

The saturation of firearms in the conflict areas of Indonesia has led to a refugee population of more than one million people, extensive economic damage, inadequate medical and educational services and the breakdown of the legal system. The uncontrolled availability of arms and explosives in Indonesia is threatening individual and state security, undermining development, and contributing to the increase in violent crime and conflict. Reducing the number

Curbing the **Demand** for **Small Arms** **Southeast Asia**

Focus on

A summary report from the workshop held on 26–31 May 2002, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

of small arms circulating in Indonesia is very difficult because there is no accurate information on the number of arms legal or illegal that move in and out of the country. National gun control laws are also alarmingly weak and thus facilitate trafficking. The rise in conflict and the increasing availability of arms has had a devastating impact on civilian populations. The breakdown of both law and order has marked communities with death, disability, psychosocial trauma and economic degradation. Development has been reversed through the widespread destruction

The workshop was organised by the following organisations

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Special thanks to Ms. Susan Reesor for her work as the local organiser for the workshop. Her care and diligence was deeply appreciated.

About the sponsoring organisations

The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue undertakes considerable conflict mediation activities in Southeast Asia. In the process of this work, the Centre sees at close range the impact of small arms availability and misuse in undermining peace building, abusing human rights and impeding humanitarian assistance. The organisation seeks to complement these mediation efforts by identifying opportunities for advancing policy, research and action to curb the impacts of small arms. (For further information contact Cate Buchanan at cateb@hdcentre.org).

The Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva, has active programmes on disarmament and peace, human rights and refugees, and trade and development. In its small arms work, it seeks to strengthen international and regional processes for reducing the human impact of small arms violence. It works closely on small arms with the Quaker United Nations Office, New York, and other organisations, and as part of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA). (For further information contact David Atwood at datwood@quino.ch).

The Quaker International Affairs Programme, Southeast Asia, works to: enhance community security through people-to-people exchanges, civilian-military dialogues, enhancing peace movements, supporting local capacities for non-violence, and encouraging people's participation in regional security dialogues; encourage greater ethnic and inter-religious tolerance and respect through face-to-face meetings and dialogues in support of peace and greater justice; and promote leadership through conferences and seminars. (For further information contact Bob and Helen Clarke at SEAQIAR@aol.com).

The Working Group on Weapons Reduction is a coalition of local and international organisations and individuals who envision Cambodia as a place of peace and safety. It aims to transform the culture of violence, where the use of weapons to solve problems prevails, to one where problems are solved peacefully; ensure that Cambodian civil society has an accepted and recognised role in local small arm and light weapons reductions work; and ensure the Cambodian government demonstrates a strong commitment to implementing a strategic plan to reduce and manage small arms and light weapons. (For further information contact Neb Sinthay at wgwr@bigpond.com.kh).

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Map of Southeast Asia



Courtesy of the General Libraries, the University of Texas

Preface

Reports of conferences come and go. Mostly they are valuable only as an historical record of what has taken place at a certain place and time and of use to few other than those who participated. By and large they end up on shelves and gather dust, only to be tossed away in some subsequent office cleaning. What do we hope will be different about this one? The workshop “Curbing the Demand for Small Arms: Focus on Southeast Asia” took place in May 2002, a year ago. Of what possible use could a report be now, so long after the completion of this event?

The small arms demand workshop in Cambodia represented the third in a series of workshops which have attempted to develop cumulative understanding of factors which drive the demand for small arms and of approaches which appear to offer useful directions for the mitigation of the misuse of small arms. There is, so far, very little literature and very little systematic research on this dimension of the small arms *problématique*. While drawing attention to some of the unique features of the Southeast Asia as a region and giving emphasis to factors which were new or less emphasised in previous workshops, the experience of the workshop in Cambodia also provided further evidence of common factors and approaches which appear to cut across cultural and geographical settings. It is our hope that a fairly systematic record of what took place in Cambodia will, therefore, be an additional founding stone of what is developing as an important field of inquiry.

In the report we have also sought to explain the methodology used for eliciting information and for providing a rich environment of exchange among participants. We are certain that this experience has been useful to those who took part. We hope that its documentation will also be of use to others, both for the information contained in the report, but also as an approach to inductive research.

We believe that the development of holistic approaches to reducing the effects of armed violence in our world will depend on how well we understand the forces involved. The approach which these workshops have taken—of drawing on the actual experience of community practitioners and affected parties and of pointing to the critical involvement of communities in the evolution of policy approaches—represents a key dimension of this. You will find in the report much richness in the statements that came from the participants themselves. The small arms picture has been further filled in and future work will be that much more informed because of this event. By widely disseminating this report, we trust that it will be of use to policy shapers and practitioners alike.

Cate Buchanan, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue

David Atwood, Quaker United Nations Office

Section I: Background to the workshop

The human impact of the widespread availability and misuse of small arms and light weapons is becoming increasingly well documented. Much of the policy response to the small arms problem to date, however, has been focused on regulating the supply and transfer of small arms. The workshop “Curbing the Demand for Small Arms; Focus on Southeast Asia,” which took place in May 2002 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, was organised around the premise that reducing the negative human impacts of these weapons also requires efforts to address the factors that drive the flow of small arms and light weapons and lead to their misuse, the so-called “demand” factors. Through this workshop the organisers sought to make a contribution both to current understanding of small arms demand-related factors and to shaping an agenda for action.

This workshop built consciously on earlier work initiated by the Quaker United Nations Offices (QUNO) in New York and Geneva. Two workshops organised by QUNO took the earliest comparative looks at the small arms demand reduction experience in different settings. These were “Shrinking Small Arms: A Seminar on Lessening the Demand for Weapons” (November 1999, Durban, South Africa) and “Curbing the Demand for Small Arms: Lessons in East Africa and the Horn of Africa” (December 2000, Nairobi, Kenya).¹ This work was followed by two other international conferences focusing on “demand” issues: the Project Ploughshares Conference on “Small Arms Demand Reduction” (March 2001, Toronto) and the Bonn International Centre for Conversion Conference on “Curbing the Demand Side of Small Arms in the IGAD States: Potentials and Pitfalls” (April 2001, Addis Ababa).

Like the earlier regional workshops in Africa the Cambodia event had several goals:

- to further highlight practical experiences of violence reduction initiatives in different parts of the world;
- to advance lessons learned from these initiatives;
- to explore methodologies for action-oriented research and programming; and
- to enhance the development of compelling policy options to reduce the impacts of armed violence and enhance the safety and security of people.

The Cambodia workshop was organised by a new consortium that included the Quaker United Nations Office-Geneva (QUNO), the Quaker International Affairs Representatives - Southeast Asia (SEAQIAR), the Working Group for Weapons Reduction (WGWR), and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HDC). These groups came together to build on their mutual concerns of conflict prevention and peace building and to throw a spotlight on the issues driving demand for small arms in Southeast Asia.

Why focus on Southeast Asia?

Southeast Asia has been largely overlooked in the growing international awareness directed at the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. This diverse region and its neighbours—South Asia and the Pacific Island States—all experience

1. Co-organised with Project Ploughshares, the SALIGAD Project of the Bonn International Center for Conversion, and the African Peace Forum (see Appendix 3 for how to obtain reports of these workshops)

significant threats to human security as a result of the unrestricted, cross-border flow of arms, which fuels armed violence, undermines sustainable development and obstructs comprehensive peace and security.

In Southeast Asia the flourishing legal and illegal trade in small arms and light weapons and their widespread availability provide the tools for a diverse range of actors to resolve conflict through armed violence rather than negotiation; facilitate transnational criminal activity such as the trafficking of people, drugs and natural resources; and destabilize peace processes and long-term war recovery efforts.

Participation and methodology

For this workshop, the organisers followed the successful approach of the Durban and Nairobi events. They invited practitioners from a range of settings around the world, and from a variety of types of violence reduction projects, and encouraged them to compare and contrast their experiences. In Phnom Penh thirty-three people from diverse organisations and constituencies, including faith groups, conflict prevention, human rights, sustainable development, women's rights, disarmament and children's rights advocates, gathered for the five-day experience. Following an established practice, several programmes—Kenya, South Africa, Brazil, Cambodia, the USA, as well as the SALIGAD project in East Africa—that had participated in earlier events were invited to share their accumulating experience at the Phnom Penh workshop. In addition, perspectives and experience from other regions outside Southeast Asia were provided by new participants from Sri Lanka, Colombia, Jordan, and the Solomon Islands. Lessons learned from the countries of Southeast Asia itself were central to the workshop and the perspectives of the participants from the Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, and Indonesia added richness and depth to the overall experience.

Some threads from Durban and Nairobi

The workshops in Durban and Nairobi attempted to identify both the factors that drive the demand for small arms and the approaches that appear successful in reducing it. These workshops showed that, in one sense, each setting is unique. Therefore, for programmes or policies to be successful, they must be based on a thorough understanding of the cultural, anthropological, economic, and political dynamics in each community. In addition, some necessary distinctions need to be made:

- between rural and urban settings;
- between those settings heavily affected by conflicts across borders and those that are not;
- between settings in which states are fundamentally weak or “failed” and those that are not;
- between those emerging from periods of violent conflict and others where the essence of the problem is poverty and criminality;
- between those which seem to be about inter-group tensions and those that have other roots.

These workshops also noted the inextricable relationships between “demand” and “supply” of small arms and light weapons.

The two previous workshops also drew attention to a number of common underlying factors which can be seen to drive demand in many different settings. These factors include:

- poverty/economic disparities;
- lack of opportunity for youth;
- inadequate public safety;
- police corruption and brutality;
- abuse of fundamental human rights;
- cultures of impunity;
- inadequate post-conflict programmes for disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration of ex-combatants;
- cultural attitudes; and
- identity issues.

In addition, the earlier workshops highlighted a number of approaches which contribute to violence reduction and lessen the demand for small arms. These appear to be valid across different geographic and conflict settings. These include:

- the critical nature of poverty alleviation and the creation of opportunity, particularly for youth;
- fully engaging affected communities as “stakeholders” in the creation of effective local policy responses;
- developing community/NGO/government collaborative efforts;
- the reform of police and criminal justice systems and the utility of community policing schemes;
- making use, where appropriate, of traditional practices for transforming/resolving conflict; and
- the importance of research in helping local programmes to be well-grounded in factual information, more aware of the particular dynamic relationships between different factors and better prepared to develop appropriate local and national policies.

Through presentations, structured group discussions, a “field” experience, and informal exchange, the Cambodia workshop sought to add another layer to the understanding of these “demand” related factors and approaches, this time from the particular perspectives of Southeast Asia.

Specific aims for the workshop

The workshop aimed to facilitate a dialogue which would:

- contribute greater understanding to the growing field of analysis about what drives people to possess and use weapons, and the practical and policy options possible to further action on this essential part of the small arms problématique;
- explore “lessons learned” from previous gatherings in the context of the particular small arms realities in Southeast Asia, including analysing strategies and processes at the community level which aim at or can be seen to have an effect on the demand for small arms and the reduction of violence;

Key questions underpinning discussions throughout the workshop

- What propels violence in your community or country?
- What shifts conflict into armed violence?
- What strategies do you use at a local level to address the issues of armed violence?
- What can be done to highlight and reduce the levels of this violence and the impacts of small arms availability and use?

- initiate a ‘conversation’ within the region about the availability and misuse of weapons in a Southeast Asian context, and what can be done to tackle the challenge of small arms proliferation;
- make a contribution towards the goal of transforming the understanding of small arms proliferation in Southeast Asia from its present definition as a transnational crime and national security issue to that of an urgent human security challenge;
- provide an opportunity for NGOs from both within and outside Southeast Asia to exchange ideas, information and to build networks of collaboration and further enrich the growing international social movement spearheaded by the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA); and enhance the development of a network of small arms NGOs in Southeast Asia itself;
- define the factors propelling demand for weapons misuse and abuse as critical human security issues requiring local, national, global solutions; and
- identify research and advocacy gaps, which should be undertaken to provide evidence of the scale and impact of small arms proliferation globally and the types of local, national and regional actions required of governments and other actors.

Section II: Experiences from practitioners and activists

Efforts to reduce armed violence: updates from previous participants

One of the key aims of this workshop was to build on the findings of previous ones in this series. A number of groups that had participated in previous workshops were invited to Cambodia. These representatives were asked to reflect on current work in the light of the previous workshops as well as to provide new information about the work of their groups.

Joseph Dube National Organiser

Gun Free South Africa, South Africa

The development of Gun Free South Africa (GFSA) as a key actor in the struggle to reduce the influence of weapons in South African society continues. GFSA has had to struggle to develop alternative societal views of guns. Guns have played an important

cultural role in the white community in South Africa and they continue to be seen as important for protection. In the black community guns have been symbols of liberation, at first political and now economic. In some sectors, they are also seen as male virility symbols, thus as ways of attracting women.

“The whole issue of terrorism is putting the focus back on state security and away from human security”

Joseph Dube, GFSA, South Africa

GFSA pioneered the idea of “firearm free zones,” with an emphasis on schools at the start. With the passage of the Firearms Control Act in 2000, GFSA was awarded the contract for developing models and materials for advancing firearm free zones. Civil society has not only been involved in the evolution of the Firearms Control Act but is also seen as important in its implementation. Promoting firearm free zones involves working on attitudes to guns and needs to include various sectors of society, including the police and the media. It also involves coming to understand who brings guns to school, for example, and why.

Developing new life skills and alternatives to violence is part of the work. The approach has been to develop pilot projects, so that schools can be properly prepared, stakeholders fully involved, and police not over-stretched. In a culture which discourages young people from questioning their elders, the GFSA process has been one of helping young people to question authority by engaging them in the development of alternatives to traditional attitudes to guns and traditional approaches to violence. GFSA has in this respect become a “service provider” to government. Attempts are being made to extend this work to drinking places and other settings. GFSA is also developing an analysis of best practice in communities for controlling firearms and reducing demand.

The new Firearms Control Act (2002) carries stiff penalties for bringing weapons into gun free zones. More broadly, GFSA is working on greater monitoring of the purchase of weapons, for example arguing that those who have a history of domestic violence should not be allowed to possess a firearm. The effectiveness of the legislation will depend on its enforcement. The South African example demonstrates that there is an important place for civil society in ensuring that laws are followed and that other processes are strengthened which can reduce the demand for arms.

For more information on Gun Free South Africa, visit www.gca.org.za

Gary Gillespie Programme Director

American Friends Service Committee, Baltimore, USA

Baltimore is a “once great city.” Today, while the urban population declines, the suburbs grow. The city has become a concentration camp for poor people. Violence is endemic, with 300 homicides per year and three times that many injuries. Drug addiction and unemployment are high. The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) programme in Baltimore felt it necessary to transfer its focus from international issues to the “war that is going on in our city.”

“Listening” work undertaken showed that people had serious concerns about gun violence. Yet the state of Maryland has some of the strongest gun control laws in the USA. In the programme it was recognised that we needed to do more community development and organising to turn the culture of violence towards a culture of peace. Solving the problems of violence meant tackling its root causes through creating jobs and economic opportunity, repairing the fabric of communities as a whole through healing projects and tackling crime. Much work has been done in schools on conflict management and community-building.

Participation by the AFSC in the Durban and Nairobi workshops helped us to learn to “dovetail” community development with international approaches. We realised that we need to learn from other people around the world. These workshops helped us to realise that disarmament is part of community development. We can learn about how to tackle the demand for weapons from different approaches in other parts of the world.

Our projects are developed by listening to the expressions of people’s needs. There is a need to use a public health approach,

using the lessons from anti-tobacco campaigning. A traditional “military” approach by the police has had little effect. A holistic method shows, for example, the self-defeating policies of the police in selling confiscated guns back to the public in order to buy new weapons. This is increasingly not allowed.

We have a range of new projects aimed at stopping urban sprawl, dispersing concentrations of poverty, developing a “reinvestment” loan fund. We seek to work with gun violence victims and their families through bereavement centres and trauma workshops. We have held a “hip-hop” concert, with poetry and music and positive messages about dealing with guns and economic justice. Our approaches gained the attention of government and the Governor’s office hired us to do a “listening” project to solicit community ideas on their needs.

“There’s a war going on in our city. It’s necessary to work on the war that is local”

Gary Gillespie, AFSC, Baltimore, USA

We have sought to build our links with the international community by such activities as taking a large group of community organisers to New York in July 2001 for the UN Conference on Small Arms. [Following the May 2002 workshop, the AFSC hosted a conference, “Building The Beloved Community: A Conference to Decrease Gun Violence On Our Earth” in September 2002. Participants included activists, and grassroots organisers from around the US, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Participants stressed the need to tackle the impact of trauma on communities and a need for healing.]

For more information on the American Friends Service Committee, visit www.afsc.org

Rukia Subow

Pastoralists for Peace and Development Initiative

North Eastern Province, Kenya

The Pastoralists for Peace and Development Initiative (PPDI) works in the nomadic setting of Northeast Kenya. The 300,000 Somali people who are pastoralists form a distinct language and cultural area in the part of Kenya bordering Somalia. In addition, there are some 120,000 refugees in the area. PPDI was formed in 1998 in response to increasing clan conflict in the area arising from competition for scarce resources, particularly water and firewood. An additional factor was the increasing availability of small arms in the area from cross-border flows from Somalia. A range of political, economic and social issues underlying the conflicts remain unsolved. Porous borders, important for trade, are abused by arms traffickers.

A variety of factors fuel small arms demand in the region:

- the lack of security means people must protect themselves and their property, especially cattle, which are the economic backbone of these communities;
- scarce resources and attempts to control access;
- clan feuds;
- politically-motivated violence;
- poverty and lack of opportunity for youth; and
- easy availability makes arms a temptation.

Since the Nairobi workshop, PPDI has formed “peace and development committees” in each district. Elders and women were particularly helpful in this. We came up with our own structures. In particular, we formed committees at cross-border areas. At first, the Kenyan government officials in the area did not wish to acknowledge the importance of this work, but they have begun to accept these civil society initiatives, as they recognise that the government simply lacks the resources to control the region. The government now provides vehicles and security personnel to reach the communities.

Since the formation of these committees, violence at the clan level has been reduced. We talk about disarmament; however, pastoralists are reluctant to give up the protection they feel they need for their livestock without some guarantees in return. Nevertheless, from January to May 2002 5,000 guns have been collected by the elders and communities. The guns are mainly owned by the clans, so we talk to the main “gatekeepers” of the clans. We try to offer schools and health centres in exchange.

PPDI has formed “peace clubs” in the schools, as a way of seeking to overcome the cultures of violence. We have also found that indigenous ways of solving problems

are more effective than those forcefully imposed by governments. We have assisted this, for example, by enabling the traditional “blood money” system to work by raising money to help those who are unable to pay victims because they have no livestock left. PDDI has also been influential in ensuring gender equity, asking that compensation paid to men and women victims be the same.

Our work can help, but these initiatives will be limited so long as arms continue to flow into Kenya from Ethiopia and Somalia. Regional political approaches are required. The Nairobi Declaration at least recognises this need and points to steps to be taken. [The *Nairobi Declaration On The Problem Of The Proliferation Of Illicit Small Arms And Light Weapons In The Great Lakes Region And The Horn Of Africa*, was signed on March 15, 2000 by the representatives of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.]

For the text of the Nairobi declaration and other related documents visit www.ploughshares.ca/CONTENT/BUILD%20PEACE/NairobiDeclaroo.html or www.globalpolicy.org/security/smallarms/regional/nairobi.htm

Jacqueline Sullivan

Viva Rio, Brazil

Although there is no official war in Brazil, the statistics we are facing up against are those of a country at war. In 2000, more than 42,000 people died in Brazil as a result of gun violence. In the Rio de Janeiro metropolitan area, firearms were responsible for 59% of the deaths of young people last year. In the city of Rio de Janeiro, the death rate was 40 out of every 100,000 inhabitants, which is seven times higher than the United States. Finally, these numbers are only getting worse, with the number of armed assaults followed by death increasing by 20% in the last year.

Viva Rio has focused on reducing violence, with a special focus on young people. This requires addressing many factors, and at all levels from local to national. It also means working across class barriers. Seeking to reduce “demand” requires proposing multiple solutions. Since the violence in Rio is often police violence, curbing the demand for arms means, for example, reforming the police and penitentiary systems and democratization of the justice system. The underlying issues of poverty and lack of opportunities must be addressed as well through investment in social and economic reforms, opportunities for education and employment for all and the urbanization of poor neighbourhoods.

An example of Viva Rio’s multiple strategy approach can be seen in the pilot project in Rio’s Cantagalo, Pavão and Pavãozinho favelas (shantytowns). In this complex of three poor communities we have employed community policing, conflict resolution, free legal aid and youth opportunity strategies. These favelas are controlled by drug trafficking and suffered from daily gunfire and extreme violence. In the Cantagalo-Pavão-Pavãozinho favelas, the state government has turned over public security to community-based approaches. This has included the training of a community police force, the creation of a community security council made up of residents of the favela and a free telephone line for residents to report police abuse.

Once the trust of the police was earned, Viva Rio began to develop dozens of social projects with the city and state governments to create study, employment and recreational alternatives for young people in order to get them away from the tempting drug trade.

The results have been very positive. In a little more than a year, the guns have been silenced, drug use among young people has dropped, and kids attend school, sport centers, and work without guns. Since the implementation of the community police on September 23, 2001 there has not been one murder in the community, and the number of violent conflicts has also reduced dramatically in what was one of the most violent favelas in all of Rio de Janeiro. The image of the police has been changed, through the use of preventive policing rather than repressive policing approaches.

The community security council is essential to the development of trust between the community and the police. It is made up of community leaders and other trusted members of the community who can identify with the local problems. Such councils are also a safe place for residents to report inappropriate activities of the police.

The novelty of this work is that the state has in effect handed over security control to Viva Rio. The new administration of the Rio de Janeiro state government has decided to use the Community Policing and Social work pilot- project in Cantagalo-Pavão-Pavãozinho as a model. This joint effort of Viva Rio and the Rio de Janeiro State Government will be replicated in other favelas in the state, (there are more than two million people living in favelas in Rio de Janeiro.) One potential problem is that the violence just moves to the next community. Multiple policing authorities—military, civil and federal—also creates confusion and overlap. But the results so far are remarkable.

Viva Rio has many programmes and incorporates many different approaches. In its youth work, entertainment, music, and sports as well as vocational skill training are all used to create alternative images and new opportunities for young people. In the “Hip-Hop for Peace” project, Viva Rio organized a series of hip-hop and popular music shows, during which guns were destroyed, in the favelas and prisons of Rio. The musicians, most of whom were born in favelas and later became famous, are very effective in transmitting the message that crime does not pay, that children should not be used for drug trafficking, and help generate support in favour of disarmament.

Churches have been vital participants in voluntary weapons collection projects. In recent months, Viva Rio has taken the initial steps toward the reinstatement of the voluntary weapons collection campaign by creating a network of 50 churches that will serve as collection centres when the campaign begins.

The “Be Gun Free, It’s Your Weapon or Me” campaign has attempted to change attitudes about being armed and emphasized the role of women in convincing men to disarm. TV spots starring eight very popular actresses asking men to say “no” to guns aired on Brazil’s main television channel for two months, reaching millions of viewers.

Viva Rio also uses public gun destructions to influence public opinion. In June 2001, Viva Rio organized the world’s largest simultaneous weapons destruction, when a bulldozer crushed 100,000 guns along a beachfront walkway. In July 2002, a second public destruction of 10,000 guns was held in front of the state governor’s palace.

Viva Rio also campaigns seriously on the national level for improved legislation and the democratisation of public security and arms control policies. We also seek to bring information from disarmament activities in other parts of the world to Brazil and other parts of Latin America, by translating materials into Portuguese and Spanish. Viva Rio has joined with other NGOs in the MERCOSUR region to create a new disarmament website www.desarme.org to fill the gap in information available in Spanish and Portuguese.

For more information about Viva Rio, visit www.vivario.org.br

Efforts to reduce armed violence: other national and regional experiences

A further aim of the workshop was to reach out to countries and regions not a part of previous workshops, in order to give new areas exposure to comparative demand-side work and to add new insights and perspectives from other settings.

Paul Stucky

Paz y Acción Noviolenta-Justapaz, Bogotá, Colombia

Our work in Justapaz does not focus specifically on small arms. But much of what we do has to do with reducing demand for small arms. Violence in Colombia is not only material but also economic. 60% of the population of Colombia is under the poverty line. One half of the population is under the age of 18. The concentration of land resources and wealth in the hands of few is increasing. This is closely related to the issues of armed violence in our country.

The current armed conflict has been going on in Colombia for more than 50 years. Armed violence tends to take place where there are major resources—water, petroleum, electricity, biological. Some 35,000 people are killed per year, perhaps 15% as a result of the political conflict and the rest due to crime and non-politicised social conflict. The social consequences include major population displacements, the breakdown of community and social fabric, victimisation and the planting of seeds of revenge. The judicial system is perceived not to work effectively. With impunity estimated in 97% of cases that reach the courts, the judicial system is not seen as an alternative for problem-solving. Exacting power with weapons is seen as a way to become a leader. There is forced recruitment into the paramilitaries and the armed opposition groups. Because of drugs, the USA in its “Plan Colombia” is pouring millions of dollars in military assistance into Colombia. Using weapons to deal with drugs is not working, and drug production and eradication by fumigation is destroying the environment.

In our work, we seek to describe clearly the particular challenges facing Colombian society, to uncover the motivation or value which may underlie this challenge, and to identify positive actions which can be taken in response. For example, there is the challenge of a state that is absent or marked by corruption in which people use the state for their own interests. However, underlying this is a positive value of self-reliance, of taking care of oneself and one’s people. Actions that redirect this value constructively included training and facilitating citizen participation initiatives in local government, promoting alternative economic ventures at the community level, and retraining urban militia as mediators. (See the end of Section VI for a fuller description of this approach.)

On the question of land reform, there have been provisions in the law for 50–60 years, but the opposite has happened. The armed conflict has led to a “counter-reform”, with an estimated 2.5 million people displaced from their lands and homes. There are new laws for the legalisation of land rights, but law and justice don’t always go together. There is movement by some who have been displaced to return native lands and reclaim them, and this is happening at times with the support of government and the churches.

We have sought to address the problem of young people and their involvement in the paramilitaries and armed opposition groups in some ways. These include training in nonviolence and consultation on legal alternatives to military conscription. We are part of the Coalition to End the Use of Child Soldiers, which seeks to provide

training, to redirect young people to employment and educational alternatives to joining armed groups, and to work for full compliance with national and international law against the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. We try to help families to relocate in order to help young people out of the pressure they feel from these groups.

We face many difficulties in this work. Often we tend to be short-term oriented; violence perpetrators are planning years ahead and we need to do the same. It is easy to lose faith; keeping hope alive is essential to making real change.

William Knox

Peace and Community Action, Sri Lanka

The problem of small arms in Sri Lanka cannot just be traced to the current armed conflict—there are multiple causes. The arming of Sri Lanka began in the early 1970s when the Government armed its supporters within the majority Sinhalese community

to put down the uprisings of students and others. In the mid to late 1970s, arms began to flow into the country to militants from the Tamil minority, frustrated with the seeming ineffectiveness of non-violent methods for improving their situation within Sri Lanka. In the mid 1980s the Tamil threat increased. Arms were distributed to home guard units, and paramilitary groups were formed. In the late 1980s there was further disruption within the Sinhalese community, including brutal

repression. The result was a further arming of populations. In the last decade there has been a further proliferation of arms within the Sinhalese community, mainly through government supply.

The effects of this proliferation of arms manifest themselves in different ways today in Sri Lanka. Aside from the armed conflict itself, most deaths due to small arms happen within the Sinhalese community. In urban areas, this is mainly the result of criminal activity. In the rural areas, small arms are used in political conflicts. Arms caches are held by criminal gangs and political groups. Guns are widely available within the Sinhalese areas. Recent attempts of the government to call in guns met with little response, despite an amnesty.

The opposite is true in the Tamil areas. There is little civilian violence using small arms within Tamil areas because the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) exerts tough control over the Tamil community, using assassination and other methods for social control. Hence, most gun related deaths within the Tamil community are a result of conflict itself.

The cease-fire presents many challenges and opportunities for those working to establish sustainable peace in this war-torn country. Peace and Community Action has its origins in Quaker work in Sri Lanka, and is now run by Sri Lankans. We work in both Sinhalese and Tamil communities. We have constant meetings and visits. We find that it is effective to just go and see people on a regular basis. Much of our work is being done in the eastern province which has been the setting for most of the armed conflict.

“In the midst of this conflict, there is something that individuals can do . . . people’s own capacity must be highlighted . . . Actions initiated by, suggested by and devised by local people gave them hope”

William Knox, Peace and Community Action, Sri Lanka

Our work shows that even in the midst of conflict there are things that people can do. People's own capacity must be highlighted, and it is important to show they are doing things which matter. For example, two years ago, when the war was still raging, an agreement was facilitated between the Sri Lanka Army and the LTTE in the eastern province to only fire at each other and not at civilians, so that farmers could once again cultivate their fields. This lasted for six months. This action was initiated and devised by local people.

Since the cease-fire, the two communities have been working together. In this phase of cease-fire and hopefully progress towards a final political settlement, the challenge within the minority Tamil community is to transform itself from a guerrilla force into a democratic political force. In the majority Sinhalese community, there is a need to look at ways of reducing "demand" for small arms. We have begun talks with police to look at ways of reintroducing community policing, for example. We have also started pilot projects in schools to train students to be community peace builders as a way of breaking down barriers between the communities.

[Since this workshop, Peace and Community Action in Sri Lanka has begun a project entitled, "Community Action on Small Arms."]

Fr. Jack Aitore

Melanesian Brothers, Solomon Islands

The Solomon Islands in recent years have been heavily affected by ethnic tensions which have affected all aspects of life—economic, social, and political. A country of 409,000 people, predominantly Christian, the tension has arisen between the people of Guadalcanal and Malaita islands. A land availability problem and a general fear of domination by Malaitans have been at the root of the conflict between the two communities.

Attempts to resolve issues politically were felt to be inadequate by many people in Guadalcanal. Following elections in 1997, when Malaitans and Chinese got seats, groups in Guadalcanal decided to take up arms. The Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army launched a campaign to kill Malaitans. The Malaitan Eagle Force replied by raiding villages. The failure of the government to resolve the grievances of the two sides led to an escalation into armed conflict.

A cease-fire was followed by a peace agreement in 2001. This has worked to stop the violence and reduce tensions. But the new government is left with many problems to solve under the Townsville Peace Agreement, including disarming the militias and compensating people for lost property. Many guns are still in the hands of the militias making it hard to consolidate the peace, as a result the government has launched a gun turn-in campaign.

The Peace Monitoring Council has prepared a major campaign to promote gun collection, including information on how to turn weapons in and answers to commonly asked questions, such as "Won't others seek to attack us if we are not armed?" A deadline of May 31, 2002 was set for the amnesty period, after which people will be arrested for possessing a weapon.

The Melanesian Brothers played a major role in brokering the cease-fire. We literally put ourselves between the two sides. We presented ourselves to the two groups, stayed with them and counselled them. We didn't know if they would shoot us or not. As a

religious community we are much respected. As a spiritual advisor, this has been the greatest test of my faith, and a major source of strength to me.

In this post-conflict phase, criminal violence is a problem. Also, as the combatants have returned home, there has been an increase in murder, violence, theft, rape and reckless driving. Ten years ago, I never heard a gun in my country. Now we have many guns and much violence. It is not clear how well the amnesty will work or how able the government will be to enforce its will after May as police morale is low. We have been requested to help carry out the disarmament and have been commissioned to go out and collect guns. But the government has no real funds to carry out law and order work. Development programmes in all provinces will also be necessary and foreign assistance is greatly needed.

David Jackman

American Friends Service Committee, Amman, Jordan

The Middle East is a large and diverse area. The situation regarding the presence of uncontrolled small arms varies greatly. In general, the stronger the government control, the fewer the arms outside the control of the government (e.g., Iraq; Syria). The weaker central authority is, the more uncontrolled weapons there are (e.g., Lebanon; Yemen; Palestine). In Lebanon it is hard for confessional groups to leave the war behind knowing that large numbers of weapons are still present and in the hands of sectarian militias. In Yemen not only are there traditions of civilians holding arms, but the government has armed civilians and now needs help in getting the weapons back. In Palestine, it is difficult to see how, even if peace comes, it will be possible to move towards greater democracy when so many factions are armed. In more open societies like Egypt or Jordan, the majority of weapons are in the hands of police and soldiers, but there is some civilian possession. Israel, currently in an unofficial state of warfare, has large numbers of weapons in the hands of the police and military, but there are also large numbers in civilian hands.

In states across the region there are a number of common factors that are associated with widespread gun violence and the proliferation of small arms. These include extreme disparities in wealth; unemployment; illiteracy; a large population of young people; authoritarian governments; the presence of open warfare; unreconciled post-war animosities; government corruption and organised criminal networks.

There is a low level of awareness of small arms and light weapons issues in the region. Some governments are highly resistant to dealing with the issue, but in other states there is an expression of interest in civil society taking a role in small arms issues.

Given the extreme concerns about security in countries beset by ongoing warfare, it is unlikely that these societies can easily declare themselves as having a *problem* with small arms. Nevertheless, even in these polarized situations, it is possible to consider some limited movement forward by civil society and interested governments. For example, public opinion research focusing on the perception of gun violence, the presence of weapons, personal experience with gun violence, etc, could be conducted. Research and awareness programmes on small arms could be considered. In addition, there could be efforts to approach demand issues that are not directly concerned with gun violence. For example, efforts towards job creation, better conflict management in families and communities, development of sports and other youth

programmes, and promotion of projects relating individual attitudes to the wider culture of violence might be initiated.

Traditional societies and their conflict resolution practices are much in evidence in some parts of the region. There may be some ways of working with these structures to more effectively promote safe gun practices (e.g., eliminating celebratory gun use at weddings and funerals) and looking at support for traditional community systems for resolving conflicts and policing neighbourhoods.

[For the reports from specialized regional seminars organised later in 2002 by AFSC on these issues, see the references in the “Resources” section in Appendix 3.]

Small arms demand issues and ideas for mitigation: the experience of the SALIGAD project

The research work of the SALIGAD Project was one of the main focuses of the Nairobi workshop in 2000, of which the Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC) was one of the co-sponsors. BICC organised a further workshop on “Curbing the demand side of small arms in the IGAD states: potentials and pitfalls” in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on April 23–26, 2001. The presentation of the SALIGAD Project made by Kiflemariam Gebre-Wold in Cambodia is featured at some length here because it represents perhaps the most complete small arms demand project to date.

Kiflemariam Gebre-Wold

Bonn International Centre for Conversion, Germany

SALIGAD was a joint project of the Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC) and the International Resource Group on Disarmament and Security in the Horn of Africa (IRG). It was created in mid 2000. SALIGAD stands for “small arms and light weapons in the IGAD countries” (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda). Its work is based on the following assumption: unless you understand why people seek arms, it is difficult to know how to tackle disarmament.

In the midst of conflict and failing social and political structures, people in the Horn of Africa are turning to small arms for protection. SALIGAD supports indigenous capacity to analyse the demand side of the small arms equation in the Horn. In doing so, it assists in the development of relevant policies. It presents options for controlling and managing small arms within the reach of the people suffering from violence. SALIGAD’s work is thus complementary to initiatives to control supply and to restrict access to small arms and light weapons.

The goals of the project include facilitating dialogue and building capacity for managing small arms so that they do not become daily tools of violence. This is done through bringing together representatives from NGOs, the academic community and governments. This reinforces human security approaches to development and emphasises the central importance of creating an environment conducive to crisis prevention and regional security.

What has SALIGAD done?

The project has:

- offered a platform and forums for the exchange of information, and helped to promote discussion and awareness among development practitioners, policy makers and researchers;
- generated policy options regarding small arms and light weapons at the national and regional levels; and

- built local capacity by directly supporting small arms researchers from the region.

Activities took place on three levels:

- Field research and data collection by local researchers. Studies covered various specific topics such as indigenous arms control or gun-related violence in urban settings and provide new insights into the dynamics of small arms demand and proliferation;
- Dialogue among governments, NGOs and grassroots initiatives, through conferences and workshops. The aim was to achieve greater understanding of the conditions that generate high demand for small arms and frustrate efforts to control them.
- Training and raising awareness of community leaders. For example, local partners invited community leaders to share traditional methods of limiting proliferation and encouraged the development of new ideas. Training approaches, based on the better understanding of the small arms realities in the region, further help local actors.

Understanding small arms “demand” in the IGAD region

The project has helped to refine the understanding of a number of factors closely related to “demand” for small arms and outline specific policies aimed at mitigating them, including:

- **human security** people arm themselves due to the failure of the state to provide adequate security in pastoralist areas; and due to urban and border area crime;
- **human rights abuses** by security forces;
- **politics of exclusion** for ethnic, religious, racial or gender reasons;
- **selective arming of ethnic groups** leads to undermining of state credibility as security provider;
- **cultural dimensions** such as “bride price” and its relation to cattle stealing/raiding; the vendetta and warrior culture in parts of the region;
- **refugees and internally displaced people** are often used as a way of diverting attention from home-grown factors related to the availability and utilisation of small arms;
- **poverty and economic disparities** as well as poorly planned development projects;
- **lack of opportunity for youth** drives young people into armed groups and criminal gangs; and
- **resource scarcity/competition and issues of property endowments/entitlements** in rural areas as frequent sources of armed conflict.

A snapshot of some of the findings

- Few new guns are coming into the region. The problem is one of gun circulation;
- gun collection strategies need to be imaginative and creative in situations where guns are seen to provide protection of person and livestock and are part of local custom; and
- lack of trust of the police force and issues of impunity are also factors driving demand. Community policing is not the same as creating local police reserves, as in Kenya, but rather opening a direct collaboration between community leadership and official police structures.

Disarmament issues

A range of economic, social and political directions for policy is suggested by the above factors. These must be developed as part of an overall strategy for the control and management of small arms for the region and need to be taken into account in the shaping of “supply” side approaches if they are to be effective. Specific policies on restricting civilian possession and use as well as restricting state possession need to be informed by an awareness of the factors driving demand.

It is together with communities (men, women and youth) that we should strive at getting greater restriction on possession and usage. For example, voluntary weapons collection approaches based on the participation of the communities themselves and,

if need be, incentives for the communities as a whole may be worth implementing on a large scale. Investing in the real needs of ex-combatants may be one critical way of reducing the demand for small arms. In other words, before we reach the stage of small arms control and ultimately destruction, there are many reasonable options for mitigation. Having a solid policy and practical measures of mitigation will be an important stepping stone for “practical disarmament” in the IGAD region and ultimately even for a small arms control regime endorsed by all states.

The project has also identified several areas where further work is needed. These include better efforts at “conflict mapping”; understanding better the role of gender in small arms demand and mitigation; analysis of actual experience with small arms collection in the region; integrating a better understanding of small arms realities in the region, civil society peacemaking training initiatives; better understanding of how cultural norms and the demands of modern law can exist side-by-side.

A concluding story

In a discussion with elders in Ethiopia and Somaliland, SALIGAD team members suggested that surplus weapons should be destroyed. The elders laughed and said they did not understand how weapons held in far away places like these hostile and arid lands could be seen as “surplus”. Weapons are assets for isolated people in these settings: Why would someone want to destroy assets? Any small arms control measures must have a reply to this kind of perception in order for it to have any practical relevance.

For a full report of the SALIGAD Project see “Small Arms in the Horn of Africa: Challenges, Issues and Perspectives”, by Kiflemariam Gebre-Wold, Mohamoud Jama Omar, Peter Marwa, Seyoum Gebre Selassie, Heran Sisay, Kizito Sabala, Brief 23, May 2002, Bonn International Centre for Conversion, www.bicc.de

Section III: Focus on Southeast Asia

A distinct focus of the workshop was to learn more about the situation in Southeast Asia, and to exchange experiences across cultures. Compelling overviews of the situation in several countries in the region enabled the visitors to begin to understand the complexity of working on the arms trade and reducing armed violence in this region.

A summary of small arms availability and misuse in Southeast Asia

Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan

Non-Violence International, Thailand

Many governments, particularly in Southeast Asia, are content to focus on illicit demand or illegal small arms possession by ordinary people, especially since the 2001 UN conference on the issue. They have demonstrated little interest in looking at their own demand, or their own behaviour in feeding either supply or demand. A summary of governmental positions on the small arms crisis reveals that these states are not interested in focusing on what they call legitimately held arms. Furthermore, existing legal controls are not harmonised across the region. What is illegal within one state in the region may not be forbidden by their neighbour.

The countries in Southeast Asia have very different histories and experiences and until recent times, most nations of this region were governed by authoritarian regimes. Today, in half of the countries in this region organising by civil society is illegal or suppressed. In the other half, civil society is in various stages of blossoming, but almost always with an uneasy relationship and difficult past with the current government.

There is also a creeping militarism, in the region and globally, the impact of which cannot be underestimated. Militarisation includes heavily armed police and security guards, military officers, or former military officers holding high government posts, security related censorship, armed guards at schools or other public buildings, armed checkpoints along roads and curfews. The most important consequence of societal militarisation has been the creation of a culture of militarism and the horizontal diffusion of weapons throughout communities where acceptance of weapons becomes normal.

A snapshot of some states in the region

Indonesian civil society has been growing steadily since the demise of the New Order/Suharto regime. The Armed Forces of Indonesia (TNI) were a full partner in the New Order government, and have simply become a component in the new system. Some elements of the military are unhappy with their loss of status and power and appear to be arming elements in society which will further their agenda. Many of these weapons come from the state owned weapons factory, PINDAD. Arms also circulate from abroad to counter-government, ethnically based organisations waging autonomy and independence struggles. There is also insecurity fed by current uncertainty and change increasing demand for weapons among the civilian population throughout the archipelago; by increasing and sometimes unregulated business competition; and criminal gangs.

The **Philippines** has enjoyed a flourishing of democracy and civil society since the revolution of 1986. Arms provided to paramilitaries during the years of dictatorship have 'privatised' as many of these groups have turned their training in political disappearances and assassination to become professional kidnappers of businessmen for financial profit. The police are seen as culpable in the above crimes, since they were also the recruiters, trainers and managers during the period in time when these same groups were used for political purposes. Arms have been manufactured in the Visayas region for decades, and although most of these factories are unlicensed and illegal, they have produced some designs now marketed and sold internationally. To the south, a century old insurgency by the Moro people against Spanish American and Philippine Governments has its own arms manufacturing capacity. The Gunless Society campaign developed to try introduce a variety of bills to the Philippine legislature to curb gun use, possession and transport, has now been followed by a civil society grouping PhilANSA (Philippines Action Network on Small Arms).

“There are multiple sources of the killing. It means that if you give up your gun, you are insecure, because the military and the police aren't able to provide security”

Participant, Indonesia

Thailand is famous as a country which has had more military coups d'état than any other country on the earth. The country, at one time, had the second highest murder rate in the world. This is due to a thriving assassination industry, which is the primary means of business competition dispute settlement. As a conduit state for Chinese/US arms to the Cambodian Khmer Rouge of the 1980s and early 1990s, the pipeline leaked significant quantities of weapons onto the regional black market. The former head of this internationally backed arms pipeline was a military officer named Chavalit Yongchaiyut, who later became wealthy enough to enter politics. He was the previously elected Prime Minister of Thailand whose government crumbled during the economic crisis in 1997, yet managed to resurrect himself in a new government as both Minister for Defence and Deputy Premier. Those covert supply lines have since been used by organisations involved in the trafficking of narcotics, women, timber and gems, as well as arms. This thriving black economy has its own demand for arms, and the level of flow has made Thailand a key source state for weapons throughout Southeast Asia, even though Thailand produces few weapons itself.

In **Lao PDR**, popular organising is prohibited. However, discontent has arisen both in the form of nonviolent street demonstrations as well as a recent and well-publicized spate of bombings. Explosives are readily available throughout the country and for sale abroad. Military grade high explosive can be had, provided you know how to extract it or can pay one of hundreds of village ordinance experts to do so for you, thanks to the explosive war remnants scattered over the country during the second Indochina war.

Singapore is a major trans-shipment point for arms in the region. Perhaps half the arms destined for insurgencies in Southeast Asia are reported to have passed through its ports and it has the most sophisticated arms production within the region. Landmines from Singapore can be found in Burma, as can a “turnkey” factory sold by Singapore to Burma's militarily controlled Defence Supply Industry for the manufacture of light weapons and ammunition.

Since the end of armed conflict in **Cambodia** surplus arms have been largely finding their way to other hot spots where they are more desperately needed, such as Sri Lanka, the northeastern states of India and to Burma's insurgent groups. During the UN's tenure, a weapons collection programme was launched. Before it ended, it managed to gather tens of thousands of arms and landmines. Unfortunately, these weapons were not destroyed by the UN soldiers prior to their departure. In what appears to have been a unilateral decision by the military component of the UN, the collected arms were handed over to soldiers of the new coalition government. This included more than 20,000 landmines which helped, although didn't cause, the next round of fighting after the UN had safely departed. Clandestine arms caches on the Cambodian side of the Thai border in formerly insurgent held areas have leaked weapons to this day on to the regional black market. A British arms broker interviewed by IANSA last year claims to have purchased arms within Cambodia at the Ministry of Defence which made them available for shipment in containers at Kampong Som port, from where they went to their next destination. A multi-sector alliance of non-governmental organisations in the women's, human rights, development and religious sectors launched an initiative to address the possession of war weapons in post-war society and to address the problem of their use, called the Working Group for Weapons Reduction.

Burma boasts the largest standing army of the region. The ruling junta is spending millions of dollars to purchase machinery and technology for the manufacture of arms, capable of making its own assault rifles and light machine guns, mortars, shells ammunition grenades and landmines. It has been supported by neighbours in Southeast Asia, East Asia and South Asia in this capacity, namely Singapore, China and Pakistan. To an unknown, but believed to be significant, degree, this has been financed by two sources, the heroin and drug dependent populations of Thailand, China and India, and the oil dependent countries of Thailand, France and the USA. Thirty different insurgent groups operating within and without the borders of the state have their own arms demands, making Burma a competitor to Afghanistan and Columbia for the title of the global drug/arms nexus in the world. This is a concern for the future, because once the war within the country dies down, these arms will come flooding out of the country onto the regional black market.

Malaysia received a wake-up call during the year 2000 from its belief "it can't happen here," when a group of militant fundamentalists entered a Malaysian Army depot and walked off unchallenged with enough weaponry to set up a very short lived rebellion in a nearby patch of jungle. This led to the death of two civil servants and a few of the militants over the following days. A Malaysian military officer stated that the same event could happen again any day. If a person can successfully impersonate an officer, "no one may question him."

In conclusion, how do all these weapons impact human security? Mainly by being in the hands of human beings. A Cambodian Buddhist monk once said "Weapons become dangerous because all that needs to happen is for anger to come into the mind of the person who has control over one". In a public opinion survey which led to the founding of the wgwr in Cambodia an open-ended question was asked to ordinary people: "Do you believe the number of guns in Cambodia is a problem? How do you experience that?" Overwhelmingly, people responded that the sheer number of guns was a problem and that it was a major source of insecurity in their lives. While they further stated that if they had confidence in the security situation within the country

they would happily not own a gun, many now feel compelled to seek one for supposed self-protection. In Southeast Asia, the failure of states to provide security complicates this problem by driving populations to possess and use weapons.

In order to improve human security in Southeast Asia, the small arms crisis must be addressed as part of a larger agenda including sustainable development, human rights and non-violent resistance.

Perspectives from Southeast Asia

A consistent observation from speakers and participants was that while there are many causes of conflict in Southeast Asian countries, at least some of the conflict at the grass-roots level comes from state policies that fail to recognise the basic rights of local people. Basic rights to self-determination, to land, resources and freedom are denied and a key result is the recourse to power through the threat or use of weapons. The demand for small arms needs to be addressed in this context.

Neb Sinthay

Working Group for Weapons Reduction, Cambodia

After almost 30 years of internal conflict, Cambodia was awash with hundreds of thousands of guns by the early 1990s. There is no accurate statistical information regarding the number of arms in circulation in Cambodia. It is commonly accepted that the number is extremely high. It is also commonly known that guns remain in the hands of civilians, corrupt police and military personnel and even politicians. Small arms proliferation will continue in Cambodia unless serious efforts are made to reduce the number of weapons in circulation and to prevent weapons diversion and trafficking.

Guns are the fourth most common cause of injury and death in Cambodia, surpassing landmine incidents. Landmine accidents are concentrated in a few North-east and Southwest provinces while gunshot injuries occur all over the country, especially in urban areas, according to a survey by the Ministries of Health and Planning in 2000.

WGWR research from 2001 indicates that the proliferation and abuse of weapons causes many problems that undermine much needed community development. Women and children are often the first victims of gun violence. These vulnerable groups are often ostracised and lose social and community support after they are victimised. High levels of male gun violence victims also leave many widows who are unprepared to take on the primary responsibility of raising young children and supporting other family members. Children and young people often drop out of school to contribute to supporting their families.

“We still have a lot of work to do. We’re not only concentrating on supply and trade . . . We have to work on the people, to change attitudes, to put down their guns and try to do something without it. In order to change these attitudes, we need more than 10 years” **Neb Sinthay, WGWR**

Exposure visit to Kenlaeng Phe Village in Kampong Chhang Province

An important feature of the Phnom Penh workshop, as had been the case in Durban and Nairobi, was an “exposure” visit, a chance to experience dimensions of the small arms problem and observe community-based initiatives at work in the country where the workshop is held. Participants travelled by road and fishing boat to Kenlaeng Phe village in Kampong Chhang Province, about two hours from Phnom Penh. Here they had an opportunity to meet and hear from villagers and officials about their experience of the small arms problem in their area and the initiatives that have been taken to overcome it. This work in this province of Cambodia represents one of the important projects of the WGWR.

“Women have played an important role. When there’s a problem with someone with weapons, we push the women forward. There is less chance of a violent reaction. So they have played a front line role. And we have an important role in educating people about taking care of the resources” **Woman in the village**

Kampong Chhang province, like many other parts of Cambodia, has a high incidence of weapons ownership—a legacy of the years of armed conflict. Like most other communities in Cambodia, impunity and lack of the rule of law have been frequent causes of insecurity. Poor discipline and lack of control over police, military police and soldiers are features of this insecurity. Inadequate support for de-mobilised soldiers has also led to kidnappings and robberies and the continued misuse of weapons. Uniformed armed men have gone unpunished for abuses inflicted upon communities and villagers have suffered intimidation at the barrel of a gun repeatedly. These are important features of daily life for rural Cambodians.

Villagers in this rural part of Cambodia are dependent on fishing for their livelihoods. During the ‘wet season’ Kenlaeng Phe is totally submerged by the rising Tonle Sap River. Houses are supported above the water on wooden stilts. But when the waters recede, the villagers are able to make use of the water and fish remaining in the naturally occurring ponds around the village. In 1987, the Government started to auction off fishing lots to private bidders. The ponds around the village were among the auctioned lots, and the holder of the rights to the lot around Kenlaeng Phe controlled lots in other villages as well. The result was that villagers were cut off from their ability to fish.

Four years later the villagers filed complaint petitions and provincial officials answered by recognising the villagers’ rights to the ponds. However, the paper documenting these rights was “lost” by an official and the fishing lot owner reclaimed the ponds. Until 1999, further incursions were made on the ponds of the village. The new “owners” of the fishing lots hired armed guards to protect the lots, destroyed irrigation dikes to maintain water flow in the ponds and pumped the pond dry to catch all the fish.



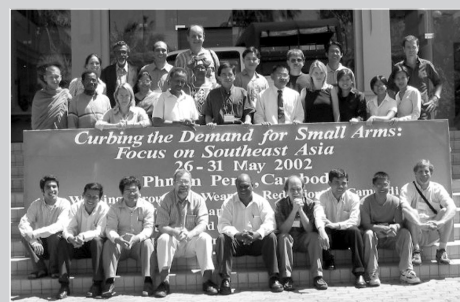
Contacts between the WGWR programme and the community began in 1999. The lot owner had started to pump the ponds dry again. In response the villagers held a “fish-in.” They went into the ponds to collect the fish. When a guard tried to frighten off the people by shooting into the air, the unarmed villagers ran away. However they turned and ran toward the guard, who in turn ran away.

The next time the lot owner pumped another pond, 400 people from four villages including Kenlaeng Phe brought their baskets and started to collect the fish. When the guards threatened them with a gun, they nonviolently resisted until the guards allowed the water to flow back into the ponds. Over the years, further such incidents occurred. The ponds around Kenlaeng Phe are now back in the villagers’ control. The type of resistance displayed by the Kenlaeng Phe villagers spread to other areas. Because of this resistance, the government eventually felt compelled to cancel the private fishing lot concessions. With other villages, Kenlaeng Phe villagers have formed an active fisheries association that maintains standards for sustainable resource use.

During the visit to Kenlaeng Phe, workshop participants were able to observe the confidence displayed by women and men successfully pursuing their community interests through non-violent action. In other parts of Cambodia rights violations are so severe that people have felt it necessary to resort to armed violence to protect their interests. In Kenlaeng Phe, nonviolence training helped the people to discover that they could resist through nonviolent means. The villagers now provide unarmed patrols, even at night, to protect their resources from people from outside the communities.

Although there are still gun incidents in the community, there is a high level of respect for the new laws on guns, not using them to threaten or even for display. Since 1999, government authorities in cooperation with NGOs (including WGWR) in the province of Kampong Chhang have collected almost 7,000 weapons and destroyed 4,000.

Participants were able to share similar experiences from their own settings with the villagers and to learn lessons for their own work from this Cambodian experience. Of particular importance from this experience were the examples of successful resistance to the presence of guns in a community, the important role that “outside” bodies (in this case WGWR and another NGO) played in providing training for the community to discover its own capacities for nonviolent resistance to intimidation and threats to their livelihood, the importance of communities working together and working with government for the establishment of good laws, and the vital role played by women in the community action. The villagers reminded the participants, however, that their ability to sustain their livelihoods in the long-run will depend on the degree to which the government fairly enforces the gun possession laws and provides proper security for the villages.



“We decided we couldn’t put up with oppression. We decided to fish where we used to be able to. Guards shot off guns over our heads, but we decided not to go away. We told them, ‘You know the rules. Don’t shoot’”

Man in the village

Photo (opposite): Buddha at a gate to the temple complex, Angkor, Cambodia. Photo (top of page): workshop participants, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Photo (above quote): Angkor Wat temple, Angkor, Cambodia. All photos © Jacqueline Sullivan.

Several actors in Cambodia are involved in weapons reduction activities:

- The Cambodian Government has collected more than 100,000 guns and explosives during 17 gun destruction events. They participated in a national workshop in 2000 with WGWR and EU-ASAC (see below for more information) and also have improved weapons legislation, established the provincial weapons confiscation committee network and a National Commission for Weapons Reform.
- The European Union Assistance on Curbing Small Arms and Light Weapons in Cambodia (EU-ASAC) has focused on assisting with the development of new weapons laws, supporting collection and destruction programmes, and promoting better standards for weapons storage.
- NGOs in increasing numbers in Cambodia are committing themselves to arms reduction work. A number of NGOs, with the assistance of EU-ASAC and WGWR, have put forward suggestions for the new weapons legislation. The lead NGO in this regard, WGWR, is a coalition of Cambodian and international organisations that cooperate together to address small arms reduction, management and peace building in Cambodia. Over the long-term, WGWR also promotes nonviolence instead of the desire to own and use weapons.

The role of outside assistance in curbing small arms and light weapons in Cambodia

In the examination of South Asia, the seminar had occasion to hear from David de Beer, Special Advisor and Programme Manager, European Union (EU), who described dimensions of the current European Union small arms assistance programme in Cambodia.

Cambodia is the only government to have specifically requested EU assistance for small arms reduction. The EU started work in Cambodia in 2000, after a government programme on collecting weapons fell apart. Over the last two years, the programme has become more comprehensive providing:

- **Legislative assistance.** A strict new law was passed that effectively bans private ownership, including a three-month amnesty period for returning weapons;
- **Weapons management.** The EU works alongside the Cambodian military to register all military-held weapons, to build safe storage systems, to improve record keeping on weapons held by the military, and to destroy surplus weapons. Police posts are often very exposed and vulnerable. The EU-ASAC seeks to provide practical solutions. For example, if police are provided with lockable storage, it will reduce the number of weapons being taken home that cause deadly injuries and accidents.
- **'Weapons for development'.** Encouraging villagers to hand in weapons in exchange for village development such as wells, repair of roads, and food for work. The EU is also working on a small scale with local NGOs creating training for community leaders to spread the message: "A village without weapons is a healthy village."

Ivan A. Hadar

Indonesian Institute for Democracy Education, Indonesia

The Indonesian archipelago has suffered from ongoing-armed conflicts for several decades. Small arms availability fuels these conflicts and increases the number of

casualties. There are three main arms supply channels in Indonesia: smuggling; “home-made” production in makeshift garage-workshops; stealing from police and military stocks or buying from ex-military and police personnel. As an example, in 2000, a weapon warehouse in Ambom was robbed and 832 guns and 800,000 bullets were stolen.

The saturation of firearms in the conflict areas of Indonesia has led to a refugee population of more than one million people, extensive economic damage, inadequate medical and educational services and the breakdown of the legal system. The uncontrolled availability of arms and explosives in Indonesia is threatening individual and state security, undermining development, and contributing to the increase in violent crime and conflict. Reducing the number of small arms circulating in Indonesia is very difficult because there is no accurate information on the number of arms legal or illegal that move in and out of the country. National gun control laws are also alarmingly weak and thus facilitate trafficking.

The rise in conflict and the increasing availability of arms has had a devastating impact on civilian populations. The breakdown of law and order has marked communities with death, disability, psychosocial trauma and economic degradation. Development has been reversed through the widespread destruction of public and private property and the loss of access to natural and other resources, which provided livelihoods for many. In this context of underdevelopment, the public health threats posed to the increasing number of internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees living in squalid circumstances are a cause for great concern.

There is a great deal of information about the military and its collective abuse of human rights; the consequences of military aid from the West; military business interests; illegal markets and to some extent, arms flows in Indonesia. Unfortunately, much of this information has not been gathered and analysed for the purpose of developing comprehensive policy change focused on small arms control.

The main issues that disarmament policies must address in Indonesia are:

- establishing a system for firearms registration;
- providing safe storage for weapons stocks;
- destroying surplus weapons in public;
- negotiating disarmament into peace deals at an early stage to sensitise parties involved;
- implementing disarmament quickly and transparently after peace agreements;
- reforming police and military forces in the areas of arms control, human rights and accountability procedures;
- increasing human capacity, promoting confidence, reconciliation and justice; and
- transforming cultures of violence.

Fred Lubang

Gaston Z. Ortigas Peace Institute, Philippines

Much has changed in the Philippines since the September 11 attacks, most noticeably, joint military exercises with the USA have resumed. In the Philippines there are many ongoing-armed conflicts as well as high levels of crime in the urban centres. Crime and conflict in the Philippines flourish due to a well-established gun culture.

Demand remains high due to the ongoing violent internal armed conflicts between the state and armed groups in the Philippines. The strong gun culture in the urban

What are the major constraints to and opportunities for demand-side approaches to reducing the effects of small arms and light weapons in Southeast Asia?

One of the purposes for coupling a regional focus with participation from practitioners from other regions was to compare experiences within and across regions. This was done in small groups and in plenary sessions. One of the exercises asked the participants to consider the following question: “From what we know and what we’ve heard in the presentations, what are the major constraints to and opportunities for demand-side approaches to reducing the effects of small arms and light weapons in Southeast Asia?” The following were among the responses:

Constraints

- The legacy of war in Southeast Asia has left a large number of weapons circulating within the region.
- Histories of authoritarian governments, militarism, impunity ongoing wars.
- Cultures of violent conflict generate a real and perceived need for arms.
- The ASEAN vision for small arms action is limited, and only understood within a transnational crime framework.
- Law enforcement is generally weak, corrupt and unaccountable, leading to little expectation of justice.
- Poverty and underdevelopment is widespread; arms are seen as a shortcut to overcoming economic problems.
- There are severe land and resource distribution inequalities.
- Significant inequalities exist between men and women.
- High levels of armed crime are common.
- Both the state and civilians fuel the demand for small arms.
- There are well-established gun cultures in the Philippines and Thailand.
- Human rights violations and a culture of impunity are widespread.
- There is a lack of co-operation between NGOs, governments, and civil society.
- There is little to no information sharing and transparency on military spending and arms transfers by states.

Opportunities

- There is an infrastructure of existing initiatives and work on the ground to promote sustainable development, and peace-building.
- Religious institutions and churches are well established and respected.
- People are tired of violence and war.
- Women are playing and increasingly prominent role in the decision-making processes.
- Democracy and human rights are growing in the region.
- There is potential for awareness raising through education, focusing on young people’s capacities to be agents for change.
- The regional network of civil society on human security and weapons issues is growing.
- There is already a strong emphasis on community development in Southeast Asia.
- There is increasing donor interest, especially for grassroots activities.
- The traditional Asian value of favouring group interests over individual interests is a constraint but also an opportunity.
- While few NGOs are working on small arms currently in Southeast Asia, a large number of organisations are working on issues that relate to the reduction of demand—such as human rights and development—providing a rich potential resource.
- There is an ongoing effort to promote dialogue between the clashing ethnic groups.
- The example of strong regional action in other regions can strengthen ASEAN efforts.

settings also supports a thriving legal and illegal market of arms imports and home-made weapons production.

Most of the legally imported weapons are from the USA. There is also a well-established Philippine gun industry, including licensed arms production facilities. Recently an Executive Order was issued by the government allowing foreign manufacturing firms to have joint ventures with local firms in the production of arms in the country. Widespread corruption among the police and military, and the poor weapons management system by both arms of the state lead to extensive 'diversion' of weapons from state stockpiles.

Though there are efforts at addressing small arms, the Philippine government does not currently have a comprehensive approach to the small arms issue. State stability remains the primary concern, diverting attention from other issues which are closely linked to the issue of small arms.

"My uncle put his kids through college by selling his gun collection" Participant, Philippines

Section IV: Deepening understanding: roles and approaches of research on small arms violence reduction

The importance of reliable data has increasingly been understood as key to the development of effective policy choices in regard to small arms. This is no less true in the area of small arms demand questions than it has been in supply-side thinking. To date, however, there has been little systematic research into demand-related questions. Previous demand work-

shops have also underlined the importance to practitioners at the local level of reliable information. This session sought to bring a focus to research needs in the demand area. It emphasised the particular value of qualitative data and participative methodologies in deepening understanding of the motivations for small arms demand and small arms misuse. It drew on the actual experience of participants, ranging from “listening” work undertaken in deprived neighbourhoods in Baltimore and the “charting” of problems, motivations and possible

actions by a peace organisation in Colombia, to the broadly conceived SALIGAD project approach in the Horn of Africa, to specific systematic research approaches undertaken by the Small Arms Survey in collaboration with researchers in Sri Lanka.

“We need to have macro-policies, but we need micro-level for implementation . . . The implementation strategy has to be developed with the people themselves and for them to own it”

Mallika Samaranayake, Sri Lanka

People-centred research on small arms

The global rates of death and injury from gun violence are alarming enough to demand alternative thinking and action. It is important therefore to develop greater understanding of the “triggers” to small arms possession and misuse, such as weak laws, lack of state transparency, poor confidence in the state to provide protection to citizens, and other underpinning motivations. This section tries to examine some of the different methodologies and approaches to people centred research on small arms—participatory techniques, surveys, re-examining ‘old’ data with a new lens.

How can we gather information and options for action that are reliable, credible and action oriented?

1. An initial gathering of information and options for action from those primarily impacted by this epidemic of violence is essential. While undertaking research may not seem like a high priority when working directly with the reality of gun violence, action oriented research can be valuable for understanding more about the impacts of arms use and the interventions necessary to alleviate the human cost.

Initial research work in the form of surveys asking people in communities what they want and need is critical for shaping project development. Participatory assessments are an essential first step to gauge the parameters of potential support, willingness to change, unforeseen obstacles and ownership of the process and outcomes. These surveys or interviews can provide qualitative input about people's perceptions of the problem and how people regard the programmes aimed at tackling the problem.

As one participant observed, researching the demand for small arms requires looking into so many aspects that it almost does not matter where you start. Regardless of which part of the "puzzle" is examined, research requires a systematic approach in order to be accountable and socially applicable. Participants consistently reiterated the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration, as gun violence cannot be pigeon-holed as one "thing" entirely, such as solely a policing issue or entirely an economic issue.

2. Surveying the overall impacts of small arms proliferation is necessary in order to address the problem at its many levels and to develop culturally appropriate solutions. Much of the research to date has focused on the supply side aspects of the small arms problem, covering issues like production, estimates of the number of arms in circulation globally or in specific regions and countries, and legal and illegal trade in weapons. One issue that has to some extent been missing from much of the research that has been done so far is the consequences of the misuse of these weapons. This research is often difficult to undertake and researchers must modify their approach according to the specific political, social and cultural contexts.

"Indigenous ways of reducing violence have worked better than government approaches"

Rukia Subow, PPDI, Kenya

In many settings, the Middle East for example, it may be easier to gain information and the confidence of authorities if the focus is on accidental killings rather than a direct focus on war situations. The use of 'mapping scenarios' can be illustrative when working with local communities, it allows for a visual story to be developed about arms flows, impacts of use, options for actions and actors involved in the situation.

Complementing a multidisciplinary approach, several participants noted their use of other research efforts, such as the *Landmine Monitor* (see www.icbl.org) and the *Global Report from the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers* (see www.child-soldiers.org), as alternative information sources and for methodological approaches. Action-oriented research findings should be drawn upon in order to critique and continually develop activities at local, national, regional and global levels.

An example of pioneering participatory research for small arms investigations was highlighted:

In 2001, the Small Arms Survey in collaboration with the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies in Sri Lanka conducted a research project using this approach to gauge real and perceived "human insecurity" among civilians affected by arms related violence in South Asia. The project was a pilot to test out methods, to learn more about insecurity related to small arms, and to determine whether participatory research had any value to uncover dimensions of arms related insecurity. The report is available from the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies at www.rcss.org

3. Appropriate research methods must be adapted to the local context. Work done so far to examine demand issues has served more to identify research questions and put forward hypothesis about their answers. The methodologies that researchers and practitioners use to examine these common questions must allow for these differences to emerge. Demand and misuse will usually not be motivated by exactly the same factors or combination of factors in different communities. To really understand the factors that drive demand in a given community, it is necessary to examine and appreciate the particular context if socially useful interventions are to be devised. In other words, local knowledge is essential.

Participants identified issues required issues requiring more systematic research, including:

- The relationship between “security sector reform” and small arms control. Looking into the benefits of community policing and reforms such as increasing wages, providing educational incentives, and human rights training. How do these initiatives contribute to people-centred security in the long term?
- Is there a necessity to improve judicial processes? If so, how can this include weapons demand reduction as one of the criteria for consideration?
- What does it mean to use indigenous methods when a community seeks to act on insecurity? What do they look like? What problems may they cause? Is it possible to have two or more conflict management systems operating in a particular situation?
- Illustrating how international “military aid” must be matched equally with aid for health, education, welfare, and development objectives, in order to reduce the demand and misuse of arms.
- The role of women as agents for catalysing demand reduction initiatives in communities.
- The potential of young people to undertake research activities in order to further their own understanding and engagement with the issue over the long term.
- Project evaluation of existing demand programmes to extend knowledge and understanding, particularly through lessons-learnt analysis.
- Efforts to understand what must be done to eliminate the alienation experienced by young people. A particular focus is required for young unemployed men in a variety of settings. Major work is required on this issue to understand how to reintegrate young men back into societies that are not necessarily prepared to receive them.
- Is weapons collection an indicator of progress? Research to date suggests that factors driving demand are not adequately addressed when designing such interventions.

Challenges to research

- Often the only data on small arms comes from the government and the arms industry. Information from both of these sources can be biased in confusing ways. Community based researchers need to be cautious about the use of such data. The lack of transparency on military and ‘defence’ issues, which is the norm in most countries, further obscures this information.
- When gathering information about the people directly affected by small arms violence, climates of fear seriously undermine research activities. Doing research can be very risky work in many settings. Security risks for informants and communities may

prevent the use of information obtained on the ground and threaten the safety of researchers and other personnel involved in a project.

- People living in very violent communities are often afraid to speak out about their experience, so researchers need to build genuine trust with the local population.
- Building this trust may also help with the challenging task of how to get conflicting parties to participate in information collection exercises.
- The role of research as a powerful advocacy tool must be developed. We need to clearly link research to the international movement with a more coordinated strategy.

The table which follows on page 34 attempts to present points related to demand for small arms in Colombia. Presented by Paul Stucky, it provides a framework for initially understanding motivations and behaviour in a given situation. It is a tool used by Justapaz in their community work in Colombia.

Problematic situations/conditions and rationales for violence	Underlying motivation or value	Positive actions (alternatives to violence) in response to underlying motivation or value
In Colombia there is 97% impunity: the judicial system doesn't work. Many choose to "deal with it themselves. Sometimes revenge is necessary"	It is important and legitimate to make things right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training in peaceful conflict resolution. Setting up mediation centres • Supporting legal changes to expedite judicial processes and for alternative mechanisms for conflict resolution • Beginning to focus on issues of reparation, and of reconciliation
The state is absent or corrupt. "We will look out for our own interests"	Self-reliance. Take care of your self and your people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and facilitating citizen participation in local governments • Initiating plans for citizen lobbying activities on national legislative bodies • Training people to be Justices of the Peace • Promoting alternative economic ventures at community level • Urban militia demobilises and retrains as mediators, active in community mediation centre
The social fabric is broken down: "Don't trust others. Look out for your own interests, even if it means getting rid of others"	Take care of your own	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on and strengthen community organisations—churches as "Sanctuaries of Peace" • Community programmes to respond to needs of displaced peoples • Promoting networking of organisations working on similar issues, of youth, of community leaders, or workers, of ethnic groups
The State as well as social and economic structures sponsor economical material violence, or are impotent to stop it. "Use violence to stop it or to set up an alternative"	Citizens are responsible for their state and society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movements of civil society for peace, for an end to hostilities and for negotiated peace processes • Local, regional and national political alternatives • Organisations and networks for human rights—civil, political, economic, social and cultural • Find allies within the state to work on alternatives with organisations and communities
Armed groups don't respect civilian lives or their human rights	Human rights are non-negotiable, and civilians are to be excluded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build human rights coalitions • Provide human rights education • Promote human rights action and reporting at national and international levels
Family and neighbourhood fights	It is important to settle problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training in non-violent conflict resolution • Open Mediation centres with mediators available
The leadership doesn't pay attention to the grassroots. "The only way is to get rid of them or force them to listen and take us seriously"	Democracy, participation, and justice are important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage grassroots participation in local politics, and also within social movements • Create infrastructures of peace, encouraging participation of churches, women's groups, ethnic groups, youth groups, etc.
Weapons are available	Do what you can with what you have. Act now. Take care of yourself and of your people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to reduce the supply of small arms to Colombia • Work for an end to military aid, including Plan Colombia and the Andean Regional Initiative of the US government • Participate in national coalitions. Strengthen coalitions with international organisations, international delegations who return to lobby for changes of their country's policies towards military aid to Colombia • There are some state-sponsored programmes for disarming (e.g., in municipality of Bogotá) • Identification of landmines • Form Andean Regional chapter of IANSA • Work urgently for an end to drug trafficking and extortion because they cause immense human suffering and are forms of financing the purchase of arms

Section V: Confirming and refining small arms “demand” issues

The workshop in Cambodia, like the one in Nairobi, sought not only to give special attention to factors shaping armed violence in a specific region but also to build on the findings of the previous workshops. General plenary discussions and small group work were designed to help confirm and refine the understanding of factors related to the demand for small arms, based on the actual experience of activists and practitioners, as well as approaches to the mitigation of small arms demand.

Confirming previous assumptions, experiences and lessons

In general, the workshop in Cambodia produced results which strongly echoed those of the Durban and Nairobi workshops. While there are certainly special features of the situation in Southeast Asia which heavily affect the particular definition of the small arms situation in that part of the world—e.g., ongoing armed conflicts in the region; long histories of military governments; drug and resource trafficking; weak civil society organisations—participants identified factors, relevant to the Southeast Asia and elsewhere, which appear to cut across cultural and geographic settings.

This workshop drew particular attention to three areas which had received less attention in previous workshops:

- The importance of limited access to land as a key factor in fuelling armed violence;
- The role of gender-related cultural features which fuel small arms demand;
- The relationships between small arms “supply” and small arms “demand”.

Overview approaches

- Demand-side thinking and understanding is increasing, but on a policy-level it is less refined than are supply-side approaches, which have had more attention.
- Regional approaches are key, “otherwise you’re creating demand across the border”.
- Comprehensive programming, taking into account insecurity and actively working to reduce it, is required.
- It is important to understand motivation in order to find solutions.
- Demand work is systems work. It is how a social system works in any one community and society that holds a key to reducing demand. Many variables have to be considered and their interactions are important.
- Supply and demand issues are crucially inter-related and can not be effectively acted upon apart from each other.

Common demand-fuelling factors in settings of armed violence

Governance and law

Demand for small arms increases in settings where there are:

- high levels of crime, money laundering, human and drug trafficking.
- wide-spread distrust of the judiciary and security sectors.
- law enforcement that is weak and corrupt.
- frequent discrimination and human rights violations.
- deadly cycles of violence, its escalation caused by state suppression of groups.
- little or no civilian participation in the decision-making processes.
- lack of cooperation between NGOs, governments, and civil society.

Civil conflict

- Where there are internal conflicts that have regional impacts and where there is the presence of armed groups embroiled in violent conflict, there will be a growing demand for small arms.
- Conflict at the grassroots level often stems from state policies that fail to protect people and recognise their basic rights. In this context, people seek power through weapons.
- A societal deficit in alternative non-violent social change and conflict-management traditions, skills, and approaches can lead to early turning to armed responses to situations of injustice and oppression.

Socio-economic development

- Limited access, use, distribution, ownership of land and water resources among the population is a major cause of conflict and a key reason why people take up arms in many regions.
- Abject social and economic factors such as poverty, inequality, underdevelopment are key underpinning factors in the demand for small arms.
- Young people are a very important element in armed violence and key to its reduction in many settings. Large numbers of young, unemployed males are a key indicator of the vulnerability of societies to armed violence. Major work needs to be done to understand how large numbers of these high-risk young people can be integrated (or reintegrated) into a society that is not well prepared to receive them.

Cultural identity and attitudes

Cultural factors also play an important role in affecting small arms demand. Such factors include:

- “macho” cultural norms, in which both males and females put place symbolic social value in the armed male.
- “gun” cultures, where the outward display of weapons is seen as important.
- high levels of violence in the home between men and women.
- numerous personal safety and security concerns.

Common approaches in addressing armed violence and the mitigation of small arms demand

Governance and law

Approaches include:

- enforcing good governance.
- encouraging transparency and information sharing.

- promoting accountability.
- promoting democracy and human rights.
- strengthening gun control and enforcement.
- ending impunity for human rights abusers.
- increasing public awareness regarding gun violence and its impacts.
- promoting security sector reform (e.g. police and militia)—including increased wages, educational incentives, human rights training, judicial reform.

Civil conflict

Approaches include:

- allowing the voices and perceptions of the people to be heard and be reflected in the strategies used to deal with conflict.
- using local, traditional and indigenous approaches to conflict management.
- increasing the understanding and use of non-violent social change and conflict resolution approaches, e.g. through training workshops.

Socio-economic development

Approaches include:

- employing community development strategies in violence-affected communities, including having key stakeholders engaged in the design and implementation of programmes and policies.
- demanding equitable distribution of resources and reducing economic disparities.
- creating opportunities for youth.
- implementing holistic approaches to disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration (DDR) after armed conflict.

Cultural identity and attitudes

Approaches include:

- building and strengthening networks of peace;
- making use of traditional conflict-management practices, including the role of elders;
- affecting gender attitudes to gun-possession;
- promoting alternative economic and social practices and contracts in communities, in regions, with international links.

Related supply issues and approaches

- Supply drives demand, as people seek to protect themselves in the midst of widespread weapons availability.
- Taking weapons out of circulation for good is imperative to reduce the stocks of weapons floating between conflict zones and available for criminal activity.
- People are glad to know that by giving weapons in, it increases peace and security; but to be sustainable, this has to be done in public and transparent ways, preferably leading to public destruction of collected weapons.
- Other important approaches include: promoting gun-free zones and linking them internationally for protection and support; developing Codes of Conduct on arms transfers, including transparency, coordination, monitoring; and promoting the regional harmonization of gun control laws.

Organising methods

- List the “milestones” on paper. What are the issues and what are problems? Who are the stakeholders within the community who must be onboard? What are you achieving?
- There is immense value in learning from what is happening in other communities all over the world and from people in other countries.

Areas for research and follow-up

- Many different models are being used to address the problem of reducing demand. We need to know more about successes and failures, what works and what does not. What are the side effects of various types of programmes and interventions?
- We need to better understand what kind of communication is needed among people working on demand issues to enhance the work. So far this has been done with a loose network. Sharing could be done in a more organised manner.
- How we work with governments needs to be considered. Some approaches work and some don't. There is suspicion and fear of being co-opted. At the same time we need to affect government policies.
- We need awareness-raising materials in the language of the affected countries and peoples.
- More decision-making points in the South are needed.
- More sustainable sources of funding are required.

Working groups

The workshop also provided opportunities for the participants to gather in small interest groups to discuss issues of concern in more depth. Topics, defined by the workshop

participants themselves as having special importance and interest, included: linking international and regional processes; linking “supply” and “demand,” the role of weapons collection and destruction initiatives; gender and small arms; activating the concern of the community; and working with armed groups. These discussions were particularly rich in their detail and identified many linkages between the issues addressed in these groups.

The below summaries of the results of

these working groups provide further detail to elements briefly developed in the previous section.

On linking with international and regional processes

- The UN Programme of Action presents an opportunity for civil society to focus its work; but the small arms movement can work outside this as well.
- IANSA still lacks strong coordination, strategic planning and direction.
- There is a need for strong national campaigns, but these need to be linked more clearly to regional and international processes.
- There is a need for a better exchange of information and best practices.

“We still have a lot of work to do to change attitudes, to put down the gun and try to do something without it. The people still remember the violence. They think ‘when I have no uniform, I have no gun, I am afraid’” Participant

- Research is critical; yearbooks like the Small Arms Survey can be important advocacy tools, but constituencies need to learn how to use this material.

On linking 'supply' and 'demand'

- Easy availability of small arms tempts conflicting parties to shift to violent tactics and in turn fuels insecurity and further arming of communities.
- Reduced government spending on weapons would free funds for focusing on factors driving demand.
- Better government enforcement of gun laws, adherence to “codes of conduct” by exporting states, and provision of greater transparency by all states would have an important influence on the availability of small arms.
- To reduce the production of locally manufactured weapons—particularly at the local craft level, new job opportunities need to be created.
- State-to-state transfers as well as government-to-civilian transfers are important elements in weapons availability.
- There are key links between weapons availability and misuse and the illicit trade in drugs and other resources.

On weapons collection/destruction

- Appropriate incentives for weapons turn-in must be found, ones which in themselves do not create a new market for arms.
- Weapons collection is of little use if “supply” issues are not addressed.
- Weapons collection programmes must be integrated into holistic approaches to small arms management, including such things as changing the culture of violence and rebuilding police/community relations.
- Weapons must be collected soon after peace agreements, when people are willing to invest in peace.
- Ammunition and weapons parts collection are also key.
- An important feature of weapons collection is guaranteeing that collected weapons are securely stored.
- Collected weapons must be destroyed, preferably within the community, to build confidence that they won't be re-circulated.
- Successful reintegration of ex-combatants requires not only their disarmament but also a changed perception of the role of the state, from war prosecutor or “enemy” to instrument of social healing and provider of services.
- Ex-combatant demobilisation must be accompanied with appropriate approaches to re-integration.

On gender and small arms

- Women are frequent victims of gun violence, including in domestic setting; this victimisation has wide social and psychological ramifications.
- But women are also sometimes actively engaged in arms smuggling.
- In some cultural settings, women support the “macho” image of the desirability of men with weapons as a source of security and status.
- Women can play vital roles in the transforming of attitudes about weapons and can be important instruments of peace in conflict settings. In some cultures they are not in the front lines of either power or connections and therefore are in a position to take different initiatives.

On working with armed groups

- There are similar difficulties in working with armed groups as with working with hostile, militarised governments.
- The legitimacy of such work comes in its being in concert with wider international norms and law; examples include work on the issue of child soldiers, landmines, and torture. Small arms should be similarly amenable.
- It is difficult to work with civilian groups that are heavily under the control of armed groups.
- Religious leaders and “outside” organisations can sometimes play important roles in mediating the relationship between armed groups and governments, making dialogue towards peace settlement possible.
- As young people are often a part of armed groups, specially designed activities, such as peace camps, can help to draw them out of the immediate conflict.

On activating the concerns of communities

- It is important to listen to people and understand their particular needs and interests.
- It is important to find ways to counter the fatalism of young people, and instil hope, for example through art, theatre and music.
- Working in holistic ways—through mind, heart, and healing—can help with group empowerment and behaviour change; peacemaking awareness needs to begin with the very young.

Concluding thoughts and next steps

Attempting to draw “conclusions” from such an exercise as took place in Phnom Penh risks masking some of the real value of such events—the interaction and mutual learning which takes place among the participants simply because they have been brought together in one place. It is impossible to capture the essence of the conversations which take place in the informal times of such meetings, often the richest element from the standpoint of participants, or to know in precise terms what having taken part in this workshop might have led to in the lives and work of the participants. What we can do here, however, is to highlight some of the core elements that seem to emerge from the diversity of the sessions of this workshop. We believe that these are important in helping to shape the way for the next steps in what is, after all, a developing field of inquiry.

Major conclusions from the workshop

While there are many causes of conflict in Southeast Asian countries, at least some of the conflict at the grassroots level comes from state policies that fail to recognise the basic rights of local people. Basic rights to self-determination, to land, resources and freedom are denied and a key result is the recourse to power through the threat or use of weapons. The demand for small arms needs to be addressed in this context.

The major topic areas in dealing with demand for small arms in Southeast Asia are very similar to those described at earlier workshops by participants from Latin America, Africa and North America. These topics can be gathered under four main constellations of issues: socio-economic development; governance; civil conflict; and individual, group and national identity.

These issues are often inter-related and interactive. That is, they form *systems* of threats and any effective response must utilise a broad systems approach. The common denominator among these interacting elements is the perception of insecurity among affected groups. The demand for weapons can be a reasoned response to “security” threats felt by people. As one workshop group reported, “It is important to understand motivation in order to find solutions.”

While the broad repertoire of demand factors may be generalised across many situations, each geographic area exhibits the factors in different proportions. Each specific area affected by perceived insecurity and the related gun violence must be approached and understood on its own terms. It is these specific local factors which will provide the clues for reversing the demand for weapons.

Each of the constellations of issues noted above requires more detailed research and analysis. This should be the task of further workshops of this type.

Most crucially there must be a focus on what must be done to eliminate the alienation experienced by young people. A particular focus is required for young unemployed men in a variety of settings. Major work is required on this issue to understand how to reintegrate young men back into societies which are not necessarily prepared to receive them.

Initial research work in the form of surveys asking people in communities what they want and need is critical for shaping project development. Participatory assessments are an essential first step to gauge the parameters of potential support, willingness to change, unforeseen obstacles and ownership of the process and outcomes. These surveys or interviews can provide qualitative input about people's perceptions of the problem and how people regard the programming aimed at tackling the problem.

At the local level organisers have learned that supply and demand factors are inextricably linked and require integrated responses. The community programmes that have developed successfully over a period of years have evolved ways of integrating a variety of supply and demand initiatives into their work. In contrast, projects that have focused solely on isolated elements such as gun control, specific attitudinal change or economic incentives have had limited success.

Most demand-side programmes on small arms were initiated in particular local circumstances by organisations and staff with little professional training. Their work has been guided by intuition and common sense. They are now at a point where they should be evaluated objectively in light of their own goals, revised as necessary and developed as models that can be successfully adapted for use in other communities and regions.

Such broad evaluation and integration of initiatives requires more cooperation among donor agencies to enable community programmes to link work on economic development, human rights, governance, security, arms control, peacebuilding and peacekeeping issues.

Many local programmes can see the value of more intentional networking within and across regions. Thought needs to be given to creating a structure that will support such networking, either through IANSA or through another more specialized form. Such a network could share approaches to research, awareness-raising, data collection, training, and other issues, and could also include specific problem-solving support for its members.

Visions for the future

In the concluding session of the workshop, participants were asked to envision just how a demand-side agenda might evolve between now and the time of "Review of Progress" Conference on the 2001 UN Programme of Action to take place in 2006. Some of these visions are listed here for inspiration, information and instigation!

- Develop alternatives to weapons as measures of security and power.
- Focus on practical steps toward structural, socio-economic and political reforms.
- Funding organisations must recognise national needs and commit to integrative development beyond individual projects.
- Organise an international conference on human security and small arms, bringing together the range of relevant constituencies.
- Create more resources for wide public information campaigns to spread awareness of the threat that small arms pose and the practical solutions to the problem.
- Dialogue with individuals and institutions to inform them about existing work, needs and issues.
- Document the stories of successes.

- People-to-people visitation between producer and most affected countries to support demand projects, lobby with producers, and provide international visibility and protection.
- Build a global movement through IANSA; strengthen national and regional campaigns.
- Organise a series of large, popular events at all levels leading up to the UN Review Conference in 2006.
- Set a public target for the number of weapons to be collected and destroyed before each major international meeting.
- Locate more decision-making points in the South.
- Develop education approaches at all levels of the educational system on non-violence and conflict resolution.

Some next steps in developing a demand-side agenda for action

It is increasingly recognised that the national, regional and global steps outlined in the UN Programme of Action that emerged from the 2001 UN Conference are necessary but not sufficient elements in the emergence of a global agenda to effectively reduce the human impact of the misuse of weapons specifically and armed violence in general. Much needs to be done if there is to be sufficient recognition of “demand-side” elements, largely ignored in the 2001 Programme of Action, and these are to become more fully part of national, regional and global action on small arms between now and 2006 and beyond.

A range of governmental and inter-governmental agencies and non-governmental organisations are taking an increasing interest in elements that have been highlighted in the Cambodia workshop and its predecessors. Fundamental to better understanding will be research in the coming period which “tests” the exact contribution of the kinds of elements which seem to be critical in small arms demand and evaluates programmes undertaken to reduce the misuse of small arms and light weapons. Between now and the 2006 Conference, it will be vital to develop key policy proposals for action at the national, regional and global level on “demand-side” aspects and their interaction with the supply-side initiatives already understood as essential. To be credible, these must be based on sound evidence.

The Quaker United Nations Office plans to be part of this evolving work. Current plans include further thematic and regional workshops, the next being in Haiti in conjunction with the Haiti Project of the American Friends Service Committee in June 2003. This workshop will have as its focus the particular setting of the Caribbean region and issues related to youth. A systematic research and dissemination programme over the next three years, aimed purposefully at the 2006 Conference, is being developed, in part in conjunction with the Small Arms Survey and other partners. The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue is currently fully engaged in a range of activities in its Human Security and Small Arms Programme, which will contribute significantly to the evolution of knowledge with implications for policy and practice over the coming years. Both organisations look forward to healthy collaboration with and support for others who are playing a role in filling out the picture of which our early work has begun to show some of the basic dimensions.

Appendix 1: Agenda

Monday, May 27

- 15.00 Opening of workshop
- Welcome to Cambodia
 - Background and vision for the workshop (David Atwood, Quaker UN Office)
 - Welcome presentation by His Excellency Em Sam An, Secretary of State, Ministry of the Interior, Permanent Member of National Commission for Weapons Reform and Management, Cambodia
 - Review of agenda
 - Introductions; sharing of expectations and hopes for the seminar
- 20.00 Brief history of Cambodia (Suon Bun Rith, UNESCO)

Tuesday, May 28

Focusing on the “demand” for small arms: Building a Connection between previous small arms “demand” workshops and this meeting

- 08.30 A review of major findings from previous workshops (David Atwood)
- 09.00 Updates from previous workshop participants/programmes:
- Joseph Dube, Gun Free South Africa
 - Gary Gillespie, American Friends Service Committee, Baltimore, USA
 - Rukia Sukow, Pastoralists for Peace and Development Initiative, Kenya
 - Jacqueline Sullivan, Viva Rio, Brazil
- 11.00 The evolution of general “demand” analysis and approaches: the work of the SALIGAD project (Kiflemariam Gebre-Wold, Bonn International Centre for Conversion)
- Spotlight: Small arms issues in Southeast Asia
- 14.00 Building Approaches to issues of small arms in Southeast Asia (Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan, Nonviolence International Southeast Asia)
Discussion. Comments from David De Beer, Programme Manager of the European Union “Weapons for Development” Programme in Cambodia
- 16.00 The work of the Working Group for Weapons Reduction (Neb Sinthay, wgwr, Cambodia)
- 17.00 Key points from the day’s discussion (David Jackman)

Wednesday, May 29

Exposure trip to Kampong Chhang province: local effects of small arms availability and community responses

Thursday, May 30

Deepening understandings: further perspectives on violence reduction and small arms “demand” factors and approaches

- 08.30 Observations from beyond Southeast Asia
- Fr. Jack Aitorea, Melanesian Brothers, Solomon Islands
 - Paul Stucky, Justapaz—Christian Centre for Peace, Justice and Nonviolent Action, Colombia

- William Knox, Peace and Community Action, Sri Lanka
 - David Jackman, American Friends Service Committee, Jordan
- 10.30 Deepening understanding of Southeast Asia small arms contexts: observations from Southeast Asia participants
- Ivan Hadar, Indonesian Institute for Democracy, Jakarta
 - Fred Lubang, Gaston Z. Ortigas Peace Institute, Manila
- Differences and similarities: building on and furthering “lessons learned” on reducing gun violence and misuse
- 14.00 Discussion groups I
- What are the common issues and approaches that have emerged from previous workshops and from what you’ve heard hear which appear to apply across cultures and regions?
 - From what we know and what we’ve heard, what are the major constraints to and opportunities for demand-side approaches to reducing the effects of small arms and light weapons in Southeast Asia?
- 20.30 Information and methodological needs and approaches: applications to community-based violence reduction work, featuring the experiences of several of the groups represented

Friday, May 31

Deepening particular interests and needs in relation to small arms “demand” work

- 08.30 Thematic Session I
- Linking with international and regional small arms processes
 - Linking “supply” and “demand”
 - Weapons collection and destruction
- 10.15 Thematic Session II
- Gender and small arms
 - Working with particular communities
 - Working with armed groups
- 12.00 Perspectives on international and regional processes: Drawing lessons and developing recommendations
- 14.30 Discussion groups II
- Vision exercise on developing a small arms “demand” agenda
- 16.45 Concluding session

Appendix 2: List of participants

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Appendix 3: Additional resources

Reports from previous QUNO workshops

South Africa

“Shrinking Small Arms: A Seminar on Lessening the Demand for Weapons”, Durban, South Africa, November 19–24, 1999, www.afsc.org/quno/Resources/smallarms_durban.pdf

Kenya

“Curbing the Demand for Small Arms: Lessons in East Africa and the Horn of Africa”, Nairobi, Kenya, December 12–15, 2000, www.afsc.org/quno/Resources/small_arms_nairobi.pdf

Jordan

Curbing the Demand for Small Arms: A Middle East Seminar, Amman, Jordan, July 8–9, 2001, www.afsc.org/intl/mideast/smarmsrept.htm

“Traditional Cultural Practices and Small Arms in the Middle East: Problems and Solutions”, Amman, Jordan, November 3–4, 2002, www.afsc.org/intl/mideast/smarms_0211.htm

For more information

Project Ploughshares Addressing the Demand Dimensions of Small Arms Abuse, www.ploughshares.ca/CONTENT/BRIEFINGS/brfo16.html

Small Arms Survey Yearbooks, www.smallarmssurvey.org

UN Development Programme—Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR)

For information regarding UNDP and its work on small arms issues, go to www.undp.org/erd/smallarms/index.htm

World Vision, “Silent Revolution: The Role of Community in Reducing the Demand for Small Arms”, www.worldvision.ca/publications.cfm?ID=176

BICC Brief 23, Kiflemariam Gebre-Wold, Mohamoud Jama Omar, Peter Marwa, Seyoum Gebre Selassie, Heran Sisay, Kizito Sabala, Bonn International Center for Conversion, *Small Arms in the Horn of Africa: Challenges, Issues and Perspectives*, May 2002.

BICC Brief 24, Farr, V. and K. Gebre-Wold, eds, 2002, *Gender Perspectives on Small Arms and Light Weapons: Regional and International Concerns*, Bonn International Center for Conversion, www.bicc.de