults were reported

missing.

> Victims were usually chosen at random, though there was some targeting of
> particular groups, such as Nigerian nationals, unarmed police officers, journalists,
> and church workers. The horrific practice of mutilation and, in particular
> amputation of hands, arms, lips, legs and other parts of the body was widespread
> until the signing of the Lome peace accord. In January, the rebels cut off the
> limbs of some one hundred civilians, including twenty-six double arm
> amputations (Human Rights Watch, 2000).

The conflict also resulted in the displacement of thousands of people. Internally,

Human Rights Watch (2000) stated that an estimated 500 000 people are displaced within

Sierra Leone. Refugees from Sierra Leone fled to neighbouring nations including 390

000 in Guinea and 90 000 in Liberia (Human Rights Watch, 2000).

The targeting of the civilian population during the conflict by the RUF was

particularly gruesome as illustrated in the above quote during the attacks on Freetown.

Taking up an armed struggle has been justified by the RUF because:

> power lies in the gun and whoever controls the guns controls the means to steal
> the wealth of the country. And the only way to stop this corruption of power is
> for the people to take up arms in order to take back their power and use this power
> to create wealth for themselves and generations to come by reconstructing a new
> African society in Sierra Leone (Revolutionary United Front Party, 2000).

The goal of the RUF was to cleanse Sierra Leone from the rotting corruption that existed within the government and left the population in poverty through a "cultural revolution whose main objective will be the liberation of our minds to instill in everyone of us a high sense of African patriotism" and which would result in "new social structures" (Revolutionary United Front Party, 2000b).

During the period under the joint junta between the AFRC and the RUF, the RUF announced an "Apology to the Nation". In this document they claimed:

> we looked at our brothers and killed them in cold blood, we remove our sisters from their hiding places to undo their feminity (sic), we slaughtered our mothers and butchered our fathers...But the atrocities that occurred must be taken in the context of a personal vendetta. They were the result of the rottenness of a system which could not be uprooted except by brutal means...In the process of cleaning the system, however, we have wronged the great majority of our countrymen...We have not come to terrorize you, our brothers and sisters, we have come to embrace you in love and harmony (Revolutionary United Front, 1997).

The admittance of the atrocities committed on the civilian population is only rationalized by their political agenda to emphasize the government's inability to protect its citizenry and further illustrate the existence of corruption in the leadership of the nation in order to remove and replace it.

The ensuing ramifications caused by the years of turmoil in Sierra Leone have included high levels of death and injury. Exact numbers of those killed are not known, but Amnesty International (1998) has illustrated the extent to which the population suffered. "The town of Koidu, in Kono District, Eastern Province, was virtually destroyed by rebel forces in April, and more than 650 bodies were reported to have been found there. More than 200 unarmed civilians were killed during an attack on Yifin" (p.

2). By way of physical harm, "as many as 4000 men, women and children suffered mutilation, crude amputations of their hands, arms, legs, lips or ears; others suffered lacerations and gunshot wounds...they reported that villagers had been rounded up and locked in houses which were then set alight" (Amnesty International, 1998, p. 2).

EXTENT TO WHICH CHILDREN WERE INCLUDED WITHIN THE RANKS IN SIERRA LEONE

It has been stated that "Sierra Leone has one of the world's worst records for recruiting children as soldiers" (Global Information Networks in Education, 2001, p. 11). Within the pro-government Civil Defence Forces (the Kamajors) documentation of participation of children as young as eight exists, and under the joint AFRC/RUF junta, children as young as six were involved with estimations of one third of all the underage soldiers being girls (Global Information Networks in Education, 2001, p. 11). Admissions from the RUF estimate that thirty percent of their forces are under eighteen (Human Rights Watch, 2000), and Amnesty International (1998) estimated that within the RUF, the CDF, and the national army combined, there existed five thousand child soldiers (p. 2). During their time within the ranks, the use of stimulants and other drugs by child soldiers during their participation in armed conflict has included amphetamines, crack cocaine, marijuana, and other substances (Skinner, 1999, p. 10).

The overall population in Sierra Leone in 1985 was 3 516 000 with a projected population of 5 399 000 in 2000 and 6 165 000 in 2005 (Statistics Sierra Leone). UNICEF (2002) indicate that the under 18 population in 2001 was 2 328 000 (p. 103). These numbers provide context to the numbers of children that were included within the

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ranks.

The war in Sierra Leone has placed its population in harm's way for many years through the activities of direct combat between the government and the RUF. Beyond the violation of children's rights through their inclusion within the ranks, children suffered under the continuing conditions of poverty exacerbated by the conflict. "Not only had children witnessed the gradual collapse of basic services, but the food distribution had been disrupted, and immunization campaigns have been halted, leaving children susceptible to epidemics of measles, typhoid and whooping cough" (Skinner, 1999, p. 11).

During 2001, under the cease fire and its establishment of peace, 1 170 children were removed from the ranks of the RUF including 107 in July (Integrated Regional Information Network, July 17, 2001). In the same report further disaggregating of these numbers occurs. "62 of the children were girls, while 45 were their babies and dependent siblings. Among the girls, 11 were pregnant and another 33 were breast-feeding their infants. Most of the child mothers were between 14 and 17 years old and many had been abducted by the RUF from the Western and Southern provinces since January 1999" (Integrated Regional Information Network, July 17, 2001).

Mazurana and McKay clarify the numbers of children involved, and in what groups their involvement has taken place, while disaggregating the numbers by sex, within the conflict in Sierra Leone. They state that of the 45 000 RUF troops, 22 500 were child soldiers and 7500 of the child soldiers were girl soldiers; of the 10 000 AFRC troops, 5000 were child soldiers and 1667 of the child soldiers were girl soldiers; of the 14 000 SLA troops, 3500 were child soldiers and 1167 of the child soldiers were girl

soldiers; of the 68 865 CDF troops, 17 216 were child soldiers and 1722 of the child soldiers were girl soldiers (Mazurana and McKay, 2003 unpublished, p. 12). Totalled, this means that of the 137 865 combined troops, 48 216 were child soldiers with 12 056 girl soldiers (Mazurana and McKay, 2003 unpublished, p.12).

The reason for the inclusion of children within the ranks of the RUF is clear from the Ideas and Ideals. Under the first of the three phases of the RUF struggle, "Arms to the People" they clarify, "the RUFP has trained a large number of men and women including the elderly, youth, children and the disabled from all corners of Sierra Leone and given them arms to dismantle the corrupt APC/SLPP system and its sordid successors...The RUFP believes that the possession of arms should not be the monopoly of a privileged group. Everybody should be a fighter to defend their rights" (Revolutionary United Front Party, 2000b).

CONCLUSION

The inclusion of children within the ranks whether considered voluntary or involuntary occurs intentionally for a number of specific reasons. As a result of their inclusion within the ranks children face conditions of exploitation, violence and injury, isolation from family and community, difficulties returning home and sometimes death. Children faced and were subject to the same overall conditions in all three case studies explored for the purpose of this research. Chapter three will examine the rehabilitation efforts expended on behalf of child soldiers in the case study countries, with particular reference to their rights and the theoretical material presented in chapter one.

CHAPTER THREE:

REHABILITATION

"They must grow up to take charge of the country, to parent their own children. And I wonder how they can do that unless in some way they can come to terms with the terrible things that have been done. People here talk of a lost generation, but we cannot afford to lose a generation" (Ethel Vina as quoted by Neustatter, 1992, p. 27).

Chapter two has detailed the ways in which children are brought into the ranks, the roles that they fulfill once within the ranks and to some degree the extent to which their participation within the ranks has affected them, all in violation of their rights as children as declared by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. In using children within the ranks, especially under conditions of abduction, trauma is experienced. Trauma is then exacerbated and reinforced by the witnessing of and participation in violent acts including murder and/or rape.

In addition to the trauma and violation of rights experienced by the individual children, families and communities are affected by the participation of children within the ranks. This includes not only the violence perpetrated by soldiers (in some cases acts of violence have been acted out by their own children under force by their abductors as illustrated in Chapter two) but by the very loss of their family members through death or abduction. The loss of children, in addition to the trauma experience on an emotional level, deteriorates social networks and can lead to a loss of economic productivity for families and communities at large.

The implications of the inclusion of children within the ranks necessitates planning and implementing programming for demobilized child soldiers linked to the

larger population of individuals affected. Ideally, this will provide stronger links to normalcy and facilitate understanding of the issues and experiences of all parties involved, thereby fostering a higher degree of reintegration.

In Machel's report, "The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children", the need to recognize the psycho-social trauma experienced by children within the ranks is emphasized. "Armed conflict affects all aspects of child development - physical, mental and emotional - and to be effective, assistance must take each into account...ensuring from the outset of all assistance programmes that the psychosocial concerns intrinsic to child growth and development are addressed" (Machel, 1996, p. 41). The level of psych-social trauma can include the difficulty in disengaging from violence post-conflict.

"Where the experience of participating in 'the cause' has been positive, as was often the case for youth who identified with and drew meaning from their part in the struggle against apartheid, the transition to a non-violent lifestyle will be difficult. This is particularly true where the frustrations of poverty and injustice remain" (Machel, 1996, p. 16). At its essence, this is what fuels the fear of many community members in the reintegration process of demobilized child soldiers. Therefore linking children, families and communities together during the rehabilitation process will hopefully model non-violence for those demobilized child soldiers in need of an alternative to that which they have been socialize to while within the ranks, and minimize the fears held by those to whom they are attempting to be reunited. Additionally, Machel suggests that there is a need to "channel the energy, ideas and experience of youth into contributing in positive ways to the creation of their new, post-conflict society" (Machel, 1996, p. 16).

Therefore, in addressing the trauma experienced by demobilized child soldiers

and the rest of their community, Machel recommends both modalities and structures that

emphasize community participation. She states that the use of:

> psychotherapeutic approaches based on western mental health traditions tend to emphasize individual emotional expression. This method may not be feasible in all contexts...Exploring a child's previous experience with violence and the meaning that it holds in her or his life is important to the process of healing and recovery. However, such an exploration should take place in a stable, supportive environment, by care-givers who have a solid and continuing relationship with the child...Best practice emphasizes that the most effective and sustainable approach is to mobilize the existing social care system...Through training, and raising the awareness of central care-givers including parents, teachers and community health workers, a diversity of programmes can enhance the community's ability to provide care for its children and vulnerable groups...institutionalizing children and identifying them as traumatized can impose an inadvertent stigma and contribute to isolation and withdrawal. Nor should groups of children who have had especially traumatic experiences, such as former child soldiers or unaccompanied children, be segregated from the community, since this will contribute to further risk, distress and marginalization (Machel, 1996, p. 43).

The Machel report provides a template for rehabilitation programming for

demobilized child soldiers. This template includes, in addition to psycho-social therapy

and family reunification/community linkages, education, and skills training as its means

for the reintegration of demobilized child soldiers. Education is seen as important as

children who have participated within the ranks have lacked formal education during that

time that they have been involved in the armed conflict. While education acts as a link to

employment, "it also helps to normalize life and to develop an identity separate from that

of the soldier. The development of peer relationships and improved self-esteem may also

be facilitated through recreational and cultural activities" (Machel, 1996, p. 15) which

would be encompassed within classroom curriculum.

Skills training becomes a necessary next step. To provide demobilized child

soldiers with a skill to contribute to the reconstruction of their society is essential, as

previously mentioned, to engage them in productive activities where their contribution can be felt in a positive manner. Reintegration is assisted in this capacity, in addition to rebuilding a post-conflict labour force and economy.

Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 39 explicitly states that States Parties are responsible for the provision of rehabilitative care of children who have suffered due to armed conflict. While many non-government organizations have stepped in to assist in the rehabilitation of demobilized child soldiers, the responsibility of care and programming remains in the hands of the national governments. The provision of care for demobilized child soldiers by non-government organizations can be seen as necessary, where governmental failure has occurred; effective, in offsetting mistrust by demobilized child soldiers and their families and communities for government officials; and/or justification by governments for non-involvement in service provision. While the debate on the appropriateness of service providers is theoretically interesting, it shall be understood for the purpose of this research that the overall responsibility for rehabilitative programming for child soldiers, in line with the CRC, remains primarily with the national government.

The following section will review the extent to which rehabilitation programming has occurred on behalf of demobilized child soldiers in each of the case studies presented in chapter two. The attempt is to illustrate those services that have been/are being provided to demobilized child soldiers, specifically through formal programming based on the particular aspects that are identified above as ideal (psychosocial, education, skills training, family reunification). By focussing on formal programming, the emphasis is on programs where there is some participation by the state, whether in service provision or

permission granted to other agencies, recognizing their obligation to provide for the rights of the children within their citizenry.

MOZAMBIQUE

Due to the establishment and maintenance of peace within Mozambique over the past number of years, it can be assumed that programming for demobilized child soldiers has been implemented in a climate of security with tangible results that can be gathered to assess the situation for former child soldiers therein. These results will be presented and analysed in terms of their effectiveness and consistency with the Machel report and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and thereby model strengths and weaknesses for other locations such as Sierra Leone and Uganda, that have not benefited from such extended periods of peace.

In line with Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Mozambique is required to file reports with the Committee on the Rights of the Child that illustrate their efforts to realize children's rights. Their initial report was due in 1996 and filed in May 2001, five years past its due date[3]. The document contains the efforts of the Mozambican government to fulfill its obligations in meeting the rights of the children of Mozambique. The report was filed late and years following the establishment of peace within the country; nonetheless it speaks to both the issue of child soldiers and the many years of armed conflict in which they participated within the ranks in Mozambique.

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[3]The delay in reporting to the committee was in part due to the reporting structure itself. Due the high volume of ratifications that occurred at the same time, many States parties were expected to file at approximately the same time, creating a backlog for the Committee to deal with.

Paragraph 528 states, "it is forbidden by law to conscript children under the age of 18 into compulsory military service. This same prohibition was in force during the last war, which was noted for the involvement of children in military actions...the ensuing military obligations are applicable to all citizens from the age of 18, the age when it is compulsory for young Mozambicans of both sexes to present themselves for military registration" (Government of Mozambique, 2001). In paragraph 529, an important exception is clarified: "under current military service legislation (Law 24/97), incorporation proper into the armed forces normally only occurs in the year of the citizen's twentieth birthday. As 18 is also the age when voluntary recruitment for military service is accepted, it is clear that under no circumstances may citizens under 18 take part in military actions. This clause is only broken in situations of war" (Government of Mozambique, 2001). Therefore, in times of war, despite the clear indication in the CRC and its Optional Protocol, Mozambique has left open the option of recruitment, justifying past and potentially future cases, of the inclusion of children within the ranks.

In light of these decisions by the national government of Mozambique regarding the use of child soldiers, comment has been included about rehabilitation of the population of children who were included within the ranks. "The psychological and social impact of the violence to which most civilians in war-affected areas were exposed also had a strong effect on children. Subjected to violence, brutality and other traumatic experiences, many children witnessed the death of other people and, totally vulnerable, they became victims and instruments of war action" (Government of Mozambique, 2001, paragraph 531). As a result, "the main focus of the assistance provided has been to seek

all means of resolving this problem through family location and reunification programs",

the adoption of a "programme to support 'children in difficult circumstances" including

"primary and in some cases secondary, education, with special pedagogical

accompaniment from MINED", while recognizing culturally-specific needs through

"performing ceremonies of purification, reconciliation with homage to the

ancestors"(Government of Mozambique, 2001, paragraphs 534, 535, 537, 548).

The Mozambican government formally began its extension of services to war-

affected children in general prior to the establishment of peace within the country, and

even prior to the formal recognition of the rights of the children in Mozambique (as the

CRC was adopted by the United Nations in 1990). These services were encompassed by

the official Frelimo policy of assistance to the "child in a difficult circumstance" in 1985

(Mausse & Nina, p. 8).

The Mozambican governmental structure dealing with the extension of services

on behalf of the child in a difficult circumstance fell primarily under the responsibility of

the Ministry of Health and through the National Directorate for Social Work (SEAS) in

1985. These services were later implemented by the State Secretary for Social Work but

are now under the jurisdiction of Ministry for Co-ordination of Social Work. The

primary goal of the policy was expedient family reunification, or where necessary,

placement with substitute families, or as a final option, placement in specialized

institutions for children. Collaborating with non-government organizations in the

provision of services to war affected children and families resulted in the establishment

of the Programme for Family Localisation and Reunification, in 1988 (Mausse & Nina, p.

8).

The Programme for Family Localization and Reunification began specifying services on behalf of children during the late eighties who had experienced life within the ranks. The collaborative approach between government agencies and non-government organizations included the participation of the National Directorate for Social Welfare, the Department for Special Education, foreign support from the Save the Children Fund UK and the Save the Children Federation (USA), as well as localized community groups that included the Red Cross, Mozambican Women Organisation, Mozambican Youth Organisation and church groups. By including the participation of local community groups the scope of the services offered, especially in reunification, was magnified, reaching "populations in the remote and inaccessible areas (including Renamo bases)" (Mausse & Nina, p. 9). Between 1989 and 1998 it is estimated that the Programme for Family Localisation and Reunification resulted in 15 588 children being reunited with family (Mausse & Nina, p.9). UNDP estimates calculate the successful reunions of affected children with family members at 95 per cent of the approximate 250 000 involved (Thompson, 1999, p. 199).

The "Lhanguene Initiative", another collaborative effort between the National Directorate for Social Welfare, the Department for Special Education, Save the Children Federation (US), Save the Children Fund (UK) and local community groups, was designed to treat the psycho-social needs of those children specifically demobilized from the ranks, and to reunite them with their families. During service provision, the Lhanguene Initiative concurrently elicited the participation of, and trained local community members to deal with the issues presented by this population. "At the end of the "Lhanguene Initiative", more than 1500 non-accompanied children had been

registered, half of whom were physically reunited with their families" (Mausse & Nina, p. 9).

Providing psycho-social treatment for demobilized child soldiers within Mozambique raised questions regarding treatment modalities. Thompson cites a Mozambican welfare official in further elucidating this point. "Western individualistic psychology had only limited insight to offer for healing. Modern techniques were employed, but along side of traditional ones, with the latter proving to be more effective" (Thompson, 1999, p. 197). Psychologists however were involved in order to assess the level of trauma despite the lack of success in healing through psychoanalysis. Therefore, as emphasized by the Machel report, the use of non-Western, traditional treatment addressing the psycho-social trauma experienced by children while within the ranks, can prove effective in transitioning these children back into their families and communities.

The goal of these types of ceremonies and rituals are to cleanse the individual of having been separate from their home community. The ceremonies/rituals can also treat the exposure to, or participation in acts of violence during the war either through the idea of cleansing or discarding that identity held responsible for the acts of violence. Additionally, due to the trauma experienced by members of family and community, these rituals help in appeasing feelings of guilt associated with the inability to protect their children from the harm they experienced (Thompson, 1999, 196). The ceremonies traditionally have been used when members of the community are separated from the rest of the community for extended periods of time, such as migratory miners in South Africa (Mausse & Nina, p. 12). The following excerpts illustrate the details of the ritual:

> As soon as the child arrived home she was taken to the 'ndomba' (house of the spirits) to be introduced to the ancestors. There the elder in the family...addressed

the ancestors, informing them that the grandchild had returned home. At the same time the grandfather thanked the ancestors for the fact that the child was alive and had returned to the family
we took the child to the bush (about two kilometres from our house), where we built a small reed hut where we put the child dressed in the dirty and torn clothes which she had brought from the base of the Matasangas. Afterwards we set fire to the hut and the child already knew that she should get undressed and get out of the hut the minute it started burning (there is always an adult nearby to get the child out of the hut). After the child inhaled the smoke of some roots which were burned, she bathed in water mixed with powdered roots as a medicine. Later at the house of the ndoma the child was vaccinated (kuthlavela - small incisions are made on the wrists, tongue and chest, and a medicinal paste is smeared on these incisions (Mausse & Nina, p. 12).

Other rituals used for the purpose of reintegrating child soldiers into families and communities reunited demobilized child soldiers with their ancestors through "ku-phalha" (Mausse & Nina, p. 12). Ku-phalha could be performed within the family unit, by the eldest member of the family, or by traditional chiefs in the larger sphere of the community.

Another state-provided strategy to assist in the social transition for children from the ranks was within the realm of education. The Ministry of Education established schools in those areas where populations displaced by war had accumulated. Teachers screened children in order to assess those in need of additional assistance due to the onset of psychological trauma as a result of the war.

UNICEF funding channelled through the Ministry of Social Welfare provided assistance in the reintegration effort for demobilised child soldiers in the provinces of Gaza, Maputo, Nampula, and Zambezia. The focus of these projects were to provide income generation and vocational training that included carpentry, metalwork, tin-smithing, mechanics, electricity, fishing, and the raising of goats (Mausse & Nina, p. 10). The results included forging community linkages for the demobilized child soldiers and

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modelling of appropriate non-warfare behaviour in daily living by those adults involved. The success of reintegration resulting from these efforts is illustrated by the findings that, "19.5% of the children involved are attending school, 55.6% are engaged in occupational activities, and 72.3% register a good family integration" (Mausse & Nina, p. 10).

The Mozambican Red Cross implemented 'Healing through Play' in 1993 throughout six provinces in Mozambique. Healing through Play involved a variety of community volunteers, provided a forum for assessing children who may be experiencing difficulty after demobilization, re-socialized children in appropriate behaviour, and included a dimension of cultural affirmation. This was accomplished through the voluntary efforts of women who received training, leading children in "group games, story-telling, theatre, and songs that reinforce Mozambican cultures and increase social interaction among all children in groups of about 40" (Thompson, 1999, p. 197). Many of the women also acted as foster parents for participant children (Thompson, 1999, p.197).

While these initiatives have aimed to rehabilitate and reintegrate demobilized child soldiers in Mozambique, Thompson (1999), raises a glaring oversight in programming. "Neither demobilization nor tracing seems to have occurred for the girls, who were forced sexual partners - now women with their own children. There is no data about how many were 'linked to' soldiers, how many went home with them during demobilisation to their districts, how many were simply abandoned" (p. 199). The absence of specific programming for girls from within the ranks implies that they were left to address the issues of reintegration without the services to which they are entitled, resulting in an additional violation of their rights. Thus, their medical, psycho-social,

educational and vocational needs remain formally unfulfilled, by those responsible to do so.

UGANDA

Addressing the rehabilitative needs of child soldiers in northern Uganda has not occurred with the comprehensive and fully appropriate measures illustrated in Mozambique, proposed by the Machel report, or required by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The following section will sketch the extent to which child soldiers in Uganda have been provided with rehabilitation services following their demobilization.

The Initial Report by the Ugandan government to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in accordance with Article 44 of the CRC, outlining the manner in which the specifics within the Convention are being addressed, was due in 1992 and submitted in 1996, four years past its due date[4]. Within the document, the ongoing armed conflict in the north is briefly mentioned, but avoided in relation to Articles 38 and 39. These articles, as has been mentioned earlier, address children in armed conflict and the necessary measures to be taken by States Parties on their behalf for rehabilitation and social reintegration in cases in which armed conflict occurs.

By way of armed conflict and its affects on the children of Uganda, the report focuses on conflict between 1981 - 1986 in the Luwero Triangle between government troops and the National Resistance Army. It states that during this period in relation to

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[4]See footnote number 2 above for explanation regarding delays in reporting to the Committee.

the involvement of children within the ranks "the NRA decided to send the child soldiers back to school", where the teachers had received a "special refresher course on how to handle the child soldiers" (Government of Uganda, 1996, paragraph 229). The numbers of children demobilized into the educational program included "forty-nine...in 1989...in 1994 there were 193 at the school and 201 in different secondary school. Those who dropped out of school were given the option of leaving the army or getting further military training and remain as soldiers" (Government of Uganda, 1996, paragraph 230).

The report goes on to clarify that the recruitment age for the Armed Forces is 18 years; "any recruitment below that age should only be with the consent of that person's parents or guardians or the District Administrator of the district in which the person resides. No person under the apparent age of 13 years shall be enrolled in the armed forces" (Government of Uganda, 1996, paragraph 231). The report assures that when the insurgency in the north is finally sorted out, with strategies such as the Presidential Amnesty extended to any surrendering rebels, the government will once again be able to "regulate the recruitment of children (voluntary or forced) into the armed forces" (Government of Uganda, 1996, paragraph 232). Those children who have been demobilized from rebel control have received the Government's "special concern" and "are immediately reunited with their parents/families" (Government of Uganda, 1996, paragraph 232).

Pertaining to Article 39 on the rehabilitation and social reintegration mandated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Initial Report focuses on portions of the article stipulating intervention due to reasons other than armed conflict. The thrust of these portions of the report address child abuse within the domestic sphere, sexual abuse,

and children in conflict with the law (i.e. juvenile offenders). Absent is a governmental response to the needs of child soldiers on their demobilization from within the ranks. Even on the basis of these aspects of Article 39 the report states that "there are virtually no programmes for treatment of victims, including measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration...there are no special examination and treatment centres for victims of abuse, especially sexual abuse" (Government of Uganda, 1996, paragraphs 132 & 133). Further, for those children without families to be reunited with following their demobilization or orphaned because of the armed conflict, "there is only one institution run by Government which is meant to receive and care for children who may not have families...the Naguru Reception Centre in Kampala" (Government of Uganda, 1996, paragraph 111).

It is estimated that three to five thousand children have escaped from the rebels during the war in the north (Stavrou, Stewart & Stavrou, 2000, p. 13). Escape often occurs during actual battle placing those children attempting escape directly in harm's way. In these circumstances children are taken back to military barracks for debriefing. On occasion, debriefing has included appearing "at public rallies, to drum up popular support for the fight against the rebels...they display the children and read out their names, which only increases the likelihood of rebel reprisals against the child or his family" (Human Rights Watch, 1997, p. 18). Following military debriefing they are passed through the Resident District Commissioners Office in order to be welcomed back into the civilian population.

In Gulu, on completion of their time at the Resident District Commissioners Office, child soldiers finally receive post-conflict care at a rehabilitation centre. The

provision of services for child soldiers has fallen on the shoulders of the non-governmental organizations within Uganda at these centres. The two primary implementing agencies of programming are World Vision - Gulu and Gulu Support the Children Organization (GUSCO). Additional organizations include the Gulu Vocational and Community Centre and the Community Services Department of the Gulu District Administration that have also provided services to demobilized child soldiers.

At the centres, demobilized child soldiers receive medical treatment, food, clothing, counselling, family tracing services, education and skills training. World Vision's Traumatised Children of War Counselling and Rehabilitation Centre in Gulu claims to have provided services for 5 560 children since they opened in March 1995, including 110 repatriated children from within the ranks in Sudan (Esaku, 2000, & Kalebbo, 2000). It has been estimated at the pinnacle of the armed conflict in northern Uganda, they had "six hundred children under their care at any one time" (Stavrou, Stewart & Stavrou, 2000, p. 14).

The Traumatised Children of War Counselling and Rehabilitation Centre specifically aims to help "detraumatise and enhance the psychological, physical, and emotional status of children and young people who were previously abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army" (World Vision, 2000). The centre's five point agenda includes:

> To provide former abducted children with accommodation facilities away from the conflict zone;
> To provide health rehabilitation to war affected children through medical care, nutrition, the provision of safe drinking water, and basic clothing and bedding;
> To provide psycho-social support, partly through counselling, to help the children overcome their traumatic emotional and psychological experiences;
> To contribute to the children's psychological and emotional recovery by offering recreational activities and, especially for the older children unable to return to primary school, vocational training in such locally marketable skills as bicycle repair, tailoring, carpentry, and farming; and

To resettle the children after the completion of their term at the centre, a process preceded by family tracing, community preparation, and the training of community volunteer counsellors for follow up care (World Vision, 2000).

The Gulu Support the Children Organization (GUSCO), founded in 1994, works both with those children affected by the armed conflict in Uganda as well as the parents and other professionals who engage with the children on returning to their home communities. GUSCO is supported by DANIDA through Save the Children Denmark (Red Barnet), UNICEF, the UN World Food Program, The British High Commission - Uganda, the Netherlands Embassy and private supporters. They attempt to provide a "long-term, community based approach" helping children to "readjust to life as civilians, in part by developing their self-esteem and sense of trust" (Anti-Slavery International).

Recognizing the extensive trauma most children have experienced during their life within the ranks, including the sexual violation of girls, GUSCO provides children with "special treatment and attention" based on a philosophy of "reconciliation and forgiveness" (Okullu, 1998). The GUSCO programmatic objectives for children aim to:

Return them to normal life and reunite them with their families and reintegrating them in the community;
Provide them with basic essentials such as food, clothing and medical care;
Provide psycho-social support to them through counselling using culture specific approach e.g. story telling;
Give skills training, basic and formal education to them (Okullu, 1998).

Additionally, GUSCO advocates respect for children's rights, sensitization of the larger community to the difficulties faced by children due to war in order to minimize stigmatization on reintegration, support of CBOs and NGOs dealing with issues pertaining to war-affected children, support of families of war-affected children in activities to reduce poverty, while attempting to reduce the perpetuation of violence in

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Acholiland through child rehabilitation (Okullu, 1998).

The duration of services provided to children during their rehabilitation in the GUSCO centre usually lasts four to five weeks. They receive counselling, education and participate in recreational activities. During their time in the centre services are provided under two guiding principles: "children are perceived not as sick victims but as survivors with individual resources, and that most children, given a protective and understanding environment, will go through a healing process" (Anti-Slavery International). Continued support is provided to these children for up to a year after their return to their home community.

GUSCO's rehabilitation centre in Gulu provides services to approximately 100 children in residential care there, 15% of which are girls, and has rehabilitated 2 300 children in total (Anti-Slavery International). Additional outcomes of this program include the arrangement of apprenticeships for 200 children with local artisans, 248 children re-entering primary school, and 165 teachers, women, and community leaders being sensitized on handling traumatized children (Okullu, 1998).

Stavrou, Stewart & Stavrou (2000), report the recent inclusion of traditional cleansing ceremonies within rehabilitation programming by western NGOs due to the positive impact they have on reintegrating children into their families. In the context of Uganda, traditional ceremonies used in this capacity are performed either by village elders or a traditional healer and consist of:

> the slaughter of a goat or chicken, which is then eaten by the family. Other rituals performed include the breaking of an egg underfoot and the stepping over of a log on the footpath leading to the house (Stavrou, Stewart & Stavrou, 2000, p. 17).

SIERRA LEONE

Throughout the years of armed conflict within Sierra Leone, considerable effort has been extended on behalf of children within the ranks, first by way of demobilization attempts and secondarily through rehabilitation programming in order to achieve reintegration. Re-occurring instability greatly diminished the ability of continued implementation and subsequent success in the reintegration of child soldiers. However, on establishing peace through adherence to the Lome Agreement, significant progress has been made in the reintegration of former child soldiers. The following will attempt to illustrate the extent to which rehabilitation services have been extended.

In line with reporting expectations laid out in Article 44 of the CRC, the Initial Report by the Government of Sierra Leone was due in 1992. Sierra Leone filed its Initial Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the 10th of April, 1996[5]. In the report, the socio-political environment in which the attempts to implement the Convention have occurred are cited as including "economic difficulties, increasing mass poverty, deterioration of social services and amenities and a rebel war" and "inevitably, this meant less family resources to meet the basic needs of children and other family members" (Government of Sierra Leone, 1996, paragraph 7). Admittedly, the war resulted in considerable impacts on the lives of the children of Sierra Leone including, "damaged infrastructure, disrupted social structures, increased...incidence of disease and malnutrition and (a) disrupted...educational system. Hundreds of children have been orphaned and up to 2,500 children have been involved in the war suffering severe trauma

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[5]See footnote number 2 above for explanation regarding delays in reporting to the Committee.

as combatants" (Government of Sierra Leone, 1996, paragraph 9).

Pertaining to the topic of Militarization, the Report asserts that under the Royal Sierra Leone Military Forces Act of 1961, voluntary participation of children in armed conflict is limited. "A recruitment officer shall not enlist a person under the apparent age of seventeen and a half years unless consent to the enlistment has been given in writing by his parents or guardians or where the parents or guardians are dead or unknown, by the District Commissioner or an Assistant District Commissioner of the District in which such person resides or if he resides in an area where there is no District Commissioner, the Director of Social Development" (Government of Sierra Leone, 1996, paragraph 27). Additionally, the report clarifies that there is no minimum age for conscription in national legislation beyond the mandate within the Geneva Convention of fifteen years of age. Yet the report admits to the "unfortunate aspect" of conscription of children under the age of fifteen within the rebel war (Government of Sierra Leone, 1996, paragraph 28).

Following the admission of the participation of children within the ranks, the report proceeds to explain the actions taken by the government during the ongoing conflict. The government "ordered the demobilization of all child combatants"(Government of Sierra Leone, 1996, paragraph 73), achieving some success. The report also highlights the collaborative programming instituted on behalf of children affected by the war and child soldiers, with "international agencies, notably UNICEF...and NGOs" including "reception and rehabilitation centres...for the initial assessment and reintegration of the demobilized child soldiers, before their eventual placement into appropriate programmes" (Government of Sierra Leone, 1996, paragraph 74). The report claims that success has occurred in the reintegration of demobilized child

soldiers due to the programmes instated on their behalf. "About 2 500 child combatants have been involved in fighting on both sides of the conflict...about 40 of these children have been demobilized and rehabilitated, and almost 50 per cent of them successfully reintegrated into their communities (Government of Sierra Leone, 1996, paragraph 86).

Other points relating to child soldiers addressed by the Government of Sierra Leone in the Initial Report to the Committee (1996) include, for example, sexual abuse of girls and the abduction of girls for immoral purposes as offences under law (paragraph 31), prohibition of imprisoning children (paragraph 34), the need to adequately address the issue of children separated from their families due to the war (paragraph 55) budgetary allocations to institutions that provide services for children with disabilities (paragraph 68), and the National Education Policy (paragraph 77 - 84). Pertaining to the latter, the Government of Sierra Leone (1996) "has developed a curriculum on peace education which hopefully is going to be introduced into all schools and child care institutions...to learn the values of tolerance, peace, coexistence and non-violent skills for resolving conflicts" (paragraph 84).

As recognized within the Initial Report of the States Parties by the Sierra Leonean government to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF has been actively involved in the lives of Sierra Leonean children throughout the years of conflict which have plagued the nation. UNICEF has been the lead agency for children during the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration while funding project implementation by selected organizations within demobilization camps.

Under the Programme for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) provisioned by the Lome Peace Agreement, the objective for the "consolidation

of security and facilitation of the socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants into society" (UNICEF, 2000, p.2) has been established. This has resulted in the allotment of assistance to child soldiers in order to,

> Address immediate post demobilisation needs and continue the reunification of child with family;
> Ensure access to education, training, family mediation and health;
> Participation as active members of their family and home communities; and
> Improve their perception of personal security through protection and increased awareness. It is envisaged that such assistance would allow children to develop in a family and friendly community environment and contribute to the future development of the country (UNICEF, 2000, p. 13).

The assistance mandated on behalf of child soldiers is provided on their arrival at an interim care centre.

Children's entrance into an interim care centre under the programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration has occurred through a variety of possible scenarios. UNICEF (2000) has determined these to include,

> Reporting at the numerous reception centres (disarmament points) and are transferred to the nearest demobilisation site;
> Surrender themselves to UN Forces;
> Run away from the fighting forces, return home and are brought to UNICEF by their families;
> Are handed over as part of a 'political gesture' by the rebels;
> Are parts of a larger group of children who may be handed over as abductees (p. 4).

It is worth noting however that during phases I and II of the program the 'wives' of soldiers, which account for many if not most of the girls in the ranks despite the other roles taken on by girls during their time within the ranks, were not admitted into DDR programme. This is problematic as girls from within the ranks did not receive official rehabilitation programming to aid in their reintegration but denied the reality of their experiences within the ranks.

Ex-child soldiers are provided with an assortment of services during their stay at the interim care centres. Their stay at the interim care centres are intended not to exceed two months. The services provided during their stay include,

Provision of basic services, clothing, feeding, medical assistance etc.;
Registration for family tracing;
Mediation with their families and communities to assist them to return home;
Counselling services at the interim care centre;
Education and skills training orientation;
Preparation for transfer to province of origin or placement in foster family;
Specialised counselling for females with specialisation in sexual abuse;
Full medical assistance for pregnant girls;
Psychological assessment and follow up services;
Recreation;
Participation in household tasks at the centre;
Basic literacy (UNICEF, 2000, pp. 10, 11).

Children are ideally to be reunited with family following the two month period of rehabilitation at the interim care centres. As recognized by the Sierra Leone Child Protection Committees (1993) "reunification does not necessarily mean a successful reintegration" as exemplified by children who rejoined the conflict when it re-occurred after having been reunified with family. It nonetheless, remains a vital step toward reintegration to be taken when in the best interest of the child.

For those children who are unable to be reunited with family, provisions for foster care must be made. "The existing network of foster families continues to be strengthened to cater for children from the fighting forces" and includes special training in order to best deal with fostering children from within the ranks (UNICEF, 2000, p. 11). On-going support by social workers is provided during foster care and attendance in educational and skills training programmes occurs.

In 1998, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and

Children's Affairs in the revision of the regulations under which foster care is governed in Sierra Leone in order to achieve better conditions for the care of children and protection while in foster care. The result was a system of foster care that was "organized around religious and traditional institutions" (UNICEF, 2000, p. 11) on behalf of demobilized child soldiers. For those children who were unable to ever be reunited with family, provision in long-term care programmes has been designed to include continued care under foster families or in group homes with "community carers" (UNICEF, 2000, p. 11) assigned to their protection and well-being.

In 1993, following the Government's call for the release of all child soldiers into programmes of rehabilitation "UNICEF received three hundred and seventy children ranging in age from 8 - 17 (10 girls and 360 boys)" (UNICEF, 2000, p.4). Three centres for the care of these children transitioning back into society were established by UNICEF, the Catholic Mission, the Sierra Leonean Government and other humanitarian agencies. Basic provisions within the camps included food, shelter, medical treatment, education and family tracing as required under the established guidelines for demobilised child soldiers and in-line with UNICEF's directives. 56% of the children's families were traced, with 43% of the children achieving family reunification by the end of the year, and 314 children achieving family reunification, in total (UNICEF, 2000, p. 4). Of the 180 children with whom social workers maintained contact post-reunification in August of 1994, 40% were attending school, 17.8 % were involved in skills training, 20% were involved in domestic activities supervised by parents and 22.2% rejoined the army or were considered street children (UNICEF, 2000, p. 5).

Due to renewed vigour in the armed conflict between the years of 1996 and 1997,

programming on behalf of child soldiers was greatly hampered in Sierra Leone.

However, UNICEF, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs and

non-government organizations concerned with children's issues, established the National

Family Tracing and Reunification Network (UNICEF, 2000, p. 6). The network

functioned in a decentralised manner, through whatever agency had access to various

areas of the country, and regionally including linkages to Guinea and Liberia with other

organizations designed for the purposes of family tracing and reunification.

Programming established at this time for the one hundred fifty demobilized child soldiers

in addition to three hundred unaccompanied children (including street children and

children from within the ranks of forces in Liberia and the RUF) occurred in three

emergency shelters (UNICEF, 2000, p. 6).

After the 1997 coup and subsequent military junta, programming on behalf of

child soldiers came to a near halt. On their ousting from power and return to the bush,

the AFRC/RUF also took with them the children in their ranks, with little hope for their

release, despite gains made on their behalf during this period under the Child Protection

Committees. The gains made by the Child Protection Committees included the intended

release of all children under ten within fighting forces. A limited number of children

were released by ECOMOG and law enforcement agencies and others were reported by

surrounding nations to have arrived in refugee camps for assistance and care (UNICEF,

2000, p. 7).

The role of the Child Protection Committees of Sierra Leone in service provision

consisted of "four basic and equally important strategies which will result in restoring

normalcy in the lives of children" (Child Protection Committees of Sierra Leone, 1998, p.

3). The strategies were consistent with the aims of UNICEF, the Convention on the

Rights of the Child and the guidelines of the Machel Report. They include Family

reunification; Ensuring access to education, health and other basic services to **all**

children; Supporting the psychological recovery of children in distress; and Promoting

family and community mediation (Child Protection Committees of Sierra Leone, 1998,

pp. 3, 4).

340 children were released between September 1997 and January 1998 from the

RUF with 90% achieving family reunification, and an additional 20 child prisoners of

war released due to the ECOMOG intervention in February (UNICEF, 2000, p. 7). 188

of these demobilized child soldiers participated in the National Commission for

Disarmament, Demobilization & Reintegration programme mentioned earlier (UNICEF,

2000, p. 7). Pre-demobilization registration occurred within the Civil Defence Force for

300 children within the ranks in the southern province in accordance with commitments

made to the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children

in Armed Conflict in May 1999 (UNICEF, 2000, p. 8).

From March 1998 till December 1999, under the newly established democratic

government of Sierra Leone responsibility was given to the Ministry of Social Welfare,

Gender and Children's Affairs to head up programming on behalf of demobilized child

soldiers. UNICEF and their partner implementing agencies including the Catholic

Mission, Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Concern Universal, Christian

Children's Fund and the Freetown City Council, were called upon to support the ministry

during this time, strengthened by the provisions of the Lome Peace Agreement.

Provisions in the Agreement included reference in a preambular paragraph that "the

children of Sierra Leone, especially those affected by armed conflict, in view of their vulnerability, are entitled to special care and protection of their inherent right to life, survival and development, in accordance with the provisions of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child" (Government of Sierra Leone, 1999). Additionally, the Agreement obligated the Government of Sierra Leone on behalf of child soldiers to "mobilize resources, both within the country and from the International Community...to address the special needs of these children in the existing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process" (Article XXX).

During the year 2000, 1232 children of the estimated 5400 child soldiers, fewer than a quarter, had been released to the four demobilisation centres leading to rehabilitation services on placement in the interim care centres (UNICEF, 2000, p. 8). Demobilization centres were ideally segregated by age for better protection and service provision for the specific needs of child soldiers. This was complicated by camp allowances for soldiers to have family members join them in the camp setting, making child soldier identification difficult due to compliance with commander's wishes for children and 'wives' to remain within their designated area of the camps. However, registration, counselling and recreation were achieved leading to transfer to appropriate interim care centres.

Following the events in May 2000, many children left the interim care centres (ICC) out of fear, coercion to rejoin the newly rekindled conflict, or due to organizational decisions to relocate the children to safer areas of the country.

> Children at the ICC became targets for their past involvement in the war. NGOs and UN Agencies that provided services for the children were seen as collaborators and became targets. The children together with the staff that cared and protected them all lived in constant fear throughout the period immediately

following May 8 (UNICEF, 2000, p. 10).

Once again, services for child soldiers were unable to be provided at their intended

calibre due to the instability within Sierra Leone.

Peace was established in Sierra Leone in May 2001. An agreement between the

Civil Defence Forces and The Revolutionary United Front has allowed for UNAMSIL to

"guarantee the free movement of people and goods nationwide" (Integrated Regional

Information Network, May 16, 2001). While any establishment of peace is tenuous due

to the ongoing climate of instability, the agreement has provided for the release of 1 170

children from within the ranks of the RUF between May and July 2001 (Integrated

Regional Information Network, July 17 2001). The demobilized child soldiers were

handed over to interim care centres for rehabilitation.

Sadly, in February 2002 UNHCR and Save the Children UK jointly released a

Note for Implementing and Operational Partners on Sexual Violence and Exploitation:

The Experience of Refugee Children in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The report

indicated that refugee children had experienced sexual violence and exploitation by

humanitarian agency staff and others with the responsibility to support them during the

difficulties they had experienced due to conflict in the region. The note states that:

> the exchange of sex for money or gifts appears to be widespread and the majority
> of children consulted said they knew of at least on other child involved in such an
> exchange. The children themselves, whilst aware of the exploitative nature of the
> exchange, felt this was often the only option they had in order to receive food and
> other basic necessities and to pay for education. Parents were often aware of the
> exploitation but also felt that there were no other options for their family to secure
> a livelihood and whilst not approving it, generally turned a blind eye. In some
> cases, however, it was reported that parents encouraged their daughters to engage
> in such activities to bring an income into the family" (UNHCR and Save the
> Children UK, 2002, p.3).

Those primarily affected were girls between the ages of 13 and 18 and a few boys by older women "but there were no suggestions of boys being sexually exploited by men. This may have to do with the greater taboos surrounding homosexuality" (UNHCR and Save the Children UK, 2002, p. 3). The report indicates that most allegations involved male national staff of UN, NGO (international and local) and peacekeeping forces; with UN and NGO staff as the "most frequent exploiters of children, often using the very humanitarian aid and serves intended to benefit the refugee population as a tool of exploitation" (UNHCR and Save the Children UK, 2002, p.4).

The note does not indicate whether the children facing sexual violence and exploitation amongst the refugee populations included demobilized child soldiers. Nevertheless, the revelation that humanitarian aid workers had abused children in their care is important for the purpose of this thesis as it raises the need for appropriate training and when necessary, disciplinary action for those engaged in such acts. To subject child soldiers to additional sexual exploitation and violence after they have already faced incredible levels of trauma and exploitation during their time within the ranks, in particular by those responsible for their rehabilitation seems very problematic when the goal is reintegration. Seemingly, this would further diminish respect for and reduce trust in authority figures.

UNICEF and partners reported by August 2002 that 4826 of the 5037 demobilized girl and boy child ex-combatants who were registered in their programs had been reunified with their families and 2241 ex-child soldier were enrolled in formal education and 1036 girls and boys in various vocational training programmes (Integrated Regional Information Network, August 30, 2002). By the summer of 2003 approximately 7000

child soldiers (Integrated Regional Information Network, July 22, 2003) had participated

in the rehabilitation programming under the National Commission for Disarmament,

Demobilization and Rehabilitation programme with significant success achieved.

"Around 98 percent of former child fighters and separated children have returned to their

communities. Hundreds of villages had been strengthened with the resources to welcome

the children lost to war and to help them adjust to village life" (Integrated Regional

Information Network, July 22, 2003). On completion of the programme in 2004, 72 490

fighters had been disarmed, 71 043 had been demobilized including 6 845 child soldiers

(Integrated Regional Information Network, February 4, 2004). Despite the success

indicated by the numbers, there was a shortfall of 8945 known fighters that had registered

for reintegration but had not participated in the programme as they "settled for self

reintegration" or were disinterested in participating as they 'only fought to defend their

villages" (Integrated Regional Information Network, February 4, 2004).

The Child Protection Committees of Sierra Leone recognize the very critical

component of cultural/traditional ceremonies within rehabilitation programming in Sierra

Leone. In the support of the psychological recovery of children in distress, their third

strategy to assist demobilized child soldiers in rehabilitation and reintegration, they state:

> Activities should take into consideration the cultural and traditional practices and
> the socio-economic status of the people. The activities must be determined by the
> expressed needs of the children and their communities. Traditional and non-
> traditional interventions may be required to assist the child to return to the normal
> development path (Child Protection Committees of Sierra Leone, 1998, p. 6).

Such activities can be achieved in consultation with traditional and religious leaders,

secret societies and organizations, in aid of the psychological recovery of children due to

the traumas experienced during their time within the ranks.

CONCLUSION

As presented in chapter one, rehabilitation programming for demobilized child soldiers should aim to realize the rights of children as contained within the Convention on the Rights of the Child (and other international legislation ratified by states parties). To this end, programmatic attention should be given in a culturally-sensitive manner to psycho-social counselling, family reunification, education and skills training. Chapter three has illustrated that programming in all three case studies has included these components with a variety of different implementing agencies (both governmental and non-governmental). Chapter four will further analyze the reintegration of demobilized child soldiers based on the information presented above.

CHAPTER FOUR:

ANALYSIS OF REINTEGRATION

"Western notions of 'child' and 'childhood' need to be re-conceptualized in context; at best such notions are unhelpful, at worst, they are exclusionary. But the solution is not to simply embrace non-Western notions of childhood...Rather, we need to come to terms with the fact that in none of the countries and cultures we worked in were the more extreme actions that these girls and young women carried out part of the culture for children or adults...none of these action can be understood, addressed or remedied within a framework or context of 'childhood' or 'adulthood' (McKay and Mazurana, 2004, p. 119).

Chapters Two and Three have illustrated the extent to which children have been included within the conflicts in Mozambique, northern Uganda and Sierra Leone, and the efforts expended on their behalf for rehabilitation due to their inclusion within the ranks. Empirically, the data has illustrated the extent to which their participation in rehabilitation programs, emphasizing psycho-social counselling inclusive of culturally appropriate practices, family reunification, education and skills training has led to the reintegration of demobilized child soldiers. There exist a number of commonalities from the case studies in the experiences of the participant children that must be addressed relating to their reintegration. Additionally, specific issues within each case study have also surfaced from the research, to be addressed below. Thus, the following will serve to qualitatively analyse the data provided to this point in line with the goal of reintegrating demobilized child soldiers based on the principles of a child rights approach.

To begin, as stated in Chapter One formal peace treaties have not historically included specific mention of child soldiers. Chapter Three clarified that the Lome Agreement ensured that rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in Sierra Leone did included specific initiatives for child soldiers. However, the omission of child soldiers (both girls and boys) from peace treaties in other situations is important because without

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official recognition the allotment of funding and subsequent service provision on behalf of demobilized child soldiers is jeopardized. The resulting service provision for demobilized soldiers could overlook the specific needs of children and special care necessary to assist them during reintegration. While it has been shown that recognition has been given during these times leading to the separation of child soldiers from adult soldiers within demobilization and rehabilitation camps, more formality is necessary during the initial stages of the peace process for assistance specifically on behalf of child soldiers. The formal recognition of child soldiers and inclusion within peace treaties also bears significance in future claims of services rendered in countries under which mandatory conscription is employed.

A comparison can be made between programming for the reintegration of demobilized child soldiers with relief efforts following a natural disaster. As would be the case in disaster relief, the goal of rebuilding a community or nation in order to return to the status quo for its population has to be measured against the problems that existed prior to the disaster. If the goal of rehabilitation results in the population returning to poverty, structural violence or systemic violations of human rights, then rehabilitation is not desirable. Rather, a goal, with a long- term developmental aim would be more appropriate. Likewise, in the case of reintegrating child soldiers, programming aimed at returning children to 'normalcy' must assess what that normalcy is. If normalcy is a situation in which the rights of children are denied or abused, then the goal of reintegration is not desirable. From a child rights-based approach this assessment is made by evaluating the situation from the principle of 'best interest of the child'.

As has been shown earlier, children suffering under conditions of poverty are at a

higher risk of becoming involved in armed conflict. Thus, to return a child to conditions

of poverty without addressing those conditions or equipping them with the means to do

so, would be to place them in a situation that increases their risk of returning to the ranks,

whether through coercion or choice[6]. Education and skills training has been included

within rehabilitation programming on behalf of demobilized child soldiers for this reason.

As proposed in the case of Sierra Leone, under the Child Protection Committees of Sierra

Leone, effort has been made to assess that education and skills training which will

enhance the lives of those children for whom it is provided.

> Projects will adapt to local economic realities and will follow as much as possible
> the individual interest and potential of concerned...some attractive new
> technologies might not be sustainable due to cost or unavailability of raw
> materials, or due to the lack of market demand for that particular product.
> Preference must be given to traditional occupations related to local markets and
> socio-economic reality. Projects must encourage using local skills and techniques
> base on traditional and customary knowledge that may be improved with external
> support. Likewise, if vocational training programmes are launched, they should
> be based on market assessments (Child Protection Committees of Sierra Leone,
> 1998, p. 5).

While much has been said about education providing normalcy for children on

their return to social life outside of the ranks and its intended goals of betterment through

skills provision linked to employment, the participation of children in educational

programming can be seen as potentially dangerous for children in situations where

continued instability is occurring. As illustrated by Rubin (1998) in the context of

northern Uganda, the concentration of children in schools or living accommodations

associated with schools is a focal point for abduction or coercion by troops seeking child

recruits. Within the conflict in Mozambique schools were targeted in order to destabilize

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[6] The use of the term 'choice' is made in light of previous discussion regarding the weak
argument on behalf of children's voluntary participation within the ranks.

the lives of the population and prove the service provision by the Frelimo government to be ineffective, thereby placing children receiving educational services in harm's way. It becomes evident, then, that bringing children together in these types of settings without more security measures or until a better grasp of peace is achieved, is to the further detriment of lives of children and possibly places them in a setting conducive to abduction, or coercion leading to life within the ranks.

To address this, additional effort must be placed on providing security to educational facilities during conflict and declaring, as UNICEF has advocated 'schools as zones of peace'. Another option is to adopt informal education programs for children affected by armed conflict. Successful models, developed by UNICEF and UNESCO, have included the Edukit concept in which basic materials, curriculum guides and texts, and teacher training is included. Seeking alternative forums in which to provide such informal educational programming is a key consideration. "Establishing...changing venues regularly are possible solutions...children climbed a steep path to a classroom in a cave under the rock cliffs out of the range of shelling" (Machel, 2001, p. 94).

While the use of pre-packaged education kits in situations of armed conflict can be a useful measure to provide children education while affording some measures of security, it must be seen only as a temporary one. "Packaged emergency education programs appear to be a frequently used education intervention...while widely used, and appropriate for immediate response, practitioners caution against long-term use in lieu of developing culturally appropriate and more comprehensive education systems" (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2000, p. 7). The long-term use of such measures designed for short term implementation, could be seen as fostering

dependency on outside agents and systems which cannot address the specific nuances and cultural needs of any specific setting or context.

Quality of education provided during rehabilitation and reintegration and ensuring such temporary educational measures beyond the immediate needs of stability and direction toward learning also stand out as a challenge in providing education for former child soldiers. It becomes important for children receiving these educational substitutions that the curriculum is standardized with national bodies so that, on return to their home communities, they could be more readily re-integrated into educational programming there. In so doing, grade repetition and placement with children of considerable age difference can be avoided, thereby minimizing social stigma and increasing the value of the education provided.

The on-going needs and rights of demobilized child soldiers, following the completion of rehabilitation programming and subsequent family reunification and reintroduction to their home communities, remains a critical issue to be addressed. The provision of continued monitoring, support and evaluation for the former child soldiers, their families and community members with whom they are reintegrated following the original 'honeymoon' phase of the reunion is necessary to offset the delayed effects of participation within the ranks. The need for this can be illustrated in Sierra Leone where follow-up evaluation by UNICEF on rehabilitation programming revealed both positive results and that "22.2 percent rejoined the army or were considered street children" (UNICEF, 2000, p. 5). This continued support could be provided through traditional structures, formal governmental channels such as Departments of Social Work, and non-government organizations interested in participating in this additional phase of support in

reintegrating child soldiers. As has been illustrated in the case of Mozambique, following the formal establishment of peace, and completion of the mandatory service provision for demobilized child soldiers, support and assistance, regardless of the actual needs that remained, had dwindled off ignoring the long-lasting effects participating in armed conflict bears for those children included within the ranks. Therefore, rehabilitation programming on behalf of child soldiers must surpass the current duration and extend well into the reintegration aspect of their experience so as to address the longer term issues that arise after the original emotional responses to returning home. The actual duration should be determined for each individual child and based on the principle of 'best interest of the child'.

Continued or longer-term support for children following their reintegration back into society raises concern regarding the sustainability of programming. To reiterate, responsibility for rehabilitation programming on behalf of those children demobilised from within the ranks falls on the shoulders of the national governments, affirmed through their ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (in the context of the African case studies used in this thesis) and other relevant international agreements. While other well meaning agents, primarily those non-government organizations mentioned in chapter three, provide invaluable assistance, especially in cases where governmental response has been slow or minimal, the primary responsibility clearly lies with the government. Thus, mustering the necessary funding and support to make such programming sustainable is obligatory. While not a perfect[7] illustration of financial wherewithal to ensure the

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[7] The source of this information, UNICEF's State of the World's Children 2003, indicates that for all of

provision of programming by state means, the following figures compare expenditures on defence to education and health, between the years of 1992 - 2001. In Mozambique, 35% of central government expenditure was allocated to Defence compared to 10% on Education and 5% on Health; in Sierra Leone, 10% of the central government expenditure was allocated to Defence, 13% to Education and 10% to Health; with 26% of Uganda's central government expenditure allocated to Defence, 15% Education and 2% to Health (UNICEF, 2002, pp. 106 – 107).

In all three countries the amount spent on defence is equal to if not higher than the amount spent in either of the other two sectors, both of which relate to programming for demobilized child soldiers. In the case of Mozambique and Uganda, the percentage spent on defence is higher than the amount spent in both of the other two sectors combined. In light of the imperative that exists through commitments made to the rights of children the disparity between these allotments is significant. It raises the question as to whether or not there exists latitude in budget reallocation to more effectively realize the rights of children and in particular for the reintegration of demobilized child soldiers.

By way of implementation measures to insure sustainability through cost-effective means it is necessary to assess the structures and agents that exist within the community (i.e. traditional healers, teachers, etc.) who have been participants in rehabilitation programming, whether formally or informally, during the programming to present. "The temptation of creating a new parallel structure for psychosocial recovery of children is not financially or technically sustainable" (Child Protection Committee of Sierra Leone, 1998, p. 5). While it may be assumed that new structures need to be

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these figures 'data that refer to years or periods other than those specified in the column heading, differ from the standard definition or refer to only part of a country'.

developed, the reality may prove otherwise. With government support to those already active in service provision, the needs of the child soldiers can be met in a community sensitive and appropriate fashion while meeting the government's commitment to the rights of the children of their nation.

A question arises regarding requirements of mandatory service in the national army of any country, in which children have already served as soldiers, during armed conflict. The question has arisen specifically in the case of Mozambique, due to their mandatory service policy for all citizens. Given that some individuals have already served during childhood, will they still be required to serve again, despite the significant trauma experienced during their service in violation of their rights? The question remains for all situations where child soldiering has occurred in the context of mandatory service, regardless of Mozambique's specific resolution on this matter. The diversity of roles within the ranks must also be taken into consideration in answering this question, as who determines what a child soldier is, and whether their service constitutes fulfilment of the required mandate will have a significant effect on the lives of those young citizens.

In their study, "Where are the Girls?" (2004) McKay and Mazurana illustrate the extent to which girls have been involved within the ranks, and the implications of that involvement. The authors state "in revealing the militarization of the lives of girls in fighting forces and the roles they play, girls must first and foremost become visible to the international community. Yet little attention has been give to girls' active involvement and distinct experiences" (2004, p. 18). Their findings, based on research in Mozambique, Uganda and Sierra Leone, indicates that "governments conceal the use of girls in their own fighting forces, while highlighting their presence in opposition forces"

(p. 113).

Regarding the recognition of girls within DDR programming, McKay and

Mazurana (2004) make the following points:

> Numbers of girls within all fighting forces are routinely underestimated;
> Female captives are often unable to leave their male captors for a variety of
> security, economic and logistical reasons;
> Notions of childhood are defined by local legal and customary standards and
> practices and often do not parallel international legal definitions or th age-based
> restrictions used by some UN agencies or INGOs. Bias exists against women
> who enter or are abducted into the armed forces as girls, including the
> characterization of girls in fighting forces, because those staying past age 17 are
> often excluded from sampling. Another example is classifying girls who are
> married with babies as 'women'...;
> Having DDR processes planned and implemented by military officials has
> resulted in bias against those the military does not consider 'real soldiers (i.e.,
> men with guns). Requirement of a weapon for entry (or confusion about this
> requirement) discriminates against children in general and girls and young women
> in particular;
> Emphasis on attracting predominately armed males to areas to disarm and
> demobilize them exists at the cost of providing secure environments for women
> and girls in or associated with fighting forces. Poorly designed and crowded
> demobilization centres and ICCs present particular security risks for females;
> Material provision for girls within demobilization centres are not adequate
> especially regarding hygiene materials (including soap, shampoo, oil and
> materials for menstruation) and clothing;
> Operating child combatant programs under the larger umbrella of programs for
> 'separated children' has a number of benefits, including demilitarizing programs
> and reducing stigma and community anger over privileging one group of children
> over another. However, these programs can serve as a barrier to addressing the
> needs of children not thought to be separated from their families, such as those
> associated with local militias;
> Access to schooling in ways that encourage the community to accept ex-
> combatants into the schools and communities is essential. Mediation work among
> communities and teachers should be a central part of assisting children to
> reintegrate (pp. 114, 115).

In the many cases where girls 'fall through the cracks' of rehabilitation

programming (including their exclusion due to failed recognition of their roles within the

ranks), their relative invisibility, while highlighting the shortcomings of that

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programming, also highlights the informal mechanisms that girls/women must access to reintegrate into society. Given the informality of these mechanisms and the lack of attention paid to girl soldiers (beyond McKay and Mazurana's study) it is not possible to further explore this dimension of reintegration. While many boys also likely access informal mechanisms of reintegration, the numbers of girls that are absent from formal programming as illustrated by McKay and Mazurana, are significant and point to a difference based on gender.

Addressing the issue of child soldiers from a child rights perspective necessarily leads to the process of reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child by States parties as mandated within the Convention. The following summarizes the key points arising from the reporting process for each of the case studies employed herein, in particular focussing on the issue of child soldiers.

MOZAMBIQUE

The reporting system for the CRC includes more than just mandatory depositing of documents by States parties as referred to in earlier chapters. It also includes elective reporting by civil society organizations, appearances before the Committee for questioning, the opportunity for States parties to respond to these questions and finally Concluding Observations by the Committee. The initial report of Mozambique to the Committee, highlighting relevant points regarding child soldiers, has been reviewed in Chapter Three. Due to the significant lateness of the report, and seemingly in an effort to move the process on, the Committee's responses to the Initial Report by Mozambique

requests additional, specific information for years beyond the original reporting period. The Committee specifically requests data to be disaggregated by age, gender, minority groups, urban or rural areas in order to ensure reporting elucidates the experience of all children within the post-conflict context.

In particular, the Committee requested the following additionally information, not covered in the States Parties' initial report:

the amount and proportion of the national budget, devoted to children at central and local levels, preferably in the last three years (1999-2001) with regard to: education, health care, support to families and the protection of children who are in need of alternative care including the support of care institutions, with indication of the percentages of these allocations derived from international sources;
given the many ministries and other governmental bodies involved in the implementation of the Convention, please provide information on the coordination of the different efforts undertaken. Is there a single body with overall responsibility for coordination?;
Given the severe and widespread poverty among the population, and its impact on children's rights, please provide information on policies and measures to reduce poverty indicating how, and to what extent, children benefit from these initiatives;
Provide information on mechanisms for monitoring the Convention's implementation in the State party (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2001).

The Committee also provided Mozambique with a preliminary list of major issues intended for discussion during their appearance before the Committee. On this list were the issue of "refugee and internally displaced children, progress in family reunification and resettlement; children in armed conflict, progress in rehabilitating children affected by the armed conflict"; and other related issues for children affected by war or who had been involved within the ranks such as educational efforts, health care, and initiatives on behalf of children with disabilities (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2001).

In response to the Committee's list of issues, the Government of Mozambique clarified that the Ministry of Women and Coordination of Social Welfare (MMCAS)

coordinates and monitors the efforts of all the diverse actors related to implementing the Convention. Its main function is to: "define and promote the implementation of support and assistance programs oriented at children, which are based on the social welfare policy, and to coordinate the activities of stakeholders in the sphere of Social Welfare" (Government of Mozambique, 2002). The Ministry has seen an increase of its funding totalling 0.02% of the Budget in 2001 (Government of Mozambique, 2002). The Government of Mozambique stated that "poverty in our country is a widespread phenomenon that affects different age groups and not only children. One of the major purposes of the development policies is to improve the living standard of the whole population and the child is included as an integral part of a nuclear or extended family" (Government of Mozambique, 2002). This response, while clarifying the appropriate national authority responsible for children's rights and general efforts on behalf of children, falls short in its explanation of the broader points on child soldier rehabilitation mentioned in the Committee's issues.

No written documentation is held by the Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding Mozambique's response to the 'preliminary list of major issues', including "refugee and internally displaced children, progress in family reunification and resettlement; children in armed conflict, progress in rehabilitating children affected by the armed conflict". As previously indicated, this list was to be the basis of discussions at the subsequent appearance by representatives of the Government of Mozambique before the Committee. However, in the Committee's "Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Mozambique" (2002) some relevant points arise

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presumably reflecting the entire reporting process, including discussions held between representatives of the Government of Mozambique and the Committee. The Committee notes "the State party's tremendous progress in repatriating and rehabilitating the hundreds of thousands of persons displaced from their homes during the armed conflict and in de-mining" (2002, p. 2). The Committee also recognizes "the heavy economic and social burdened carried by the State party as a legacy of the civil war that ended in 1992" (2002, p. 2) has been an impeding factor in the implementation of the Convention.

The Committee specifically mentions concern, in relation to "special protection measures", including "former refugees and displaced persons, seeking to resettle in their communities do not always have full access to education and health services" (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2002, p. 19). The Committee recommended that the Government of Mozambique "make additional efforts to assist former refugees and internally displaced persons to resettle in their communities, including through assuring full access to education services, and continue and strengthen family reunification efforts" (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2002, p.19).

Regarding "children in armed conflict" the Committee stated their concern that "the needs of children formerly affected by the war continue to warrant special concern", recommending the continued "attention to the needs of children affected by war and end the re-conscription of children" and to "give particular attention to providing education and/or employment opportunities for adolescents and young people, in both urban and rural areas" (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2002, p. 20).

The conclusion of the Committee's 'considerations' (2002) re-enforces article four, paragraph six of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, "that the initial report

and written replies submitted by the State party be made widely available to the public at large and that consideration be given to publishing the report, along with the relevant summary records and concluding observations adopted thereon by the Committee" (p. 26). Pursuing this recommendation further reinforces a rights-based approach, by fostering more transparency while indicating the Government of Mozambique's attempt to fulfill its responsibility in realizing the rights of children.

UGANDA

In the Government of Uganda's Initial Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (1996) President Museveni is quoted as saying "as important as human rights is, even more important is the need to recognize and protect the special rights of children who are the most vulnerable members of our society" (Government of Uganda, 1996, p. 3). The report goes on to state, "although there is a lot yet to be done, the measures taken express a genuine concern for the well-being of children in Uganda" (Government of Uganda, 1996, p. 3).

Specific mention is made of non-government organizations (NGOs) providing services by the Government of Uganda within their report. "Government efforts to improve the situation of children have been augmented by the services of both national and international NGOs which have received government support and encouragement. There are many NGOs operation country-wide whose activities are highlighted under the specific articles. International NGOs and external support agencies have played a leading role alone and in partnership with the Government to initiate and support programmes

aimed at child survival, protection and development" (Government of Uganda, 1996, pp. 7, 8). This has been illustrated in an earlier chapter pertaining to service provision for children affected by war and in particular child soldiers during demobilization and rehabilitation.

As also mentioned in Chapter Three, the report gives very little attention to the conflict in the north or its affect on children, and in particular the use and reintegration of child soldiers post-involvement in the conflict. "Uganda is just recovering from the effects of the political and civil violence that rocked the country since the 1970s. Political instability and violence left the population impoverished and the social service delivery system totally shattered. In the northern region of Uganda, where there are still pockets of resistance and insurgency, the situation is even worse compared with other areas of the country which are now relatively stable" (Government of Uganda, 1996, p. 8).

In relation to Article 39, Protection from abuse and neglect, the report states: "there are many forms of abuse and neglect which take one or a combination of the following forms: physical abuse, sexual abuse including child marriage, emotional abuse, physical neglect, failure to provide necessities of life, abandonment etc." (Government of Uganda, 1996, p. 26). No mention is made of participation in armed conflict within this list or the need for physical and psychological service provision as a result. The Government of Uganda admits within the report that "there are no special examination and treatment centres for victims of abuse, especially sexual abuse" (1996, p. 27) which is vital during rehabilitation of child soldiers due to the significant level of trauma experienced during their time within the ranks, particularly so for girls.

Regarding Article 28 on Education including vocational training and guidance, the Government of Uganda clearly states their inadequacies in this regard. They highlight the uneven distribution and poor state of repair of schools; overcrowding in the classroom; the differences experienced between the rural and urban populations in access to education; poor working conditions for teachers; shortages of instructional materials; absence of libraries or infirmaries; and lack of supplementary reading materials (1996, p. 40). These conditions negatively impact children, in particular children living in rural areas of Uganda. These conditions possibly even contribute to child soldiering as education is seen both as a measure that prevents children from participating within the ranks and in their rehabilitation after demobilization. Having no, or limited education facilities that are overcrowded with poorly paid teacher and few resources would at best exclude some children and/or make them more likely to coercion or abduction into the ranks.

Relative to Articles 38 and 39 and the issue of armed conflict the report indicates the period from 1981-1986 as being particularly difficult for Ugandans including children, with involvement in the National Resistance Army (Government of Uganda, 1996, p. 46). It goes further to say "the involvement of children in armed conflict in Uganda was dictated by the circumstances of the day" and "the age of recruitment into the army is 18 years. Any recruitment below that age should only be with the consent of that person's parents or guardians or the District Administrator of the district in which the person resides. No person under the apparent age of 13 years shall be enrolled in the armed forces" (Government of Uganda, 1996, p. 47). By way of further explanation, the report states "the major problem that has to be overcome is to wipe out all forms of

insurgency in the north of the country. Children have sometimes fallen victim to this insurgency by being abducted and forced into rebel camps. Government takes special concern for these children. Those who escape or are rescued by government forces are immediately reunited with their parents/families. It is only when the insurgency is wiped out that the country will be able to regulate the recruitment of children" (Government of Uganda, 1996, p. 47).

The report also states that the "administrative reform currently being implemented is the decentralization policy. This policy has three main elements: parliamentary democracy; popular democracy; a decent level of living for every Ugandan. Decentralization is a policy instrument aimed at improving local democracy, accountability, efficiency, equity, effectiveness and sustainability in the provision of social services" (Government of Uganda 1996, p7). This statement begs the question, 'how effective has decentralization been in providing social services for demobilized child soldiers'? The report mentions a Children's Home in Kampala Naguru Reception Centre for abandoned children. The example does not illustrate decentralization and it is doubtful whether it illustrates effective provision of social services for those children affected by armed conflict, based solely on its location being in the capital, Kampala. Article 34, regarding sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, receives no mention in terms of exploitation during time spent by children within the ranks. The table included, indicating the relationship of "defiler to child" does not list military or other conflict-related personnel (Government of Uganda, 1996, p. 53). The absence of this information renders the understanding of the situation for both boys and girls relative to the issue of sexual exploitation incomplete, at best. Additionally, the Government partly defers its

responsibility to the "the community" to deal with "normalization of lives of abused children" (1996, p. 27), instead of recognizing their responsibility in providing for the psycho-social needs of these children. The reference to community does not even suggest appropriate authorities to whom responsibility can be assigned. This further indicates the Government's unwillingness to take any responsibility in this matter.

In its conclusion, the report indicates that "Uganda is on the threshold of a revolution in education and is committed to laying a sound foundation for education for all by promoting both formal and informal education" (Government of Uganda, 1996, p. 56). Further, it states that "the care and protection of children is recognized and Government has taken positive steps to raise their disadvantaged status", asserting that "the greatest constraint to realization of the rights of children is essentially lack of adequate resources" (1996, p. 56).

In the Committee's response to the Initial Report by Uganda, it questions whether "any cases have been reported of children who have been the victims of torture or other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment" and seeks information on "the measures taken and resources committed for implementing the provision of articles 37(a) and 39 of the Convention" (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 1997, p3). The Committee (1997) also queries the Government of Uganda on "what measures have been taken to provide for the physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of child victims of abuse, as set out in article 39" (p. 4); "to what extent is the Government's policy towards refugee and displaced children (is) consistent with the principles of non-discrimination, the best interest of the child" (p. 6); and an explanation of what "measures are envisaged to bring the law regarding recruitment into armed forces" (p. 6) into conformity with the

requirements of the Convention. Finally, the Committee asks for specifics regarding

paragraphs 270 - 279 of the report on any research undertaken to "improve the

knowledge on sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children" and "what measures have

been undertaken or are envisaged to prevent, combat and provide treatment against such

sexual abuse and exploitation, and to promote physical and psychological recovery and

social reintegration of victims" (p. 7).

As in the case of Mozambique, the list of issues provided by the Committee in

response to the Initial Report, do not require a written response, rather they provide the

basis for discussions during the Government of Uganda's appearance before the

Committee. Therefore, with no specific responses to the list, the Concluding

Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (1997c) will be relied on for an

overall sense of the outcomes of reporting, and thereby the state of the rights of children

within Uganda at this point in time.

From the outset of the Concluding Observations (1997c) the Committee states

their "satisfaction to the State party for having engaged in an open and constructive

dialogue with the Committee, and in particular, for the self-critical and frank approach

taken" (p. 1). The Committee "acknowledges that the severe political, economic and

social difficulties facing the State party have had a negative impact on the situation of

children. In particular, the Committee notes that poverty, armed conflict in the north, and

the HIV/AIDS pandemic have caused major difficulties" (p. 2). The Committee states

their concern regarding "limited human and financial capacity to collect and process data,

as well as to develop specific indicators to evaluate progress achieved and assess the

impact of policies adopted on children, in particular the most vulnerable groups of

children" (p. 3). This concern is linked to the Committees statement that "the principles

of the best interest of the child, respect for the views of the child, and the child's right to

participate in family, school and social life are incorporated fully in the Constitution and

the Children's Statute"; however, "they are not implemented in practice" (p. 3). The

Committee also clearly states their concern regarding "the persistence of discriminatory

attitudes against some groups of children, especially girls...and children living in rural

areas, which often results in limiting their access to basic social facilities such as health

and education" (p. 3).

Regarding children affected by the conflict, the Committee states their concern

"that the rules of international humanitarian law applicable to children in armed conflict

are being violated in the northern part of the State party, in contradiction to the provision

of Article 38 of the Convention. Furthermore, the Committee (1997c) is concerned about

the abduction, killings and torture of children occurring in this area of armed conflict and

the involvement of children as child soldiers" (p. 4). The difficulties of refugee and

displaced children in "securing access to basic education, health and social services"

(Committee on the Rights of the Child, 1997c, p.4) is also highlighted. The Committee

reinforces the specific obligation of the State as duty-bearer in promoting and protecting

the rights of children within situations of armed conflict. The report states its concern "at

the insufficiency of the measures taken by the State party for the physical and

psychological recovery and social reintegration of children victims of war and abuse and,

further, that the existing alternative care institutions lack material and financial resources

and specialized personnel" (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 1997c, p. 4).

Echoed by Stavrou, Stewart and Stavrou (from *Background Papers*, 2000), the

limitations of rehabilitation centres for children are of concern in a number of ways. One

such concern is the "lack of formal training that the counsellors have" (p. 15). They

recognize the effort and dedication of the staff at the rehabilitation centres. Nevertheless,

their "inability to recognize the symptoms of specific behaviours and make an accurate

diagnosis coupled with appropriate treatment" (Stavrou, Stewart and Stavrou, 2000, p.

15) limits effectiveness.

Another limitation of rehabilitation programming in northern Uganda presented

by Stavrou, Stewart and Stavrou relates to its religious content. "While the use of

religion in counselling and rehabilitation is a tried and tested method of dealing with

trauma survivors, there are question that must be raised when it is used in treatment of

children, particularly in African society" (Stavrou, Stewart and Stavrou, 2000, p. 15).

Their two specific concerns regarding religious content relate to an apparent absence of

choice on the part of the child regarding its inclusion within the counselling they are

receiving, and the potential disregard for cultural practices that are seen as being in

conflict with the religious (i.e. Christian) tradition orienting the rehabilitation

programming. Both of these points are problematic from a child rights perspective the

first in its lack by 'participation' of those for whom the programming is aimed, and the

second in its potential for disregarding the cultural/religious heritage of the children

involved, in violation of Article 30 of the CRC.

Stavrou, Stewart and Stavrou note one more point of significance related to the

limitations of rehabilitation programming in northern Uganda. Capacity, in the face of

limited resources, affects the programming offered. "While there is selected counselling

and support aimed at the child, at parents, and sometimes at community leaders, the

community at large are not educated about the needs of the returning children. Given that

the wider community is less likely to accept the children back as readily as the family,

this is an important gap that has to be addressed if successful reintegration is the ultimate

goal. This is, however, not only the responsibility of the NGO sector, but should also be

shouldered by government" (Stavrou, Stewart and Stavrou, 2000, p.14).

The Committee (1997c) recommends that greater efforts be made to ensure that

the Convention is known and understood by both adults and children, particularly in rural

areas; budget allocations be made for the realization of economic, social and cultural

rights with emphasis on health and education receive priority; and discrimination in all its

forms be combated (p. 5). The Committee also recommends,

> that awareness of the duty to fully respect the rules of international humanitarian
> law, in the spirit of Article 38 of the Convention, inter alia with regard to children,
> should be made known to all the parties of the armed conflict in the northern part
> of the State party's territory and that violations of the rules of international
> humanitarian law entail responsibility being attributed to the perpetrators.
> Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the State party take measures to
> stop the killing and abduction of children and the use of children as child soldiers
> in the area of the armed conflict (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 1997c, p.
> 5).

Finally, as in their recommendations to the Government of Mozambique, the

Committee (1997c) reinforced transparency of the reporting process by encouraging the

Government to make the Initial Report and written replies widely available to the public

(p. 6).

SIERRA LEONE

The Initial Report of Sierra Leone to the Committee on the Rights of the Child

(1996) clearly states the impact the war had on children and families in Sierra Leone.

"The war has dislocated the economic and social structures resulting in adverse effects on family income, seriously affecting the quantity and quality of care for children...The war has further damaged infrastructure, disrupted social structures, increased incidence of diseases and malnutrition and disrupted the educational system" (pp. 4, 5). Regarding 'militarization', as previously stated in Chapter three, the report states:

> Section 16(2) of the Royal Sierra Leone Military Forces Act 1961 provides for the voluntary enlistment into the armed forces: "A recruiting officer shall not enlist a person under the apparent age of seventeen and a half years unless consent to the enlistment has been given in writing by his parents or guardians or where the parents or guardians are dead or unknown, by the District Commissioner or an Assistant District Commissioner of the District in which such person resides or if he resides in an area where there is no District Commissioner, the Director of Social Development".
> There is no minimum age requirement for conscription into the armed forces in the national legislation except the provision of the Geneva Convention that children below the age of 15 years should not be conscripted into the army. Sierra Leone is at present faced with a rebel war and an unfortunate aspect is the conscription of school children some of whom are less than 15 years old, by the rebel forces (Government of Sierra Leone, 1996, pp. 8, 9).

The policy to allow for the 'voluntary participation' of those under 18 stands at odds with the Optional Protocol, and does not go far enough, even with the provisions of parental/guardian consent. The inclusion of administrative authorities, outside of the family unit, also appears problematic in situations where those authorities are not using the 'best interest of the child' as a guiding principle in their decision making. Further, the existence of 'conscription', even with guidance provided by the Geneva Convention, is problematic and does not give due consideration to children's rights as illustrated in earlier chapters.

Addressing the issue of child soldiers, the report goes on to explain, "the NPRC Government ordered the demobilization of all child combatants...In collaboration with

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international agencies, notably UNICEF, Government and NGOs have established programmes to cater for the needs of the children affected by the war. Reception and rehabilitation centres have been set up for the initial assessment and reintegration of the demobilized child soldiers, before their eventual placement into appropriate programmes" (Government of Sierra Leone, 1996, p. 18).

Regarding education in general, the Government of Sierra Leone (1996) mandates that "basic formal education should be nine years. It should be compulsory" and "formal education should be broad based with practical programmes that lead to skills acquisition" (p. 18). The report also presents the Government's peace education curriculum that is intended for introduction within "all schools and child care institutions" (Government of Sierra Leone, 1996, p. 20).

Following due process, the Committee responded to the Initial Report of Sierra Leone, by listing the issues to be further clarified during government representatives' appearance before the Committee. The list of issues included disaggregating of data for all children, including the most vulnerable populations; proportion of the national budget allotted to social expenditures, i.e. health and education; information regarding protective measures against the sexual abuse of boys; information and programming for the prevention of ill-treatment of children, and for the treatment, psychological recovery and social reintegration of abused children (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 1997b). Regarding children affected by the armed conflict, or more specifically, child soldiers, the Committee requested the following additional information: indication regarding "the measures taken or foreseen to specifically define a minimum legal age for conscription into the armed forces in the national legislation"; indication of the "measures taken to

ensure that children separated by parents as a consequence of armed conflict be reunited with their families"; the extent to which non-discrimination is applied to the Government's policy for refugee and displaced children; "up-dated information on the demobilization of child soldiers by the authorities and also assessment of the success and limits of such programmes"; and, "the measures undertaken or foreseen to rehabilitate children affected by the armed conflict, in light of Article 39 of the Convention" (Committee on the Rights of the Child,1997b).

In the Committee's Concluding Observations they clearly recognize the State party's efforts to "fulfill its reporting obligations under the Convention in spite of the internal armed conflict", commending them for their "excellent cooperation with national NGOs and progress in disseminating the provision and principles of the Convention" (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2000, p. 2). However, they also express

> deep consternation at the very high numbers of children who have been forcibly recruited into the armed forces, including children as young as five years old, and who have often been forced to commit atrocities against other people, including other children and members of their community. The Committee expresses its great concern at the horrifying amputation of hands, arms and legs, and at the many other atrocities and acts of violence and cruelty committed by armed persons against children, including in some cases, against very young children...and is concerned at the tragic loss of life and severe psychological trauma inflicted upon them...by the very high number of children who have been internally displaced within the country or who have been forced to leave as refugees including, in particular those who have been separated from their parents (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2000, p. 11).

The Committee (2000) also indicate their concern regarding the indirect effects of the conflict: "the destruction of education and health infrastructures, of water collection, purification and distribution systems, of the national economy, of agricultural production, of communication infrastructure - all of which have contributed to a massive and continuing violation for a majority of children in the State party of many of the rights

provided for in the Convention" (p. 11).

And by way of response, the Committee made specific recommendations to the Government of Sierra Leone in these matters. The Committee urged the Government to "take every feasible measure to have all child abductees and combatants released and demobilized and to rehabilitate and reintegrate them in society...establish and strictly enforce legislation prohibiting the future recruitment, by any armed force or group, of children under the age of 18" and " to take all necessary measure in cooperation with national and international NGOs and United Nations bodies, such as UNICEF, to address the physical needs of children victims of the armed conflict, in particular child amputees, and the psychological needs of all children affected directly or indirectly by the traumatic experience of the war...that the State party develop as quickly as possible a long-term and comprehensive programme of assistance, rehabilitation and reintegration" (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2000, pp. 11, 12).

Additionally, the "Committee welcomes the State party's announcement of its intention to pass legislation raising the minimum age of recruitment to 18, and urges the State party to move quickly toward this goal and to ensure that the new legislation is enforced" (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2000, p.5). The Committee recognizes the correlation between HIV/AIDS, disability, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, sexual exploitation and abuse and the armed conflict. They encourage continued measures of protection against these violations of children's rights and effective programming to address their occurrence. Finally, the Committee (2000) recommends the initial report and written replies be made available to "the public at large" (p. 14), furthering transparency and recognition of the Government's

responsibility to its citizens.

CONCLUSION

Taking all of the above issues into consideration, including the empirical data

from chapter three, the following conclusions can be made.

In the case of Mozambique, while the violation of the rights of children through

the inclusion and abusive treatment within the ranks occurred on a wide scale, it appears

that extensive effort has been expended on their behalf during the armed conflict, even

prior to the formal recognition of children's rights in ratifying the Convention on the

Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child by the

Government of Mozambique, in addition to programming following the establishment of

peace. This programming has contributed to the reintegration of child soldiers due to its

inclusion of culturally sensitive psycho-social treatment, family reunification, education

and skills training, through collaboration both with government and non-government

organizations.

In the case of Sierra Leone programming was provided for child soldiers that

included the essential components to achieve reintegration by government and non-

government organizations recognizing their commitment to children's rights. However,

reintegration was hampered during the continued climate of instability until peace was

established and maintained. Reintegration of demobilized child soldiers achieved success

after establishing peace and the issue of child soldiering received critical political

attention including specific provision for child soldiers in the Lome Agreement. Prior to

this, empirical evidence points to limits in the successes achieved due to the re-involvement of children within the ranks during fresh outbreaks of violence or as a result incomplete rehabilitation programming (UNICEF, 2000, p. 5). The conclusion that can be made here, points to the necessary increase in security for children during rehabilitation programming and education as called for by UNICEF in declaring children and schools in particular as 'zones of peace'.

Finally, in the case of Uganda, the government has ratified international instruments affirming their commitment to children's rights, however, the bulk of the programming, implementation and support for demobilized child soldiers has been carried out by non-government organizations. In the reporting process to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Government of Uganda's words read in many cases, like a list of excuses for their inadequacy in promoting and protecting children's rights. The success achieved in reintegrating demobilized child soldiers has occurred to the credit of the non-government organizations there. Non-government organizations have lacked formal participation of the government in a concerted effort on behalf of those children still within the ranks, those demobilized and in need of rehabilitation and by the Government's general neglect of the situation in the north. Should this situation continue the future for children in Uganda seems problematic at best with their rights yet to be realized.

While adherence to the reporting process of the Committee on the Rights of the Child has occurred in each of the cases discussed, significant questions arise as to the value the Convention holds amidst situations of armed conflict and in particular regarding the issue of child soldiering. Mozambique, Uganda and Sierra Leone have all ratified the

Convention on the Rights of the Child, and a variety of other relevant international conventions (although ratification of other conventions varies between these countries) recognizing the rights of children. In all three countries child soldiers have been documented in national armies, paramilitaries and/or rebel groups. Their rights have been significantly violated not just by inclusion within the ranks, but additionally through the subsequent issues absent or inadequately addressed during rehabilitation after conflict (particularly for girls), such as a lack of education, adequate health care and sexual exploitation. Violations have still occurred despite the lever provided by the reporting process for the international community and civil society organizations (through the alternative reporting measures accepted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child) to hold States parties accountable for the protection and promotion of children's rights.

Perhaps, the development of a complaints mechanism in situations of a serious nature where children's rights are violated, like those described during the armed conflicts in Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Uganda, may go much further in providing 'teeth' to the Convention, acting as a deterrent for States parties and other actors prior to enlisting/abducting children into the ranks. The very fact that an Optional Protocol has been created and entered into force attempting to strengthen the recognition that children should not be included within the ranks, indicates part of the contribution a rights-based approach has given to this issue. The inclusion of 'the recruitment of children into the ranks' as a crime by the Special Court of Sierra Leone moves toward a possible stronger deterrent and recognition of children's rights within the context of war.

The reporting mechanism under the Convention on the Rights of the Child is back-logged. Rights-abuses have occurred despite the reporting mechanism and

involvement of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Recommendations by the Committee on the Rights of the Child can be seen as quite soft in addressing violations or negligence of States Parties to realize the rights of children in situations of serious concern such as the on-going conflict in northern Uganda. It is easy to see that there are flaws in the system especially at a time when the United Nations is assessing the direction it should take on human rights more generally. However, for all of these limitations the reporting mechanism does provide the opportunity for the voice of civil society to be heard through alternative reporting. Alternative reporting can, and has, raised awareness of the situation on the ground for children who are facing the violation of their rights allowing for international pressure on governments to address these situations more appropriately.

In the best case scenario a child-rights approach can guide a government in meeting its obligation to children as citizens who are guaranteed specific provisions as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child realized through the principles of participation, non-discrimination and best interest of the child. The Convention will guide a government to create appropriate structures and reporting mechanisms while engaging both children and civil society at large. In the worst case scenario children's rights can simply echo empty rhetoric that governments' express regarding their commitments under other human rights legislation. A child-rights approach to the issue of child soldering can, and has, motivated civil society and/or other governments to hold negligent/violating governments to account and provided children with appropriate rehabilitation measures to reintegrate them into society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are suggested based on the research and analysis provided within this thesis. The recommendations are divided into two parts, in line with the findings of this thesis regarding both rehabilitation programming and a child rights approach to the issue of child soldiers.

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS:

- Universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and the ILO's Convention 182 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention: Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour;
- Ratification by all African states of the African Union's African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;
- Procedural compliance with the mandates of these commitments including the establishment of appropriate authorities within government to ensure effective implementation, monitoring and reporting supported by human and financial resources;
- Support, financially and/at minimum through the creation of a supportive environment for civil society organizations' efforts to realize the rights of child soldiers in rehabilitation programming;
- Development of an individual complaints mechanism and functional commission for children within the UN System or enhance the mandate and responsibilities of the present Committee on the Rights of the Child to receive and hear cases in which the rights of children have been violated. This mechanism would be engaged when all domestic mechanisms had been exhausted.

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING REHABILITATIVE PROGRAMMING FOR DEMOBILIZED CHILD SOLDIERS:
- All rehabilitation programming to be guided by principles of the CRC: non-discrimination, survival and development, participation and best interest of the child;
- Provision of staff training relevant for their tasks including gender awareness and child protection from exploitation (including sexual exploitation and violence);
- Ensure that programming for child soldiers includes:

- o Collaboration between implementing agencies with government providing support through the appropriate child rights authority as indicated above;
- o The key components of psycho-social counseling (with culturally appropriate modalities); education (that is inclusive, safe from harm including further abduction and legitimate in the child's country of origin); skills training leading to employment; and family reunification;
- o Equal benefit for both girls and boys from the programming provided;
- o Inclusion of community members with the aim to develop linkages for the returning child soldiers and build awareness of and sensitivity to the issues they face.

- Ensure that the duration of rehabilitation programming for child soldiers is appropriate to the needs of the individual.

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