UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

FACULTY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

M.A. PROJECT PAPER

TOPIC: "FACTORS THAT DETERMINE THE REINTEGRATION OF FORMER CHILD COMBATANTS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: A STUDY OF SOUTH KIVU PROVINCE"

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REG. NO: C/50/P/8687/99

A PROJECT PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMETS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN SOCIOLOGY (ENTERPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT)

NOVEMBER 2008

DECLARATION

This project paper is my original work and has never been presented for a degree award in any other University.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BUNADER	*Bureau National de Demobilization et Reintegration* (National Bureau for Demobilization and Reintegration)
CONADER	*Commission Nationale de Demobilization and Reintegration* (National Commission for Demobilization and Reintegration)
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
MONUC	*Mission des Nations Unies au Congo* (United Nations Mission in Congo)
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Funds

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was marred by armed conflicts for eight years. In 1996, the *Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo* (Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo – AFDL) led by Laurent Desire Kabila declared war on the Mobutu regime. In May 1997, the AFDL, with the support of Rwanda, Uganda and Angola advanced towards Kinshasa the Capital city where Laurent Kabila declared himself the President of the Republic (McCalpin, 2002: 46-47).

In August 1998, another armed conflict started. Uganda and Rwanda sent their troops to the eastern part of DRC in order to fight their respective armed groups based in the Congo. The crisis triggered the formation of regional coalitions. On the one hand, a number of Congolese armed groups fought along side Rwandan, Burundian and Ugandan forces. On the other hand, the Congolese Government invited armed forces from Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola and Chad.

The main parties involved in the war signed various peace agreements to bring an end to the armed conflict. These include the Lusaka Cease Fire Agreement (July 1999), Pretoria Peace Agreement (July 2002), Luanda Peace Agreement (September 2002), and Global and Inclusive Accord (Pretoria – Sun City December 2003). One of the pillars of the peace process is the Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement (DDRRR) of the

non-Congolese armed groups. Another pillar is the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of Congolese ex-combatants (ICG, 2001:1). The inclusion of DDR is a common feature in various security provisions of peace agreements in post-war countries. Countries recovering from war are pressed by security and resources considerations to downsize armed forces, manage and control former elements of militia groups, and assist redundant combatants to reintegrate into civilian life. Effective DDR programs become a key element in restoring peace and security to post-conflict countries (Meek & Malan, 2004:5) and a *sine qua non* condition for long-term peace and stability (Dzinesa, 2006:1).

While security considerations supersede any other factor in planning and implementing a DDR program for adult combatants, a human rights approach is used to press parties to the conflict to release child combatants as a matter of priority (United Nations, Security Council, 2004:5a). Recruiting and using children under 18 years in armed conflicts violates international human rights standards and jeopardizes the future of the children involved in fighting forces (UN, 2000: 1). There were about 30,000 child combatants in the DRC (IRIN, 2006: 2) in January 2006 and all parties to the armed conflict in DRC recruited and used children during the war. The UN estimated in 2001 that 60 per cent of newly-trained soldiers in the *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie* (RCD)-Goma military camp were under 18 years. RCD-Goma signed an action plan with UNICEF in December 2001 to demobilize up to 2,600 child soldiers (Amnesty International, 2003: 20-24). In 2003, armed political groups operating in Eastern

DRC continued to recruit child soldiers who constitute more than 40 per cent of their forces in some instances (Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2004:51).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

UN agencies, international and Congolese NGOs have been involved in activities aiming at demobilizing young combatants and assisting them to rebuild their lives outside the army. After ex-combatants have been demobilized, their effective and sustainable reintegration into civilian life is necessary to prevent a new escalation of the conflict (Fusato, 2003: 5).

The reintegration of former child combatants was part of the DDR program since 2001, when the Government of DRC established the National Bureau for Demobilization and Reinsertion (BUNADER). This was expanded in December 2003 when a presidential decree established new DDR structures including an Inter-ministerial Committee charged with the conception and orientation of DDR, a National Commission of Demobilization and Reintegration (CONADER) charged with the coordination and implementation of the national DDR program, and a Committee on Funding for Demobilization and Reintegration (CGFDR) that mobilize and supervise the financial resources (Schroeder, 2005:9).

In its resolution 1291 of 2000, the UN Security Council created the Mission of United Nations in Congo (MONUC) and tasked it with, among other mandates,

the disarmament, demobilization, resettlement and reintegration of all members of all armed groups, and the withdrawal of all foreign forces from DRC. The Security Council resolution 1493 of 28 July 2003 authorizes MONUC to assist the Government of National Unity in disarming and demobilizing those Congolese combatants who may voluntarily decide to enter the DDR process (United Nations, Security Council, 2003: 17).

Despite the formal commitment expressed by the Government of DRC and various armed groups to disarming and reintegrating child combatants, success was limited. Demobilized child soldiers were re-recruited by armed groups in some areas. The UNITED National Office of the Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) reported that BUNADER demobilized 900 children in 2004. However, due to lack of financial means, demobilized child soldiers have been re-recruited by armed groups who then try to place them beyond the reach of any program aimed at their demobilization and reintegration (IRIN, 2004:1).

In some cases, fighters who had grouped ready for demobilization, including one thousand *MAI-Mai* combatants, returned to the forest in January 2004, when it became apparent that nothing was in place to assist them. Many demobilization exercises were undermined by lack of armed groups' commitment to the process, poor preparation and coordination, and lack of resources (Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2004:54).

Amnesty International (2003: 15) notes that children who manage to escape the brutality of the army or who are officially demobilized face many challenges in their attempts to reintegrate into civilian life. Without the support of their families and communities, and with limited employment prospects, many of these former *Kadogos*[1] become homeless street-children. Some may become embroiled in crime, others may conclude that their only option is to go back to the army. This represents a disastrous failure of the demobilization process (Amnesty International, 2003:43), which does not help the country solve its security problems, or offer former combatants alternatives to fighting.

Some researchers attribute the failure of reintegration programs to the complexity and high cost of the process itself. As an International Peace Academy (2002:19) report noted, "reintegration of ex-combatants, which is arguably the most difficult component of the process commonly referred to as DDR, also has the most far-reaching impact on the prospects for a sustainable peace". Others such as Fusato (2003: 1) discuss DDR goals as interrelated elements of the process: the immediate goal of restoring security and stability (trough Disarmament and Demobilization), and the long-term goal of sustaining social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants in post-war country. However, little attention has been paid to various "factors that can influence the former child combatant's acceptance and reintegration" (Peters et al, 2003:20).

[1] Kadogo, little or young in Swahili, is the term used to call child soldier.

As Alusala (2004: 1) argues, a successful DDR program, particularly of Congolese armed groups, would be a pillar of sustained peace in Central Africa. Effective DDR is a central element of long-term peacebuilding and conflict prevention, yet the full reintegration of former combatants remains incomplete in many countries emerging from conflicts.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

The broad objective of this study is to understand the factors determining the effectiveness of social and economic reintegration of former child soldier into their communities. More specifically, the study addresses DDR from a sociological perspective in order to:

1. Examine the link between de-skilling child combatants from military life and their re-socialization process into a new civilian life;
2. Analyze the social and economic components of the reintegration process;
3. Investigate the living conditions of former combatants who have been disarmed and demobilized in the Eastern DRC;

1.4. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study will focus on factors that determine reintegration of former child combatants in the South Kivu province of Eastern DRC. DDR programs were implemented throughout Eastern DRC, more specifically in war-torn provinces of South Kivu, North Kivu, Oriental Province, Maniema and Katanga.

The choice of South Kivu province is dictated by time and financial constraints, and accessibility reasons. Generalizations of the study findings will be limited to reintegration of former child combatants in South Kivu province.

CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY

According to Singleton et al. (1988:475), "the literature review must make clear the theoretical context of the problem under investigation and how it has been studied by others". This chapter will review both the empirical and theoretical literature on the reintegration of former child combatants into their communities in order to identify research gaps and inform the questions this research will attempt to answer.

2.1 REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

2.1.1 Approaches to Reintegrating former Child Combatants

Reintegration programs are assistance measures provided to former combatants that would increase the potential for their and their families' economic and social reintegration into civil society. Reintegration programs could include cash assistance or compensation in kind, as well as vocational training and income generating activities (United Nations, 1999:15). Taking a child-combatant's perspective, Singer (2005:123) defines reintegration as "the final stage in the process of attempting to return childhood to young children. The step involves introducing the child back into their home or community, so they can rejoin society on positive terms". One of the main issues in the reintegration debates is whether assistance should focus only on children who took up arms, or be extended to other children in the larger community.

Scholars and humanitarian agencies interested in the situation of children associated with armed forces or groups are moving away from a child-combatant-centered approach of reintegration to a community-based

reintegration approach (Bragg, 2006; Gleichmann et al, 2004; Machel, 1996; Singer, 2005; United Nations, 1999; UNICEF, 1997; USAID, 2005; Verhey, 2003). The child combatant centered approach referred to as traditional reintegration programming aims at providing ex-combatants with skills and livelihood training. Verhey (2003:18) recognizes the danger of the traditional reintegration approach and argues that preferential treatment of at risk children could even incite inter-communal conflicts, stigmatize child soldiers and indirectly give incentives to joining armed forces. Bragg (2006:4) holds the same view and argues that although targeted opportunities may be appropriate in the short-term during disarmament and demobilization, a non-targeted community-based model of reintegration and rehabilitation will have the most success with reference to long-term reconciliation and security. Contrary to the traditional approach, the Community Focused Reintegration (CFR) acknowledges the greater breadth of vulnerable war-affected population segments in need of such training, while seeking to promote reintegration by creating a safe environment in which elements of divided communities could interact (USAID, 2005:5).

The debate on traditional integration approach versus community-based reintegration focuses on the beneficiaries of post-war opportunities. Community-based approach is promoted to facilitate acceptance of former child combatants in their communities. Main donor organizations have used this approach in African countries including in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Liberia (USAID, 2005: 5). However, anecdotal evidence suggests that

reintegration through war-affected communities is not always effective. A UNCEF assessment team interviewed children demobilized in 2005 and 2006 in Southern Sudan to understand their personal stories of reintegration. It was found that in many circumstances reintegration had not gone well. The majority of children and youth are living in poverty without adequate food, access to education, clean water, and health services; they are waiting for help and threaten to return to the barracks where they at least had food security (UNICEF, 2008:10). This research shares the view that "there is need for more internal discussion and research on the individual outcomes of programming based on culturally grounded but romantic ideals [of community-based reintegration] that may be blind to important social strains and tensions" (Stovel, 2006: 156) in war affected communities.

Other scholars have focused on the type of activities that facilitate reintegration of former child soldiers. The dominant view in reintegration research tends to stress socio-economic reintegration of ex-child soldiers as economic reasons are often reported as the main motive for children to be recruited into fighting forces. Interviews with child soldiers from three of the Central African countries (Congo, DRC and Rwanda) revealed that the largest group – 34 percent - joined military for economic reasons, while only 21 percent indicated ideological reasons as the main driver (Andvig & Gates, 2006:12).

Researchers at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre promote the reintegration of former combatants into economy through micro-enterprise or small and medium size enterprise (SME) development. They argue that micro-enterprise provides an opportunity for income generation (a) to those who cannot find wage-employment which would provide a livelihood, and are thus forced into self-employment, and (b) to those with genuine entrepreneurship aspirations to run their own businesses. In addition, as micro-enterprises grow and expand, they generate additional jobs for others in the community (Body, 2005:11). Proponents of the economic approach advocate for the need to invest in ex-child combatants through formal education or vocational training (Gleichmann et al, 2004: 82). United Nations (1999:80) in their guidelines on economic reintegration encourage vocational training based on the rationale that in the prevailing tight labour market/environment, provision of training should be aimed at enhancing the self-employment capacity of the ex-combatant.

Quoting Cohen, Kemper (2005:24) argues that the economic approach views youth as decision-makers on the market place. They respond to supply and demand in a rational pursuit of interest. She also holds the view that without employment, young people cannot contribute to their families' welfare, which constitutes an important development towards adulthood in most countries. Increasing the education, training, and job opportunities would reduce the young people's propensity for joining the army (Kemper, 2005: 28).

Kemper's study on *Youth in War-To-Peace Transitions* advocates for a holistic approach to reintegration: a right-based approach in the framework of the Convention on the Right of the Child, an economic approach that views youth through the lens of monetary decision-making during war and a socio-political approach that examines youth vis-à-vis its relationship to civil society (Kemper, 2005:5). She argues that the strengths of the right-based approach lies with the preventive phase, the advocacy function and the strengthening of community responsibility in handling former combatants. The economic approach, on the other hand, is more effective in the short-term, because it can deliver immediate results and lure them away from armed forces. The socio-political approach fosters long term reconciliation by countering the marginalization of young people through their reintegration into the societal structures (Kemper, 2005:4).

This study argues that the challenge for any reintegration effort is whether opportunities offered to former child combatants take into account "children's expectations about their welfare after joining armed forces or groups (Andvig & Gates, 2006:14). As Peters et al. (2003:34-35) argue, marginalized from political participation, excluded from educational and economic development, youth are provided with a semblance of social integration and status when they join an armed group. Thus, militias are an opportunity to escape further alienation and become part of process that rejects the current institutional order and society. This study holds the view that to be effective, opportunities offered to former child

combatants by reintegrating institutions should not be less attractive than what was offered to young people in military life.

2.1. 2 Challenges in Reintegrating former Girl Combatants

Other researchers have focused on the reintegration of women or girls associated with fighting forces (Veale 2003; McKay and Mazurana, 2004; Denov, 2006).

Veale (2003:8) examines gender issues in armed groups, demobilization and reintegration by stressing the physical and sexual vulnerability of females, particularly girls, in conflict zones. She shares De Watteville's view that "it is often not possible for women to return to their communities of origin, particularly if they have children or have been repeatedly sexually abused and stigmatized (Veale, 2003:9). Women also face different challenges to men in economic reintegration because of lack of education, training, skills, and lack of access to credit and childcare facilities. Many female ex-combatants prefer to resettle in cities rather than to return to rural communities of origin as the socialization they have experienced as part of military unit makes it difficult for them to accept to return to traditional gender roles in a rural community (Veale, 2003:10). Girls in Angola, Sierra Leone and Northern Uganda reported that their former status as ex-combatants had put them at risk of social stigmatization and community

ostracism, and thus had impeded their own efforts and those of supportive civil society institutions, to reintegrate them, into their communities (Denov, 2006:21).

According to Brkic (2006:2) girls associated with armed forces have difficulties reintegrating into their communities after the conflict. They fear the discrimination that they and their children will face once they return to their communities of origin. Their harsh experiences during the war distance them from the community, while community members fear that the fighters that abducted girls may return to reclaim them and revenge on people welcoming them back.

Veale (2003:63) studied a small sample of Ethiopian women, tracing their movement from a time when they were children, through their entry to fighting forces, and the impact that the militarization and politicization they experience in that setting has on their lives. She concluded that "women who enter a militarized social-relational world as children, as in the experience of many females in armed conflict contexts, experience their entire socialization within the norms and values of that military context, and their constructions of what it means to be 'female' are shaped by that socialization experience. On demobilization and reintegration, they confront a different world, where those constructions may no longer apply or be relevant. The socialization experience may have been empowering, as reported by women in this study, or oppressive and enslaving, as it is common in other conflict contexts (Veale, 2003:64).

War-affected communities have resorted to traditional healing mechanisms to prevent social exclusion of former female combatants. Mc Kay and Mazurana (2004) quoted by Denov (2006:22) argue that "despite the social exclusion that many girls faced in the aftermath of the conflict, two important factors appeared to contribute to their community reintegration including purification ceremonies and rituals, as well as the development of peer-support structures and solidarity. Community rituals - some of which are gender-specific- may combine prayer, song and dance and may be conducted by religious or traditional leaders, and healers. Given the communities and families in traditional societies may experience shame because they failed to protect their girls during the war, spiritual and religious rituals may be important for the community as well as the girls themselves". This study is of the opinion that effectiveness of such psychosocial reintegration measures would also depend on the communities' perceptions on ex-female combatants.

The above available research has not adequately addressed the question of factors that determine the effectiveness of reintegrating former child combatants into their society. This study will attempt to address this gap.

2.2 REVIEW OF THEORETICAL LITERATURE

2.2.1 Social System Theory

According to Parsons (1951:5-6), "a social system consists in a plurality of individual actors interacting with each other in a situation which has at least a

physical or environmental aspect, actors who are motivated in terms of a tendency to the "optimization" and whose relation to their situations, including each other, is defined and mediated in terms of a system of culturally structured and shared symbols". However, the concept is not limited to interpersonal interaction, and refers also to the analysis of groups, institutions, societies and inter-social entities ... which have structures of interrelated parts (Abercrombie et al, 2000: 327).

Former child combatants are reintegrated into post-war communities through administrative entities such as DDR commissions considered as social systems. As such, these administrative entities must successfully perform four basic social functions as identified by Parsons: The first involved adaptation (A) to the external or natural environment from which scarce resources derive, or put more simply, the economic function. No reintegration of former child combatants is possible if DDR commissions and other agencies are unable to mobilize resources required to that effect. The second function is goal attainment (G), meaning the political utilization of resources to meet particular ends. The third function of integration (I) refers to the achievement of legitimate rules or norms to regulate the entire system, reflected, for example, in law. One of the issue here is the DDR Commission and other agencies' capacity to enforce the prohibition contained in the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts that children under the age of 18 years must not be recruited and use din armed conflicts. The fourth function,

latent pattern maintenance (L), is to do with transformation of values that are personal to individual into value patterns that are shared and stable within a given system (Stones, 1998:100). In the line of Parson's views, post-conflict communities "which developed institutions capable of better performing all four AGIL functions, had an evolutionary advantage over those who did not" (Stones, 1998: 101). Parsons' AGIL or four-function theory offers a theoretical framework to analyze different aspects of organizations reintegrating former child combatants "including economic, political legal and cultural institutions" (Stones, 1998:101). In View of Parson's AGIL model, a post-war community reaches its equilibrium if child combatants are successfully integrated into the community. This integration is possible if DDR operations function as a whole with interdependent child DDR agencies working in a coordinated system towards the same goal.

A transition of former child combatants from military to civilian life entails a process of re-socialization by which "youth have to re-learn normal cultural and moral values after having passed through a process of "asocialization" (Verhey, 2003:1). As defined in the Penguin Dictionary of Sociology, "socialization is conceptualized first as the internalization of social norms: social rules become internal to the individual, in the sense that they are self-imposed rather than imposed by means of external regulation and are thus part of the individual's own personality. The individual therefore feels a need to conform. It also may be conceived as an essential element of social interaction, on the assumption that

people wish to enhance their own self-image by gaining acceptance and status in the eyes of others; in this case, individuals become socialized as they guide their own actions to accord with the expectations of others (Abercrombie et al, 2000:329).

Durkheim's concept of socialization is also concerned with "the internalization of social morals through education" (Ritzer, 1996:101). He defines education and socialization as "the processes by which the individual learns the way of a given group or society – acquires the physical, intellectual, and, most important to Durkheim, moral tools needed to function in society (Durkheim, 1956:71). Durkheim's framework offers a basis for a moral orientation, which forms part of education and vocational training programs for the reintegration of ex-child combatants.

Parsons (1951:208) argues that socialization goes beyond child development. It means the learning of any orientations of functional significance to the operation of a system of complementary role-expectations. In this sense, socialization, like learning, goes on throughout life. He points out that "we must have knowledge of the processes or mechanisms of learning from the point of view of the actor who is in the process of being socialized" (Parsons, 1951:209). The end result of the learning of social role-expectations is "the integration of ego into a role complementary to that of alter in such a way that the common values are internalized in ego's personality, and their respective behaviors come to

constitute a complementary role-expectation-sanction system (Parsons, 1951:211). Based on Parsons' theory, effective reintegration of former child combatants is also determined by the extent to which they use newly acquired skills, knowledge and attitudes to become productive community members and respond to the communities' expectations.

According to Luhmann (1995:303), "in social systems, expectations are the temporal form in which structures develop. But as structures of social systems expectations acquire social relevance and thus suitability only if, on their part, they can be anticipated. (...) Ego must be able to anticipate what alter anticipates of him to make his own anticipations and behavior agree with alter's anticipation". Luhmann (1995: 304) argues that "one develops a feeling for the precedent-setting value of specific modes of action".

Applying Luhmann's concept of expectation to reintegration of ex-child combatant, one would argue that communities' expectations form the basis of rejection or acceptance of returning child combatants. If community members form an opinion that child soldiers are ruthless and brutal, they are likely to reject returning children as they may fear repetition of brutal behavior in the community. In contrast, if community members perceive child combatants as victims of exploitation by armed forces or groups, then children are likely to be accepted and considered as community members in need of reintegration.

2.2.2 Welfare State Theory

Living conditions of former child-combatants can be explained in the framework of the Welfare State Theory. "The basic premise of the welfare state theory is that government has the responsibility for the well-being of its citizens and that this cannot be entrusted to the individual, private corporation or local community" (Abercrombie et al, 2000:382). The aim of the welfare state is to " protect people against poverty by means of unemployment benefits, family allowances, income to poorly paid, and old-age pensions; they provide comprehensive medical care, free education and public housing (Abercrombie et al, 2000:382).

Sociological theories of welfare state have focused on two types of debate. First, Marxists have seen welfare as "instrument of repression by mitigating the worst excesses of capitalism and providing a form of state supervision of the disadvantaged (Abercrombie et al, 2000:383). In this sense, welfare is necessary for sustaining a capitalist system. However, functionalist theorists hold the view that welfare systems help to integrate society in orderly way under the conditions of advanced industrialization (Giddens, 2004:332-333). Second, welfare theorists have also focused on "the selectivity versus universality in welfare provision. Should welfare be for all or only for disadvantaged groups? The proponents of the first argue that universality of welfare emphasizes the nation as a community, enhances social order and reinforces the notion of CITIZENSHIP. Advocates of the latter, on the other hand, argue that selective welfare provision focuses

benefit on those genuinely in need, is cheaper and is potentially redistributive" (Abercrombie et al, 2000:383).

Applying the above-debate to the reintegration of former child combatants, the question would be whether State Institutions' assistance should be provided only to former children who were associated with armed forces or groups, or should be extended to the larger community of children?

Giddens (2004: 340) calls for a need to rethink equality and inequality in relation to the role of a welfare state system. The concept of equality, he argues, is being revised in a more dynamic manner, emphasizing equality of opportunity and the importance of pluralism and lifestyle diversity. (...). Welfare is not simply about material prosperity, but the overall well-being of the population including social policy promoting social cohesion, fostering networks of interdependence and maximizing people's abilities to help themselves. This study argues that as children leave military barracks for a civilian life, state welfare measures should be in place to facilitate their exit and to avoid a sharp drop in their living conditions.

However, based on Giddens' framework, the most sustainable way to improve living conditions of former child combatants is to provide children in war-affected communities with equal opportunities enabling them to become less dependant on State welfare.

2.2.3 Network Theory

The main concern of the network theory is to study the objective pattern of ties linking the members (individual and collective) of society... To network theory the actors may be people, but they also may be groups, corporations, and societies. (Ritzer, 1996:424). As Wellman argues (Ritzer, 1996:424), network analysts start with the simple, but powerful, notion that the primary business of sociologist is to study social structure... The most direct way to study a social structure is to analyze the pattern of ties linking its members (...) who may have differential access to valued resources (wealth, power, information). Network analysts search for deep structures – regular network patterns beneath the often complex surface of social systems...

Gravenotter, one of the proponents of network theory "differentiates between 'strong ties', for example links between people and their close friends, and 'weak ties', for example, links between people and mere acquaintance. (...) People with strong ties have greater motivation to help one another and are more readily available to one another. (Ritzer,1996:425). However, Gravenotter's main contribution is the role of weak ties. He argues that "weak ties between two actors can serve as a bridge between two groups with strong internal ties. Without such a weak tie, the two groups might be totally isolated" (Ritzer, 1996:425). One of the key actors in child's reintegration is the nucleus family, or the extended family or the community where the child originates from and returns to. The former child combatant's network of ties and kinship could also determine

the extent of the child's reintegration. As weak ties "prevent isolation and allow for individuals to be better integrated into a larger society" (Ritzer, 1996:425), the lack of ties and family/community support further isolates for instance the former child combatant, who may not necessary have access to the needed social capital to function and reorganize his/her civilian life.

Mizruchi uses the concept of solidarity to underline the idea of cohesion that comes of network theory. He holds two views on cohesion. "The first, or subjective view is that 'cohesion' is a function of group members' feelings of identification with the group, in particular their feeling that their individual interests are bound up with the interests of the group" (Ritzer, 1996:425). Mizruchi argues that cohesion is produced either by the internalization of the normative system or by group pressure. The second, or objective view, is that "solidarity can be viewed as an objective, observable process independent of the sentiment of individuals" (Ritzer, 1996:426).

This framework becomes crucial in the analysis of former child combatants' social, economic and emotional reintegration in a post war period. Thus, the child's social network or lack of ties can facilitate or hinder the reintegration process.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is using three theories to understand factors determining reintegration of former child combatants into the society: the Social System Theory, Welfare Theory and Network Theory.

The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of child combatants in the DRC is the responsibility of the DDR Commission (*Commission Nationale de Demobilisation and Reintegration* – CONADER), the World Bank's Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) and international agencies implementing specific projects for former child combatants. In the light of the Social System Theory, child DDR should be analyzed as a social system with interrelated parts, and performing specific functions towards the main goal of reintegrating former child combatants into civilian life. If reintegration programs- part of the DDR process - are not functioning effectively, DDR as a whole will not achieve its goal of ensuring peace and stability in war-affected communities.

The attainment of such a goal is determined by (a) the extent to which child DDR program fits into the country's plan to reintegrate all demobilized combatants; (b) the capability of CONADER as State institution to coordinate efforts by other actors implementing specific projects on child DDR; (c) the extent to which the post-war re-socialization process facilitates the child's transition from military to civilian life, (d) the extent to which reintegration activities respond to the child' s and communities' expectations.

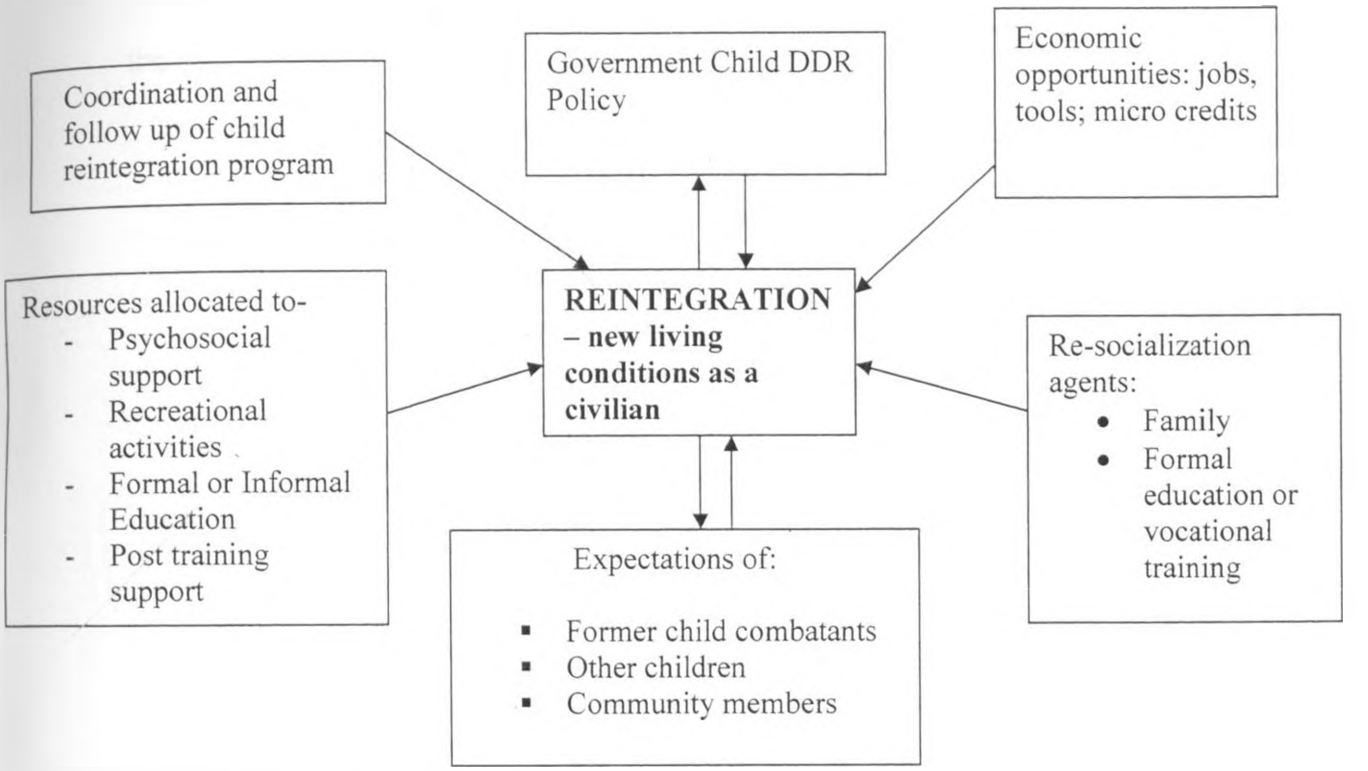
The Welfare State Theory is relevant to the explanation of child combatant's living conditions and how they are being addressed by reintegrating institutions. The theory serves as basis to shed light on the debate regarding the beneficiaries of reintegration programs: should reintegration programs only benefit children who carried guns, or be extended to other children in communities affected by armed conflict.

In the light of the Welfare State Theory, the effectiveness of reintegration program is also determined by (a) the level of State resources dedicated to child soldier reintegration programs, (b) the extent to which reintegration programs address living conditions of all vulnerable children in the communities.

Finally, Network Theory explains how family and community ties or lack of them facilitate or hinder the child's reintegration. Social ties prevent the child's isolation from the nucleus family or from the larger community.

Based on this theory, this study argues that the success of reintegration of former child combatant is also determined by the extent of the ex-combatant's social network, and the resources that can be drawn from it.

Figure 1: Model of reintegration of former child combatants



Source: Researcher

2.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The above mentioned review of both empirical and theoretical literature underline the need to understand the factors determining the effectiveness of reintegration of former child combatants into society. To achieve that objective, the study will be guided by the following questions:

1. What are the factors facilitating the child's transition from military to civilian life?
2. How do former child combatants reintegrate social and economic structures of their community of origin?
3. To what extent do former child combatants satisfy their basic needs after the reintegration process?

CHAPTER III. METHODS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is about research design as it deals with the selection and description of the research site, sampling methods, procedures of data collection and analysis. According to Peil (1995:9) "designing a research project involves organizing the collection and analysis of data to provide the information which is sought". Riley (1963:16) shares the same view by defining the design as "the researcher's plan for assembling and organizing certain concrete facts (data) by following certain rules and procedures".

3.2. SITE SELECTION

The study was carried out in the town of Bukavu, the capital city of South Kivu Province. The choice of the city is dictated by the fact that Bukavu hosts child DDR agencies carrying out reintegration activities for former child combatants. The Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) is funding 5 agencies operating in South Kivu, including National Commission for Disarmament , Demobilization and Reinsertion (CONADER - *Commission Nationale de Désarmement, Démobilization and Réinsertion)*), United Nations Children's Funds (UNICEF), International Rescue Committee (IRC), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and Save the Children UK. While CONADER is implementing a national program, the other four agencies are involved in child DDR activities aiming at ending the recruitment of children into

armed forces or groups, and "facilitating the sustainable socio-economic reintegration of child soldiers into their communities" (MDRP, 2008: 10).

However reintegration activities are carried out by national NGOs operating in the three communes of Bukavu town including BAGIRA, IBANDA and KADUTU. The study targeted both former child soldiers, beneficiaries of reintegration programs and key informants from child DDR agencies that design, finance and implement reintegration activities.

3.3. UNITS OF ANALYSIS AND OBSERVATION

According to Schutt (1996:88) "units of analysis are the level of social life on which the research question is focused, such as individuals, groups, towns, or nations. We do not fully understand the variables in a study until we know what units of analysis they refer to". In the case of this study, the units of analysis are former child combatants and child DDR agencies. They also constitute units of observation.

3.4. SAMPLING DESIGN

Singleton et al. (1988:137) define sampling design as "that part of the research plan that indicates how cases are to be selected for observation. Sampling designs are generally divided into two broad classes: probability and non-probability". The population of interest in this study is former child soldiers. The

study targeted 60 former child combatants who underwent the reintegration process and are living in their communities.

The study used a multi-stage sampling procedure to capture the various geographic areas where former child combatants are living in Bukavu town. The research stratified Bukavu into three strata representing the three urban communes:

1. Bagira
2. Ibanda
3. Kadutu

The study obtained a list of child reintegration organizations from the local CONADER office. They manage reintegration centres in Bukavu and their distribution by communes is as follows :

Communes	Child Reintegration Organizations
Bagira	1. Solidarity for Children in Distress / Bagira
Ibanda	1. Centre for Youth on Mission 2. Bureau of Volunteers for Health Education (BVES) 3. Leave Africa Live (LAV)
Kadutu	1. Support to the Oppressed 2. Solidarity for Children in Distress / Kadutu

Based on purposive sampling the study interviewed one former child combatant identified by each child reintegration organization. Then the researcher used

snowball sampling to identify other former child combatants known to the first interviewee. The study managed to reach the targeted sample of 60 former child combatants (10 per reintegration organizations) achieving the geographic coverage of the three communes of Bukavu.

The study also gathered views from 20 key informants who are staff of 10 child protection agencies based in Bukavu, including the 6 agencies managing reintegration centres. They were targeted because of their knowledge in the area of child reintegration.

3.5. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

3.5.1. Structured interviews

The main data collection instrument of this study was a structured interview schedule. According to Sjoberg and Nett (1968:193), "the structured interview's prime function is standardization of the interview process by means of a questionnaire or schedule (...). Standardization enhances reliability. The research schedule with close and open - ended questions was administered to former child combatants to gather data on their transition from military to civilian life, their living conditions and their assessment of the social and economic aspects of reintegration process.

To triangulate information on living conditions of former child combatants, and the social and reintegration process, another interview schedule was

administered to key informants from child reintegration agencies including personnel of UNICEF, CONADER, national and international NGOs providing reintegration services to former child combatants.

3.6. DATA ANALYSIS

Williams (2003:125) argues that the aim of data analysis is to discover the relationship between cases and variables, and [relationship between] variables and variables". The researcher used descriptive statistical techniques to code quantitative data and summarized those using percentages, frequencies, tabulations and pie charts. Qualitative data were grouped under various themes in according to research questions, and interpreted using thematic analysis.

3.7 EXPERIENCE FROM THE FIELD

The data collection in the field took one month, thus from 05 August 2008 to 7 September 2008. A total of 60 former child combatants were interviewed. The identification of former child combatants was a major challenge. Although it was not a problem reaching out NGOs providing reintegration services to children disarmed and demobilized from the army, it was not easy to know the whereabouts of those children who left reintegration centres and are living in their communities. This is why the researcher decided to adopt snowball sampling to identify those children who underwent reintegration after their disarmament and demobilization from the military.

The researcher first translated the interview schedules in French, which is the official language in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The researcher then administered the questionnaire to former child combatants. The researcher used a research assistant to facilitate the communication with children who would not speak French. The researcher translated the responses into English.

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to personnel of child reintegration organizations considered as key informants. Due to their level of literacy, key informants preferred to complete the questionnaire themselves. The researcher collected the completed questionnaire after a couple of days.

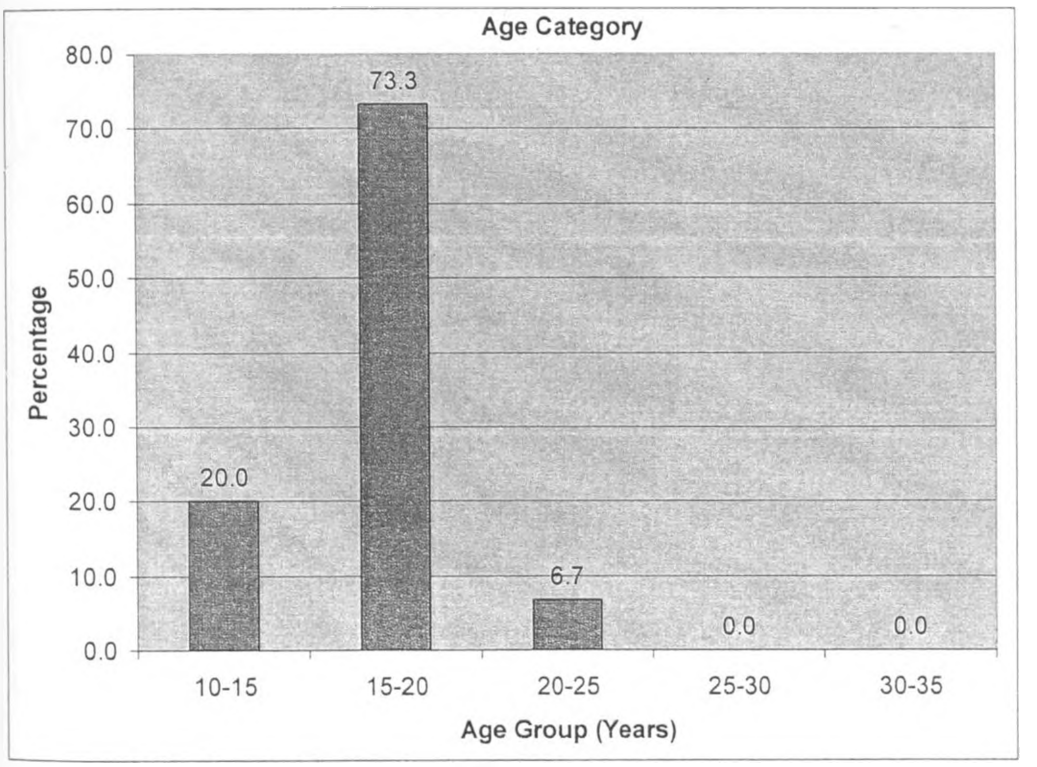
However, staff from the UN Mission in Congo (MONUC) declined to be interviewed. They said they do not have a mandate to implement any concrete child DDR projects.

CHAPTER IV. DATA PRESENTATION

There were 80 informants interviewed: n = 60 were former child combatants drawn from the communes of BAGIRA, IBANDA and KADUTU of BUKAVU, the capital city of the South Kivu Province. The others (n = 20) were key informants, staff working in organizations providing reintegration services to former child combatants who left military life. This chapter gives a detailed account of different answers given to the questions asked to former child combatants, and a report of key informants' views on factors determining the reintegration of former child combatants.

4.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON INFORMANTS

Table 4.1: Distribution of Informants by Age

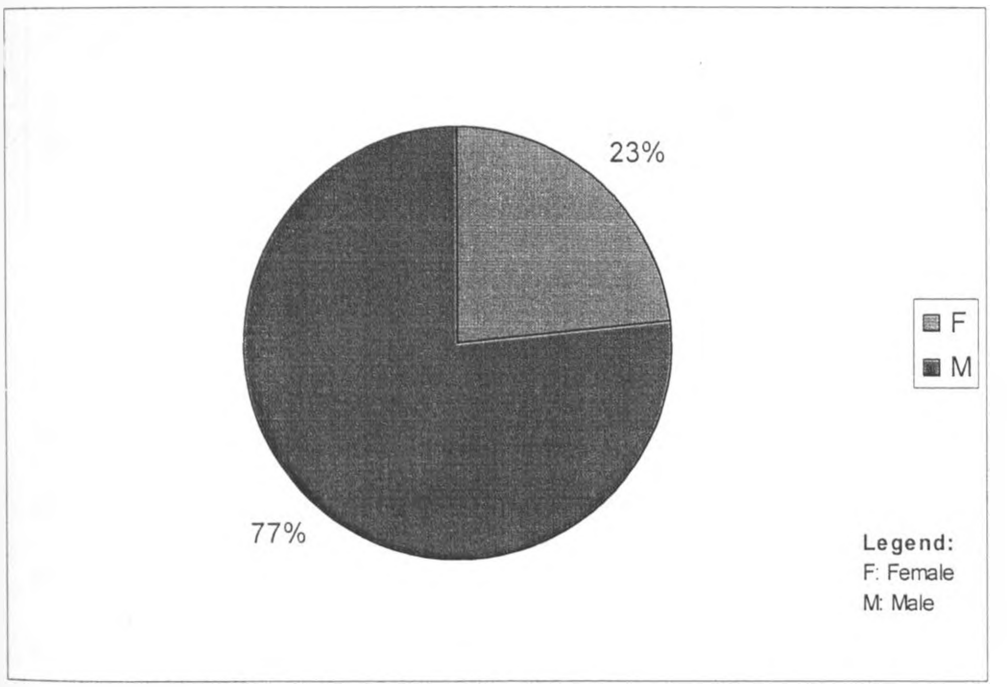


Source: Field data

The former child combatants interviewed were generally teenagers. Table 4.1 shows that the majority (73.3 %) of them belonged to 15-20 years age bracket. At this age education needs and the research for employment are high priorities for young people. This should be taken into account in planning reintegration programs.

A minority (20 %) of former child combatants interviewed were aged between 10 and 15 years old. The reintegration of such children requires an accent on early childhood activities to support their physical, emotional and intellectual development.

Table 4.2 Gender Distribution of Former Child Combatants



Source: Field data

In terms of gender distribution, the above pie chart shows that the majority (77%) of informants were male, while only 23 % were former girl combatants. The predominance of male former combatants could lead reintegration agencies to overlook specific needs of girls, who face particular challenges when they return home.

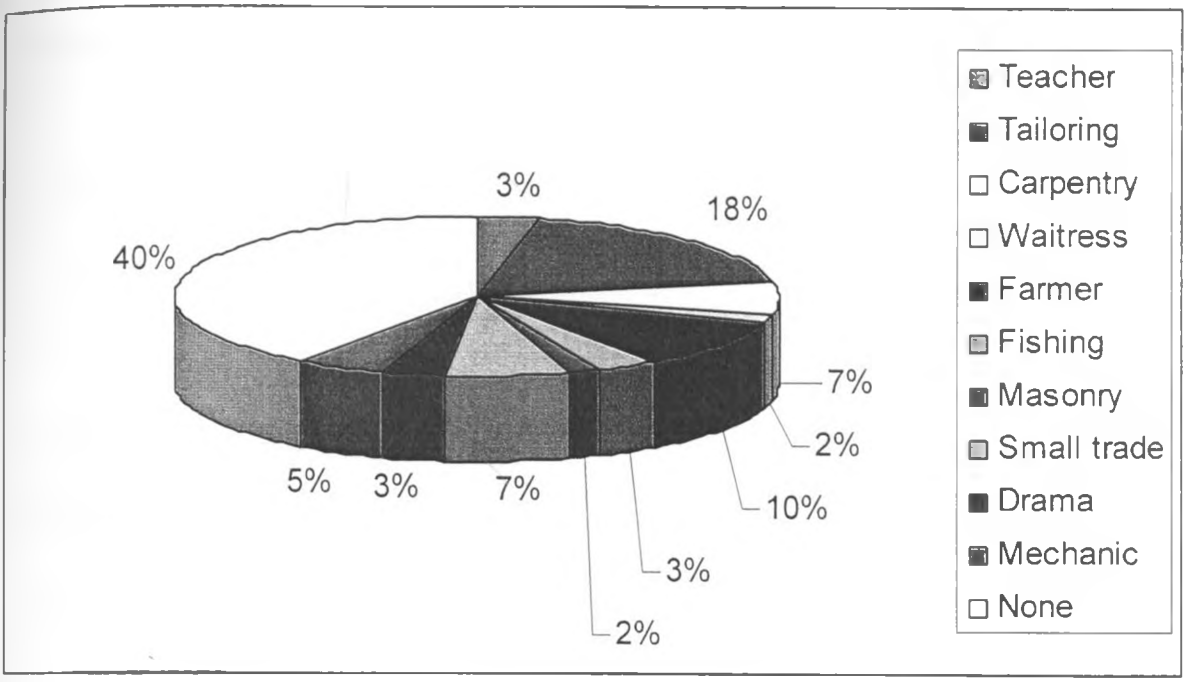
Table 4.3: Distribution of Former Child Combatants by Family Status

Family Status	Frequency	
	Number (n)	Percentage
Children living with parents	19	31.7
Orphans	18	30.0
Separated	23	38.3
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

Table 4.3 indicates that only 31.7 % of respondents were former child combatants living with their families, while orphans and separated children – the two categories combined – represent the majority (68.3 %) of former child combatants. This could be explained by the fact that children without parental care are easily exposed to exploitation and abuse including being recruited and used by the military.

Table 4.4 Distribution of Former Child Combatants by Occupation



Source: Field data

The above table suggests that generally former child combatants are involved in some sort of income generating activities. The majority (60%) of former child combatants are in a given profession. This explains why most child reintegration agencies provide skills oriented training to children demobilized from the military. The table 4.4 also indicates that most former child combatants are employed in tailoring (18%), followed by farming (10%), small trade (7%) and fishing (7%).

The research also revealed that 40 % of former child combatants are not working. This could be explained by the low level of formal education of most of them as indicated in the table below.

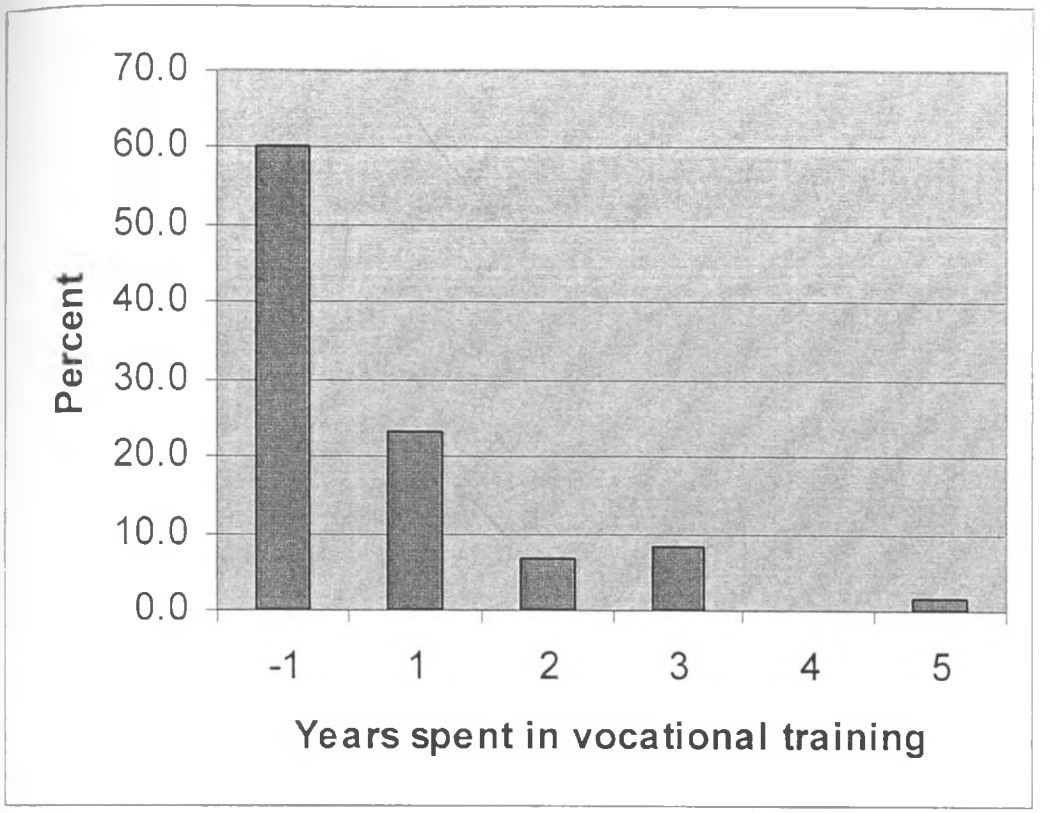
Table 4.5: Distribution of Former Child Combatants by Level of Formal Education

Level of Formal Education	Frequency	
	Number (n)	Percent
Never Attended School	12	20
Primary Education	41	68.3
Secondary School	7	11.7
University	0	00.0
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

The level of formal education of former child combatants is very low. Table 4.5 shows that the majority (68%) of former child combatants have only completed primary school. Although the majority (73.3%) of former child combatants are between 15-20 years age bracket as indicated in Table 4.1 (page 34), only 12 % have attended secondary school. This could be a hindrance to their economic integration in civilian life.

Table 4.6 Distribution of Former Child combatants by Years of Vocational Training



Source: Field data

The above graph shows the majority (60%) of former child combatants spent less than a year in a vocational training program to learn different life skills. Learning options offered to children in vocational training centers include tailoring, mechanic, and farming, masonry, small industry and drama. The low level of formal education and short time spent in vocational training centres could once again explain why generally former child combatants in South Kivu Province have very limited job opportunity options.

4.2 TRANSITION FROM MILITARY TO CIVILIAN LIFE

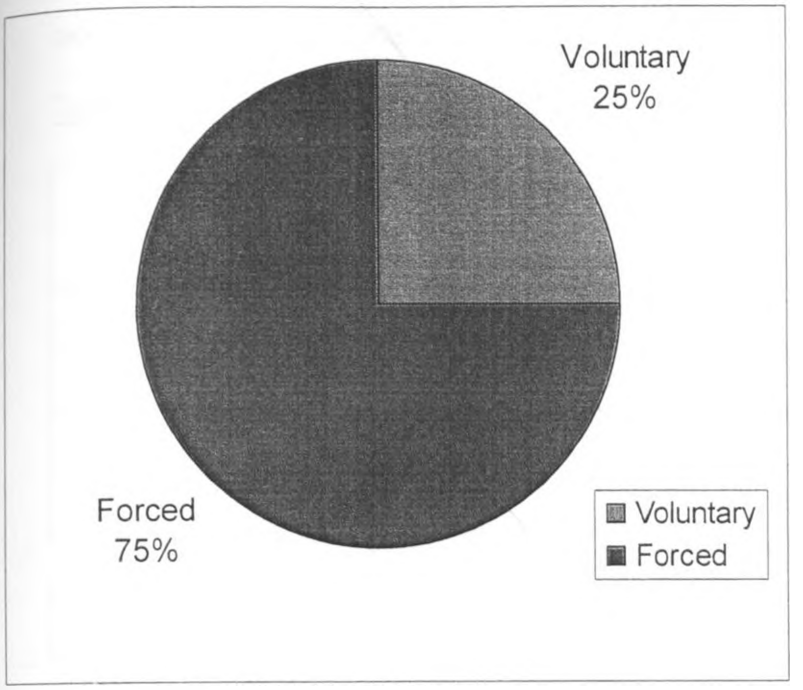
Table 4.7 Distribution of Former Child Combatants by the Enrolment Age in the Military

Age	Frequency	
	Number (n)	Percent
9	2	3.3
10	7	11.7
11	3	5.0
12	9	15.0
13	16	26.7
14	16	26.7
15	4	6.7
16	3	5.0
Total	60	100.0

Source: Field data

Table 4.7 shows that some former child combatants were recruited in the army at the age of 13 years (26.7%) and 14 years (26.7%). Others (15 %) were enrolled when they were 12 years while 11.7% of them joined when they were 10 years. This indicates that children between 10 and 14 years of are more vulnerable to recruitment into armed forces than those younger and older than this bracket age.

Table 4.8 Mode of Child Recruitment in the Military



Source: Field data

The research sought to understand how and why child combatants joined the military. The analysis of reasons given by informants indicates two modes of recruitment that children were subjected to: Voluntary Enrolment and Forced Recruitment. The research findings suggest that generally, children are recruited by force to join military life. The above pie chart shows that the majority (75 %) of children reported that they were recruited by force into armed forces or armed group. According to them, they were captured and forced to carry arms. Female informants said they were forced to join and used as concubines by the soldiers. Table 4.8 also shows that 25 % of the informants joined the army voluntarily. The reasons given include the revenge for their relatives killed during the war; choice

of the army as an alternative to non-access to education; hardship in the family and aspiration to become a soldier.

Table 4.9: Distribution of former child combatants by years spent with the military

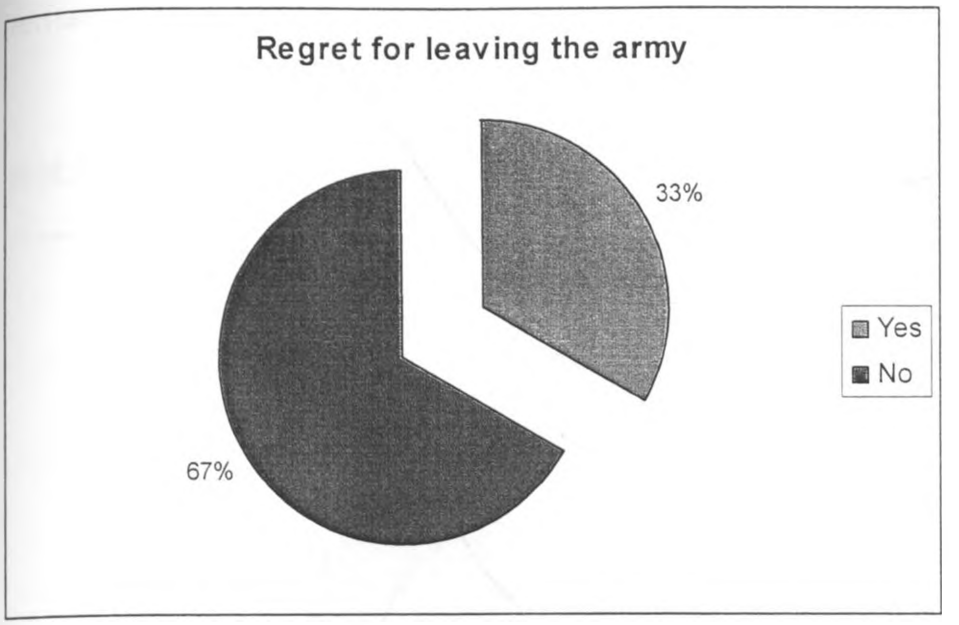
Years	Frequency	
	Number (=n)	Percent
- 1	4	6.7
1	15	25.0
2	26	43.3
3	8	13.3
4 and above	7	11.7
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

Table 4.9 indicates that out 60 informants, n = 26 (43.3 %) spent 2 years in military life. Only 4 of them (6.7 %) were associated with the military for less than a year. The research findings indicate that spend a very short time to undergo re-socialization into values of civilian life.

However, as table 4.6 (on page 39) indicates, (60%) of former child combatants spent less than a year in reintegration centres where they underwent vocational training. This is a very short time for a process meant to have a significant impact on children's lives.

Table 4.10: Former Child Combatants' Perceptions of the Army



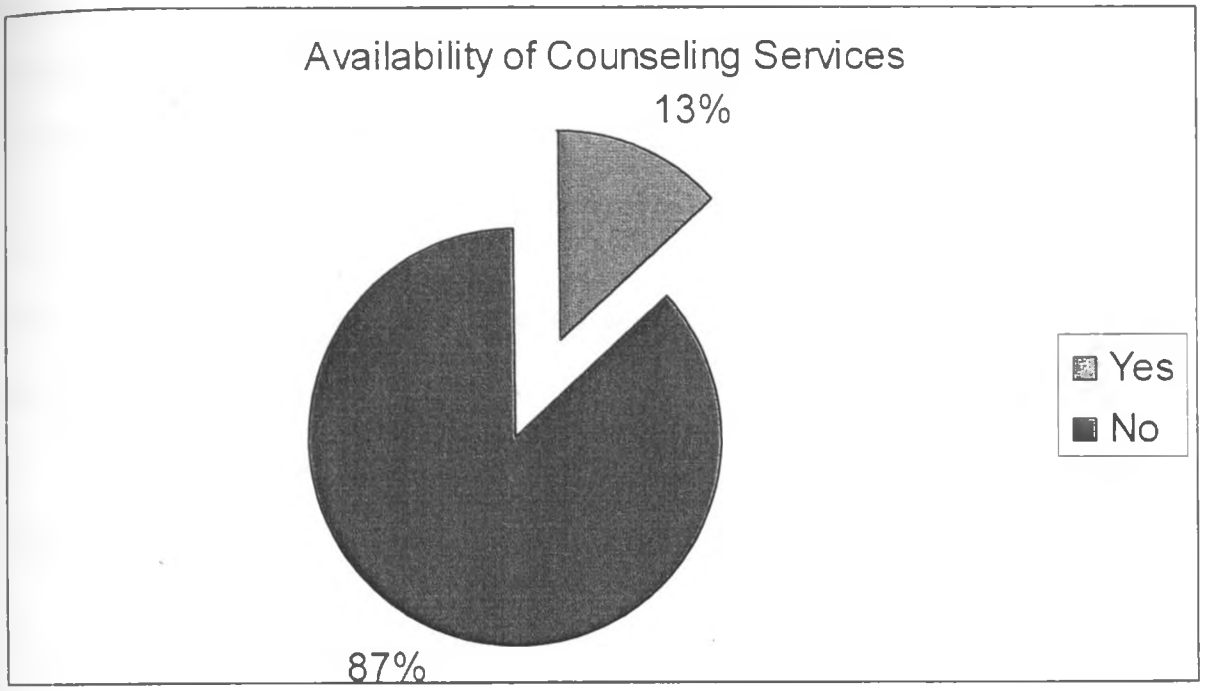
Source: Field data

The above pie chart shows that the majority (67 %) of former child combatants have no regret for having left the army. According to them, the army was too risky with precarious security conditions, with no health care or freedom. Some of the children reported to have been exposed to death in many occasions. They witnessed the death of some of their colleagues.

The pie chart also indicates that quite a number (33 %) of former child combatants expressed regret for having left the army. They explained that unlike in the army, they don't have shelter or work; they feel abandoned by the government, which decided to release them from the army. Other children who willingly joined the army expressed the feeling of being forced to leave the army and that they did not achieve their dream of becoming a soldier. Reintegration for

such former child combatants would require in-depth sensitization and promising alternatives to military life.

Table 4.11: Access to Counseling Services after the Army



Source: Field data

Contrary to the practice in many post-war contexts to provide psycho-social support through counseling to people who underwent traumatizing experiences, the above table shows that the majority (87 %) of former child combatants did not have access to any counseling services. This could mean that children traumatized by war experience remain helpless even after going through a reintegration process.

The above pie chat also shows that only a minority (13 %) of those who left the military had access to counseling services during the reintegration process.

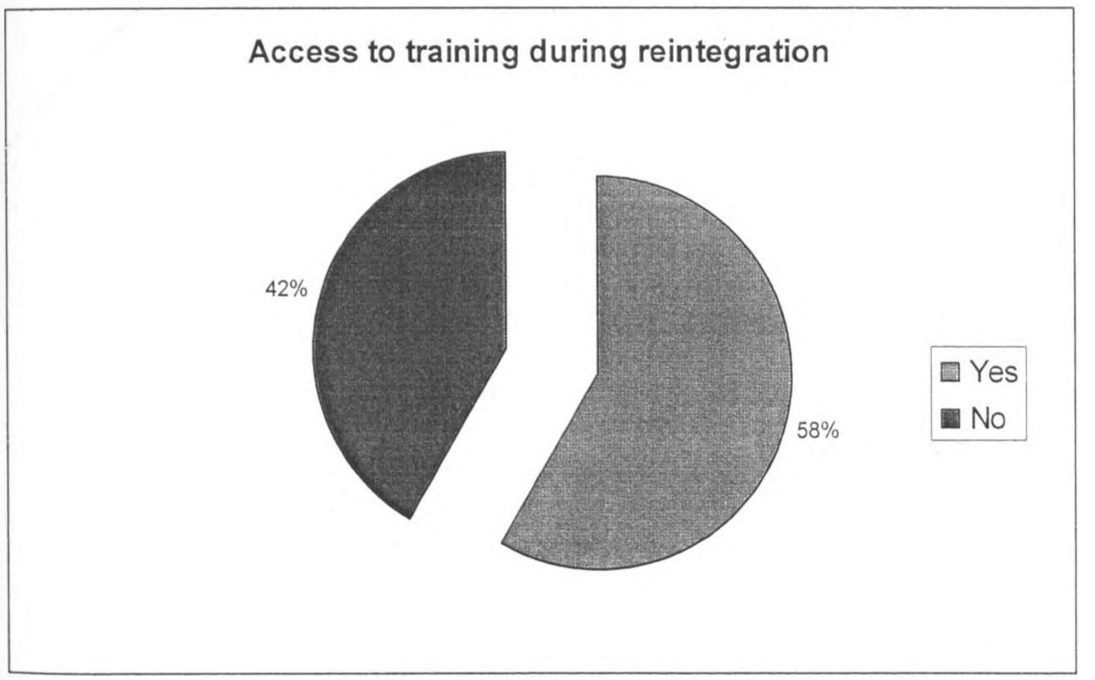
Table 4.12 Assessment of the Quality of Counseling

Level of satisfaction	Frequency	
	Number (n)	Percent
Not Satisfied	1	12.5
Satisfied	2	25
Very Satisfied	5	62.5
Total	8	100

Source: Field data

The table 4.12 indicates that the majority 5 (62.5 %) of 8 former child combatants who had access to counseling services were very satisfied with the quality of services they had received.

Table 4.13: Access to Training during the Reintegration Process



Source: Field data

The pie chart 4.13 shows that the majority (58 %) of former child combatants had access to training in the reintegration centres. The focus of the training was on skills to enable them get a job and earn a living in their communities.

Table 4.14: Assessment of Training against Expectations.

Answer	Frequency	
	Number (n)	Percent
Yes	14	40
No	21	60
Total	35	100

Source: Field data

The research sought to understand if the training offered to former child combatants met their expectations. For 60% of former child combatants, the training received did not meet their expectations as training options were limited, and that choices were imposed on them by reintegration agencies. Some were trained in mechanic while they had preferred to continue their secondary school education in other fields. This means that generally there is a gap between training options offered to former child combatants and their expectations. The gap is not likely to facilitate the reintegration process.

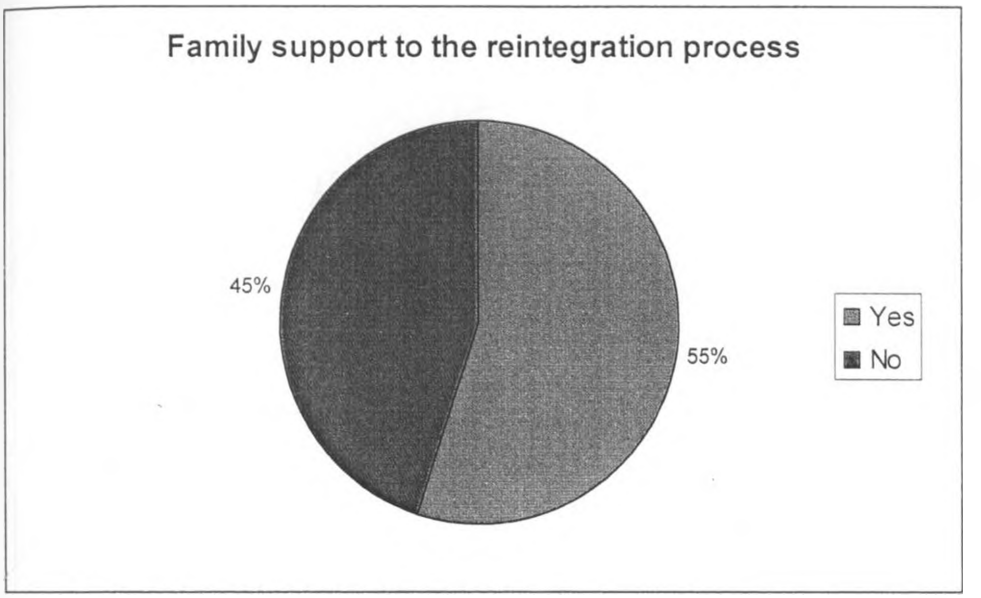
Table 4.14 also shows that there is a minority (40 %) of respondents whose aspirations were met with the type of training offered during reintegration. For these respondents, the literacy and other life skills acquired during the training has prepared them to easily manage the challenges of civilian life. They said they

are now useful to the society because of the training received during the reintegration process.

4.3 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION

4.3.1 Family support and economic activities

Table 4.15: Distribution of former Child Combatants by Availability of Family Support

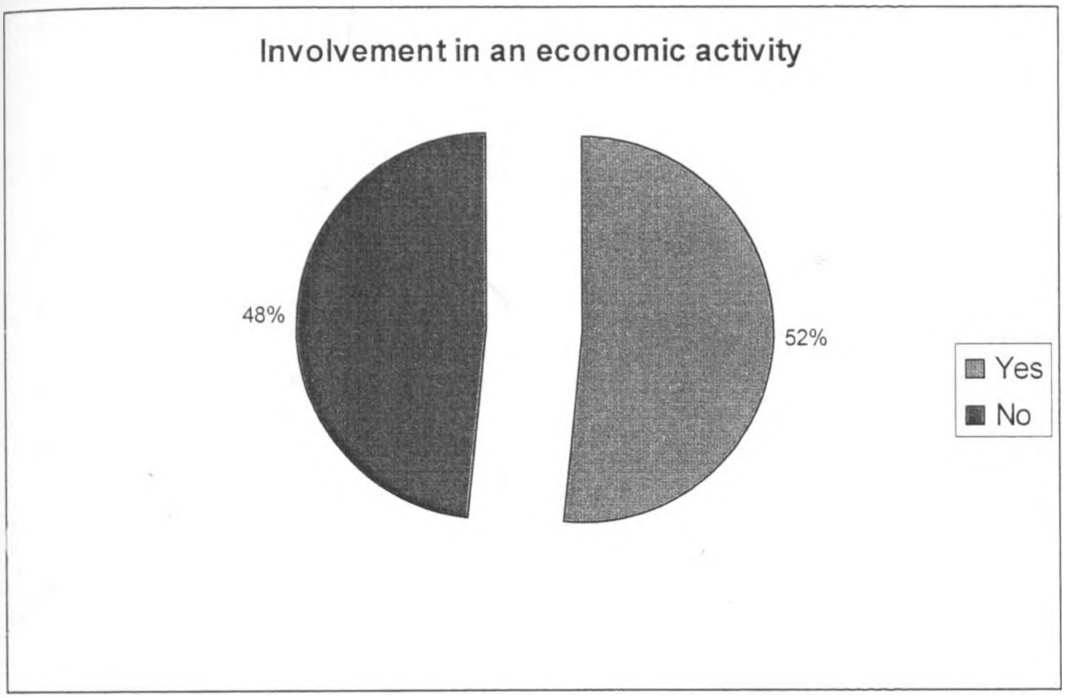


Source: Field data

The above pie chart shows that the majority (55 %) of former child combatants who returned to their own families received support to facilitate their reintegration into civilian life. They revealed that family members provided them with farming, tailoring or fishing tools, housing and food, as well as the needed moral support to fit in the family.

The above pie chart also indicates that a minority (45 %) of former child combatants did not receive any support from family members. Most of them said their parents were poor and could not provide them with the needed financial or material support.

Table 4.16: Distribution of Former Child Combatants by Economic Activity



Source: Field data

The above pie chart shows that the majority (52 %) of former child combatants are involved in an economic activity. These activities include tailoring, working in restaurant, farming, carpentry, mechanic workshop and small trade.

However, the pie chart also shows that 48% former child combatants were not involved in any economic activity. They would rely on their families or reintegration agencies for their survival.

4.3.2 The reaction of other children in the community

The researcher sought to examine the reactions of other children in the community towards former child combatants. The informants reported various reactions that can be grouped into three types of feelings: fear, disrespect and sympathy.

Informants who talked about fear said that other children viewed them with suspicion and perceived former child combatants as violent and dangerous people in the community. Other informants reported that other children have no respect for former child combatants and brand them as bandits, thieves and rapists.

However, some other children in the community expressed sympathy towards former child soldiers. They perceived them as children who were rather abused and in need of assistance to live as civilians.

Former child combatants who receive negative reactions from others in the communities felt rejected, and therefore not socially reintegrated in their immediate environment. However, others who were treated with dignity felt accepted and therefore better prepared to fit in civilian life.

4.4. FORMER CHILD COMBATANTS' LIVING CONDITONS

Table 4.17: Child Combatants' Perceptions of their Living Conditions

Assessment	Frequency	
	Number (n)	Percent
Poor	35	58.3
Average	14	23.3
Good	3	5.0
Nothing to mention	8	13.3
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

The assessment of former child combatants' living conditions indicates that generally children released from the military live in poor conditions. Table 4.17 shows that the majority (58, 3 %) rated their living conditions as poor. This explains why most former child combatants are keen to undergo skills-oriented training in order to get a job and earn an income.

The above table shows that only 5 % of informants had good their living conditions.

Table 4.18: Assessment of Access to Basic Services in the Army and in Civilian life

		In the Army		After reintegration in civilian life	
		Frequency		Frequency	
		Number (n)	Percent	Number (n)	Percent
Medical Services	Easily Accessible	3	5.0	10	16.7
	Accessible	8	13.3	**31**	**51.7**
	Rarely Accessible	**35**	**58.3**	13	21.7
	Not accessible	13	21.7	5	8.3
	No response	1	1.7	1	1.7
	Total	**60**	**100**	**60**	**100**
Food	Easily Accessible	5	8.3	17	28.3
	Accessible	16	26.7	**28**	**46.7**
	Rarely Accessible	**34**	**56.7**	8	13.3
	Not accessible	5	8.3	7	11.7
	Total	**60**	**100**	**60**	**100**
Clothes	Easily Accessible	6	10.0	14	23.3
	Accessible	6	10.0	**28**	**46.7**
	Rarely Accessible	22	36.7	12	20.0
	Not accessible	**26**	**43.3**	6	10.0
	Total	**60**	**100**	**60**	**100**
Housing	Easily Accessible	2	3.3	15	25
	Accessible	5	8.3	**29**	**48.3**
	Rarely Accessible	24	40.0	6	10
	Not accessible	**29**	**48.3**	10	16.7
	Total	**60**	**100.0**	**60**	**100.0**
Protection	Easily Accessible	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Accessible	**31**	**51.7**	**35**	**58.3**
	Rarely Accessible	20	33.3	17	28.3
	Not accessible	9	15.0	8	13.3
	Total	60	100.0	60	100.0

Source: Field data

Former child combatants compared accessibility to medical services, food, clothes, shelter and protection in the army with accessibility to the same services and amenities in civilian life. Table 4.18 on the previous page shows that the majority (51.7 %) of former child combatants rated medical services accessible after their reintegration in civilian life and the majority (58.3 %) of them rated medical services as rarely accessible.

Table 4.8 also indicates that 46.7 percent of former child combatants stated that food was accessible now in their civilian, while most (56.7 %) of them rated food as rarely accessible in the army. Only 26 percent of the respondents said food was accessible in the army.

In terms of clothing, the majority (70%) of former child combatants said they had access to cloth as civilians: 46.7 percent rated clothes easily accessible, and 26.3 % said that clothes were accessible. But, for 43.3 percent of former child combatants clothes were not accessible in the army, and 36.7 percent of them rated clothes as rarely accessible when they were associated with the military.

The table also shows that 48.3 percent of former child combatants assessed shelter as accessible after reintegration, and the same percentage of respondents (48.3 %) indicated that shelter was not accessible in the army.

However, in terms of protection, the majority (58.3 %) of former child combatants said they had access to protection as civilians, and a slightly reduced majority

(51.7%) of the former child combatants felt also protected by the military during the war. This could explain why during the war some children joined the military to seek protection.

4.5 COLLABORATION BETWEEN CHILD REINTEGRATION AGENCIES AND THE NATIONAL DDR COMMISSION

Table 4.19: Assessment of the Collaboration between Child Reintegration Agencies and National DDR Commission

Assessment	Frequency	
	Number (n)	Percent
Poor	16	26.7
Good	22	36.7
Very Good	7	11.7
Excellent	2	3.3
No Response	13	21.7
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

Table 4.19 shows that 36 percent of former child combatants considered that there as good relation between child DDR agencies and the National DDR Commission; and 11.7 percent rated that collaboration as very good. However, 26.7 percent rated that collaboration as poor. A good coordination between child DDR agencies is a key factor to the success of the reintegration process. Table 4.19 also shows that 21.7 percent of the former child combatants did not respond

to this question as they did not come into contact with the personnel of the National DDR Commission.

4.6. REINTEGRATION ACTIVITIES AND CHILDREN'S EXPECTATIONS

Table 4.20: Assessment of Reintegration Activities Against Expectations

Answer	Frequency	
	Number (n)	Percent
Yes	30	50
No	30	50
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

The above table indicates that generally former child combatants have mix feelings regarding reintegration activities versus their own expectations. Table 4.20 shows a split between former child combatants: half 50 of them considered that reintegration activities met their expectations; and learning new skills gave them hope for the future, have prepared them to better handle civilian life while making them feel useful to the society.

However, the other half (50 %) of former child combatants expressed their dissatisfaction with reintegration activities as they did not meet their expectations. They suggested that children must be consulted, and that the government should fulfill its promises. One child said "drama activities do not generate income, why did they impose them on us".

4.7 TRAINING AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Table 4. 21: Assessment of the link between Training Received and Job Opportunities.

Answer	Frequency	
	Number (n)	Percent
Yes	45	75
No	15	25
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

Table 21 shows that the majority (75 %) of former child combatants stated a clear link between the training they received in vocational training centres and job opportunities. The training responds to some of the skills and knowledge needed in the community. However, they also maintained that this is not a guaranty to find a job.

However, for a minority (25 %) of former child combatants, there was no link between the training they underwent and the job opportunities as they did not find a job even after the training. Others maintained that jobs are scarce, and young people need more than training to find a job. "After training we are still begging on the street", reported one of the former child combatants.

4.8 CHALLENGES AFFECTING FORMER GIRL COMBATANTS

Table 4.22: Assessment of Specific Reintegration Challenges Affecting Former Girl Combatants

Answer	Frequency	
	Number (n)	Percent
Yes	28	48.7
No	11	18.3
No Response	21	35.0
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

The researcher sought to find out whether former child combatants faced specific challenges during the reintegration process. Table 4.22 shows that 48.7 percent of former child combatants share the view that former girl combatants face particular challenges to reintegrate into civilian life. The community views such girls with suspicion, avoids them, or find them too tough as they were associated with the military. Some of the respondents reported that men would easily run away from such girls as they might have been used as concubines or wives of soldiers. This finding corroborates other researchers' views that "girls associated with armed forces have difficulties reintegrating into their communities after the conflict" (Brkic, 2006:2).

However, 18.3 percent of former child combatants, mainly girls, said they did not face particular problems during reintegration, except a certain level of marginalization and stigmatization. They maintained that girls kept low profile in

the community but adapted better than others and easily found jobs in tailoring, restaurants, and as salesperson in the market.

4.9 FACTORS FACILITATING THE REINTEGRATION OF FORMER CHILD COMBATANTS

The research sought to find out from informants factors facilitating the reintegration process of former child combatants. The informants' views can be grouped into three categories.

First, there are factors related to the combatants. These include formal education of younger children and vocational training for those who missed primary and secondary school; consultation with former child combatants on training option; provision of equipments and tools to those who completed vocational training to find a job; follow up former child combatants in their communities.

The second category of factors is related to the community where the former child combatant is returning to. Community members need sensitization to change their mindset and de-criminalize former child combatants. The rest of children in the community also need to be sensitized in order to promote acceptance of those children who were associated with armed forces.

Finally, the third category of factors is related to the assistance by key stakeholders: the family and the Government. Most Informants indicated that family acceptance and support were important to facilitate a new life to children

formerly associated with the military. In addition, a Government's plan on former child combatants is an important factor that facilitates the work of NGOs providing assistance to children who left the military.

4.10. CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE REINTEGRATION PROCESS

Based on their own experiences, former child combatants mentioned several challenges including the fact that the Government did not take the process seriously. They felt abandoned, "left out" by Government authorities. They maintained that this led many former child combatants to become thieves, thugs and prostitutes in their residential areas.

Former child combatants also mentioned that many NGOs consider former child combatants as children, therefore impose solutions on them without prior consultation. The same NGOs limit themselves in providing training without follow up.

Finally, former child combatants repeatedly made it clear that being jobless and idle is the main challenge they face when they return to civilian life. "Being jobless, said one of the demobilized child, might lead some of the children back to the army".

4.11 DATA OBTAINED FROM KEY INFORMANTS

The study interviewed 20 staff from 10 organizations providing or funding reintegration activities to former child combatants. These organizations include War Child Holland, Save the Children United Kingdom, United Nations Children's Funds (UNICEF), Bureau of Volunteers for Health Education (BVES), Leave Africa Live (French acronym LAV), Association in Support of the Oppressed (AS0), National DDR Commission (CONADER), Dynamic for the Support of Vulnerable Children (DSEV), Action for Children in Difficult Situation (AFESD), and Solidarity Action for Children in Distress (SACD). All the agencies are based in Bukavu town.

Most of key informants have an average of four years of work experience in the area of reintegration of former child combatants. This means they have an expertise in the subject under study and that they have the ability to provide an informed view about the factors and challenges related to the reintegration of former child combatants.

4.11.1 Collaboration between Child Protection Agencies and the National DDR Commission

Key informants are very much satisfied with the collaboration between child reintegration agencies and the National DDR Commission (CONADER). This

corroborates the views expressed by most of former child (please refer to table 4.19 on page 53).

4.11.2 Reintegration process

According to key informants, whey children arrived in reintegration centres, they are provided with the required assistance for their reintegration:

a) **Access to basic services**: Former child combatants are provided with food, clothing, accommodation, medical services and initial orientation. Injured or disable children are be given attention by medical personnel of reintegration agencies or referred to the nearest medical centre. This assistance is a crucial support to children's transition from military to civilian life. This would prevent children from begging on the street while being prepared to reintegrate their families.

b) **Access to formal education or vocational training**: Many former child combatants who spent their school-age in military activities miss their formal education. According to key informants, former child combatants with some skills will find it easier to reintegrate economically than those without skills. This explains why formal training and vocational training courses are offered to former child combatants. Children will be profiled by reintegration agencies. Younger children tend to be offered formal education, while those who missed their secondary school education are offered accelerated learning through vocational training courses including in carpentry, mechanic, agriculture, masonry, electrical, small industry (soap making, cooking)...Key informants

stated there was a clear link between the training offered and the expectations of former child combatants. However, former child combatants' access to the job market is limited because lack of experience. Key informants also indicated that reintegration agencies tend to focus on vocational training courses leaving out younger children in need of formal education.

c) **Sensitization of communities:** Community members are sensitized by child reintegration agencies to the acceptance of former child combatants when they return. According to key informants, this is a crucial activity that prepares the reconciliation between those who carried out arms and their communities of origin. There was a low level of rejection of former child combatants in communities where people were well prepared and sensitized.

d) **Support to economic activities:** Economic reintegration requires that former child combatants find a job or become self-employed. For key informants, practical skills acquired in vocational training centres are key assets supporting their economic reintegration. Some former child combatants were given tools, seeds, and financial support to become self-employed. However, success was limited as most did not have accounting skills. In addition, most employer would have negative perceptions on former child combatants and therefore would not trust them for jobs.

e) **Psychosocial support:** Key informants stated that children who undergo counseling, trauma healing, process trough games and other recreational activities tend to be better prepared to civilian life. However, experience

showed that South Kivu province did not have many psycho-social experts to support children in this area. Basic activities such as songs and games are used in most of reintegration centres to provide that support.

4.11.3 Challenges associated with reintegration

Key informants reported various challenges associated with the reintegration of former child combatants. The most common challenge cited by key informants was the lack of intensive sensitization of communities. This explains the fear that community members expressed towards former child combatants.

Another challenge is that there is still demand for child soldiers as the war continues in some part of Eastern DRC. Former child combatants from poor families will be easily tempted to return to the military. They suggested that leaders of armed groups should be sensitized against the recruitment of children in the military.

Another challenge is that the re-socialization process from military to civilian life requires time. According to key informants, children spend limited time in reintegration agencies as the latter face limited resources to maintain children longer, and set up a follow up mechanism to ensure that former child combatants are properly reintegrated into civilian life. Finally, the DRC government's minimum involvement in the reintegration process remains a major challenge.

4.11.4 Factors facilitating the reintegration process

According to most of the key informants, factors facilitating the reintegration of former child combatants into civilian life can be grouped into three categories.

a) **Structural factors**. These include a clear government policy on the reintegration of former child combatants. Such policy would guide the program of child protection agencies.

Structural factors would also include a legal framework in terms of laws protecting children from being recruited into the army and facilitating their reintegration once released from the military. The Government's will to assist former child combatants should be translated into a clear budget allocation to reintegration programs.

b) **Social factors**. The child's social networks determine the failure or effectiveness of the reintegration process. This entails that families and other children are sensitized on the situation of child soldiers and are invited to welcome them back to the communities. They are provided with emotional, financial and material support needed to reintegrate the society.

c) **Direct support to former child soldiers themselves**. This includes providing former child combatants with psycho-social support, training in life skills, recreational activities. This will also entail that reintegration agencies develop a follow up mechanism to "accompany" former child combatants in their reintegration process.

CHAPTER V: DATA ANALYSIS AND KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

The broad objective of this study was to understand the factors determining the effectiveness of social and economic reintegration of former child soldier into their communities in the South Kivu Province. This chapter will review the research findings against the research questions in line with the research specific objectives.

5.1 TRANSITION FROM MILITARY TO CIVILIAN LIFE

The researcher sought to examine the transition from military to civilian life in relation to the first research question. Children recruited in the military by force or voluntarily are socialized as young soldiers used in different capacities (cooks, porters, spies, messengers, fighters, concubines). Children used as fighters undergo military training and are used in the frontline during the fight. When children leave military life they are in need of series of interventions and programs to assist them succeed in their new roles as civilians.

Child reintegration agencies provide children with assistance during the transitional period. This includes helping children to have access to basic services (accommodation, food, clothes, medical treatment); access to formal education or vocational training; sensitization of communities prior to family tracing and reunification; limited support to economic activities and to a limited extent psycho-social support or trauma healing support.

The researcher found that the majority (73.3 %) of former child combatants interviewed were in the 15-20 years age bracket as indicated on table 4.1, page 34. At this age, the majority of children would either be at the middle or at the end of their secondary school education, and others are already young adults in need of employment. The reintegration programs therefore should be informed by the fact that most of those children missed their formal education and are in need of accelerated learning in vocational training centres.

According to key informants, reintegration agencies view vocational training courses are a quick way of assisting former child combatants to gain skills and become productive in civilian life. The training provides former child combatants with practical skills in mechanic, carpentry, masonry, farming, tailoring and small scale business. In the light of state welfare theory, an effective reintegration program would also promote fairness by ensuring that other children who missed their education benefit from vocational training opportunities. This is in line with the community-based approach to reintegration that many organizations are promoting in war-torn countries.

However, the drive for vocational training courses leaves out younger children whose education needs would be adequately met by a formal education system. This group of younger children represent 20 % of former child combatants and are aged between 10 to 15 years (please see table 4.1 on page 34). Reintegrating such children require time and resources as completing the

remaining years of primary and secondary school education takes at least 8 years. In a country where there is no universal primary education policy, education will be more accessible to former child combatants with family support, and it will not be easily accessible to those without parental care.

The researcher also found that although reintegration agencies prioritize training, the content and type of training offered do not always meet expectations' expectations. Table 4.14 on page 46 shows that 60 % of former child combatants were not satisfied with the training offered to them. When this was triangulated with the key informants' views, the research revealed that all reintegration agencies see a link between the training they offer and children's expectations. A successful transition from military to civilian life through training should also be informed by an adequate training needs assessment.

The research shows that most (65, 4 %) of the children were enrolled by armed forces or armed groups between the age of 12 to 14 years (please refer to table 4.7 on page 40). The majority (75 %) of them were recruited by force to join the military (please refer to table 4.8 on page 41). Former girl combatants reported that they were captured, sexually abused and enrolled in the military. The socialization process into military life is accompanied by high level of violence and trauma that reintegration process should address. Children joined the army at a very young age when they would easily learn military activities. However, this is an age when they would easily be indoctrinated and forced to commit

atrocities during military operations. The involvement of children in military operations destroys their childhood. Rebuilding childhood becomes a major challenge in this context and depends on the impact of military life on every individual child. Therefore profiling children to know their individual stories becomes a key element that facilitates transition from military to civilian life.

Another issue related to mode of recruitment is the time child combatants spend with the military. The research shows that the majority (68%) children spent between one to two years in military life. A small percentage of informants (6.7%) spent less than a year with the military (please refer to table 4.9 on page 42). The researcher also found that the majority (60%) of former child combatants spent less than a year in vocational training program (please refer to table 4.6 on page 39). For Key informants, children spend very limited time in reintegration centres in order to reduce dependency on centres and encourage them to return home. However, they also ague that most child reintegration agencies are facing shortage of financial resources and therefore keep children in reintegration centres for a very short time. This reveals that, generally, the socialization process in the military took longer than in vocational training centers, where former child combatants are re-initiated to civilian life.

The researcher also found that reintegration agencies did not prioritize psychosocial support as an important element in the transition from military to civilian life. Most children underwent a traumatic experience in military life. Some

were forced to kill; others witnessed killing and beating of civilians. It is recognized that "violent experiences at any age, but especially in early childhood years, leave not only physical but also emotional wounds. Psychosocial and mental health care for ex-combatants appear to be particularly urgent tasks, especially after decades of violence and civil war" (Gleichmann et al., 2004:89). Contrary to this view, the researcher found the majority (87%) of former child combatants did not have access to counseling services (please refer to pie chart 4.11 on page 44). Some key informants attributed this to the lack of experienced child protection agencies able to provide such professional counseling services in the South Kivu province.

The researcher found that while reintegration agencies were satisfied with the coordination between them and CONADER, only 51 % of former child combatants interviewed were satisfied with the coordination function of CONADER (please refer to table 4.19 on page 53). The differences in perceptions could be explained by the fact that former child combatants deal more with reintegration agencies than with CONADER, whose personnel does not provide services to demobilized children. However, key informants stressed the role of the Government of DRC, through CONADER, in providing policy leadership on the reintegration of former child combatants. Such guiding role should be translated into a budget line with resources to support civil society organizations involved in the reintegration of former child combatants.

5.2 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION

In relation to the second research question of this study, the researcher sought to find out how former child combats fit in social and economic structures of their communities of origin.

The study gathered from informants that sensitization of families, other children and the larger community was an important factor facilitating their reintegration into the community. This sensitization is critical to reduce the level of rejection that some children, in particular girls, face when they return home. Communities that were sensitized had a higher level of acceptance of former child combatants than where there was no sensitization. Sensitization helped community members reshape their opinion about former child combatants as people who were forced to join the military and therefore in need of assistance to reintegrate the society. This finding is consistent with Luhmann's theory of expectations. Reintegration agencies are involved in sensitizing families, community members and other children to "anticipate their expectations" (Luhmann, 1995:303) regarding former child combatants.

The research found that socially, the majority of former child combatants did not have families to rely on for their reintegration. Former child combatants were either orphans (30 %) or separated from their parents (38.3 %) as shown on table 4.3, page 36. According to key informants, the lack of direct family support is addressed by reintegration agencies using foster family care. According to this

system, children are received by a family with which they share the same cultural background. The family educates the child to basic rules of good conduct before returning him/her to community of origin. Foster family care plays the role of re-socialization agent. However, key informants revealed a limited use of foster families as very few often accept to welcome former child combatants other than their family members.

The acceptance of the former child combatants by its family members is a crucial factor in the reintegration process. The researcher found that generally former child combatants who returned to their families were accepted, and were easily integrated in the social structures. The majority (55 %) of children were provided with moral, material and financial support by their families to facilitate their reintegration (please refer to table 4.15 on page 47).

The study also established that reintegration agencies did not provide former child combatants opportunity to socialize with other children in the community. This explains why other children expressed fear and disrespect towards former child combatants. Boys are perceived as bandits, thieves, while girls are branded as prostitutes. The perceptions of other children, and the community in general, would negatively affect former child combatants' self esteem. One of the reasons could be that most former child combatants spent their learning time in vocational training centres and did not have many interaction opportunities with other children in the wider communities. This widens the gap between them and

the rest of the communities, hence reinforcing negative perceptions towards former child combatants.

The researcher found that reintegration agencies were concerned with the economic reintegration of former child combatants. They organized training to provide former child combatants with skills needed in the job market. The researcher found that 52 % of former child combatants were involved in an income generating activity (refer to table 4.16 on page 48). Some are tailors, carpenters, mechanics, farmers, while others are in small trade, fishing, or are workers in city restaurants. The research shows that all the girls trained in tailoring were employed. This indicates that the type of skills acquired determine the nature of economic reintegration. The following testimony indicates this link: "*In 2001, our village which is near the Kavumu airport was attacked by armed rebels. Some armed men captured me and three of my friends. We walked for hours and they subjected us to abuses. We were cooking for them every day. I spent 1 year with the rebels. One day, the Government soldiers attacked the rebels we were associated with. They captured me and one of my friends. We returned home. I learnt tailoring for 7 months. I decided to go to Bukavu town and stay with my uncle. There I found a job of my dream: working as a tailor. I am able to take care of my own expense with the money that I receive*". (Anita – not her real name, interviewed in Bukavu town, August 2008).

Most key informants corroborate this finding although some argue that employers are reluctant to employ former child combatants because of the stigma and lack of work experience. Other key informants suggested that reintegration agencies should link up trained former child combatants with potential employers in order to assist them get jobs.

Former child combatants (48%) who were not involved in any economic activities expressed frustration as they remain idle in the community. This could be explained by the fact that some respondents are still very young to compete in the job market. It could also mean that the skills learnt in reintegration process do not guarantee access to an employment. As one former child combatant stated: *"what I learnt does not help me to live; I have no job and feel abandoned"*. This means that the reintegrating these children into civilian life will still depend on a welfare system by the Government or continued humanitarian assistance to prevent their return to the army.

According to key informants, reintegration agencies were limited to provide former child combatants with tools, equipments or financial assistance to use the skills they learnt in carpentry, mechanic, electricity, masonry, etc. Providing skills and knowledge to former child combatants does not necessarily lead to a productive behavior if there are no jobs. It cannot also lead to self-employment if there are not tool kits and financial support made available to graduates vocational training courses.

5.3 LIVING CONDITIONS OF DEMOBILIZED CHILD COMBATANTS

The research sought to find out the living conditions of former child combatants in relation to the third research question of this study.

The research shows that the majority (67%) of former child combatants do not regret to have left the army. They described military life as risky and would prefer to be civilians. Key informants indicated that children enjoy reintegration activities as they help them retrieve their childhood and forget about the hardship in the military life.

The research also shows that the majority (58.3%) of former child combatants perceive that their living conditions are poor (refer to table 4.17 on page 50). Although they are happy to have left the army, they are not satisfied with their current living conditions. However, key informants revealed that reintegration agencies are satisfied with former child combatants' living conditions. This is an indication that child reintegration agencies assume that children's lives have been positively transformed while research evidence from the beneficiaries indicate the contrary.

Former child combatants who are not satisfied with their current living conditions cite the lack of resources including tool kits to put into practice the skills they learnt in vocational training centres. Others blame the government for not fulfilling its promises of providing assistance to the reintegration of former child

combatants. But the poor living conditions can also be explained by the fact that most of former child combatants have a very low level of education, therefore tend to be involved in low-paid jobs.

The research sought to compare access to basic services in the army with the same in civilian life (please refer to table 4.18 on page 51). The majority of children reported that medical services, food, clothes and shelter were more accessible now than in the army. The majority (58.3%) of former child combatants said food was rarely accessible, and the majority (56, 7%) of them had rarely access to healthcare whenever needed. Access to food and medical care are among the basic rights of any human being.

Reintegration agencies help former child combatants meet their basic needs when they join the centres. Provision of accommodation, food, cloth, medical services is part of the assistance package to former child combatants. The majority (58%) of former child combatants felt safer when they returned home than when they were associated with the military.

Key informants and former child combatants underscored the need to have a follow up mechanism to "accompany" disarmed and demobilized child combatants in their communities. Such follow up mechanism would allow reintegration agencies, families and former child combatants to assess the reintegration process, and address any possible factors pulling children back to

military life. Poor living conditions as reported by former child combatants form a fertile ground for banditry and fresh recruitment of former child combatants into armed forces or groups.

CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the research findings, the conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations on the reintegration of former child combatants.

6.1 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The field research on factors determining the reintegration of former child combatants was conducted in the South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of Congo. The findings of the research are based on answers provided by 60 former child combatants and 20 key informants from child reintegration agencies.

The researcher found that most former child combatants were recruited by force to join the military between the age of 12 and 14 years. They were made to work as porters, cooks, spies, fighters, and concubines. They spent less than a year in reintegration centers, whilst the majority of children had spent between one and two years in military life. The socialization process in the military took longer than the time they spend to learn new skills and embrace civilian life.

The research shows that the majority of former child combatants are young with a very low level of education. Therefore, having missed secondary school, most of them mentioned vocational training as the most important factor to facilitate

their reintegration into civilian life. Reintegration agencies provide training to former child combatants to assist them acquire practical skills in mechanic, carpentry, masonry, farming, tailoring, small industry and drama. However, many former child combatants were not satisfied with the vocational training courses offered to them. This is an indication that the content of the training was not necessarily driven or informed by a proper training needs assessment.

Although counseling is a key factor in the reintegration process, reintegration agencies admitted that counseling services were lacking. This does not facilitate the transition from military to civilian life. Key informants indicated the need for professional counseling staff to assist children overcome traumatic experience they might have had as child soldiers.

The study findings indicate that reintegration of former child combatants should prioritize the sensitization of families, children in the community and the rest of community members in order to reduce stigmatization and marginalization of former child combatants. The research found that communities that were sensitized by reintegration agencies demonstrated a higher level of acceptance of former child combatants than those who were not sensitized.

Reintegration agencies stressed the need for the Government to invest resources into reintegration activities for children who were associated with the

military as an important factor to consider. Such resources would also benefit other vulnerable children in the community.

The social reintegration of former child combatants who are either orphans or separated from their families is a major challenge. Such children do not reintegrate civilian life in their direct family environment. Key informants indicated that a foster family care system is being used as a temporary measure to reduce the level of isolation that the majority of former child combatants feel. The reintegration of such former child combatants will heavily rely on Government's welfare policies or on continued humanitarian assistance.

However, the research revealed that family support was a crucial factor that helped some children in their social reintegration process. Most children who returned to their own families were warmly welcomed home.

The researcher found negative perceptions towards former girl combatants, who often face marginalization, stigmatization and rejection for their past association with the military. Girls who returned home with children they bore with soldiers faced more problems in the communities. This limits their ability to interact with others in the community.

Reintegration agencies stated that economic activities are an avenue towards self-reliance. This explains why all former child combatants expressed the need

to be involved in an income generating activity. The researcher found that all the girls trained in tailoring were working and therefore more economically integrated than the boys.

The research shows that the majority of former child combatants do not regret to have left the army. However, they said they live in poor conditions, even though generally, those conditions are better than the life they had in the military.

6.2. CONCLUSIONS

The research findings indicated that most former child combatants do not feel fully reintegrated into the society. They live in poor economic and social conditions. They were not all consulted on the type of training provided to them by UN Agencies, international and local NGOs involved in the reintegration process.

Informants expressed a sense of disappointment with the lack of government resources allocated to reintegration programs. The research revealed that reintegration agencies overemphasized the role of vocational training to provide former child combatants with practical skills. However, this leaves out younger children in need of formal education.

The research also revealed that reintegration agencies and their activities gave hope to children formerly associated with the military. Many of them said they do

not regret to have left the military life. The majority of children found jobs and are involved in fishing, tailoring, mechanic, masonry, carpentry and small trade. Generally former child combatants who returned to their own families were accepted and provided with the needed emotional and financial support to reintegrate in civilian life.

The research findings indicate that there are various factors that have a positive influence on the reintegration process. They include a clear government policy on reintegration; the provision of formal education or practical skills through vocational training programs respecting children's expectations; in-depth-sensitization of communities, families, and other children in the larger communities; access to job opportunities for trained former child combatants; provision of counseling services and special attention to former girl combatants who face stigmatization and marginalization in the communities.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.3 Recommendations to policy makers

The research findings indicate that former child combatants were not satisfied with the training provided to them. To be effective, reintegration programs should be centered on the aspirations of former child combatants who are the target groups. The provision of tool kits and assistance in terms of micro-credits schemes would enable graduates of vocational training centres to practice the new skills and knowledge they acquired after leaving the army.

According to the study findings, many former child combatants were not satisfied with their living conditions, while officials from child protection agencies expressed their satisfaction about former child combatants' living conditions. The difference in perceptions demonstrates that child reintegration agencies do not know much about former child combatants who left their centers. It is therefore crucial for reintegration agencies to design and implement a follow up mechanism to assess the actual – not perceived- living conditions of those who benefited from their programs.

In addition, reintegration agencies should review the duration of re-socialization process to ensure that former child soldiers spend more time unlearning what they went through in the military.

The majority of former child combatants did not have access to counseling services. They recognized the importance of such services in helping them to cope with possible violent behavior and overcome the memory of atrocities they witnessed in the military. Prayers, traditional songs, psychosocial support and an interaction between community leaders and former child combatants could be used to help the latter handle trauma and feel part of the rest of children in the community.

The researcher also found that most former child combatants had low level of formal education. The majority did not complete their secondary school education. They mostly rely on vocational training where the majority spends less than a year in learning skills requiring manual efforts. This negatively affects their chance to have well competitive and well - paid jobs. It is therefore crucial that relevant government departments, UN agencies, international and local NGOs expand the scope of learning opportunities offered to children to increase their chance of being economic self-reliant. Expanding the horizon of the trainees could also include *inter alia* providing training on information technology, which has a huge potential job market.

6.3.2 Recommendation for further research

The research findings indicated that small number of disarmed and demobilized child combatants was still interested in the military life. They are likely to accept any return to the army should they be approached by leaders of armed groups still operating in some parts of Eastern DRC. Therefore, there is need for further social research to (a) capture the extent of re-recruitment of formerly demobilized child soldiers; (b) understand the motives of such children in order to develop mechanisms preventing their return to military life.

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APPENDIX 1 : LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Sir/Madam,

Ref.: Letter of introduction

My name is Jean N. Lokenga. I am a student at the University of Nairobi, Kenya. I am carrying out a study on the reintegration of former child soldiers in the South Kivu Province to complete my M.A research in Sociology, University of Nairobi in Kenya. I would appreciate your collaboration and assistance in sharing your experience and knowledge on this topic in order to support the work of those designing and implementing reintegration programs for former child soldiers. The information to be collected will be used for academic purposes and will be treated as confidential.

Sincerely yours,

Jean N. Lokenga

APPENIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR FORMER CHILD COMBATANTS

A. Background information

1. Age----------

2. Gender 1. Female ☐ 2. Male ☐

3. Family status

   1. The child lives with parents ☐
   2. The child is separated from his/her family ☐
   3. Orphan ☐

4. Marital status

   1. Single ☐
   2. Married ☐
   3. Divorced/Separated ☐
   4. Widow ☐

5. Education level

   1. Total number of years completed in school ----------
   2. Total number of years in vocational training ----------
   3. Level
      a) Never attended school ☐
      b) Primary school ☐
      c) Secondary school ☐
      d) University ☐
      e) Vocational training ☐

6. Do you have any occupation? 1. ☐ 2. ☐

If yes, which one?----------

B. Transition from military to civilian life

7. At which age did you join the army?----------
8. How many years did you stay in the army?----------
9. Please explain the reasons why you join the army.----------
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10. Do you regret to have left the army?

    1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

    Please explain your answer----------

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11. Did you receive any counseling services in the transit center after leaving the army?

    1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

12. If yes, please describe counseling related activities that were organized for you in the transit center?

---

13. If you responded yes to question No 11, how would describe your level of satisfaction with regards to the quality of counseling services received?

    1. Not satisfied ☐
    2. Satisfied ☐
    ☐

3. Very satisfied

Please give reasons for your answer----------

---

14. Did you have access to any type of education after leaving the army?

1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

15. If yes, did the type of education you received correspond to your expectations?

1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

Please explain your answer----------

C. Social and economic reintegration

16. How did your family members react when you returned home?----------
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17. Did you receive any support from your family to facilitate your reintegration into the civilian life?

1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

Please explain your answer ----------

18. How do other children in the community perceive former child combatants? --

19. Are you currently involved in any economic activities?

1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

Please give reasons for your answer

20. How would you describe the living conditions of former child combatants?

21. How would you compare your living conditions in the army and after leaving the army? (Choose relevant answers in the table below):

	In the army	After leaving the army
1. Medical services	Easily accessible---------- Accessible---------- Rarely accessible---------- Not accessible---------	Easily accessible---------- Accessible---------- Rarely accessible---------- Not accessible---------
2. **Food**	Easily accessible---------- Accessible---------- Rarely accessible---------- Not accessible--------- In the army	Easily accessible---------- Accessible---------- Rarely accessible---------- Not accessible---------
3. **Clothes**	Easily accessible---------- Accessible---------- Rarely accessible---------- Not accessible---------	Easily accessible---------- Accessible---------- Rarely accessible---------- Not accessible---------
4. **Shelter or housing**	Easily accessible---------- Accessible---------- Rarely accessible---------- Not accessible---------	Easily accessible---------- Accessible---------- Rarely accessible---------- Not accessible---------
5. **Protection or safety**	Provided ---------- Rarely provided-------- Not provided ----------	Provided ---------- Rarely provided-------- Not provided ----------

22. How would you describe the collaboration between your agency and the National DDR Commission, CONADER?

1. Poor ☐
2. Good ☐
3. Very good ☐
4. Excellent ☐

23. In your opinion, do reintegration activities respond to your expectations when left the army?

1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

24. If yes, how? ----------

---

25. If no, why? ----------

---

26. Is there a direct link between the type of education or training provided to former child combatants and job opportunities?

1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

Please give reasons to your answer----------

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27. Are you satisfied with your living conditions after reintegration process?

1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

Please give reasons to your answer----------

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28. Do former girl combatants face particular challenges during the reintegration process?

1. Yes ☐ 2. No. ☐

Please give reasons to your answer----------

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29. In your opinion, which factors would facilitate the reintegration of former girl combatants? ----------

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30. In your opinion, what are the challenges in reintegrating former child combatants?----------

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31. In your opinion, what should be done to facilitate the reintegration of former child

combatants into their community?----------

Thanks for your answers.

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR KEY INFORMANTS (CHILD REINTEGRATION AGENCIES)

1. Age ----------

2. Gender:

   1. Female ☐ 2. Male ☐

3. Occupation:----------

4. Job title:----------

5. Years of experience in child reintegration activities:

   1. 0-2 years ☐
   2. 3-5 years ☐
   3. 6-8 years ☐
   4. + 8 years ☐

6. How would you describe the collaboration between child reintegration agencies and National DDR Commission, CONADER?

   1. Poor ☐
   2. Good ☐
   3. Very good ☐
   4. Excellent ☐

7. In your opinion, do reintegration activities respond to children's expectations when left the army?

   1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

8. If yes, how? ----------

---

9. If no, why? ----------

---

10. In your opinion, is there a direct link between the type of education or training provided to former child combatants and job opportunities?

1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

Please give reasons to your answer----------

---

11. Are you satisfied with the living conditions of children who underwent reintegration process through your agency?

1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

Please give reasons to your answer----------

---

12. Do former girl combatants face particular challenges during the reintegration process?

1. Yes ☐ 2. No. ☐

Please give reasons to your answer----------

---

13. In your opinion, which factors would facilitate the reintegration of former girl combatants? ----------
---

---

14. What are the challenges in reintegrating former child combatants?----------
---

---

15. Which of the following factors facilitate the reintegration of former child combatants: (please tick the most appropriate):

    1. Level of coordination between child DDR agencies

        a) Very much ☐
        b) Much ☐
        c) Not much ☐
        d) Not at all ☐

    2. Resources dedicated to reintegration program

        a) Very much ☐
        b) Much ☐
        c) Not much ☐
        d) Not at all ☐

3. Follow up activities by reintegration agency

   a) Very much ☐
   b) Much ☐
   c) Not much ☐
   d) Not at all ☐

4. Family support to former child combatants

   a) Very much ☐
   b) Much ☐
   c) Not much ☐
   d) Not at all ☐

5. Formal or informal education provided to former child combatants

   a) Very much ☐
   b) Much ☐
   c) Not much ☐
   d) Not at all ☐

Thank you for your answers.

APPENDIX 4: MAP OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Map No. 4007 Rev. 8 UNITED NATIONS
January 2004

Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section