Exchanging Weapons for Development in Mali

Weapon Collection Programmes Assessed by Local People

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NOTE

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PREFACE

Since United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali first coined the term "micro-disarmament" in the mid-1990s, international efforts to reduce the availability of small arms and light weapons have only begun to approach a comprehension of the human costs of the problem and the optimal means of curtailing it. Because of these weapons' devastating effects on people's livelihoods and on communities' abilities to build peace and pursue development, durable solutions to curbing the problem are urgently needed.

Increasingly, the international community has favoured weapon collection programmes as a means of alleviating the world's most conflict-embroiled regions of the tools used to perpetuate armed violence. These approaches to the problem have aimed to encourage communities plagued by violence to hand in their guns, sometimes offering them individual incentives or community-based development projects in exchange for their arms. Some important lessons have already been realised from these endeavours. But there remains much more to learn. For example, we must ask which types of projects actually have identifiable and lasting effects in eliminating guns from local communities. Furthermore, it is imperative to know which arrangements and incentives work best in promoting the surrender of weapons, and in providing local people a sense of ownership in their own future development.

It is in this context that I am pleased to introduce the present UNIDIR study, based on research in Mali. The research represents an important step forward from past evaluative attempts, applying innovative field techniques that place local people at the centre of the weapon collection review process. The participatory techniques developed in the study offer new lessons for effective implementation and measuring the success of weapon collection initiatives, directly as observed by the local people who are in the best position to evaluate the effects of the projects on their own lives.

The original approach of this UNIDIR study enhances substantively our insight into post-conflict dynamics, and presents invaluable keys to better

incorporating weapon collection programmes into existing post-conflict disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration activities.

The findings from the research serve to underscore the necessity of deeper and wider involvement of local people in all aspects of weapon collection, as a more direct path to understanding the root causes of violence as well as the other complicating situational factors that must be unearthed in order to conclusively resolve the issues underlying the violence. The study suggests that the best means of inculcating a spirit of local ownership is to involve communities themselves as the principal agents in the design, oversight and review of projects to collect weapons. The research results also belie any doubts about the important role played by women in mobilising local people to eradicate guns from their communities.

In looking towards the future, it is my hope that the discoveries made through this UNIDIR study in Mali will provide impetus for the application of participatory techniques as part of other programmes initiated by the international community to build peace, facilitate post-conflict development and augment the protection of human security. If we are to hope for sustainable peace and security for all of the world's people, then we must not relent in the search for inventive new ways of confronting the debilitating problems of small arms and armed violence.

Amadou Toumani Touré
President of the Republic of Mali

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ACRONYMS

BANSA	Before And Now Situations Analysis
BICS	Basic Inter-personal Communication Skills
CCA	Community Calendar Approach
CoC	Code of Conduct
CTB	Belgium Technical Cooperation
DSG	Direction Support Group
GTZ	Germany Technical Cooperation
IDP	internally displaced people
IDS	Institute for Development Studies
LC	Local Commission
NGOs	non-governmental organisations
PAREM	Programme d'appui à la Réinsertion Socio-économique des Ex-combattants du Nord Mali
PM&E	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
SALW	small arms and light weapons
SSR	Security Sector Reforms
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
UNDDA	United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNPoA	United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
WfD	weapons for development

INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of violent conflict, post-conflict areas remain saturated with weapons, ammunition and sometimes land mines and unexploded ordnance left scattered throughout the community. The availability of these weapons, coupled with their widespread misuse, too often ignites renewed armed violence and impedes efforts aimed at post-war reconstruction. It is unnecessary to look beyond the recent past to find evidence of the effects of the continued availability of such arms, in places as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Iraq. Bearing this in mind, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) undertook an evaluative study to assess both past and current weapon collection schemes in selected countries where success has been registered, aiming to determine how affected communities may be better integrated into post-conflict weapon collection programmes. While past evaluations have produced controversial results due to application of methodologies that have excluded the actual people benefiting from weapon collection and Weapons Collection in Exchange for Development (Weapons for Development, or WfD) projects, UNIDIR has attempted to improve on past evaluative efforts through development and application of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) tools in its research.

This UNIDIR study is based on research findings from UNIDIR's experience in Albania, Cambodia and Mali. The current report presents the detailed lessons learned from the Mali case study on Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation of Weapons Collection in Exchange for Development programmes. The research findings indicate that use of comprehensive participatory procedures, processes and policies, which give confidence to communities, can lead to greater ease in retrieving illegally held weapons.

The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA)

The present study[1] stems from the recommended follow-up actions of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects; more specifically, the need to develop and support action-oriented research aimed at facilitating greater awareness and better understanding of the nature and scope of the problems associated with the illicit small arms trade.[2] The UNPoA has instigated implementation of a range of measures aimed at controlling the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons, and supports practical disarmament as a reduction measure. Reduction measures, which have involved different types of incentive schemes being given to communities in exchange for voluntary surrender of their weaponry, cannot be successfully implemented without first introducing mechanisms for engagement of the local community.

Reduction schemes that have been particularly prominent include the following: in Haiti and Eastern Slovenia, weapon buy-back programmes were instituted, whereby a sum of money was paid out, roughly equivalent to the market value of the items handed in; in Nicaragua, token rewards—certificates signed by President Doña Violeta Barrios de Chamorro—were given to ex-combatants when they returned their weapons; in South Africa, in addition to token rewards—certificates signed by former President Nelson Mandela—each participant received gift vouchers to a local store and was entered in a raffle to win prizes worth up to US$25,000; in Mozambique, people handing in weapons were given farming tools; and, in Albania, Cambodia, and Mali, Weapons for Development programmes were initiated, whereby collected weapons were exchanged for development projects—e.g. schools, roads and wells—that would benefit the whole community.

The Weapons for Development Approach (WfD)

The UNIDIR project on Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation of weapon collection programmes was initiated with the aim of contributing to the UNPoA by studying the issues involved in weapon collection. The particular focus of the study is Weapons for Development, a micro-

disarmament strategy through which illegally held weapons are collected and handed over to the legitimate authorities in exchange for developmental goods and services that benefit the whole community. This approach encourages affected communities to collect weapons, while offering area-based developmental projects that benefit the whole community as incentives. Such rewards for weapon collection differ from buy-backs and other inducements, due to the fact that incentives are not offered to the individual that surrenders a weapon, but instead to the whole community from which the weapon is collected. The approach emphasizes the link between development aid and weaponry surrender.

Although the WfD approach had been applied previously in weapon collection programmes in Mali, Nicaragua and other countries, the term "Weapons for Development" was formally used for the first time in the disarmament literature in 1998. This occurred in the wake of the Albanian conflict of early 1997, during which a large amount of weaponry was looted from storage facilities in that country. In the aftermath of the Albanian conflict, the government of Albania requested the assistance of the United Nations (UN) Secretary General in the development of a national strategy and programme to recover the looted weaponry. A UN assessment mission visited Albania in June 1998 to make a preliminary estimate of the options for assistance.[3] The mission concluded that strategies incorporating a "buy back" scheme would not be suitable for Albania, as such strategies: (a) would involve prohibitively high costs due to the number of illegal weapons in circulation; (b) would have a strong inflationary impact on an already fragile economy; and (c) would not be supported by donors because they reward the illegal activities of the population.

In view of the above observations, the mission also recommended the development of a programme linking development aid to weapon surrender. This highly imaginative approach came to be formally known as "Weapons for Development" (sometimes referred to as "Weapons in Exchange for Development"). It was envisaged that this approach would create a better local security environment, while at the same time promoting social and economic development and improving more traditional approaches, such as "guns for goods" or "buy back" programmes.

New Evaluation Techniques Applied

The present UNIDIR project aims at reviewing weapon collection and Weapons for Development programmes by applying Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation methodology, which involves the real beneficiaries in the evaluation and monitoring of the programmes. The aim of the project, as well as the description of the PM&E methodology and how it was developed and applied, is explained in detail in the next part of this report. In brief, different techniques, which incorporated the use of visual symbols, were applied with a view to reviewing the principal aspects of the weapon collection cycle as well as the incentive schemes that were put into place. The techniques included:

- For reviewing the projects' goal(s) and purpose(s), the main technique applied was **Before and Now Situations Analysis (BANSA)**;
- For reviewing the projects' identification and design, the main technique applied was **Determining Decision-Making Process**;
- For reviewing the projects' appraisal and implementation, the main technique applied was **Conversational Interviews**;
- For reviewing the projects' monitoring, the main technique applied was **Community Calendar Approach (CCA)**;
- For reviewing the projects' performance, the main technique applied was the **Three Star Game.**

These or similar techniques will be applied to review weapon collection projects in various study countries. Studies of the lessons learned from experiences with weapon collection in a number of countries will be published, with the current report describing the results from the Mali country study. A final publication will take the form of a handbook of best practices for weapon collection and other issues related to the illicit proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons and will offer policy guidance to policy makers, planners, programme directors and researchers, synthesising the lessons learned from various country studies. The project as a whole relies above all on the role and perceptions of the people directly involved—and affected by—weapon collection activities.

How the Study Was Prepared

The implementation of the project began in September 2002. Through UNIDIR's extensive research experience, it has learned that ownership of the research process is as important as the outcome of the research itself. Furthermore, for action-oriented research, such as WfD, which intends to generate policy recommendations, involvement of the concerned stakeholders from the outset was determined to be crucial.

Specific measures were pursued to build a sense of project ownership among the stakeholders. First, a database of possible stakeholders at both the national and international levels was established, including governments, donors, the UN and other inter-governmental organisations (IGOs), research institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Consultations were also undertaken, during which UNIDIR explained and discussed its ideas with the individual stakeholders, and stakeholders presented their views on the project. Several Geneva- and United Kingdom (UK)-based organisations were visited, whereas others were contacted by e-mail, telephone, fax and mail.

A Direction Support Group (DSG) was formed, comprising members drawn from a donor government, the United Nations (UN), international organisations and research institutions. The membership of the DSG includes: the Government of Japan, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs (UNDDA), the African Union, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, the Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva, the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex and Small Arms Survey. The DSG provides policy direction to the Management team.

An International Stakeholder's Workshop was held in Geneva on 9 December 2002, attended by 53 delegations, including Albania, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka. The proposed research methodology was introduced, and participants presented opinions and feedback on various aspects of the project. Workshop recommendations included limiting the project to three case study countries: Albania, Cambodia and Mali (originally, ten countries—Albania, Angola, Brazil, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of

Congo, Mali, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka—had been suggested). The draft conference report was sent to participants for their comments before it was published.

PM&E techniques suitable for the Malian situation were developed and tested by the Geneva-based WfD Management team, in consultation with practitioners earlier identified by the team as contact points in selected case study countries. These practitioners provided input into the process of developing project methodology. The DSG was also updated and informed throughout the entire process. The techniques that were developed can be applied at all levels: community, regional (within the country) and national.

At the national level, in Bamako, Mali, the contacts were composed of: (a) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, section responsible for Small Arms and Light Weapons; (b) The National Commission for Demobilisation and Reintegration; (c) The UNDP Office; and (d) A local NGO practising participatory methods. Several international organisations implementing programmes in the field of SALW were contacted and information was exchanged.

In consultation with other national stakeholders, initial field research sites were selected, and a draft research programme was prepared prior to the arrival of the WfD Management team in Bamako. Suitable local consultants, as well as an interpreter, were identified. All of these steps were important because none of the WfD Management team's members had ever been to Mali. The National Commission for Demobilisation and Reintegration voluntarily accepted to coordinate the above elements.[4]

From Geneva to Bamako

When the WfD Management team arrived in Bamako in early March, meetings held at Colonel Sangare's office, together with a cross section of national stakeholders, effected revisions in the original plan to align it with the field reality. It was decided that the research should be conducted in only three areas: Lere, Gao City and Menaka (originally, five areas were anticipated for the study).

Lere is a typical rural area located inland in Mali. Gao City is an urban area where most of Mali's ex-combatants reside. Menaka was selected

because it is the place where weapon collection projects originated in Mali; it contains both semi-rural and urban sections, and is also near the border with Niger.

Based on these characteristics, it was felt that the results from these areas would be comparable, and would provide a comprehensive review of weapon collection and WfD efforts.

Five full working days spent in Bamako were sufficient for the team to redesign the original plan, recruit and induct a local facilitator, arrange the logistics, contact by telephone the local authorities and organisations in the field and assemble a Field Core team. In addition, briefings with individual stakeholders were also carried out.

From Bamako to the Field

The Field Core team[5] included the following people:

Mr Geofrey Mugumya, Team Leader, Geneva;
Ms Shukuko Koyama, Project Assistant, Geneva;
Mr Mohammed Maiga, Local Facilitator on Participatory Methods, Bamako;
Mrs. Foutamata Maiga, Representative of National Commission for Demobilisation/Consultant on Women, Bamako;
Mr Abdullah Ag Mohammed Assaleh, Interpreter, Bamako; and
Mr Souleymane Therra, Driver, Bamako.

At the field research locations, a strategy was mapped out, which required the team to first meet and introduce itself to the local authorities before carrying out any field activities. This strategy was meant to avoid suspicion and security concern by the authorities, as the research itself dealt with a sensitive subject.

In order to encourage a sense of project ownership at the local level, the local authorities were assigned the role of identifying and selecting local residents, who were trained in the PM&E methodology and offered short-term contracts as Trainee Facilitators. The local authorities and organisations also offered venues for the meetings and arranged general

community meetings. General community meeting participants were briefed on the purpose of the research. It was within these meetings that the focus groups, which would conduct all of the research, were formed (based on gender, age and/or according to other intra-societal differences).

A Strategy for Feedback

A bottom-up feedback process was instituted to ensure that the preliminary research findings would be adequately shared between the different stakeholder levels. At the community level, this process required that, at the end of each exercise, the records of the proceedings be read out to the participants to enable them to confirm that the records reflected what had actually been discussed and agreed. At the prefecture level, the local administrators in each area were debriefed on the findings. At the regional level, the regional heads of government departments, other agencies and the press were debriefed on the preliminary research findings and had the opportunity to clarify certain aspects. Finally, at the national level, a meeting of national stakeholders—chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—was arranged, and a debriefing on the research findings was held. All the stakeholders made some clarifications where necessary. The team also individually debriefed the UN Resident Coordinator and other organisations.

This feedback strategy enabled virtually all interested stakeholders a say in both the process and the final report. This feedback process can be applied to any project, at all levels—international, national, regional and community.

Challenges and Obstacles that Need to Be Considered

The team set off for Lere from Bamako—a twelve-hour journey by road—early in the morning of 7 March 2003. The team's members were confident that all was proceeding as envisaged. Yet it was only after having travelled about 50 kilometres from Bamako that the team realised that the Malian members of the team might be required to carry travel permits, issued by the UNDP office in Bamako. There was no other option but to return to Bamako. Upon arrival at the UNDP office, the team was reassured that the UNIDIR staff were already permitted to travel as a result of previous

authorisation obtained in Geneva. Furthermore, UNDP informed the team that the Bamako office was in any case neither responsible for UNIDIR staff nor for the local members of the team. The Malian members of the team still insisted on acquiring travel permits, though, which led to additional hours being spent at the governor's office in Segou. The names of the team members from Mali were appended to the UNIDIR staff travel authorisation at the governor's office, an act which reassured the Malian collaborators. But the fact remained that about two to three hours of travel time had been wasted. This incident was among the early valuable lessons learned.

In more general terms, some of the obstacles faced arose from the fact that researching in conflict zones, on a sensitive subject such as weapon collection, poses serious challenges to a researcher/evaluator. For the purpose of this report, the challenges to the research can be summarized in terms of the following issues that require attention:

- The need to appropriate authority at all levels—from the community level upwards—until a comprehensive plan is achieved. Findings from the field should be correlated at different levels.
- Securing access to specific places and information can require contacting the people in power—some researchers may view this as a highly politicised act which could generate biased results.
- Local and international NGOs, as well as other local contacts, represent an important element in obtaining access for researchers to certain areas and assisting in research follow-up; however, researchers should be aware of the backgrounds of external collaborators before engaging them—this often represents a difficult task.
- Over-reliance on one source may obscure some issues, as some organisations, including NGOs, sometimes ignore information that contradicts their own views.
- A complete picture of the situation can be obtained only when the evaluator looks outside the immediate "bad situation", to other strategic areas and persons that could potentially provide relevant information—due to time constraints and language barriers, this is sometimes impossible.
- Researchers should also bear in mind that it is easier for a foreign researcher to be critical than a local researcher or NGO.

Problems of dishonest or questionable research
- It should be considered whether the research being conducted is for academic purposes, action or mere "research tourism". People often prefer programmes that offer immediate benefits—WfD is not this type of programme.
- Wariness of discovering sensitive information, which agencies, government officials or local consultants may not understand and/or want to reveal, may be cause for concern.
- Expectations should not be disproportionately raised—the researchers need to be clear about what will follow after the research is completed.

Respect is a crucial element of research on any subject
- For successful research on any subject, the environmental issues that led to the conflict or made people resort to violence must be understood.
- Research should be designed to avoid re-traumatizing the population, especially when asking questions.
- One should be conscious of people's norms, cultures, values and traditions when carrying out the research.
- Research should take into account the power relations within a community—Who controls what? What is the role of women? With whom should the researcher(s) (not) speak directly?

Preparations before going into the field
- Sufficient knowledge of the research subject, and specificity about the research aim by the research team, serves to narrow down the sources and avoid contradictions within the research team.
- The gap between planning and reality: no plan, however ingenious, survives the reality of the field. Once in the field, the researcher will need to clarify the research objectives and adjust the plans, yet time constraints may make such adjustments nearly impossible.
- Issues of personal safety are essential in places like northern Mali; thus, the team needs to remain together at all times (i.e. no division of roles and responsibilities).
- While the use of modern technology, such as e-mail, is vital for contacting field-based NGOs and local authorities for news on the current situation, such technology can be difficult to find in the field. At times, researchers must rely on the experiences of people that are originally from such field areas, but who may provide outdated information that could compromise the research.

- Gender issues may play a role in the research outcome—for example, in order to access information from women, a woman should be included in the research team. This can be a difficult feat in the context of certain communities. In addition, people from a particular community or tribe may not be suitable to work with or among those from another tribe—retraining, logistics and other valuable resources may be required to accommodate this aspect of the research.
- Hired local researchers and other contracted persons may lack understanding of or intentionally neglect observing the terms of reference, with the aim of gaining further financial benefits or other privileges. Such conduct may constrain the research project budget.

Other crosscutting issues
- Professional bias needs to be avoided.
- Language barriers may impede research progress.
- Lack of good relations between international and local researchers represents a challenge to the research.
- Persons working with the researchers may be distracted from the agreed methods and aims of the research. The researcher should be aware of such collaborators' role in the research, and ensure that such persons do not deviate from their agreed roles.

Key Lessons Learned

The key lessons learned and best practices, both of which are the main subject of the study, are summarised in the following questions:

- Is there a need for participatory approaches in disarmament?
- What are the experiences and perspectives of different social groups in the community regarding the causes of proliferation of small arms and light weapons? What are the views of these local groups on weapon collection programmes?
- What are the criteria (impact and performance indicators) for determining success or failure of weapon collection programmes?
- What drives weapon holders to voluntarily surrender their weapons? What incentive schemes work best? Who determines the schemes, and how are they decided?
- What are the best practices to follow?

- What capacity-building needs are required to effectively involve local communities in weapon collection?
- Does local and community level involvement in weapon collection have any positive multiplier effects, such as contributing to peace building or preventing the recurrence of conflict?
- What recommendations should be made to the various actors/ stakeholders, including donors who support weapon collection programmes?

Presentation of the Findings

The field research findings are organised in the report as follows:

Chapter 1:   Development and Application of the Methodology
Chapter 2:   An Overview of Weapon Collection from the Experiences and Perspectives of Traditional Leaders and Local Administration Officials
Chapter 3:   Young Men Focus Groups: Experiences and Perspectives of the Rural-based Young Men
Chapter 4:   Older Men Focus Groups: A Comparison of Experiences and Perspectives of the Rural-based, Urban-based Ex-combatant and Border-based Men
Chapter 5:   Women Focus Groups: A Comparison of Experiences and Perspectives of the Rural-based, Urban-based and Border-based Women
Chapter 6:   Synthesis and Analysis of the General Lessons Learned
Chapter 7:   Policy Recommendations

DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF THE METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This part explains how Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) techniques were developed and applied to review community and local level involvement in weapon collection programmes. The process is described in detail, including the formulation of project objectives and research questions; how contacts with country and local level organisations were made; the selection and training of field facilitators; general community meetings and formation of focus groups; and how the exercises were initiated. While the entirety of the process that was followed may not represent a perfect blueprint for preparation of PM&E evaluative research, the authors are convinced that it is feasible and that the techniques that were applied are the most appropriate for involving all levels of the community in managing weapon collection programmes. As stated earlier, this WfD project is a United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research initiative, which aims to study the implementation of weapon collection and Weapons in Exchange for Development programmes. A team of disarmament and post-war reconstruction and development experts was hired to undertake this task. For a period of six months, the WfD Management team in Geneva tested old PM&E techniques as well as developing new ones, with a view to identifying which techniques were most suitable for application in the disarmament field. Five techniques, in addition to the Basic Inter-personal Communication Skills (BICS) technique, which is required for all participatory research, were found to be most suitable to the specific situation in Mali.

THE NEW EVALUATION METHODOLOGY: PM&E

To achieve the aim of the current WfD project—to detail and document the lessons learned and best practices drawn from weapon

collection programmes—UNIDIR preferred to apply the PM&E approach because of its well-established status as a research method for project review. Defined as "collaborative problem solving through the generation and use of knowledge" and "a process that leads to corrective action by involving all levels of stakeholders in a shared decision making process", PM&E has the merit of involving and engaging people at the grass-roots level to actively participate in all stages of weapon collection. UNIDIR wanted particularly to learn from the experiences of grass-roots participants and, accordingly, to assess the suitability of PM&E methodology.

Moreover, PM&E methodology has been successfully applied in various World Bank development projects, beginning in the 1980s. This was an important consideration in developing the methods for the current research project, in which UNIDIR felt it appropriate to test the effectiveness of PM&E techniques for the disarmament field. From the outset, the designers of the current research recognised that past approaches to reviewing weapon collection and Weapons in Exchange for Development programmes were conducted in a classical "consultants and clipboard" manner, with poor involvement of major stakeholders, including women, children and young people, older men and ex-combatants from rural, urban, or border communities. As a result, a plethora of criticisms were raised against Weapons in Exchange programmes. High on the list was the criticism that such projects were not economically cost-effective. Indeed, there was a dire need to explore the points of view of the beneficiaries of these projects.

In Mali, the first country of study in the present research, PM&E techniques were applied, involving the real "people" (beneficiaries) in the review of the principal aspects of weapon collection processes: overall goal setting, identification and design, appraisal and implementation, monitoring and evaluation, effectiveness, relevancy and sustainability. Different visual participatory tools were employed; usually, symbols and diagrams representing a subject of focus (e.g. a picture of a woman to represent an ordinary woman in decision making at the community level). Boxes representing the "Before" and "Now" situations in the community were applied for purposes of encouraging participation by all members of the community—including the most silent and those perceived to be "ignorant". The techniques used are not "ends" in themselves, but rather tools for stimulating discussion as well as generating and analysing data.

It is UNIDIR's firm belief that engaging people in problem-solving activities directly relevant to their immediate security inculcates a sense of ownership, which builds people's confidence in themselves and taps into local knowledge, information and expertise. This belief is to be understood alongside the more basic idea that, for community members to become more conscious of and develop a genuine commitment to ridding their community of SALW and preserving the peace therein, they clearly cannot be relegated to a passive role in implementing weapon collection programmes.

The research findings obtained in Mali reveal that the application of PM&E techniques can unravel a multitude of salient issues that would not be comprehended through traditional ("clipboard") methods. Hence, PM&E is a promising tool that can contribute to better understanding of the causes of violence as well as of how communities can become directly involved in stamping out the root causes of violence. Recent trends in post-conflict countries such as Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Iraq and Liberia reveal that the need for integrating a local and community level weapon collection element into post-war reconstruction is a matter of urgency. However, this is impossible without first understanding the practical complexities of how such techniques should be applied. The timing could thus not be more appropriate to develop this type of methodology.

KEY EVALUATION RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Achievement of the above-mentioned research goals entails reviewing all phases in the implementation of weapon collection programmes as well as answering key questions in each phase. Specific questions addressed by the research, in reviewing programmes of weapon collection and any other interventions that were undertaken, include:

- What were the goal(s) and purpose(s) of the weapon collection projects?
- How were the various activities and projects identified and designed, and whose initiative were they?
- How were the projects appraised and implemented?
- How was the monitoring carried out, and what was monitored? What indicators were used?

- How was the performance evaluated (with respect to such aspects as effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and relevancy) for the various activities/projects and the institutions that were involved?
- What about crosscutting issues, such as storage of weapons, number of weapons to be considered "enough", etc?

COORDINATION

As the PM&E techniques were being developed and tested, information was shared with practitioners in Mali, who provided input into the methodological development process whenever appropriate. As previously mentioned, five PM&E techniques were found most suitable to the case of Mali, in addition to the Basic Inter-personal Communication Skills technique, which is required for all participatory research. Relevant questions were formulated for use as part of the employed techniques.

SELECTION OF TRAINEE FACILITATORS

As mentioned in the Introduction to this report, three sites, Lere, Gao City and Menaka, were selected for the research. Lere is a typical rural area located inland in Mali. Gao City is an urban area where most of Mali's ex-combatants reside. Menaka was selected because it is the place where weapon collection projects originated in Mali; it contains both semi-rural and urban sections, and is also near the border with Niger. Site selection for these locations was based on the understanding that these areas would be comparable and would provide a comprehensive review of weapon collection and WfD efforts.

In Lere, the first place where review was conducted, the team first met and briefed Mr Aley (a Member of the Local Commission for Disarmament) and Mr Oumar Boure (the Prefect for Lere and Sumpi). The research team requested that they help identify six people to be trained in the PM&E methodology. The selected individuals were to be offered short-term contracts, and would stay on as trainee facilitators for the duration of the research in Mali. The local authorities were requested to arrange a community meeting, which was held on Monday, 10 March 2003. The

UNIDIR WfD research team spoke at the meeting, introducing the research to the whole community.

The local authorities identified the following people for training:

Mr Mory Abba Tangara, Secretary to the Mayor;
Mr Mohammed Ould Messoul, Office secretary;
Mr Abdoulahi Ag Alher, Trader;
Mr Houlda Yattara, Farmer;
Mr Mohammed Elmoctor, High school student; and
Mr Buba Maiga, Ordinary citizen.

All of the selected trainees were men, despite the team's emphatic insistence that 50 percent of the trainees should be women. The authorities explained that they had selected only men because of a failure to find women that would be suitable for the task. According to the local leaders, selection of the trainees was based on ethnic balance as well as knowledge of the French language.

The team was dissatisfied with the absence of female trainees. It had construed the local authorities' actions as an indicator that women were considered lower in this particular community. However, this view was dispelled during the general community meeting, when the entire community reproached the local administration officials over the lack of inclusion of women among the trainees. The explanation provided by the local administrator was that he had received the request with insufficient time to look for women that were fluent in French. He had selected people who were easily accessible in and around the town. The women attending the meeting were disappointed; however, they were consoled by the fact that two out of the four Project Core team members were women.

TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

The local administration authorities in Lere allowed the training sessions to be held in the Mayor's offices. This gave the research a sense of local ownership, since the local authorities were contributing. The local leadership in subsequent research locations, including Gao City and Menaka, also provided venues free of charge. The training sessions began with an explanation of the research mission—among the topics covered

were the PM&E approach, the objectives of the WfD project, the topic of small arms and light weapons and the reasons for which they have become an international concern.

In order to introduce the participatory approach, trainees were asked to define SALW according to their own understandings. As a response, one trainee stated, "SALW are those weapons that are easy to handle".[6] Others offered: "They are cheap and available in the market even here in Mali"; "They are weapons that can be operated only by individuals"; and, it is "easy to put the parts together". The trainees demonstrated support for the Weapons for Development approach. They also pointed out some shortcomings of other approaches they had experienced before, such as cantonments and/or where some kind of buy-back scheme had been implemented. Feedback in this regard included that: "Buy-backs are not good because they encourage individuals who don't have weapons to acquire them and then present them to receive the benefits"; "There is a likelihood of acquiring the weapons in bulk and then selling them"; and, "Weapons become a commodity for sale and this encourages the arms trade. This was not the case for WfD approaches." It was pointed out that practice in Lere is that, whenever weapons are handed in, members of the local commission first verify the origin. This is to discourage trading of weapons from neighbouring countries.

Additional comments about other approaches to weapon collection included: "Those who have the weapons will not realise the danger they pose, since they will be earning money from them". Issues such as what constitutes a weapon ("can handing in parts be considered handing in a weapon") were also raised. The trainee facilitators concluded that even if large sums of money are paid to retrieve weapons, these expenses are worthwhile, since the dividends accruing from the reduction of armed violence in a community outweigh the costs of such retrieval efforts. This has certainly been the reality in Lere, since the beginning of weapon collection projects there.

PM&E TECHNIQUES

Most of the trainee facilitators had never done any prior work related to community participation. They were introduced to a Basic Inter-personal Communication Skills exercise to familiarise them with participatory

methods. The exercise involves showing pictures of a village woman and a female community worker, depicted in different positions: one in which there is communication between the two; another illustrating a breakdown in communication between the two; and another showing how communication was later restored between the two women. This exercise stimulated discussion among the trainees, who appreciated the power of using pictures in communication. Those who did not immediately understand were encouraged to ask questions. For instance, there was a question as to why only women were involved in the picture. In general, when the trainees were asked the implication of the exercise, their responses indicated that they had understood. Responses included the following: "The exercise made me improve my capacity in the field of inter-personal communication skills"; "Why didn't the agent change her communication style in the second picture, when the village woman appeared not to understand?"; "Are there any other methods other than using pictures in which basic inter-personal communication skills could be used?"; and, "We shall be able to practise during the data gathering". As regards the trainee facilitators' application of the techniques in the field, their performance was very good, and most participants felt encouraged to respond to issues that they found relevant to their own situation.

Basic Inter-personal Communication Skills (BICS)

Basic Inter-personal Communication Skills is a prerequisite technique for any participatory research. This is because facilitators have to learn how to communicate at the local level. To familiarise them with participatory working methods, pictures are used as symbols to show how to establish basic inter-personal communication skills. The exercise involves showing pictures of a village woman and a female community worker, depicted in different positions: one in which there is communication between the two; another illustrating a breakdown in communication between the two; and another showing how communication was later restored between the two women. Whenever it is applied, this technique usually stimulates discussion and reflection among the trainees about day-to-day communication. Because pictures can be understood and interpreted differently by different people, questions have to be allowed, and clarifications should be made, to ensure that everybody understands the aim of the exercise. The facilitator should always ascertain whether the meaning and implications of the exercise have been understood. Trainees' responses should always be

recorded. The latter steps are important to the eventual formulation of the Field Code of Conduct.

Before and Now Situations Analysis: For Reviewing Project Goals and Purposes

Trainees were introduced to this technique as a participatory tool to be applied in reviewing how the overall goals and purposes of weapon collection and WfD projects were set and later achieved. In the context of reviewing the projects, the BANSA technique involves comparison of the "Now" situation (improved—after interventions have been implemented) to the "Before" situation (prior to implementation of various interventions).

Symbols in the "Before" situation box depicted a community in a dangerous situation of armed violence: guns littered everywhere; killings and deaths; water and sanitary problems; and unplanned infrastructures. Trainees were asked to look at the boxes and interpret the symbols with respect to the situations in their own communities prior to the implementation of weapon collection and WfD projects. Trainees added other elements, which were even worse than those already depicted, to the "Before" situation box.

On the other hand, the "Now" situation box depicted an improved community, with people going freely about their business; a well-planned village with water and sanitary conditions, and without guns. The trainees agreed that the "Now" situation box corresponds to the current situation in Lere. Additional symbols, indicating where further improvement had been noticed, were added. Trainees were told that their task would be to engage the communities in analysing the boxes; to facilitate the drawing of alternative boxes that reflect the actual situations in those communities; and, to discuss what steps were taken to change the situation from the "Before" to the "Now" (improved) condition. The facilitators would also be responsible for uncovering the types of resources and constraints that were encountered, as well as other issues of importance to the community members. When the BANSA technique was applied among the communities in the field, more symbols, which more completely depicted the actual circumstances, were added to both the "Before" and "Now" boxes.

Before and Now Situations Analysis (BANSA)
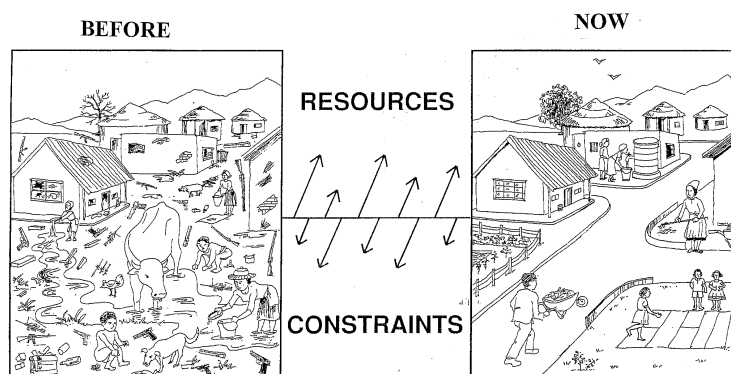
Specifically, the guidance given to trainees instructed them to encourage participation by posing open-ended questions that encourage conversational discussion. This is in contrast to a direct "question and answer"-type approach, which can generate dead-ended questions that elicit simple "yes" or "no" responses. The questions aimed at understanding how the overall goals and purposes of weapon collection and WfD projects were set and later implemented:

- What was the existing situation before the weapon collection project(s)?
- What was the general problem that the weapon collection project(s) aimed to help resolve?
- What future ("Now") state of affairs was envisaged?
- What specific results were expected in order to achieve project objectives?
- What were the specific operational objectives for the project—e.g. reduction in the number of weapons available to criminals; community awareness; etc.?
- How did the community manage to achieve the "Now" state of affairs?
- Is the current state of affairs similar to the one envisaged at the beginning of the project(s)? If not, why?
- What resources were required for the project(s)? Where were they obtained?

- What were the major constraints encountered? How were these constraints overcome?
- What were the target group(s)/area(s) of the project(s)?
- What external factors were necessary to attain project goals?
- What were the immediate impacts of the project(s) on the project areas or target groups?
- What changes or benefits did the project(s) bring—qualitatively, quantitatively or both?
- How long did it take to achieve the results? Where can one look to verify the successes or failures?
- What were the measurable (qualitative) indicators for success or failure of the project(s)?
- From what sources can the indicators be verified?

Note: The above questions were given merely to guide trainee facilitators—they were not meant to be asked in a direct question and answer format. Instead, they were intended to stimulate and facilitate discussion among the community participants. In fact, the community participants themselves posed questions similar to those listed above to fellow participants when responding to some of the issues that arose. Trainees were taught to always apply the six "Helpers": Who, What, When, Where, Why and How.

At the end of this exercise, trainees were asked to specify whether any further clarification was required for the BANSA technique. Their responses indicated that they had fully understood and would be able to apply the technique in the field. Indeed, their performance in the field exercises provided confirmation that they had comprehended well the BANSA technique as presented.

The BANSA technique, including the process and questions enumerated above, were applied to all the field exercises. This technique represents a tool to review the determination of overall goals and purposes for weapon collection and WfD programmes.

Trainees were trained in the other PM&E techniques as well. Training sessions for these other techniques took place during the mornings, while the afternoons were reserved for application of the techniques in the field. The additional techniques employed included the following:

Determining Decision-Making Process:
For Reviewing Project Identification and Design

This technique enables participants to understand and review within the community the decision-making process that characterised community involvement in weapon collection activities and WfD projects. The technique makes use of pictorial diagrams that contain institutions and individuals responsible for decision-making in a community.[7] Depending on the community being studied, these institutions and individuals may include: an external agent, a village official, a village chief, a village committee (elders, religious and other leaders), a local ordinary woman, a local ordinary man, a village artist and/or a local ordinary youth.

Participants are asked to compare the pictures to their own situation. They are each given small cards on which they may vote for those pictures representing the institutions or individuals that made the decisions for the various activities that had been identified. During the exercise, project identification and design questions are posed to the participants, such as the following:

- How did the weapon collection project(s) begin?
- Who initiated them?
- Were the affected communities involved in project decision-making? If so, how?
- Were women and other marginalised groups involved? If so, to what extent?
- Who identified the community projects to be provided in exchange for the collected weapons?
- Did the implemented activities address the factors causing demand for weapons?

As with the BANSA technique, these questions were given merely to guide trainee facilitators, but were not meant to be asked in a strictly question and answer format. Other questions were permitted, depending on the situation. This technique, including the process and questions enumerated above, were applied to all the field exercises. The technique represents a tool to review the identification and design of weapon collection and WfD programmes.

Conversational Interviews:
For Reviewing Project Appraisal and Implementation

The purpose of the Conversational Interviews technique is to enable review of how the weapon collection and Weapons for Development programmes were implemented. This exercise involved instructing the trainees on how to facilitate a conversational discussion within a group. The issues discussed cover questions of project appraisal and implementation, such as the following:

- Were there any mechanisms in place for the collection of weapons?
- If so, did the project planners build on these mechanisms, or did they introduce new ones?
- Had there been any previous incentives given to people who voluntarily surrendered weapons?
- How different were those incentives from the ones introduced through Weapons for Development?
- Which of the two is preferable? Why?
- How sustainable is the WfD approach?
- How does the value of your own individual contribution to weapon collection programmes, in terms of number of weapons turned in, time spent, resources, etc., compare to the goods, services and/or any other peace dividend received from the WfD programme(s)?
- What project implementation arrangements were pursued? How effective were they?
- What convinced weapon holders to hand over their guns?
- What confidence building measures were put in place?
- What guarantees were put in place to encourage the participation of different stakeholders (e.g. safety in handling weapons, legal protection)?
- At which locations were the voluntarily surrendered weapons received, and which locations are considered best for safe storage?
- Who ensured that the collected weapons were safely stored?
- Which weapons were handed over first? What reasons explain this?
- From your experience, what is the best timing for implementing weapon collection and incentive programmes?
- Who should participate, and who should not participate, in weapon collection programmes? Why?
- How were the incentives implemented?

- How was the handing over of weapons made a collective responsibility, given the fact that weapons sometimes belong to individuals?
- What were the constraints to implementing the incentives? How can they be overcome?
- Did women or other marginalised groups have a role in implementing weapon collection or WfD? If so, what were these tasks?
- What information-sharing mechanisms were instituted to ensure that all stakeholders were brought on board?
- What general lessons can be learned from implementing the weapon collection and Weapons for Development programmes?

As with the previous techniques, these questions were given merely to guide trainee facilitators—they were not meant to be asked in a direct question and answer format. Instead, they were intended to stimulate and facilitate discussion among the community participants. This technique, including the process and questions enumerated above, were applied to all the field exercises. The technique represents a tool to review the appraisal and implementation of weapon collection and WfD programmes.

Community Calendar Approach: For Reviewing Project Monitoring

This technique enables understanding of the community's perspectives on how the monitoring of weapon collection and Weapons for Development projects was conducted. The process requires participants to list all the activities/projects that were undertaken. Participants use Calendar-oriented monitoring forms, indicating at what time of year the individual collection activities and projects attracted more weapons, as well as the reasons why this was the case. Trainees were given the questions that had been specifically developed for this particular exercise. These included:

- What were the aspects of the project(s) that needed critical monitoring? Why?
- Were there any benchmarks upon which the monitoring was based? If so, what were these benchmarks?
- Who was involved in monitoring and who was not? Why?
- What performance indicators were put in place to show that objectives were being achieved?
- How was it assessed whether the number of weapons in the community was decreasing/increasing?
- Which weapons were handed over first? What reasons explain this?

- What kinds of weapons were turned over in large numbers? What reasons explain this?
- Where were the collected weapons stored? Why?
- Who handled the weapons that were turned in?
- At what time of year did the rate of voluntary weapon surrender increase? Why?
- What processes are involved between the point a weapon is handed in and its destruction?
- What types of incentives attracted the highest numbers of surrendered weapons? Why?
- How was the distribution of benefits accruing from weapon collection incentives monitored?
- How was the monitoring conducted, of who was cooperating and who was not cooperating?
- How was the information recorded?
- What lessons can be learned from your experience monitoring weapon collection and Weapons for Development projects?

As with the previous techniques, these questions were given merely to guide trainee facilitators—they were not meant to be asked in a direct question and answer format. Instead, they were intended to stimulate and facilitate discussion among the community participants. This technique, including the process and questions enumerated above, were applied to all the field exercises. The technique represents a tool to review how project monitoring was carried out.

Three Star Game: For Reviewing Project Performance

This technique uses three stars—the biggest representing "very excellent" performance, the middle-sized representing "fairly excellent" performance and the smallest representing "good" performance. The terms "fair" and "bad" are not used because people generally feel uncomfortable using them, and view them as overly critical and offensive to the people involved.

★	Very excellent
★	Fairly excellent
★	Good

Participants are asked to list all weapon collection/WfD activities and projects that were undertaken, as well as all individuals and institutions that were involved in these activities and projects. Based on their own experience, participants associate one of the three sized stars with an activity/project or individual/institution. The exercise enables an understanding of the kinds of activities/projects that are preferred by the community—based on the projects' relevance, sustainability and effectiveness, in terms of attraction of greater numbers of weapons and reduction of armed violence. The technique also helps deduce which institutions/individuals should be involved in future project implementation.

The trainee facilitators were also presented the questions that had been developed for this particular technique, such as:

- How did the communities rate their level of participation in weapon collection programmes? (Participation is defined as a continuum ranging from information sharing to support for participatory initiatives by the external people.)
- How did they rate the contribution of different institutions or individuals, and why?
- Which interventions/activities had the most desirable results and why?
- What do you consider the indicators for success or failure of weapon collection programmes?
- How do you evaluate the distribution of benefits from the incentive projects?
- Are Weapons for Development approaches to weapon collection sustainable?
- To what extent did such approaches empower the population— through motivation, resources and knowledge—to maintain and pursue various measures to rid the community or area of illicit weapons and violence?
- Were the collection and incentive activities undertaken relevant, considering the degree to which the population or the authorities valued disarmament as a priority?
- What impact did the weapon collection and Weapons for Development projects have (e.g. reduction of incidents of misuse of small arms and light weapons; reduction of violence or increase in working capacity due to resultant security enhancement)?

- Do you consider the WfD approach more effective than other approaches (e.g. buy-backs)?
- How many collected weapons do you consider to be enough for the community? For the country?
- What lessons could be learned from your experience reviewing weapon collection and WfD projects?

As with the previous techniques, these questions were given merely to guide trainee facilitators—they were not meant to be asked in a direct question and answer format. Instead, they were intended to stimulate and facilitate discussion among the community participants. This technique, including the process and questions enumerated above, were applied to all the field exercises. The technique represents a tool to review the performance of individuals, institutions and activities or specific components of the weapon collection and WfD projects.

The trainee facilitators understood all of the presented techniques. The power that these techniques wield, to engage different people in discussion, was appreciated by the communities.

FIELD OPERATION ARRANGEMENT

The field research plan required those communities that would be the subjects of the research to be divided into three groups, according to gender and age. Two trainee facilitators would be assigned to each group: one trainee would be responsible for note-taking, while the other would facilitate the discussion. However, in general, both trainee facilitators were to work together to ensure teamwork.

Code of Conduct (CoC)

The project team formulated an operational Code of Conduct. Reflecting on what they had learned in the Basic Inter-personal Communication Skills exercise, the trainee facilitators were quick to contribute to the formulation of this tool. The CoC was formulated to include the following guidelines: (a) strict time management; (b) ensure effective participation by everyone; (c) treat equally all participants in the groups; (d) every question or answer from the community is important; (e) be good listeners; and (f) do not be defensive.

Field Terms of Reference for the Groups

Field Terms of Reference were formulated, establishing three focus groups—young men, older men, and women. All questions and answers from the community were to be recorded as much as possible. After each exercise, whenever possible, the conclusions reached by the groups were to be read aloud, to ensure that they were an accurate reflection of the issues the communities had raised. The PM&E team would meet every evening, to both receive the groups' findings and prepare training on the next exercises. During the exercises, the main facilitators would provide support and assistance whenever needed. Each group would decide at what time to hold their next meeting, keeping in mind the daily morning training time.

The General Community Meeting

The first general community meeting held in Lere on Monday, 10 March 2003, marked the beginning of the actual field exercises. The local administration had informed the community about the Weapons for Development project meeting the previous evening. By 10:00 a.m Monday morning, over 50 villagers had gathered at the Mayor's office.

The PM&E Team Leader began the meeting by explaining the purpose of UNIDIR's WfD project. The historical linkage between UNIDIR and peace building efforts in Mali, as evident through projects such as the book "A Peace of Timbuktu" (which some members of the community had ever seen), was also described.

A heated argument then ensued among community members, focusing on various aspects of the weapon collection programmes. The particular contentious issues that arose included complaints over the short notice given to the community about the general community meeting.[8] The useful lesson learned was that in the future ample time should be given to the communities so that they may prepare themselves before community meetings.

As the meeting proceeded, members of the community voiced additional concerns regarding who had chosen the trainee facilitators. Some community members expressed disappointment, demanding to know why no women had been included among those chosen for the task.

Community members asked what compensation would be provided to those participating in the research. According to the interpreter, other inter-communal issues were also raised, which were not necessarily of concern to the PM&E team. The interpreter stated that he could not convey these issues to the team, since he did not believe such matters to be fit for the team's ears. The team did not insist that he interpret these issues.

Concerns were also expressed that some villages, which accounted for over 60 percent of weapon collection activities, were not present at the meeting. As the meeting drew to a close, a final observation was made, that "the best way to deal with weapons is to talk to those who manufacture them". This statement draws attention to the need to implement measures that curb the factors causing demand for small arms and light weapons at the same time as any supply-reducing measures.

The lively debates that took place during the general community meetings are regular occurrences in PM&E exercises. Such arguments are evidence that people have different opinions and are thinking about critical matters. The PM&E team welcomed this type of impassioned expression of opinions, for it is the core of what PM&E aims to accomplish.

Forming Focus Groups

After about two hours of discussion, community members in Lere agreed to grant the PM&E team all the support it needed, and decided to participate in the project activities during the next 4-5 days. Having extended the team's appreciation, the Team Leader requested the community members to divide themselves into focus groups of their choice, according to gender and age. Facilitators for each group were introduced, who thereafter took charge of forming the groups. Three focus groups—consisting of young men, older men, and women—were formed. Together with the trainee facilitators, each group decided the place and time that would be most convenient for conducting the field exercises. No criteria were established for age ranges within the groups, but judging from informal sample interviews that the team conducted, the ages for young men ranged from 20-40 years; older men ranged from 40 years upward, while older male ex-combatants were typically between 25 and 45 years old; women ranged from around 17-50 years. Furthermore, no criteria were set for other group characteristics—each community member just seemed to know automatically where he/she belonged, according to his/her gender and age,

and probably status[9]. The team did witness a group of young men trying to pull a young woman away from the women's group, but the young woman ignored them.

With the focus groups formed, having agreed on their timetables and meeting locations, the general meeting concluded. The young men's and women's focus groups decided to proceed immediately with the BANSA PM&E exercises. Despite a few minor hold-ups, the whole process worked very well, and the team is convinced that it can be adapted as a prototype procedure for conducting participatory research on a range of sensitive subjects including weapon collection, armed violence, the illicit trade in SALW/other illicit substances or items and post-conflict situations.

APPLYING THE TECHNIQUES IN THE FIELD

The following sections describe how the PM&E techniques, described earlier in this chapter, were applied in the field to review WfD projects. The techniques were applied in combination with other conventional evaluative research methods, such as SWOT [Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats][10] and Vulnerability and Capability Analysis, among others. Field exercises were conducted within the three focus groups, which were formed according to gender and age: young men, older men, and women. In order to obtain further insight on how the different social groups in the communities were entangled in the various dimensions of SALW and armed violence, the focus groups were further disaggregated according to other differences including: place of residence (rural, urban or border); occupation and other major means of livelihood (trading, pastoralism, sedentary farmer); and status as an ex-combatant or not (established as a special category). The research findings reveal that armed violence impacted the above variables in different ways and magnitudes.

DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE PM&E TECHNIQUES WERE APPLIED

PM&E techniques were applied to review all phases of the weapon collection and WfD management cycle, with a view to answering the following questions:

- What were the goal(s) and purpose(s) of the weapon collection projects?
- How were the various activities and projects identified and designed, and whose initiative were they?
- How were the projects appraised and implemented?
- How was the monitoring carried out, and what was monitored? What indicators were used?
- How was the performance evaluated (with respect to such aspects as effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and relevancy) for the various activities/projects and the institutions that were involved?
- What about crosscutting issues, such as storage of weapons, number of weapons to be considered "enough", etc?

The processes followed, as well as the questions asked, are as described under the technique descriptions presented earlier in this chapter. The techniques that were applied are as follows:

- For reviewing the projects' goal(s) and purpose(s), the main technique applied was **Before and Now Situations Analysis**;
- For reviewing the projects' identification and design, the main technique applied was **Determining Decision-Making Process**;
- For reviewing the projects' appraisal and implementation, the main technique applied was **Conversational Interviews**;
- For reviewing the projects' monitoring, the main technique applied was **Community Calendar Approach**;
- For reviewing the projects' performance, the main technique applied was the **Three Star Game.**

CHAPTER 2

AN OVERVIEW OF WEAPON COLLECTION FROM THE EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS AND LOCAL ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS

INTRODUCTION

The Field Core team held discussions with various stakeholders—the United Nations Development Programme, NGOs and government—at the national, regional (within Mali) and local levels.

This chapter presents the findings from discussions held with the local disarmament committee and local government administration officials: Mr Aley Ag Rhissa, Member of the Local Commission (LC) for Disarmament, Lere; Colonel Toure, High Commissioner, Gao Region; Colonel Adama, Prefect, Menaka District. Conversational interviews with each individual took place in their respective areas, and lasted 2-3 hours. The discussions touched upon various aspects of the weapon collection and WfD projects, as well as the causes of armed violence in their respective areas.

FINDINGS: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Causes of Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in Mali

On the subject of the modalities of illicit SALW proliferation to and within Mali, the three local leaders gave differing explanations with respect to their own areas. Their experiences varied according to gender and age; area (rural, urban or border); occupation and other major means of livelihood (trading, pastoralism, sedentary farmer); and special categories of persons such as ex-combatants. For example, they pointed to the fact that rural farmers will provide different explanations for the proliferation of illicit SALW than do nomads or traders or border dwellers; urban-based young

men or ex-combatants offer different explanations than those of rural-based youth; experiences were described as similarly divergent for women as well. In general, the following factors were highlighted as the main sources of illicit SALW proliferation and armed violence in Mali:

Personal security—Armed burglary had become a daily activity, particularly in urban centres. This led those people targeted by armed robbery to acquire guns as well, in order to protect their lives and property. At the same time, communities located in the interior of the country were forced to acquire weapons because of the failure of the government to provide them adequate security.

Guns as means of livelihood—It was pointed out that the region's economic problems, brought on by drought and conflict, had facilitated armed violence becoming "a means of livelihood for some individuals", as a potential reprieve from the desperation of poverty.

Neighbouring countries—The local administrators informed the team that much of the SALW proliferation in Mali comes from its neighbouring countries, especially Mauritania/Polisario, Niger, Algeria, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Accordingly, "a bilateral and sub-regional approach to solve the problem is therefore necessary to address cross-border problems".

Immigrants—Mali's policy of "openness" is to blame in part, because many immigrants freely enter the country and exploit the relaxed level of control to import guns.

Reasons for SALW Proliferation in Mali:
- Personal security reasons
- Guns as means of "livelihood"
- Neighbouring country factors
- Immigrants
- Artisans
- Leakage from the military
- Vastness of the country/Porous borders
- International Cartels
- Livestock rustling
- The Arab factor

Artisans—An estimated one hundred (100) artisan workshops located in the cities of Segou and Mopti are suspected to be recycling illegal arms.

The Military—Over eight (8) percent of the illegal SALW in circulation in Mali are estimated to come from the armed forces. The reason given was that the Malian army is voluntarily recruited from a pool of frustrated young men who join with the hope of quickly becoming rich. Once in the army, their dreams are not realised, and their frustration only grows. Some soldiers desert—along with their guns—while those who remain in the military frequently begin to collaborate with criminals. The interviewees noted, "these are the guns that find their way to cause violence in the communities". During the conflict, there was a large military presence in the region. Many weapons, as well as a large amount of ammunition, are believed to have made their way from the army to the community through sales for profit.[11] Criminals managed to get their hands on some of these weapons, especially after the conflict ended, even though such criminals were not necessarily involved in the conflict.

Vastness of the country—Mali is one of the largest countries in Africa, and shares borders with several countries. The National Guard and Gendarmerie possess insufficient capacity to protect all of Mali's borders; the country has virtually no control over its northern frontier.

International gun and commodity trafficking—The local leaders observed that Mali's porous borders, particularly in regions bordering Mauritania, Niger and Algeria, make these regions especially vulnerable to European arms and cigarette traffickers, who have collaborators in Mali.

Livestock rustling—Cattle raiding, and subsequent retaliatory raiding, along the Niger-Mali border has necessitated the acquisition of guns by border communities, to either protect their livestock or raid neighbouring communities.

The Arab factor—Arab communities in Mali have been dissenting, although this is not at present believed to be a principal cause of SALW proliferation.

Reasons for Starting Weapon Collection Programmes

Different explanations were given concerning what prompted the beginning of weapon collection programmes in Mali. It was noted that while the provision of goods and services to the whole community in exchange for weapons was very important, this was considered more of an accelerating factor than a major driving force behind the voluntary surrender of illegal weapons. In general, the following factors were mentioned as the key driving forces encouraging weaponry surrender:

The negotiated peace agreement—There was a realisation that the resort to use of armed force is not a solution to every problem; thus, the fighting groups negotiated with the government for a peaceful end to the conflict.

Intervention by traditional institutions—After the peace agreement and the end of the prolonged violent armed conflict, traditional institutions, including elders, chiefs and religious leaders, started on their own initiative to sensitise their communities about the dangers of armed violence. They were aided by the fact that they knew which members of their communities were in possession of the guns. The respect that these institutions command within the community led directly to their success persuading people to turn in their guns: "Even though the conflict tended to erode their powers, they continued to be respected among their communities".

Confidence measures—Measures that gave confidence to those willing to hand over weapons were implemented, following the conclusion in mid-1997 of a negotiated agreement between the government and rebel forces. At the community level, for instance, measures, such as the non-involvement of the security forces, convinced weapon holders to come forward and hand over their weapons.

Sensitisation and awareness raising—Following the conclusion of the peace agreement, the elders, traditional chiefs and religious leaders, and later, women,[12] embarked on sensitisation and awareness raising campaigns within their communities. These encouraged the communities to handle the situation independently. Local communities began to approach individuals within their communities

who were believed to be possessing guns. In the event of an individual's refusal to hand over a gun, the whole community would denounce such a community member. For people whom the community did not know, but whom it suspected to have guns, the community would report them to the security forces. Border communities also became involved in cross-border meetings.

> **Factors that Encouraged Initiation of Weapon Collection Programmes:**
> • A negotiated Peace Pact
> • Intervention by traditional institutions
> • Confidence building measures
> • Sensitisation and awareness raising
> • The nature of the conflict (had reached attrition level)
> • The general desire to end violence as a means to solve problems

War of attrition—The incessant violence that characterised the conflict had endured for a long time, and had a negative impact on the entire community. Everyone grew tired of this, to the point where "keeping a weapon became a threat in itself to some people," and thus people felt they "had to hand them over".

Process of Weapon Collection and WfD Programmes

The weapon collection programmes were initiated at different times in different regions, beginning with Menaka, where the armed rebellion in Mali had started. As the Prefect observed, "the use of guns started and ended here". In general, the following steps in the weapon collection and WfD programmes were common to all of the regions:

Formation of local committees for disarmament—A regional meeting that took place in Timbuktu in mid-1997, attended by the regional community leaders, recommended the formation of Local Commissions for Disarmament. The formation of these Local Commissions formalised community weapon collection and WfD programmes.

The process for collection—As for the process of collecting weapons, the local leaders explained that when individuals from the community hand in a weapon, it is typically received by the Local Commission, which verifies, registers, and transports the weapon to the National Guard facilities for storage. At the National Guard facilities, a receipt signed by a representative of the project, as well as by a member of the LC and a member of the National Guard, is issued.[13] Collected weapons are usually kept at the National Guard facilities because of the National Guard's capacity to securely store the weapons, as well as the availability of technical expertise to handle the guns. The members of the LC are typically free to check the weapons deposited at the National Guard, especially when the weapons are needed for destruction. The LCs are tasked with handling the weapons because its members are trusted by the community; people turning in weapons do not want to be directly exposed to the security personnel.[14] The communities have been satisfied with this arrangement, because it has created confidence and encouraged those holding weapons to hand them over.

Challenges in Implementing Weapon Collection Programmes

The local leaders described a number of challenges faced when implementing the weapon collection programmes. From their experience, when incentives started to be offered, priority was given to those who handed over the largest numbers of weapons—this led to complaints from those who had handed in fewer guns. Additionally, the lack of technical expertise in handling weapons was a significant concern, especially for those turning in or collecting the weapons. No special tools are provided to handle ammunition, grenades or other potentially dangerous objects; thus, those handing over or receiving the weapons are left exposed to danger. Although some members of the LC have knowledge in handling weapons, they were still exposed to some risk, and capacity building is still needed.

As a further challenge, although the Weapons for Development approach encouraged the communities to put pressure on individuals still possessing weapons, the communities located very close to Mali's borders with countries as Niger have held onto their weapons. According to the local leaders, this trend appears to result from persistent security concerns, like protecting private property from cross-border cattle raids.

The local leaders pointed out other challenges to implementing weapon collection programmes. These included resistance, by those who had bought their guns, to giving them up without some form of compensation. Weapons are usually collected before any incentive programmes are set in motion, and this makes those who handed over their weapons impatient, especially if the implementation of promised community projects is delayed. At times, the projects were not implemented as a result of inadequate funding, and this discouraged the communities.

The absence of a legal instrument, giving amnesty to individuals who voluntarily surrender their weapons, also constitutes an impediment to the success of weapon collection programmes. People will only turn in their arms if they do not fear being prosecuted or harassed by members of the security agencies.[15] However, the High Commissioner for the Gao region observed that, "since the whole issue of weapon collections was started by the communities, even in the absence of the law, people can still surrender their weapons".

Finally, the leaders also mentioned the limited financial resources available for the reintegration of ex-combatants. This process thus remains incomplete, breeding pessimism among some ex-combatants, and negatively impacting weapon collection efforts.

Measures for Curbing Small Arms Proliferation and Armed Violence in Mali

When asked about the optimal methods to solve problems of illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and armed violence, the local officials listed the following measures that were underway in their respective communities:[16]

Reforms in recruitment of the armed forces—At the recruitment level, only people with credibility are now accepted for military duty, although the local leaders made it clear that it is not easy to attract the right people to the regular armed forces.

Civilian law enforcement—The military has been progressively removed from the day-to-day maintenance of law and order, and has

been replaced in this role by civilian security agencies. It is hoped that such measures will curb the leakage of arms and ammunition from the military to the civilian population.

DDR—During the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration exercise, many small arms and light weapons were confiscated, but more remained at large.

Measures for Curbing Small Arms Proliferation in Mali:
- Reforms in recruitment of armed forces
- Civilian law enforcement, as opposed to military law enforcement
- Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes
- Sensitisation and awareness raising of weapon holders
- Bilateral approach with neighbouring countries/communities
- WfD programmes

Sensitisation and awareness raising—Sensitisation programmes have been conducted at the community level on the dangers of possessing weapons.

Bilateral approaches—Bilateral meetings have been held between Mali and its neighbours, including the Republic of Niger and Mauritania, and joint mechanisms to monitor SALW proliferation along their common borders have been established.

Weapons for Development—Community-based developmental projects offered in exchange for weaponry surrendered are ongoing.

Achieving Total Disarmament at the Community Level

When asked how the total removal of illicit weapons could best be accomplished in their communities, the local leaders responded according to their own experiences. It was stressed that alternatives to the use of arms and violence need to be provided, such as employment initiatives—for, "when people are busy with economic activities, they will not think of using

violence—this is what is happening now in northern Mali, despite a few problems here and there".

At the community level, seasonal activities can be determining factors in disarmament efforts. For example, in the sedentary communities, the post-harvest period is very important for weapon collection, because this is the time when people gather together in large numbers. For nomads, the period between November-February is crucial because they are assembled together at specific locations (oases); this facilitates any sensitisation campaigns. Problems that lead to the use of weapons and armed violence are also less prominent at this time, "generally a peaceful moment for the communities".

The local leaders placed the burden upon governmental authorities to take the lead in their communities in ensuring that official weaponry stockpiles are well protected. The construction of proper storage facilities, such as underground armouries similar to those that already exist in most developed countries, would go a long way in guaranteeing that official weapons stocks do not make their way to the illicit arms market or the general community. As a further measure towards complete disarmament, the officials recommended that the issue be taken up with arms manufacturers, the original source of proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In the leaders' words, "most of these guns have come from outside Mali". At the same time, however, the leaders emphasised the importance of sensitising people within the country, so that they do not purchase or acquire arms in the first place.

The local leaders did not hesitate to describe Mali's problems with proliferation of small arms in international terms. They expressed the view that "the problem of illicit small arms and light weapons is international, and thus requires international cooperation". Total community disarmament should be linked to national, regional and international disarmament efforts, because of the interconnectedness of the problem at these different levels. As the officials pointed out, "It serves no purpose to disarm at the community level when new arms are being brought in." The leaders also emphasised the need for involvement and sensitisation of cross-border communities in the solution to the problem. The capacity of border guards and other "first contact" officials should also be strengthened.

Measuring "Success" or "Failure" of Weapon Collection Programmes

When asked how communities could assess whether their weapon collection efforts were successful or unsuccessful, the leaders explained their answers in terms of their own general experience. A basic measure of success would be an improvement in the security situation, indicated by the reduction of (armed) violence ("no more killings, murders and robberies"). For example, in Lere it was reported that, during the previous twelve (12) months, only one incident of a car being ambushed was observed. Moreover, those involved in the ambush were apprehended by their own relatives, a testament to the effectiveness of community sensitisation.

The marked growth of settlement in rural areas represents another possible measure of success for weapon collection programmes. Whereas populations had previously been displaced from rural areas to urban centres, "now people have voluntarily gone back to their villages". When people can move around without armed military escorts, this can be a further indication that weapon collection efforts have succeeded. For example, one member of the group remarked, "we never used to move between Lere and Niono[17] without military escorts, but now there is no need".

Settlement in areas formerly considered inhospitable may be an additional indicator that weapon collection projects have attained success. For instance, "there were no civilian villages along Lere-Niono road, but today several villages have sprung up".

Finally, the resumption of economic activities, such as construction of wells and irrigation pumps, trading activities, and micro-credit projects, can be an indicator of success for weapon collection programmes.

Characteristics of Incentives Given Through WfD Projects

When questioned about the optimal characteristics of incentive schemes that are provided to the community to encourage the surrender of illegal weapons, the local and traditional leaders identified the geographical context as a key factor determining which incentives are appropriate. As an example, most nomadic communities have exhibited a preference for the construction of wells, while urban dwellers have preferred income-

generating activities. Different social groups may also demonstrate different preferences with regard to their preferred incentive projects. Men residing in urban centres have typically preferred trading activities, while rural-based men preferred restocking programmes; at the same time, women tended to prefer projects that provided direct services, such as health centres, cereal banks, grinding mills and small-scale trading activities.

The local leaders' priorities for incentive projects possessed a number of common elements. First, projects should provide for the basic needs of the community. Incentives should also be sustainable, demonstrating continuity and compatibility with the situation at hand, including with other projects. Further, projects should address community-wide needs, rather than offering rewards to individuals. Incentives need to be accessible to everyone in the community at the same time, so that no one is excluded from the benefits of the project(s); this is true unless there is an agreed criterion for use (e.g. a community-imposed user fee). Finally, incentive projects should foster reconciliation and unity among all the social groups.

Implementation Arrangements

There was consensus among the local leaders on the desirable characteristics of implementation arrangements. The leaders stated the villagers alone should have the right to select the management and monitoring committees. At the same time, the involvement of government officials should be kept to a minimum. In general, the community members themselves should play a leading role in implementation. Too, the overall goal of the project(s) should be to benefit the entire community—an objective that should be made clear from the outset to those chosen to manage the project.

Conclusions

All three local leaders were of the view, "As long as there is adequate security provided by the state, there is no need for any other groups to hold arms." Accordingly, ordinary citizens had resorted to the acquisition of arms and use of violence in Mali as a direct consequence of the state's failure to provide for its population and control small arm and light weapon proliferation. If the state is unable to offer security to its people, then

citizens will use their own means to protect themselves and their property. Those with little economic means will use violent methods to acquire wealth.

The meetings that the team held with the local leaders allowed greater insight into the mechanics of weapon collection and WfD projects.

CHAPTER 3

YOUNG MEN FOCUS GROUPS: EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES OF THE RURAL-BASED YOUNG MEN

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents field findings from the young men focus group. PM&E field exercises were conducted with only one rural-based focus group of young men, based in Lere. The five PM&E techniques that were developed were all applied, namely: (a) Before and Now Situations Analysis; (b) Determining Decision-Making Process; (c) Conversational Interviews; (d) Community Calendar Approach; and (e) the Three Star Game. The process followed as well as the questions asked are as detailed in Chapter 1 of this report, entitled "Development and Application of the Methodology".

BEFORE AND NOW SITUATIONS ANALYSIS: FOR REVIEWING PROJECT GOALS AND PURPOSES

Immediately after the general community meeting, the young men attending the meeting formed themselves into a focus group. Facilitators assisted them to form the group and to decide how the group would conduct its business during the next 4-5 days. They chose the alleyway adjacent to the Mayor's office as a suitable meeting place for all of the exercises. It took some time before they grasped what was required of them, but they understood the exercises after thorough explanations by the facilitators. The young men planned their schedule for the next four days. They took into account the fact that they had football matches every evening at 5 p.m.; thus, they would have to complete all the exercises by 5 p.m. each day. They proceeded to conduct the BANSA exercise, which they finished by 5 p.m. on that same day. For the PM&E team, this was the

first valuable lesson learned: the PM&E approach allows participants the flexibility to plan the review exercises to fit with their regular daily activities.

A total of 14 young men, with average age between 20 and 40 years old, participated in the focus group's exercises. Below are the detailed findings from these exercises.

Situation of the Community Before Implementation of the Projects

In the discussions that arose during the analysis of the BANSA diagram and subsequent question and answer session, the youth identified a number of elements that characterised the "Before" situation in Lere. Among these were "the existence of weapons in the community", which "was visible almost to everybody". Armed violence impacted virtually every member of the community, as indicated by the direct quotation: "People were living in fear". The famine that plagued the communities was partially attributed to the presence of weapons, as people could not cultivate their fields: "there was famine because people were not undertaking any activities, and much of the conflict accrued from hunger—which made people resort to violence". The young men also described the "Before" situation by stating, "people never used to go to their fields that are located far away from the town". Additionally, "people never used to move freely, either to Niono or any other place, without military escorts".

The "Now" Situation—After Implementation of the Projects

The "Now" situation was described with the statement, "people can now move freely without requiring military escorts". Further, "people are now in full control of their time and resources, and thus there is peace". "Because of peace, everybody is busy working in their businesses." They also described the general state of cooperation in the community: "Communities have now become together and closer." The implementation of the projects facilitated new levels of trust and community spirit, which has resulted in the development of the town of Lere: "Weapon collection efforts marked development." The young men also pointed out, "the decentralisation came after disarmament and therefore can be attributed to weapons collection." Finally, the Flame de Paix de Lere ("Flame of Peace in Lere") of 9 July, in which over one thousand weapons were destroyed in a fire, "symbolised a return of peace to the people of Lere".

Overall Goal(s) and Purpose(s)

With regard to the overall goal for weapon collection and WfD projects, and how the community managed to achieve this goal, the young men explained that the community had felt the need to restore peace by "reducing the risks of weapons and restoring calm". They revealed that this was, from the outset, an enormous task that required a range of integrated strategies, along with the resources to implement them. These strategies included: (a) Sensitisations of communities on the dangers of weapons and armed violence;[18] (b) Inter-community meetings, which involved leaders of different tribes from Lere; (c) Demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants; (d) Initial support given to those who handed in weapons; and (e) Cross-border meetings, involving officials from neighbouring countries, on the subject of border-based arms proliferation.[19]

Measuring the Impact

Based on their experience with weapon collection and WfD projects, the young men identified two categories of effects observed by the community as measures of whether the projects had had an impact. First, there were the immediate impacts of the projects on the community. These comprised an immediate reduction in the numbers of weapons circulating in the community. This reduction diminished the levels of violence, which resulted in peace and brought about the resumption of agricultural and fishing activities, other economic activities, and "the restoration of confidence among Lere tribes which made them once again work and live together harmoniously".[20]

The second type of project effects was experienced in the long-term. According to the young men's experience, the tangible benefits from weapon collection and WfD are not always immediately obvious, but are more visible in the long-term. Consequently, the medium to long-term impact indicators envisaged by the current study were apparent in the young men's statements, which cited "the creation of self-confidence and courage". The young men also observed, "seeing successful developmental projects that were brought to the community greatly contributed to surrendering more weapons". The young men also pointed out "the demobilisation and reintegration of some ex-combatants and others that used to be involved in violence".[21]

DETERMINING DECISION-MAKING PROCESS:
FOR REVIEWING PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND DESIGN

Introduction

The Determining Decision-Making Process exercise was carried out the following day. Facilitators began the exercise by explaining the purpose of the participatory techniques. The procedure that was followed is detailed in Chapter 1, "Development and Application of the Methodology".

Definition of Participation

Early in the exercise, the facilitators, wishing to ascertain how exactly the young men in the community conceived of the term, "participation", asked the focus group what they understood "participation" to mean. Among their various responses were the statements: "Contributing to a project"; "To take part in deciding an activity"; "Intervention in a project"; and "To assist some activity". Judging from these responses, it was concluded that the participants understood participation to mean, "beneficiaries having a say and input in all stages of the project implementation process".

Weapon Collection and Weapons for Development Activities

The participants were next asked to list the various activities undertaken as part of weapon collection and WfD projects, and to ascertain which actors and/or institutions made which decisions. The general activities and projects that were identified by the young men are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Weapon Collection Activities	Weapons for Development Projects
• Actual gathering of weapons • Checking of weapon safety • Conducting the "Flame of Peace" • Fundraising[22] • Handling and storage • Inter-community meetings • Organising destruction ceremonies • Registration of the collected weapons • Sensitising and informing on the dangers of SALW • Verification of type of weapon, origin, etc. • Weapon destruction	• Animal fattening (sheep, cows and donkeys) • Animal restocking • Cereal Banks • Construction of markets and schools • Decentralisation programmes[23] • Gardening • Irrigation • Micro-credit schemes • Provision of farming tools and materials • Provision of grinding mills to women • Provision of telephone services • Supplying of water to the town and surrounding villages • Trade • Training of women in various fields • Transportation • TV Antenna • Well construction

Analysis of How Decisions Were Made

In terms of the primary decision makers in the community, categories of people were identified: external agent, ordinary village woman, ordinary village man, village chief, village official, village artist, village committee and ordinary village young man as shown in Table 2.

A total of twelve (12) activities/projects (those listed in the table, above) were selected by the young men's focus group as the most important. The young men assessed which people in the community were the key decision makers in determining each of these activities/projects. According to the young men, the ordinary village woman and the village committee each

determined/influenced four (4) out of twelve (12) activities/projects, while two (2) out of twelve (12) were determined by the village chief. The external agent and village artist each determined one (1) out of twelve (12) activities/ projects. Neither the ordinary village man, village official or village young man was credited with determining/influencing any of the twelve (12) decisions.

Table 2: Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation (PM&E):
Reviewing Decision-making and Influence using Pictorial Diagrams:
Young Men's Focus Group, Lere, Mali, 11 March 2003

Decision Maker	No. of Decisions
External Agent	1
Ordinary Village Woman	4
Ordinary Village Man	0
Village Chief	2
Village Official	0
Village Artist	1
Village Committee	4
Village Young Man	0

The young men's reasoning in their assessments of the decision makers for the twelve (12) activities/projects was explained as follows:

Village Woman—The women were heavily involved in sensitising their own sons, husbands and brothers. Their efforts helped convince the latter to give up their weapons, which contributed positively to the results of the weapon collection activities. Village women also formed peace solidarity groups, which demonstrated (by marching) in support of peaceful means of ending the conflict. Women also served as members on the Local Commission.

Village Committee (Local Commission)—The village committee initiated the whole idea of weapon collection in the community. They organised inter-community meetings, which were instrumental in bringing together all ethnic groups. The committees are also usually

those who receive the weapons handed over as part of weapon collection initiatives. The names of those turning in their weapons are kept confidential by the committees, thus creating a sense of trust and leading to the handover of many weapons. Furthermore, the village committee organised the "Flame of Peace" in Lere, which destroyed over 1,000 weapons that had been collected.

Village Chief—The village chiefs, a group encompassing elderly men, tribal and religious leaders, displayed influence in encouraging their own ethnic groups to work towards peace and reconciliation.

External Agent—This category of actor/institution includes international and/or inter-governmental organisations, NGOs, UN, bilateral and multilateral organisations. They provided the financial and other types of support that made possible the implementation of the projects.

Ordinary Village Man—The ordinary village men were not rated as exercising any influence; thus, they were not decisive actors in determining any weapon collection activities or WfD projects.

Village Young Man—Most of the young men in the village were involved in the violence; therefore, they could not have been involved in the early planning of weapon collection activities or WfD projects.

Village Official—Government officials initially did not take part in the weapon collection process, as those holding weapons did not have confidence in them. This reflects the situation to date. However, members of the Local Commission must liaison with village officials from time to time.

CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEWS:
FOR REVIEWING PROJECT APPRAISAL AND IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

The facilitators commenced the Conversational Interviews exercise by explaining its purpose. Participants sat in a semicircle, so that each could

see the other people in the group. The process that was followed and the questions that were asked are as detailed in Chapter 1 of this report, entitled "Development and Application of the Methodology".

This section describes the young men's experience with weapon collection and WfD projects, as revealed through the Conversational Interviews exercise.

Comparison of the Weapons for Development Approach and Previous Incentives

When asked about the existence of previous mechanisms for the collection of weapons, and whether the new approach took into account these mechanisms, the young men's focus group noted the programmes for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration, whereby ex-combatants and their families were placed in cantonments.[24] While in the cantonments, some ex-combatants would be selected for integration into the national army or the civil service. The young men also identified the construction of centres for the reintegration of women and young people.

These prior activities continued to be implemented alongside the newer Weapons for Development approach: "the new approach combined the existing and new mechanisms" for weapon collection. However, the young men did point out some distinct differences between the older approaches and the WfD programmes. Most significantly, the earlier approaches considered the needs of the ex-combatants first—either individually or as a special group—and offered them funding in the form of short-term interventions. Under the WfD approach, the community as a whole was given first priority. WfD incentives contrasted previous individual incentives that were relatively smaller and of less visible impact on the community—the WfD projects targeted the entire community; their impact was quickly visible; they sometimes addressed the medium-to-long term needs of the community; and they usually involved larger micro-level investments.

It was concluded that the quick impact and medium-to-long-term benefits associated with WfD made this approach a satisfactory one from the perspective of the local communities.[25]

Convincing Weapon Holders to Turn in their Arms

The young men listed a number of activities/projects that were carried out to convince those holding weapons to hand in their guns. From their experience, the young men named the following activities as having played a role in bringing about weaponry surrender: (a) Sensitisation efforts by women, religious and tribal leaders; (b) Awareness raising, with regard to the negative impact of small arms and light weapons and armed violence on development; (c) Promised development projects, which encouraged communities to disarm; and (d) The initial pilot projects, in those communities that turned in weapons, gave confidence to other, more reluctant communities.

A heated argument erupted during the exercise among the young men, about the underlying cause of the conflict and accompanying violence; the majority argued that the poverty, which arose as a result of the prolonged drought in the area, was to blame for the conflict.

Process of Collecting Weapons

In terms of the process, or the way in which weapons were collected from the community, the young men's experience was similar to the descriptions given by the local administration and traditional leaders.

Who should be/should not be involved
The experience of the young men, regarding which actors and institutions should or should not be involved in weapon collection projects, provided that all community leaders, as well as women and civil society, should be involved. However, the military should not be permitted direct involvement, as they are distrusted by those possessing weapons. Members of the young men's focus group had no problem with local civilian administrator involvement in weapon collection activities, but cautioned against their involvement in Weapons for Development projects. Finally, because of the inherent risks, children should not take part in weapon collection or WfD activities either.

Distribution of benefits
In describing how the WfD project benefits were distributed within the community, the young men, considering that those who surrendered weapons were individuals, stated from their experience that there existed a

spirit whereby everyone worked in the interest of the whole community: "each for everybody and everybody for each".

COMMUNITY CALENDAR APPROACH: FOR REVIEWING PROJECT MONITORING

The Community Calendar exercise took place at the same venue as the previous one. The exercise began with the facilitators explaining the purpose of the technique. The process followed and the questions asked are as detailed in Chapter 1 of this report, entitled "Development and Application of the Methodology".

Once more, the facilitators asked the young men to recall the major weapon collection activities and Weapons for Development projects, identified in the previous exercises, that had been implemented in the community. This appeared an easier task for the young men than it had been earlier, and the facilitators assisted them where they tended to forget—especially in cases where participants were attending for the first time.

Timing of Weapon Collection Activities

The young men's experience, like that of the local leaders and administrators, dictated that the optimal timing for implementing weapon collection activities and projects varied from area to area, depending on climatic conditions and the type of incentive project or weapon-related activity being implemented. Hence, the time of year for implementation of certain activities is critical, and depends to a large extent on the specific area and activity in question. Additional factors also have an influence; for example, the weekly market days were also mentioned, as occasions where people may be found gathered together in large numbers—such events are thus conducive to sensitisation activities.

Weapon Collection Activities and WfD Projects

Weapon collection activities

The young men cited four major weapon collection activities whose monitoring was rated as "very excellent": (a) Sensitisation campaigns

(initiated between January-June 1998); (b) Inter-community meetings (initiated in November 1997); (c) Weapon collections (initiated between March-July 1998); and (d) Handling and Storage (initiated between March-July 1998).

Weapons for Development projects

According to the young men, the timing within the year of implementation of an incentive project influences the amount of weapons handed over. The incentive projects that attracted the largest numbers of weapons, as well as the best timing for their implementation, as described by the young men, are located on the monitoring form, as shown in Table 3:

Table 3: WfD Community Calendar—Rural-based Young Men's Focus Group, Lere, Mali, March 2003

Activity Month	Micro-Credit	Cattle Breeding	Grinding Mills	Wells	Crafts	Garden-ing
January	*		*	*	*	*
February	*		*	*	*	*
March	*		*	*	*	*
April	*		*	*	*	
May	*		*	*	*	
June	*	*	*		*	
July	*	*	*		*	
August	*	*	*		*	*
September	*	*	*	*	*	*
October	*		*	*	*	*
November	*		*	*	*	*
December	*		*	*	*	*

* Time of year when project implementation attracts more weapons

Analysis of the Community Calendar

The young men's experience with weapon collection and Weapons for Development activity/project monitoring, as explained through the Community Calendar exercise, is described below:

Micro-Credit Schemes—These operated throughout the year, as medium to long-term economic activities that could provide income to the communities throughout the year. They offered alternative income sources, and thus attracted many weapons surrendered.

Cattle Breeding—Best implemented between June and September, the period where there exists plenty of hay to feed the animals. The animals are later sold, during poorer times, when they can offer significant profits. These projects were crucial in influencing people to hand over their arms.

Grinding Mills—Effective throughout the year because grinding is an almost daily activity. The mills' contribution was evident through the eased workload for women, which allowed them time to conduct sensitisation activities.

Wells—The greatest need for wells is from the month of September onwards, after the rainy season. This is a difficult period within the year, and once water was made available there was a reduction in violence.

Handicraft Projects—Implemented throughout the year because, as trading activities, they provided income, offering alternatives to people who commonly resorted to armed violence.

Gardening—Best implemented between September and March, because during this time there is water in the ponds.

In general, the young men's experience was that, "when projects started, people became busy and somehow started to forget the use of arms, and this reduced the armed violence".

Crosscutting Issues

Aspects requiring critical monitoring

When the young men were questioned about the aspects of weapon collections which required critical monitoring, they responded by naming: (a) Collection and verification—because one needs to know both the origin of the weapons and how they came into circulation; and (b) Storage of the weapons turned in—to ensure that the guns are not allowed to make their way back into the community or be used again.

Benchmarks

When the discussion moved to the subject of benchmarks for monitoring weapon collection activities and WfD projects, the young men cited a few reference points, based upon their own general experience. These included: (a) "The number of sensitisations sessions carried out"; (b) "The number of guns handed in"; and (c) "The number of WfD projects implemented in the communities".

Performance indicators

On the issue of performance indicators, used to gauge whether the interventions were achieving their objectives, the focus group identified the following measures from their experience: (a) "The return to the area of the local administration"; (b) "The presence of humanitarian and development NGOs"; (c) "The destruction of some weapons"—an indicator of reduction in number of weapons in circulation; (d) "The general reduction in armed violence"; and (e) "Few guns visible in public, compared to the situation before".

Types of weapons handed in first

As part of the Community Calendar exercise, the young men explained which kinds of weapons were turned in first, as well as the reasons why. From their experience, the weapons handed over first included AK-47s, pistols, and hunting guns, which were old but still in working condition. Their reasoning for this pattern of weaponry surrender was due to the fact that these arms are the most readily available in the region.

Information-sharing

The young men's experience, regarding how information on implementation was shared among stakeholders, revealed that "the information was registered in books". Furthermore, "sometimes partners,

like NGOs, gave information to other stakeholders". "Spot-checking of the project sites" was also conducted, "by those who wanted the information" .

In terms of the lessons learned from participating in the implementation of weapon collection activities, their experience was that they learned: "how to reconcile with all ethnic groups through working together".

THREE STAR GAME: FOR REVIEWING PROJECT PERFORMANCE

Introduction

This was the last of the Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation exercises, conducted after the team had spent five days in the village. The team had initially assumed that the morale of the young men would drop towards the end of the exercises, but this proved not to be the case. Indeed, even greater numbers of participants showed up for the final exercise. The exercise began with the facilitators explaining its purpose. The process that was followed and the questions that were asked are as detailed in Chapter 1 of this report, entitled "Development and Application of the Methodology".

The young men reviewed the performance of weapon collection/WfD activities, projects and institutions as follows:

Assessment of Performance

Participants in the focus group assessed the overall performance of the activities and projects implemented as part of weapon collection and WfD programmes, as well as the individual actors and institutions that were associated with programme implementation.

In reference to the national level, the young men credited the benefits obtained from implementation of programme incentives as having partially induced those holding weapons, including ex-combatants, to turn in their guns. These benefits received from weapon collection and WfD programmes comprised reintegration into social and economic life; for example, some people were provided employment with the government.

At the community level, project implementation, and the consequent removal of some of the guns in the community, facilitated the general restoration of people's livelihoods. Donor support was important in supplementing the local community's efforts.

In general, the projects that demonstrated the best results (led to the most weapons turned in) were those whose benefits met the people's basic, everyday needs.[26]

Table 4 details the young men's assessment of the performance of the various Weapons for Development projects, as well as the roles of the individuals and institutions involved in weapon collection activities and WfD projects, in contributing to the surrender of arms.

Table 4: Assessing the Performance of WfD Projects and
Actors/Institutions—The Three Star Game,
Rural-based Young Men's Focus Group, Lere, Mali, March 2003

WfD Project	Actor/ Institution	Rating	Assessment Criteria
Provision of Wells		★	Rated as "very excellent" because "water is life". This type of project permitted people to settle in one place. It initiated developmental activities and created more villages.
Gardening		★	Rated as "very excellent" because those who were supported in gardening exhibited superior performance. This type of project was especially successful because of the market which the town of Lere provides for produce.
Grinding Mills		★	Rated as "very excellent" because they allowed women to spend more of their time doing other valuable activities, whereas they had previously been occupied with grinding.
Cattle Breeding		★	Rated as "fairly excellent", for although it was an important project, most of the animals that were given died because of unfavourable conditions.

Table 4 (following)

WfD Project	Actor/ Institution	Rating	Assessment Criteria
Micro-Credit		★	Rated only as "good" because most of them failed.
Handicraft		★	Rated only as "good" because they received very little support.
Artist in the Village	Women's Group	★	Rated as "very excellent" because they played a direct role, especially in sensitising the communities on the dangers of having weapons.
	Village or Tribal Chief	★	Rated as "very excellent" because they served as the links between the communities, facilitating inter-community reconciliation.
	Village Man	★	Rated as "very excellent" because of their role as the first actors in the field.
	External Agent	★	Rated as "very excellent" because of the financial resources they provided. They also participated in mediation between the fighting groups and the government.

* The village committee was not mentioned as an institution because its role(s) is sometimes intertwined with those of the village and tribal chiefs.

CHAPTER 4

OLDER MEN FOCUS GROUPS:
A COMPARISON OF EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES
OF THE RURAL-BASED, URBAN-BASED EX-COMBATANT
AND BORDER-BASED MEN

INTRODUCTION

Eleven (11) PM&E field exercises were conducted with the older men's focus groups: five (5) with rural-based older men in Lere (all exercises were conducted at a local secondary school); five (5) with urban-based ex-combatants in Gao City (all exercises were conducted at CAR-Nord offices); and one (1) with border-based men in Menaka (all exercises were conducted at the local administration's Guest House). The procedure and techniques employed during the field exercises, including the process followed and the questions asked, are as detailed in Chapter 1 of this report, entitled "Development and Application of the Methodology". In all focus groups, the use of visual aides excited the older men, encouraging almost everyone to contribute. Due to this enthusiasm, sessions sometimes had to be extended beyond the regular time allotments to the following day.

BEFORE AND NOW SITUATIONS ANALYSIS:
FOR REVIEWING PROJECT GOALS AND PURPOSES

The discussions arising from the questions and answers and analysis of the BANSA diagram produced the following input from the older men focus groups.

Situation of the Community Before Implementation of the Projects

There were both similarities and differences regarding the older men's experiences of the "Before" situation. As far as the similarities are

concerned, all of the groups concurred with the fact that the previous situation was one of armed violence, characterised by panic and fear, murder and state-inspired human rights abuses. Security agents used to follow people, and would arrest them at will. As well, "there used to occur useless killings". There was a lack of free movement for people between towns and villages. These characteristics of the "Before" situation paralysed economic and social activities, such as trade and transport, cattle breeding and farming.

In the same vein, differences did surface between the older men's perceptions of the "Before" situation. While the rural-based men emphasised their lack of voice in the way the region's affairs were managed, due to the over-centralisation of power at the nation's centre in Bamako, the urban-based ex-combatants pointed out the lack of viable economic development in the region ("the general lack of developmental activities in the region"). On the other hand, the Menaka-based older men, the majority of whom are "Tuareg" traders and herdsmen, mentioned the existence of racism and xenophobia; lack of water for both humans and livestock; robberies, especially of livestock; the destruction of villages and towns by both rebel groups and government forces; and the culture of "pointing fingers and name calling" among the population. In general, the differences between the older men's perceptions can mainly be attributed to ethnicity, geographical location and major means of livelihood for each group.

The "Now" Situation—After Implementation of the Projects

All of the older men's focus groups generally agreed that the "Now" situation represented significant improvement, as exemplified by specific positive developments. The rural-based men mentioned improvements like the restoration of peace and confidence among the communities; rejuvenation of development activities; reconciliation and co-existence of different ethnic groups; and decentralisation of power from the nation's capital city to the regions. The urban-based ex-combatants and border-based men emphasised the beginning of projects that have engaged nearly everyone; freedom of speech and movement ("today we can talk freely and on any issues without fear"); the beginning of education and health services; and revival of trade and commerce ("nomads can bring their goods to the market"). According to the latter, "it was the lack of development for the region that made people resort to armed violence".

Definition of Insecurity

In order to find out whether insecurity in the region was related to the lack of development, the facilitators probed the focus groups further, asking the border-based communities what they considered to be "human insecurity". The response that was given is presented in Table 5:

Table 5: Conception of Insecurity by Border-based Older Men, Menaka, Mali, March 2003

Individual Level	Household Level	Community Level	National Level
• Absence of peace • Lack of food • Fear • No freedom of movement	• Failure to feed one's family • Robbery of family livestock • General fear • Men dying • Lack of income	• Non-cooperation among community members • Disappearance of some community members without any information • No social and economic services	• Lack of free interactions among different tribes • Lack of trust among the people • No respect for particular communities • No credibility of government officials • No freedom of expression and participation in local affairs • No respect for the civilians by the authorities

Following the older men's responses and feedback, as described in the table above, human security seems to range from access to basic needs and human rights to democracy and empowerment, including the right of a people to decide its own local affairs.

Overall Goal(s) and Purpose(s) of Weapon Collection and WfD Programmes

Participants were asked to name the overall goal(s) of weapon collection and Weapons for Development projects. Similar to the young men's focus group, responses were not uniform. While the rural-based men

described the goal of weapon collection and WfD programmes as related to "the community's need to restore peace, so as to rejuvenate the social and economic activities that had been paralysed by insecurity", the urban-based ex-combatant viewed the programmes as having been initiated because "the communities wanted to restore peace by reconciling all ethnic groups". At the same time, the border-based older men described the programmes as intending "to restore peace and public order". While differences between the older men's portrayal of the situation could be due to many reasons, including misinterpretation,[27] there nonetheless existed a common denominator among their responses: the "restoration of peace".

Lessons Learned from the Older Men's Responses:
Whereas weapon collection and WfD programmes were viewed by men from all the areas as aiming to reduce the numbers of illicit small arms and light weapons in circulation, each area had a specific problem(s) that it wanted to solve in the short-term:
- The rural-based men of Lere, where the previous conflict had exacerbated the inter-ethnic divide (because many different ethnic groups lived there), held as a first priority the need to re-establish peaceful co-existence among the people.
- The urban-based ex-combatants (combatants, at the time of project initiation) valued as important the acquisition of non-military skills to help them integrate into mainstream society and a competitive economy.
- The border-based men—the majority of whom were Tuaregs, displaced by the conflict and the famine (which resulted from the drought)—placed high priority on creating conditions that were conducive to the return of refugees and IDP, as well as assisting the latter to rebuild their villages.

The older men also revealed what they viewed from their experience as being the immediate or operational objectives of weapon collection and WfD programmes. According to the rural-based men, the immediate objectives were "to give peaceful means a chance by disarming all those with illegal weapons, so as to restore confidence and establish co-existence among the various ethnic groups". For the urban-based ex-combatants, the operational goals were, "to reduce weapons circulating in the communities

by starting development projects, which would disengage people from fighting and socially and economically integrate ex-fighters into the mainstream society through provision of lifetime skills". The border-based men saw the near-term objectives of the projects as, "to remove the guns from the hands of rebels and criminals so that internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees could return to and be supported to rebuild their homes".

Strategies for Achieving Objectives

In reciting their experience regarding the strategies that were pursued to meet the aims of weapon collection, all of the older men's focus groups recognised sensitisation and awareness raising activities, on the dangers of small arms and light weapons and armed violence, as an effective strategy that was pursued. The young men's focus group earlier pointed out the same strategy.

In addition, the older men all noted the involvement of individual women and women's groups as another important component in the mobilisation in support of weapon collection and Weapons for Development efforts, from the household level upwards.

The urban-based ex-combatants and border-based men also recognised the significant role played by traditional leaders and institutions: chiefs, religious and tribal elders, and local committees. Furthermore, they added that the role played by the heads of the rebel movements "was crucial in establishing communication links between all the stakeholders that were working for disarmament and peace".

Participants in the older men's focus groups elucidated other strategies that had been pursued to support weapon collection and WfD programmes. Among these were the cross-border meetings that took place between neighbouring states (between communities located along the borders), and the establishment of cross-border security mechanisms. Another strategy was the involvement and informing of the entire community, with respect to weapon collection and WfD activities and projects. The granting of amnesty to the various rebel groups was pointed out too.[28] The people's trust in the National Pact[29] was a further component cited by the older men. Also mentioned was the commencement of professional training programmes for ex-weapon

holders; training was offered in such trades as welding, brick laying and carpentry. Similarly, ex-combatant reintegration into mainstream society was also a strategy.

The PM&E team also learned that while both the rural-based and border-based men heralded "reintegration of ex-combatants" as a strategy for weapon collection, its success was disputed by the ex-combatants themselves because, according to the latter, the following promises had never been fulfilled:
• Most of the agreed issues, such as their integration into the regular armed forces at their full rebel military ranks.
• Ex-combatant reinsertion packages and other promised privileges.
This situation strongly suggests the need to first critically study the profiles of ex-fighters before designing WfD projects.

Assessing the Impact of Weapon Collection and WfD Programmes

In discussing the possible methods for measuring the effects of weapon collection and Weapons for Development projects, each of the older men's focus groups gave different indicators. However, their general experience was that human security issues should be addressed in order to prevent communities from resorting to armed violence. According to the older men, human insecurity comprehends people's lack of basic human needs; lack of respect for human rights and participation; and lack of empowerment, whereby people are not free to decide their own local affairs.

Hence, the older men offered a number of indicators as measures of whether the implementation of weapon collection and WfD programmes improved human security. First of all, the older men revealed that, "there is an effective and durable peace". The negotiated agreement between the government and rebel movements began a period of peaceful means of conflict resolution. The significant reduction in armed violence was another indicator that was mentioned, as was the restoration of trust among the communities that had been torn apart ("People seem to have forgotten the past and reconciled their minds and hearts").

The older men also pointed to the many weapons that were collected and destroyed ("at least they were removed from circulation") as an indicator that the weapon collection and WfD projects were having an impact. The older men also noted the reintegration of ex-weapon holders into mainstream society, and, similarly, the removal of the military from villages and cities, and the control, mostly by the army, of leakage of guns to the community.

Other indicators listed by the older men further embodied the general security situation following the collection activities and WfD projects. Among these indicators, the disappearance of banditry activities was noted. The men also alluded to the security improvements along the borders with Mauritania, Algeria and Niger. Similarly, the free movement of people, cars and goods indicated the effects of the programmes. In addition, the devolution of power, through the decentralisation programme, from the centre in Bamako to the various regions, indicated project impact.

The older men named other indicators, which highlighted the resumption of the "normal development process". These included the number of developmental projects undertaken in the communities, as well as the return of NGOs to the area. The provision of services was also cited by the older men's focus groups as a key indicator, as they specifically referred to the resumption of health and educational services. Other related indicators included the resumption of trade and commerce, especially for the nomads; the supply of water to the villages ("Castles of Water");[30] the animal restocking programmes in the region; provision of telephone services ("The construction of the TV antenna came after disarmament"); the rehabilitation of public buildings, and the construction of new buildings.

Depending on the area, the above improvements occurred between 1994 and 2003.

According to the local communities, **human insecurity** ranged from the people's lack of basic human needs, to lack of respect for human rights and participation, to lack of empowerment, whereby people are not left free to decide their own local affairs. The restoration of these fundamental liberties indicates improved human security.

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When asked what sources could be used to verify the above project achievement indicators, the older men revealed the following sources: (a) "Private people and former rebel leaders[31] who bought cars with profits realised out of the projects they started"; (b) Workshops, for carpentry, welding and other trades, that were established to train ex-combatants; (c) Availability of transport activities linking villages and cities; (d) Agencies like CAR-Nord,[32] the United Nations Development Programme, Belgium Technical Cooperation (CTB), Germany Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and others which assisted the communities; (e) Exposure visits, including trips to the region without military escort; (f) Talking with local communities; (g) The booming economic activities in the towns; (h) The number of ex-fighters reintegrated into the regular military, paramilitary and civil services;[33] and (i) The number of guns collected (records available from the local administration) and destroyed during various "Flames of Peace".

Constraints in Weapon Collection and WfD

During the discussion about the constraints that were faced in implementing weapon collection and Weapons for Development programmes, different experiences and perspectives were given. The older men's feedback in this respect generally alluded to delays in beginning developmental projects, in the areas where communities had already surrendered weapons. Lack of confidence was also an impediment, especially in areas where insecurity was still looming ("we were not sure of our security"). As such, communities could not give up their weapons, because they needed them to protect their own security.

Difficulties in harmonising divergent stakeholder views, on what had to be done and how to do it, also presented problems for collection and Wfd efforts. Further, uncertainty often prevented those holding weapons from turning in their guns. For instance, people who desired to hand over their weapons mistrusted project managers, and were not sure whether they would be rewarded for turning in their guns. In particular, according to the ex-combatants, most of their leaders were corrupt. Some weapon holders feared future judicial pursuit if they were found in possession of weapons; thus, the lack of a legal instrument being placed into effect, to protect those voluntarily surrendering their arms, prevented weapon holders from having the confidence necessary to hand over their weapons.

Weapon collection and WfD projects were also constrained by the general lack of understanding by those who had weapons ("most of them were illiterate young men"). In terms of the ex-combatants in particular, the projects and other benefits that were promised to the ex-fighters often were not implemented. A general lack of funds, which the older men also cited as an obstacle, explains some of the shortfalls in providing projects to the ex-combatants. The older men focus groups also blamed misunderstandings within rebel movements and communities as impeding the progress of weapon collection and WfD programmes. Wavering levels of respect for the provisions of the National Pact were also noted. As well, constraints were attributed to inadequate support from the government and external partners. Finally, the famine that loomed throughout the region, due to a lack of crop cultivation (a result of conflict and prolonged drought), imposed further limitations on programme success.

Key Points from the Older Men's Experience with Weapon Collection and WfD Programmes:
- The link between customs duties and the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons was a new discovery that surprised government officials. It seemed that none of the officials had ever thought about this possibility, an example of valuable insight that was unraveled through application of the PM&E method.
- Successful weapon collection requires sub-regional scoped approaches.

The older men's explanations of how the above constraints were overcome differed from area to area. However, the following common elements were identified: (a) The vigorous sensitisation activities and awareness raising campaigns among the communities, on the dangers of SALW and armed violence; (b) The patience and commitment of communities; (c) Continuous meetings between rebel leaders and traditional leaders; (d) Reminders to adhere to the provisions of the National Pact; (e) The few promises to ex-combatants that were in fact honoured, such as training; (f) The creation of inter-border patrols (with Niger, Mauritania and Algeria); (g) The general security improvement along the borders; (h) Meetings between bordering communities; (i) A reduction in customs duties, which enabled the arrival of cheaper goods that people

could afford, thus improving their lives. This also limited the frequency with which traders would resort to acquisition of arms to smuggle goods across the borders; and (j) Better access to means of transportation to and from neighbouring countries.

All of the focus groups seemed to concur that despite a few matters which remained unresolved, they were content with the progress that had been made, especially following the devolution of power from Bamako to the regions. They concluded: "As communities become engaged with their own developmental activities and as the state provides security for everybody, many more illegal guns will continue to be handed in."

DETERMINING DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: FOR REVIEWING PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND DESIGN

Introduction

The process that was followed and the questions that were asked in the Determining Decision-Making Process exercises are as detailed in Chapter 1 of this report, entitled "Development and Application of the Methodology". Due to time constraints, this exercise was not conducted with the border-based older men in Menaka.

Definition of Participation

Intending to develop a better understanding of participants' conception of the term, facilitators asked the older men to define "participation". After a lengthy disagreement among different focus group members, the general consensus emerged that participation was: (a) "To be part of an undertaking"; (b) "To take part"; and (c) "Taking decisions together".

Participants then proceeded to list the various activities that were implemented as part of both weapon collection and WfD projects.

Weapon Collection and Weapons for Development Activities

Participants were asked to list the various weapon collection activities and WfD projects undertaken, and to ascertain which actors and/or

institutions made which decisions. The general activities and projects that were identified by the older men are presented in Table 6:

Table 6

Weapon Collection Activities	Weapons for Development Projects
• Checking of weapon safety • Conducting the "Flame of Peace" • Destruction • Formation of Local Commissions for Disarmament • Fundraising (seeking external support) • Inter-community meetings • Organising destruction ceremonies • Receiving the weapons handed in • Registration of the collected weapons • Sensitisation and awareness raising among communities on the dangers of SALW • Setting up mechanisms for collecting weapons • Setting up mechanisms to build confidence for those handing in weapons • Storage • Verification of type of weapon, origin, etc. And the urban-based ex-combatants added the following specific activities: • A symposium for all rebel movements • Sensitisation of rebel groups • Setting up committees to register ex-combatants	• Animal restocking • Cereal banks • Construction of canals • Gardening • Grinding mills • Micro-credit schemes • Workshops (tailoring, carpentry and welding)

An important difference did exist in the way the development project incentives were provided to Lere and Gao City: whereas in Lere, weaponry surrender was not rewarded with goods and services until a later stage

(when the Belgium Technical Cooperation started funding the developmental component), the urban-based ex-combatants in Gao City benefited immediately from the link between turning in their weapons and the resultant incentives. In Gao, from the outset, handing in a weapon qualified the ex-combatants to join a cantonment, where many privileges could be accessed.

Analysis of How Decisions Were Made

In general, both older men's focus groups identified the same decision makers as those mentioned by the young men's focus group. However, the ex-combatants added two additional types of actor—"ex-combatants" and "former rebel leaders".

Table 7 represents a summary of major decision makers for weapon collection and WfD projects, as revealed by the older men.

In total, thirty (30) decisions were considered as very important. Six (6) out of thirty (30) were attributed to the traditional leaders, with the rural-based men naming them in five (5) out of six (6) decisions and the urban-based ex-combatants attributing them one (1) out of six (6) decisions.

The ordinary village woman, ordinary village man and village committee each determined/influenced three (3) out of thirty (30) decisions; the rural-based men attributed two (2) out of three (3) decisions each to both ordinary village woman and ordinary village man, and one (1) decision out of three (3) to the village committee. At the same time, the urban-based ex-combatants recognised both the ordinary village woman and ordinary village man as each determining/influencing one (1) out of three (3) decisions, while they attributed two (2) out of three (3) decisions to the village committee.

The village young man, according to the rural-based older men, determined one (1) out of thirty (30) decisions, while the ex-combatants credited the village young man with zero (0) decisions. The village artist determined two (2) out of thirty (30) decisions according to the rural-based older men, and zero (0) decisions out of thirty (30) according to the ex-combatants.

Table 7: Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation (PM&E):
Reviewing Decision-making and Influence using Pictorial Diagrams:
Older Men's Focus Groups (Rural-based & Urban-based Ex-combatants),
Mali, March 2003

Decision Maker	No. of Decisions
External Agent	2R
	OX
Ordinary Village Woman	2R
	1X
Ordinary Village Man	2R
	1X
Traditional Leader	5R
	1X
Village Official	0R
	0X
Village Artist	2R
	0X
Village Committee	1R
	2X
Village Young Man	1R
	0X
Former Rebel Leader	1R
	2X
Ex-combatant	0R
	7X

Key: X Urban-based, Ex-combatants, R Rural-based Older Men

Both older men focus groups attributed zero (0) decisions out of thirty (30) to the village official.

The urban-based ex-combatants attributed the ex-combatant seven (7) out of thirty (30) decisions, while the rural-based older men credited the ex-combatant with zero (0) out of thirty (30) decisions.

Overall, the former rebel leader was attributed three (3) decisions determined/influenced out of the total thirty (30) decisions, with the rural-based older men attributing the rebel leader one (1) out of three (3) and the urban-based ex-combatants attributing the rebel leader two (2) decisions out of three (3).

Finally, the external agent was credited with determining/influencing two (2) decisions out of thirty (30), with the rural-based older men attributing them two (2) out of two (2) decisions, and the urban-based ex-combatants attributing them zero (0) decisions out of two (2).

The older men focus groups explained the reasoning underlying their attributions of decision-making influence as follows:

Traditional Leader—Includes elders, chiefs and religious leaders. They possess significant influence in the community, and nearly everyone respects them. Traditional leaders played a major role in encouraging their respective ethnic groups to work towards peace and reconciliation. The results suggest that their influence was more obvious in rural areas, where people live together and know one another; this contrasts urban areas, where people don't necessarily know each other.

Ordinary Village Woman—Women did a lot in sensitising their own sons, husbands and brothers to give up their weapons; this improved the results of weapon collection. The woman's influence was also more predominant in the rural areas than in the urban areas, as the majority of those who perpetuate armed violence in urban areas are neither married nor maintain strong ties with their mothers. This reflects the potential difficulties that women may face in dealing with urban armed violence.

Ordinary Village Man—The village men were influential in security matters, as they were the ones directly affected by armed violence—businessmen, cattle farmers, traders, and others.

Former Rebel Leader—The rebel leaders were the major decision makers in negotiating and reaching agreement with the government. They also convinced their followers to hand over their guns. Their influence was experienced to the largest extent by the urban ex-combatants.

- Women's involvement in dealing with armed violence in an urban setting may be diminished by perpetrators' unmarried status or lack of maternal attachment, both common characteristics of those taking part in urban armed violence in the areas of study.
- The role of women in mobilising, from the household level upwards, was recognised as crucial.

Ex-combatant—While the urban-based ex-combatants themselves said that they played a significant role, as the success of weapon collection depended on their own willingness to stop the violence, the rural-based older men held the view that the ex-combatants did not determine any decision, for they were the actors perpetuating the crime and armed violence.

Village Committee (Local Commission)—Initiated the whole idea of community weapon collection. Inter-community meetings were important in bringing together all ethnic groups. Weapons are secretly handed over to the committees, which keep secret the names of those that have handed in weapons. This method of operating created trust and led to the handover of many weapons. The village committee also organised the "Flames of Peace". The committees' role was more relevant to the urban-based ex-combatants, because the committees made it easier for them to hand in their weapons ("or else they would encounter problems if they had to contact the numerous security agents associated with urban areas").

Village Young Man—For the rural-based older men, the young men played a role, but the urban-based ex-combatants did not attribute the young men any role. This was in part due to the fact that most of the ex-combatants were themselves in the young men's age bracket, although they preferred to be called "older men ex-combatants".[34]

External Agent—Includes international organisations, like NGOs and the UN, which provided the financial and other support that made possible the implementation of the projects and, as such, had some influence on certain decisions. Their projects are more visible in the rural areas than in the urban centres, which explains why they were not recognised by urban-based ex-combatants.

Village Artist—Local artists, through music and drama, played a very important sensitisation and mobilisation role, alerting communities about the dangers of holding onto their guns. Still, their role was more influential with the rural people than in the urban areas, where a variety of alternative forms of entertainment exist.

Village Official—Like in the young men's focus group, neither of the two older men's focus groups attributed any decisions to village officials. The main reason for this was suspicion—those holding weapons did not have confidence in government officials, which reflects the situation to date.

Conclusions on Decisions and Influence

In sum, every institution and individual in the community participated in weapon collection and WfD, apart from government officials and security agents. None of the decisions were externally imposed, although some external NGOs did participate. The activities implemented reflected the beneficiaries' desires, needs and decisions. For instance, the ex-combatants asked for projects that they thought would provide them the lifetime skills necessary to initiate self-employment.

Institutions and individuals divided roles in accordance with each's own comparative advantage, and this proved to work well. The women's role in mobilising, starting at the household level, was recognised by the focus groups as important—the women used to send messages to their sons, husbands and brothers who were engaged in violence.

In general, the decisions that were made aimed at solving the existing problems.

When the older men were questioned whether the implemented programmes solved the problems that existed in their communities,

facilitators received a mixed response. While the rural-based men responded positively, the urban-based ex-combatants displayed some complaints and reservations. The ex-combatants noted that some problems remained unresolved because the packages given to each of them were insufficient;[35] therefore, according to the ex-combatants, the whole DDR programme was a failure. This suggests that, for any weapon collection programme to be successful, the issue of reinsertion packages for ex-combatants should be resolved first. In other words, complete demobilisation should be a prerequisite.

Throughout the exercises, the ex-combatants presented their views in the form of grievances. In this way, the PM&E exercises appeared to function as a forum that allowed participants to air their grievances with the national authorities responsible for implementing the DDR programme. The PM&E team perceived this as a reflection of the powerful nature of PM&E as an evaluative technique, for it unravels the comprehensive set of issues surrounding any subject, regardless of whether the issues are sensitive, by providing a "neutral" ground where people can discuss issues on an equal footing.

- Ex-combatants presented their views in the form of grievances.
- PM&E is an effective evaluation technique insofar as it unravels the comprehensive set of issues surrounding any subject, regardless of whether the issues are sensitive, by providing a "neutral" ground where people can discuss issues on an equal footing.

CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEWS: FOR REVIEWING PROJECT APPRAISAL AND IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

This section describes the older men's experience with weapon collection and WfD projects, as revealed through the Conversational Interviews exercises. Due to time constraints, the exercise was not conducted with the border-based older men in Menaka. The exercises

were conducted in an atmosphere that enabled many of the participants to contribute. The process that was followed and the questions that were asked during the Conversational Interviews exercises are as detailed in Chapter 1 of this report, entitled "Development and Application of the Methodology".

Comparison of the Weapons for Development Approach and Previous Incentives

When asked about the existence of previous mechanisms for the collection of weapons, and whether the new approach took into account these mechanisms, both older men's focus groups recognised the low-level sensitisation activities and awareness raising campaigns that were previously conducted by the traditional leaders; these were bringing in some weapons, although no incentives were being given. The older men also made reference to the cantonment of ex-fighters, whereby those who qualified (by having handed in a weapon) would be given incentives, such as food, integration into the armed forces and civil service,[36] and other privileges.

> The PM&E team was amazed by the type of DDR programme that had been used in Mali. Usually, regarding DDR programmes, the majority of ex-fighters prefer integration into mainstream society, but ex-combatants in the Mali case reflected contrary preferences, typically expressing the desire to be placed in the military. When this issue was brought to the Prefect of Menaka, his response was that the so-called "ex-combatants" were just "rag-tags" who had formerly joined the rebellion because they had had nothing else to do. The Prefect stated that most of them do not want to work on their own, and that they had misused all of the reinsertion packages that they were given.

Whereas according to the rural-based older men, the introduction of the WfD approach strengthened the previous mechanisms for voluntary weaponry surrender by adding a developmental aspect, this view was not shared by the urban-based ex-combatants; the latter argued for the continuation of the previous arrangement, which targeted individual ex-combatants and their families rather than whole communities.

In addition, the majority of urban-based ex-combatants preferred to be integrated into the regular armed forces and other services, if given this option. The urban-based ex-combatants explained that this was the case because they considered themselves as a special post-conflict group. They stated, "we are not against the whole community benefiting, but as ex-combatants we were promised these benefits by the government". The urban-based ex-combatants also considered integration into the armed forces and other services, where they would be paid a salary, to be more sustainable than community-based projects.

The above responses reveal the degree to which the DDR programme was a failure in Mali, for its implementation was not adequately prepared. The DDR programme was implemented without decentralised structures in place to administer the ex-combatants' social safety nets, while the majority of ex-combatants were illiterate and had never lived on their own. Most of the funds that were given as part of reinsertion packages were simply wasted because of the absence of the necessary outreach services and administrative structures for sensitising ex-combatants in starting and running self-reliant activities. The UNDP shared this perception of the situation, having informed the PM&E team that even ex-rebel leaders, who were loaned large sums of money with the hope that they would establish viable businesses, have failed to repay the loans. The ex-rebel leaders' inability to repay loans, according to the UNDP, is partly a result of business failures due to poor knowledge and experience in business management.

- Low-level sensitisations had yielded some weaponry surrender, without incentives being offered.
- Rural-based older men preferred incentives that would benefit the whole community.
- Urban-based ex-combatants preferred incentives that would benefit individuals; they also preferred salaried employment to self-employment.
- Ex-combatants considered themselves as a special group within the population.
- Outreach services, which sensitise ex-combatants on how to begin and run self-reliant activities, are a very important component of DDR programmes.

Convincing Weapon Holders to Turn in their Arms

When the older men were asked what encouraged weapon holders to continue surrendering weapons, despite the grievances mentioned above, it was pointed out that a combination of confidence building measures and pressure were applied. Factors that encouraged weapons to be handed over comprised: (a) Continuation of sensitisation activities and application of pressure from the traditional leaders; (b) Hope of reintegration and provision of funds to start income-generating activities; (c) Willingness of weapon holders themselves to bring peace to their own communities; (d) Developmental projects promised to the communities by the government, such as bridges, roads, canals and dams; (e) The strategy of reaching out to almost everyone for consultation; (f) The transparent process of reaching decisions through consensus in general community meetings; (g) Commencement of the decentralisation programme; and (h) Government promises to provide adequate security to the communities.

- A combination of confidence building measures and application of pressure are important in promoting and enforcing weapon collection activities.
- The devolution of power to the regions was considered an important strategy to encourage weaponry surrender.
- Communities may continue to hide their major armaments, including larger-calibre weapons, for years, until they gain confidence in the alternative security arrangement(s) being put in place.

Process of Collecting Weapons

The views of the older men, regarding the process of weapon collection, were similar to those expressed by the young men and the local administrators. They all stressed the importance of public destruction of the weapons, within the areas where they were collected.[37]

Types of weapons handed in first
When questioned about the types of weapons turned in first, both older men's focus groups responded in a similar manner to the young men.

Their answers reflected the most common weapons in the region: the AK-47 (Czech-made), G3, Mark 36, as well as various pistols and hunting guns, which were old but still in working condition. At the same time, the urban-based ex-combatants added an important element: "while small and light ones are usually handed in first, bigger ones wait for the full trust and confidence to first be established". When the PM&E team probed deeper, it was informed that communities might continue to keep their armaments for many years, until they gain full confidence in the alternative security arrangements being implemented in exchange for their guns. Communities may also fear that the weapons they surrender might be passed on to their adversaries, including neighbouring tribes.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR APPROACH: FOR REVIEWING PROJECT MONITORING

Introduction

The Community Calendar exercises took place in the same venues as the previous exercises. Due to time constraints, the exercises were not conducted with the border-based older men in Menaka. The exercises began with the facilitators explaining the purpose of the technique. The process followed and the questions asked are as detailed in Chapter 1 of this report, entitled "Development and Application of the Methodology".

As was done with the young men's focus group, the facilitators asked participants to recall the major weapon collection activities and WfD projects, as identified in the previous exercises, that had been undertaken. The older men identified essentially the same weapon collection activities and WfD projects as those identified in the Determining Decision-Making exercises.

Weapon Collection Activities

When asked about the specific weapon collection activities that were most effective and, hence, most in need of critical monitoring, the rural-based older men selected seven (7) activities, while the urban-based ex-combatants chose only four (4) activities. Three (3) of the four (4) activities cited by the ex-combatants were among the seven (7) activities that the rural-based older men mentioned.

Table 8 details the specific weapon collection activities, identified by the older men's focus groups as requiring critical monitoring.

Table 8 : Weapon Collection Activities Requiring Critical Monitoring: Community Calendar—Rural-based and Urban-based Ex-combatant Older Men's Focus Groups, Mali, March 2003

Activity / Period	Sensitisation	Inter-Community Meetings	Actual Weapon Collection	Handling & Storage	Verification	Destruction	Inter-Rebel Meetings	Monument
January								
February								
March								
April	*(b)		*(b)		*R		*X	
May	*(b)		*(b)	*R	*R		*X	
June	*(b)		*(b)	*R	*R	*R	*X	
July	*(b)		*(b)	*R	*R	*R	*X	*R
August	*(b)		*(b)	*R	*R	*R	*X	*R
September	*(b)		*(b)	*R	*R	*R	*X	
October	*(b)	*(b)	*(b)	*R	*R	*R	*X	
November	*(b)	*(b)	*(b)	*R	*R	*R	*X	
December	*(b)	*(b)	*(b)	*R	*R	*R	*X	

(All activities implemented at various times between 1992-2003.)

* Time of year when project implementation attracts more weapons, according to:

R: Rural-based Older Men, X: Urban-based Ex-combatants, (b): Both (R & X)

Analysis of the Community Calendar

Among the activities listed by the focus groups as requiring critical monitoring, similar times of year were listed, by both the rural-based and urban-based excombatant older men, as marking the periods where the different implemented activities brought in the most weapons. Differences in monitoring required and effectiveness associated with the various activities named by the two older men's focus groups lie in the following:

Handling & Storage/Verification—The rural-based older men hailed from areas in which the whole community recognised its stake in monitoring the weapons handed in, whereas the urban-based ex-combatants, after handing over a weapon and entering a cantonment, did not concern themselves further with the way the weapons were stored or handled.

Destruction/Monument—While the rural-based men in Lere directly witnessed a "Flame of Peace," in which thousand of weapons were destroyed and a monument was subsequently built, the urban-based ex-combatants in Gao City did not see such activities take place in their area, as the weapons collected from the Gao region were taken to Timbuktu, to be destroyed in a Flame of Peace and have a monument built there.[38]

- The importance of inter-rebel meetings as an activity was recognised only by those directly involved in the fighting.
- The timing of a project or activity is an important factor determining its level of success in a community.
- For purposes of public accountability, the destruction of collected weapons should take place in public, and within the area in which they were collected.

Weapons for Development Projects

When asked about the specific WfD projects that were most effective and, hence, most in need of critical monitoring, the rural-based older men selected six (6) projects, while the urban-based ex-combatants chose five (5). Only two (2) types of projects—cereal banks and transportation—were common to both groups' response.

Table 9 details the specific WfD projects, identified by the older men's focus groups as requiring critical monitoring, as well as the times of year when the projects were viewed as most effective.

Table 9 : WfD Projects Requiring Critical Monitoring: Community Calendar—Rural-based and Urban-based Ex-combatant Older Men's Focus Groups, Mali, March 2003

Activity / Period	Cereal Banks	Irrigation	Grinding Mills	Wells	Workshops	Trading	Transportation	Reintegration	Micro-Credit
January			*R		*X	*R	*(b)	*X	*X
February			*R		*X	*R	*(b)	*X	*X
March			*R		*X	*R	*(b)	*X	*X
April			*R		*X	*R	*(b)	*X	*X
May	*(b)		*R	*R	*X	*R	*(b)	*X	*X
June	*(b)		*R	*R	*X	*R	*(b)	*X	*X
July	*(b)		*R	*R	*X	*R	*(b)	*X	*X
August	*(b)		*R	*R	*X	*R	*(b)	*X	*X
September	*(b)		*R	*R	*X	*R	*(b)	*X	*X
October	*(b)	*R	*R	*R	*X	*R	*(b)	*X	*X
November	*(b)	*R	*R	*R	*X	*R	*(b)	*X	*X
December	*(b)	*R	*R	*R	*X	*R	*(b)	*X	*X

(All activities implemented at various times between 1992-2003.)

* Time of year when project implementation attracts more weapons, according to:

R: Rural-based Older Men, X: Urban-based Ex-combatants, (b): Both (R & X)

Analysis of the Community Calendar

From the above table, the experience of both older men's focus groups with the monitoring of WfD projects reflected the following similarities:

Cereal Banks—Both groups pointed out that cereal bank projects, which normally operate between September-October (harvest time, when grain is cheap) and between June-August (the selling period, when communities run out of grain) were crucial in attracting the surrender of weapons.

Transportation—Both groups were satisfied with the restoration of transportation, which enabled the free movement of people and goods. They were of the view that those investing in transport businesses have made progress.[39] This activity is required throughout the year.

Differences between the two older men's focus groups' experience with the monitoring of WfD projects were explained as follows:

Wells and Irrigation—For the rural-based people, the majority of whom are sedentary farmers, wells and irrigation projects are important to their livelihood because they provide water for humans, livestock and crops. These projects enticed people to hand in their weapons. However, the situation was different in urban areas like Gao City, which sits at the bank of the Niger River. In such places, water is not a problem; furthermore, the food for urban populations is produced in rural areas.

Grinding Mills—In the same way, the rural-based participants cited grinding mills as more important to their livelihood than did the urban-based men, because women in the rural areas used to have to walk long distances on insecure roads to grind their grain. This is in contrast to the urban areas like Gao City, where electricity is available and grinding services are within the reach of the communities that need them.

Trading Activities—The revival of trading activities was important in attracting the handover of weapons in rural areas, because it effected the opening of trading routes between Lere and Niono and between Lere and Timbuktu. With the revival of trade, most of those that had

engaged in armed violence were offered an alternative to fighting. This was not the case with the urban-based ex-combatants, the majority of whom had never engaged in any business before.

Reintegration—There was disagreement over whether "reintegration" should be considered a WfD activity, but the majority of urban-based ex-combatants agreed that it was an activity under WfD. According to the latter, the promised reintegration and reinsertion packages were the determining factors that led them to lay down their arms.

Micro-Credit—The rural-based men did not cite micro-credit projects because they believed most of these schemes to have failed. However, the urban-based ex-combatants stressed that micro-credit projects were very important. In this case, both groups' views may be valid, for micro-credit projects tend to work better in urban areas, where the large populations that provide markets for products are concentrated in one area at all times. This contrasts the situation in rural areas, where the population is scattered, making it necessary for people to walk long distances (sometimes taking days) to find a market for their products— this makes micro-credit products more expensive.

- Weapons for Development project design requires a thorough study of the different social and economic groups in the area, as well as of rural-urban differences. Project successes in rural areas will not likely be replicable in an urban setting, and vice-versa, without taking into account the local conditions that may affect project performance.
- Micro-credit schemes appear to work better in an urban setting, where the population (representing the market for any products) is geographically concentrated. This differs from rural areas, which are sparsely populated.

General Findings Concerning Activity/Project Monitoring

In general, the rural-based older men expressed the view that those projects which were most successful in collecting weapons were those that addressed basic human needs, rejuvenated economic activities and

engaged former weapon-holders in self-employment, whereas the urban-based ex-combatants insisted on integration into the regular army and other services for ex-fighters,[40] as well as projects which provided them skills, such as training in various trades. All of the focus groups concurred that weapon collections should be timed in such a way that they correspond to the period(s) when climatic conditions are conducive to exchanging weapons for goods and services—in other words, the period(s) when the incentive to use a weapon is lowest.

Aspects requiring critical monitoring

In terms of the weapon collection activities and Weapons for Development projects that required critical monitoring, the older men's focus groups revealed, from their experience, that verification and safe storage are crucial components of weapon collection, while the monitoring of project management is very important in WfD programmes.[41]

Who should be/should not be involved

It was evident from the discussions with both older men's groups that they believed women and other people whose credibility is untainted should be the ones directly involved in activity/project implementation. While the rural-based older men preferred that the community elect some of its members who possess technical expertise (including managerial skills) and experience to take charge of implementation on behalf of the whole community, the urban-based ex-combatants thought the community elders should oversee the implementation process, as a result of their credibility in the society. Due to the dangers involved, both older men's groups agreed that children should not be involved in weapon collection and WfD. Similarly, the army and other security agents should not be involved, because those surrendering weapons do not trust them.

Monitoring indicators

The older men identified the following indicators, beyond those named in the previous sections, as important in monitoring whether the numbers of illegally held weapons were increasing or decreasing in their communities: (a) The many weapons that were destroyed ("the fact that they are no longer in circulation is a good indicator of practical disarmament"); (b) The reduction in incidents where arms are used; and (c) The withdrawal of the military from the villages and cities.

Distribution of benefits

The older men stated from their experience that the method of monitoring, which best ensures that project benefits reach the entire community, depends on the type of project being implemented. The example of grinding mills was given to illustrate a case where women shared the profits, while the community benefited from grinding services that were relatively closer and less expensive.

- Weapon collection activities should take place at the times when the need for weapons is lowest in the community, and, at the same time, when the services provided by Weapons for Development project incentives can offer a viable alternative to weapon use.
- Only community members that are fully trusted by the entire population should be allowed involvement in weapon collection/ WfD project implementation.
- Community-based qualitative indicators should be tracked, in order to measure activity/project success or failure. Reliance on numbers of weapons collected alone offers an incomplete measure of success.
- Identification of the underlying causes is crucial if corrective interventions are to be designed.
- The most suitable WfD projects offer full access to their benefits to the whole community at the same time, without giving preferential treatment.
- Reinsertion packages for ex-combatant reintegration should be equal as much as possible—differences should correspond to either the individual's rank or number of years served.

Effectiveness in addressing the root causes of small arms proliferation

In discussing whether the interventions addressed the root causes of small arms and light weapons proliferation, both focus groups seemed to agree that there was an attempt to link the interventions (projects) to the causes. However, they also pointed out that some intervening organisations were not sensitive to the root causes of the problem. For instance, they pointed out that the regions of Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal had all been economically marginalised, and a lack of sensitivity greatly diminished the merit of the some of the interventions.

Lessons learned through weapon collection and WfD

The urban-based ex-combatants offered a few additional lessons learned from their own experience, which they believed should be shared with others: (a) "In the future, those entrusted with making decisions regarding disarmament should always ensure that the decisions they make are correct and later honoured"; (b) "Leaders of rebel movements should never be corrupt";[42] and (c) "All ex-combatants should be treated equally, without giving exceptional treatment to ex-combatants from one region."

THREE STAR GAME: FOR REVIEWING PROJECT PERFORMANCE

Introduction

Due to time constraints, the Three Star Game exercises were not conducted with the border-based older men in Menaka. The facilitators began the exercises by asking the older men to recall the major weapon collection activities and WfD projects, as identified in the previous exercises, that had been undertaken. Those who were regular attendees remembered quickly. Participants were also asked to list the institutions/individuals associated with the implementation of the identified activities/projects. The process that was followed and the questions that were asked during the Three Star Game exercises are as detailed in Chapter 1 of this report, entitled "Development and Application of the Methodology".

Rating the Performance

The contribution of weapon collection activities, WfD projects and participating institutions/individuals was assessed, with a view to studying which of these performed better than the others, and why.

- Assessment of the performance of activities/projects and individuals/institutions aims at understanding which of these elements the beneficiaries considered as most appropriate, so that future programmes can be designed with this information taken into account.
- Sensitisations, inter-community and inter-rebel movement meetings and the destruction of weapons were rated with the highest performance marks by the rural-based and urban-based ex-combatant older men.

The older men's focus groups assessed and ranked the weapon collection activities as shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Assessing the Performance of Weapon Collection Activities—
The Three Star Game, Rural-based and Urban-based Ex-combatant
Older Men's Focus Groups, Mali, March 2003

Weapon Collection Activity	Rating		Rating Criteria
	Rural	Urban Ex-combatant	
Sensitisation			Rated as "very excellent" because the success of weapon collections depends on effective sensitisation of the communities involved.
Inter-Community Meetings	★	★	Rated as "very excellent" because they opened the way for all ethnic groups to work together, and facilitated processes towards general disarmament and community weapon collection.
Destruction			Rated as "very excellent", as it was supported by almost everyone in the community, wherever it was performed.
Weapon Collection			Rated as "fairly excellent" because, although many SALW were collected, many more remain in circulation.
Storage	★		Rated as "fairly excellent" because all deposited weapons were accounted for.
Verification			Rated as "fairly excellent", as knowledge of the origins of the weapons is an important step in ensuring that weapons handed in are not being recycled for later use.
Inter-Rebel Meetings		★	Rated as "very excellent" for their role in putting those conducting sensitisation activities in contact with those possessing weapons.
Organisation of the "Flame of Peace"	★		Rated only as "good" because of the difficulty of organising such events.

(The criteria for the ratings in the table are based upon the success of the weapon collection activity in attracting weaponry surrender.)

As far as Weapons for Development projects are concerned, the older men's focus groups rated project performance as shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Assessing the Performance of WfD Projects—
The Three Star Game, Rural-based and Urban-based Ex-combatant
Older Men's Focus Groups, Mali, March 2003

Weapons for Development Project	Rating		Rating Criteria
	Rural	Urban Ex-combatant	
Provision of Wells/Water Supply	★	★	Rated as "very excellent" because they permitted people to settle in one place and, thus, begin development activities. Many more villages were established as a result of the increased availability of water. In religious terms, water is important to Muslims.
Cereal Banks			Rated as "very excellent" because they ensured that people would have food during periods of famine.
Animal Restocking			Rated as "very excellent" because they permitted communities to replenish animal stocks that had been lost.
Workshops			Rated as "very excellent" because they provided the young men and ex-combatants life skills for creating self-employment.
Transportation			Both groups rated transportation as "very excellent".
Animal Restocking	★	★	Rated as "fairly excellent" because it replenished the stocks that had died due to drought.
Cereal Banks			Rated as "fairly excellent" because, compared to other projects, profits were minimal. These projects benefited those who managed them.

Table 11 (following)

Weapons for Development Project	Rating		Rating Criteria
	Rural	**Urban Ex-combatant**	
Gardening	★	★	Rated only as "good" because such projects are only practical during the few months of the year where there is enough rain. Moreover, there is not even a sufficient market for products grown during this time.
Micro-Credit		★	Rated as "very excellent" by the urban-based ex-combatants.
Grinding Mills	★		Rated as "very excellent" because they freed women's time for engagement in sensitisation activities.
Trading			Rated as "very excellent" because they encouraged those who were used to armed violence to engage in trading.

(The criteria for the ratings in the table are based upon the success of the WfD project in attracting weaponry surrender.)

The older men assessed the performance of the institutions and individuals involved in weapon collection activities and Weapons for Development projects, as shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Assessing the Performance of Institutions and Individuals—
The Three Star Game, Rural-based and Urban-based Ex-combatant
Older Men's Focus Groups, Mali, March 2003

Institution/ Individual	Rating		Rating Criteria
	Rural-based	Urban-based Ex-combatants	
Village or Tribal Chief Village Committee	★	★	Rated as "very excellent" because they linked all of the communities together, which enabled disarmament. Rated as "very excellent" because they are community organisations which made and ratified all decisions.
Ordinary Village Woman	★	★	Rated as "very excellent" by the rural-based older men, because the women alone carried out sensitisation activities in the rural areas, at the household level. Rated as "fairly excellent" by the urban-based ex-combatants.
Ex-combatant		★	Rated as "very excellent" due to their role as the main actors in the conflict—their decisions determined whether peace would occur or not.
Rebel Movement Leader		★	Rated as "very excellent" because they negotiated a Peace Pact.
External Organisation	★	★	Rated as "very excellent" by the rural-based older men, because they "provided the means". Rated only as "good" by the urban-based ex-combatants, as the majority of the latter have not received their promised benefits.

General Assessment of Performance

In general, the older men's focus groups assessed the performance of the implemented weapon collection activities and Weapons for Development projects, as well as the individual actors and institutions that were associated with implementation, as follows:

The focus groups generally held the common view that the main overall contribution of the community and other institutions/individuals was their willingness to contribute to the success of the projects. According to the older men, this cooperative attitude was manifested through: (a) The acceptance by the community of its role as participants in weapon collection; (b) The precedent-setting role played by those individuals in the community who handed in their weapons first; and (c) The enormous contribution of local organisations, such as PAREM[43] and others.

In considering the project characteristics which led to more weaponry surrender, the older men's general experience was that the more successful projects were those whose benefits solved people's basic, everyday needs—for example, the provision of water (both for humans and animals), food and health services. Promises to reintegrate ex-combatants into the regular army and other services (in other words, provision of employment) also encouraged significant weaponry handover. Finally, the older men also observed that those projects that provided life skills (for example, in various trades) were also relatively successful in bringing in weapons.

In reference to the indicators of activity/project/institution success, the older men generally pointed out the following measures of effectiveness: (a) "The peace now being enjoyed"; (b) "The revival of economic activities, as evidenced by the fast development of towns and new villages"; (c) "Evidence of communities working together"; and (d) "The international fame Mali received, following the peaceful end of the conflict".

Both the rural-based and urban-based (ex-combatant) older men named a lack of sufficient funds as a major indicator of activity/project failure. While rural-based men cited "inadequate resources, which delayed the starting of developmental projects in communities that had surrendered weapons," the urban-based ex-combatants stated that very few among them had benefited, and "even the few who benefited were not satisfied, because most of the promises were not honoured".

The older men reviewed the long-term impact of the Weapons for Development approach in terms of their general experience. They described the approach as: "Giving communities confidence to contribute to their own security." The older men's focus groups also observed that the benefits from WfD projects went to the whole community. They recited a number of relevant examples, including: (a) The provision of grinding mills, which lightened the workload for women and freed their time for other activities; (b) The revival of transportation, which enabled links with other cities and brought back trading activities; (c) The reduction in armed attacks, which has allowed free movement of people and goods and accessibility to farmland; (d) The decrease in robberies and aggression, which has made communities more confident; (e) The rehabilitation and creation of new social and economic infrastructure; and (f) The devolution of power to the regions. By participating in weapon collection activities, the older men revealed, communities have learned how to better manage crises and other disaster situations.

Key Points from the Older Men's Experience with Weapon Collection and WfD Performance:
- Community willingness to participate is crucial if weapon collection programmes are to succeed.
- The provision of grinding mills freed women's time to conduct sensitisation activities.
- Delays in commencing community projects, in areas where weapons had already been handed in, diminished the likelihood of successful collection of weapons.
- Involvement of post-conflict communities in community programmes like weapon collection fosters rapid reconciliation among the affected communities.
- The WfD approach should never disturb other ongoing DDR programmes.
- As long as the state fulfills its traditional role of protecting its citizenry, there exists no need for guns in the community.
- The older men's desire to have their views expressed correctly can be taken as a sign of the value of PM&E methodology in facilitating the interest of those involved.

To conclude the exercises, participants were asked whether the WfD approach was sustainable, as well as how many guns collected from the community may be considered "enough". The older men's experience with these aspects varied.

While the rural-based men supported WfD as a sustainable approach, the urban-based ex-combatants did not agree, arguing that: (a) WfD was not sustainable because it distorted the DDR programmes that were already in progress, causing the majority of the ex-combatants to lose their reinsertion packages; and (b) The WfD approach might work better in rural areas than in urban areas, because people in urban areas live more as individuals than as a community. The urban-based ex-combatants added that, even in rural areas, WfD should only be applied after all ex-combatants have received their promised reinsertion packages; WfD projects should not interfere with these packages.

Regarding the number of guns collected to be considered "enough", both older men's focus groups pointed out, "no weapons should remain in the community when the state is providing it adequate security".

At the end of the exercises, a fight almost erupted between the ex-combatants because the French-to-Tamasek interpreter was accused of misinterpreting their views. This incident occurred just after the facilitators had read aloud the conclusions from the exercises, to crosscheck whether the written record represented the views the participants had presented during the exercises. The PM&E team understood the older men's strong desire to have their views correctly represented as confirmation of their keen interest in the exercises, and as evidence of the value of using PM&E as a method of review.

CHAPTER 5

WOMEN FOCUS GROUPS:
A COMPARISON OF EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES
OF THE RURAL-BASED, URBAN-BASED AND
BORDER-BASED WOMEN

A women session in progress in Menaka

INTRODUCTION

A total of twelve (12) Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) field sessions were conducted with the women's focus groups: five (5) exercises with rural-based women in Lere; five (5) exercises with urban-based women in Gao City; and two (2) exercises with border-based women in Menaka. Exercises in Lere were conducted on the premises of the Mayor's office; in Gao, at the women's regional office; and in Menaka, at the local administration's Guest House. All field exercises undertaken, including the techniques that were applied as well as the procedure followed and questions asked, are as detailed in Chapter 1 of this report, entitled "Development and Application of the Methodology". During the exercises, the use of visual aides excited the women, and encouraged nearly everyone to contribute. As with the previous focus groups, due to great enthusiasm, sessions were sometimes extended beyond the usual schedule to the following day.

BEFORE AND NOW SITUATIONS ANALYSIS: FOR REVIEWING PROJECT GOALS AND PURPOSES

The discussions arising from the questions and answers and analysis of the BANSA diagram produced the following input from the women's focus groups.

Situation of the Community Before Implementation of the Projects

All three women's focus groups—rural, urban and border-based— seemed to concur that the "Before" situation was marked by difficulties in their daily lives, as well as by general fear and violence, as shown in Table 13.

Table 13

Rural-based Women	Urban-based Women	Border-based Women
"There were no medical facilities." "There was no water." "There was a general social breakdown." "Car and cattle robberies were being reported almost every day." "There was no farming, which led to famine, and people were starving." People were afraid of going out in the field to search for firewood and grazing lands for animals. There was a "lack of transport and communication between the villages and towns, which affected trade and commerce".	There was a "lack of transport and communication between Gao and other towns". "General insecurity and instability." There was famine, as there was no food coming to the city. "People—including those working in offices—were being trailed by security agents." "There were murders of people during broad daylight." Destruction of the "social fabric". "Lack of trust among the communities."	There was "famine and, as a result, malnutrition—and stunted growth of children". There was "no movement into or out of the villages". "Women used to experience health problems, such as miscarriages, resulting from fear." "The destruction of villages. People fled their homes." "Many people were killed or disappeared." There was "robbery of livestock". There was "separation and breakage of families". There were "epidemics", including "cholera, as there was no clean water", and there were also problems with "drugs".

As is evident from the women's responses, displayed in the above table, the differences between the women's experiences of the "Before" situation depended upon the extent to which each category of women was affected by armed violence. For instance, in areas like Menaka, where the violence was relatively intense, the impact on individual women was experienced more directly. As an example, women in Menaka experienced health problems, such as miscarriage, as a result of fear. Additionally, the Menaka-based participants made statements such as: "the whole social fabric under which communities thrived had been eroded, because of armed violence perpetuated by the proliferation of SALW". At the same time, in places like Lere, armed violence mostly affected people's daily activities, curtailing free movement, trade and the cultivation of those fields that were located far from settlements.

Key Points from the Women's Experience—The Impact of Small Arms:
- Women used to experience health problems, such as miscarriage, as a result of fear.
- Other gun-related injuries also affected the people, but were never reported.
- The entire social fabric, which allowed communities to thrive, had been eroded.
- There was separation and breakdown among families.
- People fled their homes, and others were forced into exile.
- People were murdered in broad daylight.
- There were epidemics, such as cholera, as there was no clean water; there were also drug shortages.

The "Now" Situation—After Implementation of the Projects

When the women's focus groups spoke in reference to the situation after implementation of weapon collection programmes, they generally expressed the view that there had been a significant reduction in the level of armed violence, which resulted in the general reestablishment of social capital. The reemergence of social capital was manifest through the following: (a) "There is confidence and trust among the people"; (b) "People now work, eat and live together"; (c) "We now belong to the same

associations (all ethnic groups)"; (d) "We organise and participate together in the same ceremonies e.g. art, culture, etc."; (e) "There is effective participation in all activities that promote common interests"; (f) "There is inter-communal cooperation and self-confidence among the people"; and (g) "People are working hard and developmental activities have (been) revived."

In addition to the reestablishment of social capital, the women's focus groups also cited the following elements, which characterised improvements in the "Now" situation: (a) Travel without need of military escort; (b) The removal of the military from villages and cities; (c) Free movement of people and goods; (d) Fewer car-jackings and less livestock rustling; (e) Cessation of arbitrary arrests; (f) Reopening of borders; (g) Few guns can be seen in public—only the security people possess them; and (h) Resumption of inter-urban transport between the cities of Kidal and Gao.

Definition of Insecurity

As was done with the older men's focus groups, the border-based women from Menaka were asked to define the "insecurity" perpetuated by small arm and light weapon proliferation in their community. Their conception of insecurity was described as shown in Table 14:

Table 14: Conception of Insecurity by Border-based Women, Menaka, Mali, March 2003

General	- General fear - Famine - Lack of respect for human rights - Absence of trust among communities - Trafficking of weapons into a community
Individual	- Anticipation of being attacked at any time - Lack of self-security - Lack of security for one's property
Household	- Failure to protect family livestock - Disappearance of the head of the family - Robbery of family livestock - Risk of death

Table 14 (following)

Community	- Intra-communal mistrust - General instability - Suffering in the community - Death of community members at the hands of outsiders
Regional	- Inability of free movement of people and goods within and outside the region - Killing of community members
National	- Failure to control borders - Failure to control guns - Lack of credibility of government in the face of its people - Lack of credibility for government officials - Lack of people's freedom of expression and movement - Lack of respect for civilians by the authorities

Overall Goal(s) and Purpose(s) of Weapon Collection and WfD Programmes

Different explanations were given regarding the main rationale for beginning weapon collection activities, but the common thread underlying the women's experience was the "restoration of security and consolidation of peace". While the rural-based women described the objective of weapon collection as "to restore security and consolidate peace", the urban-based women described it as "restoration of peace and security"; meanwhile, the border-based women believed the purpose of weapon collection to be, "to restore peace and establish confidence, tolerance and trust among the divided communities". Other medium to long-term objectives of weapon collection expressed by the women's focus groups included issues of developing the northern region—which they said was marginalised, compared to the other regions—and the desire for people to forget the past and work together for the total reconciliation of all ethnic groups.

> **Key Points from the Women's Experience with the Goals and Purposes of Weapon Collection:**
> - The main aim of weapon collection programmes was the restoration of security and consolidation of peace, while the immediate objective was to reduce the number of weapons circulating in the communities.
> - Beyond reducing the number of weapons in circulation, each community may have its own specific objectives for weapon collection, depending on the degree to which the community was affected by the violence.
> - A further goal was the establishment of equality and tranquility among all of the people.

All of the women's focus groups seemed to agree that the immediate objective of the weapon collections was: "reducing the number of weapons that were circulating in the communities". However, beyond this reduction in the number of weapons in circulation, each focus group maintained its own specific objectives that it wanted to see achieved in its own community. The rural-based women desired reconciliation of the various ethnic groups, the resumption of free movement of people and goods as well as of trade and other economic activities; the urban-based women wanted the men to stop fighting, and hoped to discover new means of engaging the young people; similarly, the border-based women wished for a reduction in banditry and livestock rustling, the commencement of activities that would offer alternatives to the use of guns, the facilitation of the repatriation and reintegration of refugees from abroad and the establishment of equality and tranquillity among all the people.

Strategies for Achieving Objectives

When speaking about the strategies that were pursued to meet the objectives of weapon collection, all of the women's focus groups agreed that sensitisation and awareness raising among the communities, on the dangers of small arms and light weapons and violence in general, comprised the overarching strategy. This strategy corresponds to the responses given by both the young men's and older men's focus groups as well.

The women also described the other broader strategies that had achieved positive results. First, women recognised that their husbands, brothers and/or sons were ruining each other. The women realised the need to seek out a solution to this problematic situation. Second, women from the various communities needed to build trust among themselves as a precursor to improving the situation; this was achieved through discussion. Third, the women agreed that individual women should start campaigns to sensitise men, starting at the household, for they knew whether their husbands, sons or brothers were involved in armed violence or not. Fourth, the women mobilised themselves and began outreach sensitisations; meetings were organised in homes, neighbourhoods and villages, and sometimes even in the bushes. Fifth, as traditional leaders and institutions became more fully involved, women became partners in the search for a durable peace, and began wider mobilisation campaigns, which spread from home to home, neighbourhood to neighbourhood, village to village and city to city, throughout the region. Finally, women in some areas staged demonstrations, which included marches, hunger strikes and, sometimes, threatening to "strip naked", all in an attempt to put an end to the armed violence.

Key Points on Women's Strategies for Weapon Collection:
- Urban-based weapon holders—usually unmarried and lacking maternal links—represented difficult cases for women's sensitisation activities.
- Women pursued demonstration as a strategy to end the violence, through marching and, sometimes, threatening to "strip naked", all in an attempt to bring about a peaceful end to the conflict.
- Beginning at the household level, women's sensitisation campaigns spread to cities and villages.
- Women's subordinate status to their husbands, as well as demanding domestic obligations, sometimes prevented women from having sufficient time for mobilisation activities.

The experience of all three women's focus groups, regarding the difficulties faced in collecting weapons, was that achievement of the current improved situation was not an easy task. In particular, the urban-based women alluded to the difficulties they faced in dealing with urban-based

weapon holders, who had either lost touch with their families and/or were not married; this made it impossible to mobilise at the household level. Another obstacle common to the experience of all three women's focus groups was the mistrust of and lack of confidence in the National Pact, which had been signed by the government and rebel forces.[44] As well, the women revealed that their status of subordination to their husbands, coupled with their demanding domestic obligations, sometimes did not permit them enough time to dedicate themselves to mobilising.

The women also generally agreed that most of the difficulties were overcome by the general willingness and desire of the whole community to end the armed violence.

Assessing the Impact of Weapon Collection and WfD Programmes

Participants gave a long list of both quantitative and qualitative community-based indicators for assessing the success of weapon collection and WfD programmes. As previously, the women's responses were typically dependent upon the area in which they were based. They pointed out that success could be verified by physical site visits to the infrastructures that were put in place, interviews of people who had returned to their villages (refugees and IDPs) and records kept by various leaders (for example, members of the Local Commission for Disarmament).

The indicators provided by all three women's focus groups were nearly identical.

The rural-based women offered the following indicators for measuring the success of weapon collection and WfD programmes: (a) The several projects that were undertaken to reintegrate ex-combatants—for example, through PAREM jobs were created, and many ex-combatants were employed; (b) The rehabilitation of infrastructure; (c) The employment opportunities that came about as a result of peace; (d) The number of new private houses built in Lere and other villages; (e) The return of displaced people to their villages; (f) The rehabilitation of infrastructure that was destroyed during the conflict; (g) Animal restocking programmes; (h) Assistance from international organisations like the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Food Programme (WFP) and others; (i) The grinding mills provided by the Belgium Technical Cooperation; (j) The several wells

that were rehabilitated; (k) The cereal banks supported by Germany Technical Cooperation, offering food relief to the population; (l) The construction of canals and trenches that provided water for irrigation of gardens and facilitated the establishment of new villages; (m) Assistance to women's associations; and (n) The promotion of social activities, such as sports, which serve to promote co-existence among young people.

The urban-based women stressed the following indicators: (a) The large number of ex-combatants and other ex-weapon holders that gave up the fighting; (b) The reintegration of some of the ex-combatants into the regular forces and the civil service; (c) The animal restocking programmes—especially in areas where animals were lost during the armed violence; (d) Support for both short and medium to long-term development projects that are still being implemented; (e) The repatriation and return of refugees to their villages; and (f) The resumption of cultural activities.

At the same time, the border-based women pointed to the following indicators: (a) Free movement of people and goods between cities and villages, without need for military escorts; (b) The cessation of kidnapping and disappearances, problems which characterised the "Before" situation; (c) The opening of administrative offices in places outside the capital city ("every office used to be in Bamako"); (d) The resumption of economic activities—trade and commerce; and (e) Social stability, as evidenced by schools that have been built, new wells that have been dug, health units that have been built, and restocking and agricultural activities.

Key Points from the Women's Experience Assessing Weapon Collection Programmes:
- Community-based quantitative and qualitative indicators are the best measures of programme success or failure.
- Success can be verified by site visits to infrastructure that was put in place, interviews with people who have returned to their villages (refugees and IDPs) and from records kept by various leaders—for example, members of the Local Commission for Disarmament.
- Border security needed to be improved, and border communities made to feel safer.

Necessary Conditions for Weapon Collection

In terms of the women's experience regarding the external conditions necessary for the success of weapon collection programmes, all of the focus groups seemed to agree that successful community involvement in weapon collection, or any micro-disarmament programme for that matter, requires a multifaceted and integrated approach. In particular, participants mentioned the following conditions as necessary precursors to success: (a) The country needed to secure its borders, to stop more guns from flowing into the communities; (b) Community support for the women's efforts was vital; (c) The unwavering willingness of the government to politically support the efforts of the community; (d) The timely support by development partners, such as UNDP, UNHCR, CTB and others; (e) Financial resources were also required from the state itself; (f) Border communities needed to be guaranteed better security; and (g) Meetings between neighbouring communities, in which women participated, were very important.

Constraints in Weapon Collection and WfD

In discussing the constraints facing weapon collection and WfD efforts, the women, particularly those from the border-based communities, pointed out the famine that loomed throughout the region, the continuous fear of the military and other security operatives and the mistrust between rural and urban communities—people did not trust the Tuaregs, a predominantly rural people who were perceived to have a negative effect.

In general, the women's experience participating in weapon collection elicited a number of lessons learned. First, they highlighted the possibility that persistent fear from past experiences may cause people to be reluctant in coming forward to turn in their weapons. As well, delays in obtaining the resources necessary to undertake community development projects, especially in communities that turn over weapons, may jeopardise collection efforts. Also, the women learned about "Promoting Women's Action", as well as how to handle crisis situations.

In conclusion, the PM&E team was impressed by the speed with which the women grasped the techniques and articulately analysed issues. Throughout the exercises, and in all the areas, there was great enthusiasm, and nearly everyone was willing to contribute.

DETERMINING DECISION-MAKING PROCESS:
FOR REVIEWING PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND DESIGN

Introduction

The process that was followed and the questions that were asked in the Determining Decision-Making Process exercises are as detailed in Chapter 1 of this report, entitled "Development and Application of the Methodology". Participants began the exercises by asking the women's groups to list the various activities that were implemented as part of weapon collection and WfD programmes.

Definition of Participation

When the facilitators were conducting the exercises with the rural-based women, they had assumed that the participants understood the term "participation"; hence, they did not ask them to define the term. However, later in the course of the discussion, the facilitators realised that they had made a mistake. The term continued to be used, yet participants understood it in different ways. When the question was put to the urban-based and border-based women, however, both of these groups agreed on similar definitions of the term. While the urban-based women understood participation as "contributing, taking part in a project and/or conceiving of ideas together," the border-based women understood it as "to contribute, the willingness to do something" and/or "to have a spirit to do something". From these definitions, it can be deduced that, like their male counterparts, the urban-based and border-based women understood participation as "the full involvement and ownership of both the process as well as the product".

Weapon Collection Activities

In describing how the various decisions were made about weapon collection activities, all three women's focus groups concurred that their own influence was felt most strongly through sensitisation and awareness raising among the communities on the dangers of SALW proliferation and continued armed violence. As such, unlike their male counterparts, the women had little experience with the weapon collection process. Nevertheless, their participation varied from area to area. As an example,

the rural-based women mentioned other areas where they made decisions such as setting mechanisms for confidence building for those handing over weapons, while urban-based women in addition, mentioned organising cultural activities and inter-community meetings and in the same vein, border-based women from Menaka, where rebellion "began and at the same ended" seemed to have played more other roles, such as exchange of experiences (exposures visits to different communities to learn), involving the media in weapons collection issues, and participating in the cantonment and in demobilisation and reintegration.

Analysis of How Decisions Were Made

This part of the Determining Decision-Making exercises was not conducted with the border-based women from Menaka. The rural-based and urban-based women's focus groups identified the following major decision makers in their communities, as shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation (PM&E):
Reviewing Decision-making and Influence using Pictorial Diagrams:
Women's Focus Groups (Rural-based & Urban-based), Mali, March 2003

Decision Maker	No. of Decisions
External Agent	R1
	U1
	B-
Ordinary Village Woman	R1
	U6
	B-
Ordinary Village Man	R1
	U2
	B-
Village Chief	R2
	U1
	B-

Decision Maker	No. of Decisions
Village Official	R0
	U0
	B-
Village Artist	R1
	U0
	B-
Village Committee	R2
	U1
	B-
Village Young Man	R0
	U0
	B-
Ex-combattant	R0
	U1
	B-

Key: X Urban-based Women, R Rural-based Women, B Border-based Women

Ordinary Village Woman—Out of the total twenty (20) major decisions that the women considered as important, the ordinary village woman was attributed influence in seven (7) of these decisions, with the rural-based women assigning them one (1) decision and the urban-based women attributing them six (6) out of seven (7) decisions. The wide margin between the number of decisions attributed to women by the rural-based and urban-based women is a product of differences in levels of empowerment—urban-based women are said to be more empowered in matters of disarmament, compared to the rural-based women, who are still under strict (traditional) control.

Village Chief—The village chief was attributed three (3) out of twenty (20) decisions, with the rural-based women assigning them two (2) decisions and the urban-based women assigning them one (1) decision. The difference can be explained by the extensive influence

that traditional leaders wield, on matters of SALW and security, especially in Mali's rural areas.

Village Committee—The rural-based women also recognised the influence of the village committee to a greater extent than did the urban-based women, by a margin of two (2) decisions to one (1), because the women felt that, in the rural areas, the committees are closer to the people than in the urban areas.

Ordinary Village Man—Three (3) out of twenty (20) decisions were assigned to the ordinary village man, with the urban-based women assigning them two (2) decisions and the rural-based women assigning them one (1) decision. The explanation given was that urban-based men were more accepting of their wives' participation in weapon collection programmes than were rural-based men.

Key Points Concerning Women's Participation Levels:
- Empowerment levels differ between urban and rural-based women, because rural-based women are under strict (traditional) control.
- Local Committees are closer to the people in the rural areas than in urban areas.
- Local artists play a more influential role in the rural areas.
- Rural-based ex-combatants have been completely reintegrated into their original communities.

External Agent—Each of the two participating women's focus groups attributed one (1) decision to the external agent, a category which comprises organisations like NGOs.

Village Artist—Rural-based women attributed one (1) decision out of twenty (20) to the village artist, while the urban-based women did not recognise the artist's role. Local artists are more influential in the rural areas, where there exist limited types of entertainment compared to city life.

Ex-combatant—The urban-based women attributed one (1) decision to the ex-combatant, while the rural-based women did not attribute them influence in any of the twenty (20) decisions identified. The ex-combatant's role was recognised more in the urban areas—where ex-combatants seem to be organised as a group—than in the rural areas, because the rural ex-combatants have been reintegrated into mainstream society.

Village Young Man and Village Official—Neither focus group attributed them any decision-making influence.

CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEWS: FOR REVIEWING PROJECT APPRAISAL AND IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

This section describes the women's experience with weapon collection and WfD projects, as revealed through the Conversational Interviews exercises. Due to time constraints, the exercise was not conducted with the border-based women in Menaka. The exercises were conducted in an atmosphere that enabled many of the participants to contribute. The process that was followed and the questions that were asked during the Conversational Interviews exercises are as detailed in Chapter 1 of this report, entitled "Development and Application of the Methodology".

Comparison of the Weapons for Development Approach and Previous Incentives

When asked about the existence of previous mechanisms for the collection of weapons, and whether the new approach took into account these mechanisms, the women's experience was that, apart from the cantonments, there were formerly military operations and patrols which would sometimes recover weapons from bandits and other people. Later, when cease-fire commissions were set up, more weapons were handed in. The beginning of the WfD approach systemised weapon collection, however, especially through the creation of Local Commissions to handle the weapons that were turned in.

When the women discussed whether the WfD approach was more effective in attracting weapons, compared with the existing mechanisms mentioned above, both focus groups shared the view that the WfD approach was indeed more effective: "because, in addition to many weapons having been collected and destroyed, communities that collected the weapons received development projects, and also WfD led to effective security". However, the urban-based women cautioned that WfD is only effective as long as the following conditions are met: (a) WfD must not encourage the importation of more guns by communities who want to benefit from WfD incentive projects; (b) The benefits should trickle down to the whole community, and should be visible; (c) The benefits WfD provides should be sustainable and relevant to the community—water, medical care, environmental protection, help fighting hunger and/or creation of employment through small-scale industries; (d) There needs to be effective security for people and their property; and (e) Weapons that are collected need to be clearly marked and, later, publicly destroyed, and not reused.

Convincing Weapon Holders to Turn in their Arms

In terms of what was actually done to convince individual weapon holders to turn in their guns, despite the fact that WfD benefits reward the whole community and not individuals, the women mentioned the sensitisation and awareness raising campaigns that they conducted, as well as the general desire to have peace, viewed by both women's focus groups as a major driving force encouraging weapon surrender. The rural-based women recalled the names of such eminent persons as Hadara, Hamana, Yahia Ag Mohammed Ali and Mohammed Dofana, whom they credited with having convinced others turn in their weapons by first doing so themselves. The women also named other elements, such as patience, demonstrated by both weapon holders and communities, as important factors facilitating the handover of weapons.

The urban-based women cited additional guarantees and confidence building measures that facilitated the weapon collection process: (a) Continuous meetings held by women's pressure groups in residential quarters; (b) The open discussion in general inter-community meetings of issues related to armed violence; (c) Parental involvement led to a general understanding of the problem by different groups, and convinced sons and

daughters to turn in their weapons and stop contributing to the violence; (d) Communities sometimes banished their members, and parents sometimes banished their children if they insisted on continuing the violence; (e) Hunger strikes were staged and mothers threatened to strip naked; (f) Acceptance and encouragement by the government of communities looking to find their own ways of collecting weapons; and (g) The ability of the Local Commissions to keep secret the names of those that handed in weapons.

Process of Collecting Weapons

The women's focus groups elaborated the procedure that was followed in collecting weapons.[45] They explained that weapons were first handed over to the elders and other trusted members of the local committee, who would then transfer the weapons to the National Guard.[46] The National Guard ensured that the weapons were safely and securely stored. Eventually, whenever enough weapons were collected, they would be destroyed in "Flames of Peace". The regional High Commissioner, village and tribal leaders and Local Commissions ensured that the weapons were safe until they were taken to Timbuktu for the "Flame of Peace". Both focus groups concluded, "Weapon collection should be a continuous process because weapons can be used all the time to perpetuate crime."

Types of weapons handed in first

When questioned about the types of weapons that were turned in first, the rural-based women responded that, although they did not participate directly in handling the weapons, they were informed about the "Flame of Peace", and also saw "the usual weapons they always see being carried by the soldiers".[47] Similarly, the urban-based women, some of whom used to be in cantonments, had a variety of experience with arms. They named weapons like AK-47s and pistols as being handed in first.

Who should be/should not be involved

All of the women agreed on the desirability of direct involvement in weapon collection by traditional leaders (because of the respect they command from the community), women's groups, civil society and, more generally, the whole community. On the other hand, the women all agreed

that children and the disabled should not be involved, because of the dangers posed. They also held the consensus view that neither the army nor government officials should be involved, because these people are not trusted by those potentially handing in weapons; furthermore, weapon holders fear that, if such actors were to be involved, collected weapons might later be reused. Nevertheless, the women all agreed that the government must render the necessary political support, and promote policies that favour voluntary weaponry surrender as well as ensure that government weapon stocks are not illegally leaked into the wrong hands.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR APPROACH:
FOR REVIEWING PROJECT MONITORING

Introduction

The Community Calendar exercises were held with the women's focus groups at the same venues as the previous exercises. Due to time constraints, the exercise was not conducted with the border-based women in Menaka. Facilitators began the exercise by explaining its purpose. The process that was followed and the questions that were asked in the Determining Decision-Making Process exercises are as detailed in Chapter 1 of this report, entitled "Development and Application of the Methodology".

As was done with the previous focus groups, the facilitators asked participants to recall the major weapon collection activities and WfD projects that had been undertaken.

Weapon Collection Activities

When asked about the specific weapon collection activities that were most effective, the women's focus groups identified the following activities as shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Weapon Collection Activities Requiring Critical Monitoring:
Community Calendar—Rural-based and
Urban-based Women's Focus Groups, Mali, March 2003

Activity Period	Sensiti-sation	Inter-Com-munity Meetings	Actual Weapon Collection	Cantonments	Destruc-tion
January	*(b)	*(b)			
February	*(b)	*(b)			
March	*(b)	*(b)		*U	
April	*(b)	*(b)		*U	
May	*(b)	*(b)		*U	
June	*(b)	*(b)	*(b)		*R
July	*(b)	*(b)	*(b)		
August	*(b)	*(b)	*(b)		
September	*(b)	*(b)	*(b)		
October	*(b)	*(b)	*(b)		
November	*(b)	*(b)			
December	*(b)	*(b)			

(All activities implemented at various times between 1993-2002.)
* Time of year when project implementation attracts more weapons, according to:
R   Rural-based Women
U   Urban-based Women
(b)   Both (R & U)

Analysis of the Community Calendar
    The following conclusions can be drawn from the women's experience, as revealed through the community calendar exercises:

    Sensitisation and Inter-community meetings—Sensitisation programmes were recognised as important by both groups, and should be carried out throughout the year. Inter-community meetings were also judged important by both groups, and have since continued because of the need to search for and consolidate peace among the communities.

Weapon collection—The actual collection of arms, handling and storage, verification and registration all began at the same time, and have been ongoing, because additional weapons are still being collected. These activities are best implemented between June and October, during the rainy season. The handling and storage aspects of weapon collection require particularly critical monitoring.

Cantonments—The urban-based women's focus group was the only group of women to recognise the cantonments in this exercise, because some of these women were the wives of ex-combatants. The time period named for this activity was March to May 1994, following the signing of the Peace Pact between the rebel movements and the government. According to the women, this was a period where monitoring was crucial, because it enabled people to know which rebel group was responsible in case an armed violent incident occurred. Many weapons were handed in as a precondition to qualifying for the incentives offered in the cantonments.

Destruction of weapons—The rural-based women's focus group mentioned this activity due to the "Flame of Peace", in which thousands of weapons were destroyed in Lere during June 2001.

Weapons for Development Projects

When asked about the specific WfD projects that were most effective, the rural-based women selected three (3) projects, while the urban-based women named six (6) projects as very important. In this case, only two (2) types of projects—cereal banks and animal fattening—were common to both groups' response.

Table 17 details the specific WfD projects, identified by the women's focus groups as most effective and, thus, requiring critical monitoring, as well as the times of year when the projects were viewed as most effective.

Table 17: WfD Projects Requiring Critical Monitoring:
Community Calendar—Rural-based and
Urban-based Women's Focus Groups, Mali, March 2003

Activity Period	Cereal Banks	Gar-dening	Micro-Credit	Animal Fattening	Handi-craft	Com-merce & Trade	Grind-ing Mills
January			*U		*U	*U	
February			*U		*U	*U	
March			*U		*U	*U	
April			*U		*U	*U	
May			*U		*U	*U	*R
June	*(b)		*U	*(b)	*U	*U	*R
July	*(b)		*U	*(b)	*U	*U	*R
August	*(b)		*U	*(b)	*U	*U	*R
September	*(b)	*U	*U	*(b)	*U	*U	
October	*(b)	*U	*U	*(b)	*U	*U	
November	*(b)	*U	*U	*(b)	*U	*U	
December	*(b)	*U	*U	*(b)	*U	*U	

(All activities implemented at various times between 1993-2002.)
* Time of year when project implementation attracts more weapons, according to:
R   Rural-based Women
U   Urban-based Women
(b)   Both (R & U)

Analysis of the Community Calendar
The women's experience with the monitoring of WfD projects was explained as follows:

Cereal Banks—The seasonal climates of Lere and Gao are nearly identical. As indicated on the table, both women's groups selected cereal banks as an effective project requiring critical monitoring. Cereal banks were typically implemented between October and December—harvest time—when grain costs less. Selling typically took place

between May and September—when communities usually run out of grain—this is the time period where weapon collection rates are at their highest.

Gardening—The urban-based women mentioned gardening, which is best implemented between September and December; this season is suitable for cultivation because it comes after the rains have subsided. This opinion contrasted that of the rural-based women, who mostly cultivate for home consumption because of the small scale of the market available in rural areas.

Micro-Credit—These schemes operated throughout the year, in part because the activities provided regular income, and also because the recipients signed contracts for a period of one year. These projects were more effective in urban areas than in rural areas.

Animal Fattening—As indicated on the table above, both women's groups selected this project. The project is best implemented between June and September, when animals are cheaper and easier to manage, due to the ample supply of grass. The animals are then sold during the dry season, when they obtain substantial sums of money for their owners. Many weapons were also observed to have been collected at this time.

Handicraft/Commerce & Trade—These activities were highlighted by the urban-based women as having been effective in attracting weaponry surrender. The women noted, "the projects provided alternatives to those who used to earn their living from armed violence".

Grinding Mills—The rural-based women pointed out this type of project, best implemented during the rainy season, which coincides with the period where sensitisation activities are conducted, especially among nomadic communities. As a result of these projects, women save time that was formerly spent grinding, and can dedicate more of their time to sensitisation, mobilisation, and other developmental activities.

General Findings Concerning Activity/Project Monitoring

In light of their experience with the timing of weapon collection, both women's focus groups held the view that the best times for such activities must be determined through consideration of such factors as: (a) Climatic conditions; (b) People's means of livelihood(s) in a particular community; and (c) Time(s) of year where the security of the community is perceived to be high/low. For instance, the women mentioned that sensitisation is most successful when carried out during the rainy season, when most communities can be found in fixed locations. On the other hand, projects like cereal banks are better implemented during the dry season, when communities are in dire need of food.

When the women's focus groups were asked about their experience with the characteristics of interventions that attracted more weapons handed in, they stressed those projects that attempted to address problems of people's lack of basic necessities and sustainable livelihoods. Both rural-based and urban-based women explained, "that is why projects like workshops for handcrafts and skills training, which provided employment for the youth, and grinding mills, which freed time for women to do other economic activities, attracted more people to hand in their guns".

In terms of the constraints that faced project implementation, the women mentioned issues similar to those that were pointed out earlier by their male counterparts. Among these issues, some of which are similar to one another, were included: (a) Loss of trust by communities that had handed in weapons, after promises were either delayed or not fulfilled; (b) Project implementation delays, or even cancellation, resulting from inadequate resources and/or funding, even though communities had handed in weapons; (c) Distrust on the part of those possessing weapons; and (d) Promises that were not honoured, especially to ex-combatants.

Monitoring indicators
In response to the facilitators' questions on performance indicators, the two women's focus groups offered differing indicators as measures of potential increases or decreases in numbers of illegal weapons in circulation. The rural-based women referred to the "Flame of Peace", in which thousands of small arms and light weapons were destroyed, as one quantitative indicator to gauge the reduction in numbers of weapons. They also pointed to the fact that no more attacks involving the use of SALW have

occurred, another sign that there were fewer weapons in circulation. Other indicators mentioned were similar to those noted in the previous exercises.

Distribution of benefits

In discussing how WfD projects were implemented, and the mechanisms that were pursued to ensure that the whole community benefited, the women's experience was that "the desire to work for the well-being of the whole community, as well as for the development of their areas, convinced those who had weapons" to turn in their guns. The urban-based women in particular emphasised this explanation as important in their choice to credit ex-combatants (weapon holders) with playing the most significant role in ameliorating the previous situation. Individuals and members of small groups and associations were the ones to first implement projects; they received the direct benefits, while the indirect benefits of the projects would make their way to the whole community. For example, when grinding mills were undertaken, members of the project would get a share of the profits, but the community would also benefit from cheaper and closer services, an improvement from the former situation.

Effectiveness in addressing the root causes of small arms proliferation

When facilitators queried whether the interventions attempted to address the root causes of the small arms problem in the communities, both the rural-based and the urban-based women concurred that there was indeed an attempt to link the interventions (projects) to the causes. This was made possible only because those people affected by and familiar with the underlying causes of the problem had been involved in the project initiation process. The women noted, "much of the problem accrued from the region's economic marginalisation, such as lack of opportunities for young men".

THREE STAR GAME: FOR REVIEWING PROJECT PERFORMANCE

Introduction

The Three Star Game was the last exercise conducted with the women's focus groups. Similar to previous exercises, the morale of the groups remained high, as more and more women turned up each day to participate in the exercises. Facilitators began the exercise by explaining its purpose. The process that was followed and the questions that were asked

in the Three Star Game exercises are as detailed in Chapter 1 of this report, entitled "Development and Application of the Methodology".

Rating the Performance

The contribution of WfD projects was assessed, with a view to studying which of these performed better than the others, and why. The women's focus groups only reviewed the performance of WfD projects, because the performance of weapon collection activities and institutions/individuals was covered in the previous exercises. The performance ratings for particular projects typically differed between the focus groups, but in some cases descriptions of performance and the explanations given were common to all groups.

Assessment by the rural-based women

The rural-based women's focus group reviewed the performance of nine (9) Weapons for Development projects, judged to be among the most effective projects implemented in the communities. The projects' performance was rated, and the reasons given were as follows, as shown in Table 18.

Table 18: Assessing the Performance of WfD Projects—
The Three Star Game, Rural-based Women's
Focus Groups, Lere, Mali, March 2003

Weapons for Development Project	Rating	Rating Criteria
Provision of Wells		Rated as "very excellent" because water was previously not available in the villages.
Water Supply	★	Rated as "very excellent", "because water was very expensive before, but now it is easy to get and free".
Grinding Mills		Rated as "very excellent" because they lessened the domestic work for women and freed their time for mobilisation.
Cereal Banks		Rated as "very excellent" because they saved people from famine.

Table 18 (following)

Weapons for Development Project	Rating	Rating Criteria
Animal Fattening		Rated as "fairly excellent" because of the difficulty involved for those who carried out these projects.
Commerce	★	Rated as "fairly excellent" because women could thereafter sell their produce, as the projects helped create more customer availability.
Transportation		Rated as "fairly excellent" because there now exist transportation services between different places.
Television	★	Rated as "good" because few women have access to television; but, at the same time, it is very important for women to know about the programmes of other women in other parts of the world.
Telephone Services		Rated only as "good", because those who can afford it can send messages to Bamako and else-where.

Assessment by the urban-based women

The urban-based women's focus group reviewed the performance of six (6) Weapons for Development projects implemented in the communities. The projects' performance was rated, and the reasons given were as follows, as shown in Table 19.

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Table 19: Assessing the Performance of WfD Projects—
The Three Star Game, Urban-based Women's
Focus Groups, Gao, Mali, March 2003

Weapons for Development Project	Rating	Rating Criteria
Cereal Banks		Rated as "very excellent" because they were a strategy to fight against hunger, which had originally caused many people to resort to the use of force.
Gardening	★	Rated as "very excellent" because those who undertook it improved their income and living standard and, thus, did not resort to the use of guns.
Animal Fattening		Rated as "very excellent" because it earned income for those who undertook it.
Micro-Credit		Rated as "fairly excellent" because it was a bit less successful, although it benefited many people, including those regarded as "poor".
Handicraft	★	Rated only as "fairly excellent", as few talented people participated.
Commerce & Trade		Rated as "fairly excellent" because, although it only benefited a few people, it was important in reviving trade activities in the communities and, as such, indirectly provided employment.

Assessment by the border-based women

The border-based women's focus group reviewed the performance of eight (8) Weapons for Development projects implemented in the communities. The projects' performance was rated, and the reasons given were as follows, as shown in Table 20.

Table 20: Assessing the Performance of WfD Projects—
The Three Star Game, Border-based Women's
Focus Groups, Menaka, Mali, March 2003

Weapons for Development Project	Rating	Rating Criteria
Cereal Banks		Rated as "very excellent" because they provided affordable grain and made grain readily available in the villages.
Gardening		Rated as "very excellent" because it diversified people's incomes; its products covered almost all food needs.
Animal Restocking	★	Rated as "very excellent" because animals are a mainstay of the Menaka population.
Micro-Credit		Rated as "very excellent" because it improved people's incomes.
Child Feeding		Rated as "very excellent" because it helped support children from the poorest families.
Handicraft		Rated as "fairly excellent", as few skilled women participated.
Savings Banks	★	Rated as "fairly excellent" because, although they benefited only a few people, they are a means of fighting poverty, hunger, disease and unemployment.
Desert Stopping	★	Rated only as "good" because, although it was important, it was not related to people's daily needs.

Criteria for Rating Project Performance

Analysis of the women's feedback in assessing project performance leads to the conclusion that the women rated WfD projects according to

project capacity to encourage greater numbers of weapons to be surrendered. Beyond this principal criterion, however, other bases for the women's ratings included: (a) Projects that provided for basic daily needs (water, health care, food, etc.); (b) Projects that provided employment for people, including ex-combatants; (c) Projects that addressed food needs and other human security-related concerns; (d) Projects that lessened the women's domestic work; (e) Projects that led to markets for the women's produce; (f) Projects that promoted information and experience sharing on armed violence among women's groups; (g) Projects that assisted the poorest of the poor; (h) Projects that addressed women-specific problems, such as health care; (i) Projects that enhanced the diversification of incomes as well provided alternatives to violence; (j) Projects that provided famine relief; (k) Projects that benefited a large portion of the population; (l) Projects that promoted reconciliation among the ethnic groups; (m) Interventions that brought the people to work together; and (n) Projects for environmental conservation.

Reviewing Project Impact

As a way of concluding the Three Star exercises with the women's focus groups, the women were asked how they reviewed the impact of the Weapons for Development approach. Their general experience revealed that WfD encouraged all of the communities to participate in weapon collection and to work to end the armed violence in their communities. The WfD approach also simultaneously addressed communities' development needs.

Overall, the Weapons for Development approach was considered more effective, consistent and sustainable, because it led to a steady influx of collected weapons. Project benefits reached the whole community, either directly or indirectly. Projects associated with WfD also tried to address communities' basic everyday needs and problems. The women concluded with a comment reaffirming their belief that communities do not need weapons: "we need more schools, health centres, medicine and food, but not guns".

CHAPTER 6

SYNTHESIS AND ANALYSIS OF THE GENERAL LESSONS LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

This section presents a synthesis and analysis of the general lessons that were learned from the Mali case study. To facilitate the transfer of these lessons learned to the users of this report, among whom may be included practitioners of weapon collection schemes, including planners, programme directors and/or researchers, the lessons have been categorised into the following seven (7) thematic areas:

(*i*)   Methodology;
(*ii*)   Conception, Design and Implementation;
(*iii*)   Assessment/ Performance Indicators;
(*iv*)   Characteristics of Incentive Schemes;
(*v*)   Best Practices in Implementation;
(*vi*)   Capacity Building Needs;
(*vii*)   Conflict Prevention Issues.

METHODOLOGY

All of the focus groups seemed to appreciate the Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation (PM&E) methodology applied in the study. The participants' review recognised that the techniques enabled nearly everyone that was interested to express their views. Facilitators as well as participants from the communities grasped the techniques relatively easily. Virtually no major problems were encountered during application of the techniques. The five (5) techniques applied can be adapted to review different weapon collection programmes. The following PM&E techniques were used in this study:

i. **Before And Now Situations Analysis**—For reviewing the projects' goal(s) and purpose(s);

ii. **Determining Decision-Making Process**—For reviewing the projects' identification and design;

iii. **Conversational Interviews**—For reviewing the projects' appraisal and implementation;

iv. **Community Calendar Approach**—For reviewing the projects' monitoring; and

v. **Three Star Game**—For reviewing the projects' and institutions' performance.

Conception, Design and Implementation

Identifying the real beneficiaries

With respect to the beneficiaries, project organisers should know who is meant to benefit from the weapon collection projects or, more generally, the post-war reconstruction. The local people should be asked what they want to achieve through the projects, and how they intend to reach these objectives. The experience revealed from past weapon collection schemes dictates that, unless such questions are correctly answered, interventions are bound to fail. This demands that weapon collection programmes listen to the affected community in order to understand the local mechanisms for dealing with weapons.

Understanding the root causes

The core causes that drive people to arm themselves need to be identified. Why are people resorting to the acquisition of illicit small arms and light weapons and engaging in armed violence? What security threats are confronting people, and what are the threshold threat levels at which communities choose to resort to desperate means? Eliciting answers to such questions, by the communities themselves, goes a long way towards coming up with appropriate interventions to solve the problem(s). Past interventions have ignored such issues, thus diminishing their likelihood of success. The current study has also revealed that, in circumstances where nearly every community member has been either directly or indirectly affected by violence, there is a general willingness by all to unite and solve their problems.

The present study has revealed that identification of the root causes of small arms proliferation and violence makes it easier to design appropriate

interventions that address the underlying threats or vulnerabilities; this approach contrasts one which merely reacts to the by-products, or effects, that have come as a result of the violence. As such, interventions which target the factors driving demand and facilitating the flow of SALW into illicit hands become the long-term goal, while the immediate or operational objectives entail the reduction of the number of arms circulating in the community and the mitigation of the society's degeneration into a "culture of violence". When combined with implementation of strong legislation and other regulatory measures which counter the illicit trade in SALW, such measures may bring the possibility of sustainable security. As an example, the study shed light on the economic marginalisation experienced by people in the northern region of Mali as one of the root causes that drove people to armed rebellion in the country. Along the same lines, the following additional factors were identified as facilitating an influx of guns into the country: (a) Failure of the government to secure its borders; (b) Poor management of the country's armouries; and (c) Leakage of arms from the armed forces.

Key points on conception, design and implementation of weapon collection projects:
- External interveners should always listen to the voices of the affected communities.
- Solutions should build upon what already exists, rather than imposing solutions that might be alien to the beneficiaries.
- People need to appreciate the concept of "security first", as a pre-condition for development.
- The affected communities should be allowed to reflect on the impact that the misuse of SALW, and of violence in general, has had on their communities—economically, socially and in terms of human loss.
- The terms "security" and "insecurity" should be defined in the context of how communities understand them.
- The whole community should be informed of the goal(s) of the weapon collection projects, so as to build partnerships with those responsible for implementing the projects.
- Confidence building measures require that communities participate at all levels, rather than the implementers of weapon collection programmes limiting them only to involvement in information sharing.

Studying past and present situations

A critical analysis of both past and current situations is a prerequisite to any project, with a view to understanding the strategies that were pursued to end past armed conflicts (if any) as well as the underlying development gaps and other socio-political-economic dynamics. Furthermore, the project should understand how these gaps and dynamics have affected different age groups and people's means of livelihood, and how they may have played a role in the demand for weapons and the encouragement of armed violence. Communities need to be provided an opportunity to reflect on what went wrong within the community, and how they envisage to resolve the situation. Analysis may prove useful, of the historical issues that led the people to resort to arms or violence. For example, it is important to understand how different events have affected the social, economic, political and other safety networks within the community, especially among the various age groups. Further, the local people may help to unravel issues such as disparities in the allocation of development resources among different geographical regions of the country.

Key points on conception, design and implementation of weapon collection projects:
- Inclusiveness means that the entire social, economic, political and gender spectrum must be given the opportunity to define their input to the weapon collection, post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building processes.
- An outreach strategy should be employed which brings on board everybody's views.
- Weapon collection should be mainstreamed, or incorporated into the general post-conflict humanitarian, political and developmental framework.
- Weapon collection becomes a "collective good", for once the community's physical security is restored, every member of the community will acknowledge the benefits of the activities/projects.
- If communities are confronted with similar problems in the future, they will have much less difficulty in pooling their synergies and working for a common goal.
- The principal concern should not be weapon collection *per se*, but rather the creation of better conditions—sustainable physical and human security and better health.

Clarification of outcomes

It must be made clear to beneficiary communities that the weapon collection efforts are intended to help them, and that the dividends that result from the general reduction in armed violence will benefit the whole community without discrimination. For this to be the case, the local people must be placed at the centre of the project; they must be listened to, so that interventions do indeed respond to their actual needs, rather responding to the needs perceived by programme implementers. Achievement of this goal requires that weapon collection initiatives be driven by the local community, rather than externally imposed.

Key points on conception, design and implementation of weapon collection projects:
- An analysis of institutions is important, to understand the community institutions and how they relate to each other and to the whole society.
- Traditional institutions were found to be most effective in implementing weapon collection.
- Projects should be implemented as a partnership between the local communities, authorities and external agencies, with local communities playing a leading implementation role, and external organisations facilitating this role.
- In some communities, the participation by women in the decision-making process might not be highly visible, but they may have an influence behind the scenes.
- Women can apply mobilisation strategies that are uniquely possible by women, but which are effective with weapon holders through psychological and traditional forces.
- Previous interventions have viewed women solely as victims, while ignoring their contribution as "peace finders".

Confidence building and local ownership

Weapon collection schemes are most successful when they are driven by local initiative and interests. This entails the full participation of the affected communities at all levels, including information sharing, joint planning, committing resources and empowerment; the involvement of external organisations should be limited to the provision of support and facilitation of community initiatives. Through the study, it was learned that

the full participation of affected communities bolsters local people's confidence and sense of project ownership, especially as alternative security and protection measures are put in place. In the period after weaponry surrender, this feeling of participation and ownership can allay people's fears that the security arrangements that are in place will be compromised. For example, community involvement may allow local people to learn about the effectiveness of such measures as community policing, an alternative security arrangement. Further, the local people may need to know for what purpose the confiscated weapons will be used—there may be suspicions that some weapons might find their way to adversaries, such as neighbouring tribes. The basic principle behind any intervention is not weapon collection *per se*, but rather the creation of better conditions—sustainable physical and human security and better health.

Consideration of all political and socio-economic forces

From the outset, weapon collection programme practitioners should know that no community is one hundred percent uniform. However intense a war or situation of armed violence may be, the latter will inevitably have variegated impacts on the different social, political and economic groups within the community. The various groups must be identified and disaggregated at the beginning of project conception and design, so that they may be brought on board early in the process of planning weapon collection activities or post-war reconstruction. Their early involvement ensures beneficiary ownership and sustainability, beyond the initial practitioners and actors. The current study illuminated the likelihood that the exclusion of any individual group will lead to an "unbalanced equation", whereby those excluded from the project equation may be driven to re-arm themselves. In past weapon collection strategies, a common mistake was the involvement only of those in government, while excluding opposition parties; such omissions greatly diminished the success of previous projects.

Mainstreaming

It was learned from the current study that the will to get rid of illicit SALW needs to be reflected in the humanitarian, political and development agendas of the affected country. This means that decisions regarding weapon collection efforts must be made in a democratic manner, with strong political backing at the national, regional and community levels. It is essential to involve all local stakeholders—political, traditional, tribal and

religious leaders, elders, ex-combatants, women and civil society—at all of these levels (national, regional and community). In contrast to past weapon collection programmes, which were solely politically motivated, sustainable weapon collection programmes demand the pursuit of a comprehensive strategy that simultaneously encompasses humanitarian, political and developmental aspects. Implementation of these elements should never follow a continuum—moving from one phase to another—but should rather be performed in parallel. For instance, DDR programmes, which are highly political, should be implemented alongside and in a manner that is compatible with weapon collection and WfD projects, which are developmental as well as humanitarian in nature.

The role of traditional leaders and institutions

It is clear from the study that the subjects of SALW and armed violence are extremely sensitive. Resolution of these problems is beyond the purview of the so-called "traditional" security forces, for in some cases complex socio-economic, cultural and political issues are involved. Such issues require the involvement of a variety of stakeholders, from different disciplines, with multifaceted expertise and experience. The central characteristic of those involved must be an "unquestionable credibility" in the eyes of the communities where programmes are implemented. As the Mali findings reveal, traditional institutions, such as tribal chiefs, elders, religious leaders and village committees, whose powers have remained over time within their communities, should always be explored as major entry points and pivotal figures for implementing the programmes. This suggests that the communities in question need to be studied, to understand the various aspects which hold the community together. One must know the different power relations, and how power is shared. How are different decisions made? Who holds power in the community, and what factors lead one to have influence? How do the communities collectively maintain their security? How do they know who possesses weapons and who does not? Where are the community's armouries?

Women can apply unique strategies

Due to the sensitivity of the subject, the best means must be sought to convince weapon holders to surrender their arms. Such means may include sensitisation and awareness raising—starting at the household level—which women often do well. One specific lesson learned was that, in their capacities as the mothers and caretakers of children, wives, mothers-in-laws and sisters of the majority of those possessing weapons,[48] women are

strategically placed to clearly spread word of the dangers posed by illicit SALW. Women were also found to have the capacity to apply mobilisation strategies that are uniquely possible by women, and which are effective vis-à-vis weapon holders through psychological and traditional channels. For example, the elderly women's threat to strip naked, unless weapon holders heeded their appeal to turn in their guns, was a very effective strategy. Another valuable lesson learned is that women and women's groups are most knowledgeable in managing livelihood support projects in times of hardship. Therefore, incentives that target women, and address the factors fuelling the demand for arms, will benefit the whole community. Given the comparative advantage that women have, as noted above, it is prudent to build alliances and equal partnerships with women's organisations at the community level.

ASSESSMENT/PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Assessment of how the actual people perceive weapon collection

Since in most circumstances, weapon collection takes place in either post-conflict or armed violence-prone areas, interventions should be able to prove to the affected communities that there is some positive change that has been brought about by the implemented activities/projects, with respect to the "Before" situation. Evidence from this study reveals that this requires dialogue with the beneficiary communities, to discover their feelings on weapon collection and WfD projects, and to decide upon appropriate performance indicators. Again, the lessons learned show that past reviews concentrated on indicators that were pre-conceived by project planners; these are mainly quantitative, comprising numbers of weapons confiscated, costs incurred in treating injuries, etc. However, such indicators do not give a clear picture of the impact of weapon collection interventions. This suggests the need for application of participatory evaluation tools, which engage the actual beneficiaries and enable them to express their views and feelings about the impacts of weapon collection. The participatory approach elicited indicators based on the feelings of the affected communities themselves; these include: (a) How the communities felt when weapons were destroyed; and (b) What positive trends occurred in the people's daily lives as a result of weapon collection interventions. The latter indicators were mainly qualitative, and human development-oriented. This type of indicator is most preferable and relevant to the situation, and can be applied, in parallel with quantitative indicators, to

obtain a clear overall assessment. Based on the lessons learned from the case of Mali, a range of qualitative indicators may come up in the research:

Security and Human Rights-related Indicators

Security improvement—"There are no more killings, murders and robberies".

Settlement in rural areas—For rural-based societies like those of Mali, when people begin to leave urban centres and resettle in rural areas (rural areas often experience a decrease in population as a result of proliferation of SALW and violence), this indicates that the rural areas have been pacified.

Movement from one village to another without need of armed escort.

Reduction in incidents of insecurity where SALW are involved (robberies, killings, injuries, etc.).

Fewer people seen carrying guns in public, including law enforcement agents as well as private security guards.

Removal of road checkpoints, and cessation of military and paramilitary-type patrols.

Improvement in security along international and inter-community borders.

Free movement of people and goods—People freely going about their daily activities.

Development-related Indicators

Establishment of new settlements—Indicates improved physical security conditions and social infrastructure resulting from the implementation of Weapons for Development projects.

New projects—Includes the construction of wells, the installation of irrigation pumps, trading activities and micro-credit; these signify the restoration of normality.

Programmes that improve people's livelihood—The initiation of WfD projects that addressed existing structural vulnerabilities and

provided skills meeting the demands of the rapidly changing society; these indicated that the underlying problems were being addressed.

Success of restocking programmes—In the communities where armed livestock raiding is practised, this indicated that the numbers of weapons had been reduced; herdsmen had regained confidence, and began restocking their herds.

Government financing of medium to long-term development projects, such as building water points, canals for irrigation, etc.; these indicated that structural developmental gaps were beginning to be addressed.

Governance and Reform-related Indicators

Removal of the military from villages and cities—Indicated the pursuit of proper policing methods and/or security sector reforms, as opposed to the deployment of a large number of military personnel in order to try to end violence. The armed forces were responsible for most of the leakage of SALW to the general public.

Return of civilian local administrators—As opposed to the military; indicated the return of civilian control to the area, and the end of the so-called "occupation".

Devolution of power from the capital city to the regions—Indicated the government's seriousness about decentralising and carrying out administrative reforms.

Reduction in customs duties (taxes)—Enabled traders to import goods into the country at affordable prices; this was considered a good indicator because people would no longer need to use arms for smuggling.

Presence of humanitarian and development NGOs—Especially the return of those NGOs that had left due to insecurity; this signified a reduction in arms in the area.

"Flames of Peace"—Whereby weapons that were collected, confiscated or retrieved were publicly destroyed; indicated the government's commitment to ridding the area of excess weaponry.

Indicators of Restoration of Social Capital

Observation of different ethnic groups in a community working together to solve common problems—For example, participating in community projects; compared to the "Before" situations, this indicator signified total reconciliation.

Every community that participated wanted to be known, and associated with something positive—For example, the "Peace of Timbuktu".

Undertaking of long-term sustainable development activities—Indicated a shift from "war economies", characterised by the diversion of humanitarian aid by those entrusted with its distribution, to the resumption of "normal development", which is more ethical.

Numbers of demobilised ex-combatants and other groups handing in guns—Compared with the estimated numbers of those suspected to be possessing guns and involved in crime; this indicated that fewer and fewer people were still holding onto their guns.

Number of ex-combatants or rehabilitated former criminals integrated into the regular forces, the civil service and other non-combat-related sectors—Indicated that the circumstances which had forced people to take up arms had been essentially eliminated.

Return of refugees and IDPs to their former places—Indicated people's security and confidence in co-existing with others.

Resumption of cultural activities—Indicated tolerance of diversity, as well as respect for minority groups.

CHARACTERISTICS OF INCENTIVE SCHEMES

The current study revealed that the beneficiaries of Weapons for Development projects prefer those projects that exhibit the following characteristics.

Main Characteristics

WfD projects should be conceived and implemented according to rights-based principles: the right to food, clean water, health, and shelter.

The perpetual inaccessibility of these rights by the majority in the community is an important early warning indicator of a looming armed conflict.

Sustainability—Projects should be sustainable and linked to the medium to long-term needs of the community.

Community contribution—Initiatives should allow communities themselves to make a contribution, in all aspects, to avoid reliance on unsustainable external support.

Avoid rewarding individuals—Incentives should benefit the whole community, rather than particular individuals. This ensures that those who continue to perpetrate criminal activities are not at the same time being rewarded while their victims are left uncompensated. Further, when the whole community benefits, it promotes community members' vigorousness in eliminating the presence of SALW.

Unifying and non-discriminatory projects—Projects should be promoted which encourage communal cooperation and whose benefits the members of the community can access simultaneously, without discrimination.

Community-based indicators—Indicators to determine the success or failure of weapon collection and WfD efforts should be developed by the beneficiaries themselves, so as to avoid over-reliance on statistics that do not necessarily correspond to the ways in which the actual beneficiaries assess the situation.

Preventing re-use—Appropriate mechanisms for destroying decommissioned weapons must be employed, so that the weapons do not find their way back into circulation.

Continuity—Interventions should impact the community in a continuous manner, so that they do not cease to rid the community of weapons and armed violence, even long after the projects have ended.

Improved alternative means of livelihood—Incentives should provide improved means of livelihood, rather than simply restoring the prior status quo, because the former status quo may have been a factor contributing to the problem.

Sensitisation and awareness raising programmes are very important.

Empowerment—Real empowerment is also very important, and involves imparting skills that enable individuals to compete in a market economy, rather than dominate through the use of violence. For example, children that have access to guns may feel empowered, but in the wrong way.

Confidentiality of identities—The names of those surrendering weapons must be kept confidential, to reassure those still holding onto their weapons that they may come forward without being punished or penalised.

Planning and Programming-related Issues

The following planning and programming issues must be considered:

Timely external support—Should be provided in a timely fashion so that projects for those communities that have handed in weapons are not delayed; such delays will discourage others from handing in their weapons.

Acceptability—The whole community should accept and promote disarmament and non-violent initiatives as a prerequisite condition for development.

Implementation of certain weapon collection and WfD activities/ projects should be timed to correspond to seasonal climatic conditions in the project area. Periods where the need for weapons is lowest are the best times for weapon collection.

Forward planning—Necessary and important, to ensure that the resources for implementing WfD are secured early on, so that weapon collection activities are implemented in parallel with the WfD programmes.

Inexpensive and uncomplicated—The projects must be simple and cost-effective so as not to discourage donors and/or be beyond the managerial capabilities available in the community.

Ownership—The actual collection of weapons must be viewable, as the product of a long process that involves everyone. This requires patience, especially on the part of those that handed in weapons.

Out-reach strategy—A mechanism for bringing on board divergent views and opinions should be put in place, so as to allow input from as many stakeholders as possible.

Consensus—A transparent decision-making mechanism, for reaching consensus through general community meetings (Palaver Tree Parliament) is important (where it does not exist).

Special individual cases—For conflict population groups like ex-combatants, projects that provide individual and immediate income may be more important than any other activities, which may be laborious. This must be borne in mind.

The "Full village cycle"—Those projects are preferred that are designed to complete the full cycle—linking the provision of skills to opportunities, and the products produced to markets.

Micro-disarmament as a process—Community disarmament is a long process that requires confidence measures to be established if all of the community's armouries are to be accessed. Communities may hesitate to disclose where their weaponry is hidden until they are sure that other means of ensuring their safety have been implemented, and are effective and sustainable.

BEST PRACTICES IN WEAPON COLLECTION

From the study, it was learned that the following standard practices should be applied in weapon collection.

Public Confidence Building-related Practices

Full trust—Those involved in the implementation of weapon collection have to be fully trusted by the community, and also must be able to earn the confidence of weapon holders.

Suspected elements—Any members of or institutions in the community that people do not trust, such as the army and security agencies, must initially not participate.

Transparency—The collected weapons should be publicly destroyed, within the area in which they were collected.

Collective responsibility—The spirit of "each for everybody and everybody for each" should be the underlying guideline. In subscribing to this principle, those that hand in their weapons will be doing so in the interest of the community.

Weapons should be publicly destroyed—The "Flame of Peace" ceremonies are important to the community, for they send a message to outsiders, and represent a form of social accountability in creating gun-free societies.

Verification—Those mandated to manage the programmes should have access to the weapon storage facilities, and community members must agree on where the weapons are to be kept (if not stored with the military). Any received weapon should be verified before it is stored, so that it is known how the weapon came into circulation and in which country it was manufactured.

Management-related Practices

Use of local committees—Local committees for disarmament, which handle the weapons handed in, should be formed where they do not already exist.

Traditional institutions—These institutions, including elders, religious leaders, traditional chiefs and village committees, are important entry points for implementing programmes at the community level.

"Don't encourage more guns"—Management mechanisms must ensure that the WfD approach does not result in the trade of arms by some communities who may want to benefit from the projects.

Collective responsibility—This requires the spirit, "each for everybody and everybody for each". In subscribing to this principle, those that hand in their weapons will be doing so in the interest of the community.

Policy-related Practices

Integration—WfD projects should facilitate integration of the various social, economic and cultural groups, rather than exacerbating existing divisions among them.

Receiving and handling weapons—A comprehensive policy process should be utilised, from the point in time where a weapon is collected until it is publicly destroyed.

Consistency of policy—A consistent policy, which honours whatever is pledged to communities and/or individuals that have surrendered weapons, should be employed. This creates confidence and encourages those that have not yet handed over their weapons to come forward.

Parity of treatment for everyone—Reinsertion packages given to ex-combatants, ex-weapon holders or those that have renounced violence should be similar and equal, to the greatest extent possible. This discourages dissent among those who are under the impression that they were cheated.

Discourage benefits for individuals—The policy governing weapon collection activities and WfD projects should discourage projects whose benefits tend to flow only to project members or managers, for this type of benefit is not conducive to attracting weaponry surrender.

Address DDR-related concerns first—A well-defined DDR policy should in place beforehand, which addresses the concerns of ex-combatants and all other parties, and which reassures all stakeholders that the community-based weapon collection and WfD programmes will not interfere with the DDR programme. Whenever possible, issues of ex-combatant demobilisation need to be resolved (depending on the situation) as a prerequisite to commencement of any community weapon collection programmes. Such issues should be addressed according to the situational context, though, as demobilisation is a highly politicised activity.

Destruction policy—As a matter of policy, the collected weapons should be publicly destroyed, as close as possible to the communities who participated in the collection. This measure is also a public accountability tool.

External organisations—It is crucial that develop people-oriented policies, knowing well that the way in which aid is delivered may even serve to reinforce the factors already fuelling the demand for small arms and light weapons. Thus, before delivering their assistance, external organisations must listen intently to the local people, and understand the root causes of SALW proliferation in the community.

Gender-Related Standards

Individual vs. community needs—Under certain special circumstances, the needs of individuals who have already handed in weapons or renounced violence should be considered first.

Recognition of differences—There is a strong need to recognise the differences existing within a community, including differences between categories of people (rural, urban, ex-combatant, man, woman, young person, trader) and how these groups of people may be affected differently by the proliferation of SALW and armed violence.

Women-specific roles—The specific roles that women can play should be harnessed, because women's techniques are more effective in attracting the surrender of weapons.

Strategic-Related Issues

External organisations—Before delivering their assistance, external organisations must listen intently to the local people, and understand the root causes of SALW proliferation in the community.

Timing of implementation—In certain areas, there is a relationship between climatic/seasonal events and the desire to have a weapon. Therefore, the timing of weapon collection is important, so that the incentives are provided at the time when the need for weapons is at its lowest.

Role of government—There is a need for governments to fulfil their traditional role of protecting their citizens by controlling weapons and fighting crime. This entails enacting appropriate laws and stringent regulations to control and manage SALW acquisition.

Early involvement—There should be an early sensitisation campaign by parents to warn their children of the "gun culture". This should be supplemented by the development of curricula on peace education, to be taught in elementary schools.

CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS

The current study has identified the following gaps where the country presently lacks capacity: (a) Lack of control of the armed security forces, which leads to leakage of arms and ammunition to the general community; (b) Inappropriate facilities for arms and ammunition storage; (c) Poor record-keeping of the country's stocks of arms and ammunition; and (d) Poor intelligence gathering, to monitor illegal arms that enter the country, and inadequate ability to secure the country's borders.

The capacity building needs of the country are identified in the following: (a) Provision of materials and technical assistance to Local Disarmament Commissions, which handle the weapons that are handed in: protective wares and materials, such as guidebooks on how to handle guns and maintain the safety of weapons, and also insurance coverage; (b) Logistics and training for border guards, customs and immigration officials, on matters related to checking and controlling the entry of arms into the country; and (c) Technical and financial assistance to enable the destruction of collected weapons, as well as any other excess weaponry that a country no longer needs.

In general, the following aspects also exhibited a need for capacity building:

Monitoring the illegal manufacture of weapons—Support for the local authorities to monitor local artisans who make guns; assistance in this sector should include logistics, such as the provision of transportation to law enforcement agents.

Security Sector Reforms (SSR)—Support for affected countries to reform their security sectors, so as to counteract the real threats to both human security and national security.

Stimulate action—Assistance in disseminating the lessons already learned, so that action at the community level can stimulate additional subsequent action at higher levels; for example, the West African moratorium on SALW emanated from the Mali experience.

Support for women's initiatives—Promotion of greater involvement of women's initiatives in disarmament programmes, by building women's capacity on issues related to SALW and conflict prevention.

Capacity building for local organisations—Support for development of local organisations: for young people and ex-fighters; Local Commissions.

Legal instruments—Existence of a legal instrument to protect those who are willing to voluntarily surrender their weapons is very important; it supports community-initiated disarmament efforts. Such legal instruments need to be supported, bearing in mind that the process of enacting legislation is complicated, requiring technical and financial resources that are lacking in a country like Mali (and any other post-conflict country).

Support demobilisation—Those who have given up violence need support, to enable them to reintegrate into normal life.

Financial inputs—To earn communities' trust, to the extent that they begin to hand over their weapons, is not an easy task, even if in exchange for developmental projects; various means, which require money, had to be applied.

Sub-region scoped projects—It is difficult to convince a community to disarm if its neighbour across the border remains heavily armed. This problem requires a trans-border approach, whereby weapon collection and WfD projects implemented in one community are simultaneously replicated and implemented in neighbouring communities across the border.

CONFLICT PREVENTION ISSUES

The following lessons learned, from the communities that participated, revealed that: "community participation in weapons collection had a bearing on sustainable peace building and prevention of recurrence of conflict":

Reconciliation—When communities participate in implementing projects whose benefits serve their common interests, the likelihood for quicker reconciliation, through all ethnic groups working together, is high.

Integration—Projects that cause communities to come together should be promoted. This is crucial for post-conflict societies.

Rights-based approach—Projects and activities whose benefits are linked to addressing the people's basic everyday needs will enhance people's consciousness of their rights.

Durable peace—It is desirable to have a general understanding by those holding weapons, such that the desire to have peace is the driving force behind overcoming any constraints.

Preventive (built-in) peace building mechanisms—Projects should be designed to enable the communities that had been torn apart to work together towards common objectives.

Disaster management—Communities learn how to manage crises when they participate in weapon collection project implementation.

CHAPTER 7

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the current study, eight (8) recommendations have been formulated, aimed at policymakers in countries that fund weapon collection and Weapons Collection in Exchange for Development programmes. Also, some "mutual" conditions are suggested for recipient countries.

CONTINUE FUNDING, BUT...

Countries that have been funding weapon collection and Weapons Collection in Exchange for Development programmes should continue to do so. However, they should insist that countries that benefit from their funds fulfill the following:

- Reduce national expenditures on the production and/or importation of small arms and light weapons;
- Demonstrate proof of a strong commitment to implement the UN Programme of Action (UNPoA);
- Integrate measures to deal with the SALW problem into the national development agenda; and
- Collected weapons should always be publicly destroyed.

PROMOTE THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN SECURITY, BUT...

Donors should continue to fund incentive schemes to encourage the voluntary surrender of weapons. However, donors should insist on the following conditions:

- Projects need to be implemented at the local and community level;

- Projects must target the root causes of SALW proliferation and armed violence;
- Projects must recognise the need to link skills to opportunities and products to markets (Full village cycle);
- Projects must realise that incentives are not an alternative to existing (traditional) mechanisms for voluntary surrender of weapons; such mechanisms must not be ignored;
- Projects must only offer incentives to encourage weaponry surrender which complement and support existing initiatives;
- Projects need to employ "bottom-up" approaches to determine the types of incentives to be offered; and
- Project review should utilise Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation techniques.

ASSIGN RESOURCES FOR CAPACITY BUILDING, BUT…

While donors should build the capacity of all stakeholders (for example, government, UN and civil society), they should insist on the following conditions:

- Women must have a voice in all weapon collection programmes;
- Women's organisations should be given first priority when distributing resources for capacity building;
- Traditional and religious leaders and other community-based institutions should be involved as entry points for project implementation; their capacity should be augmented; and
- Local civil organisations should be involved and encouraged to promote a "gun-free culture".

FUND PEACE AND DISARMAMENT EDUCATION, BUT…

Donors are urged to continue investing in conflict prevention, peace and disarmament education, but, at the same time, they should insist that:

- The intended beneficiary countries show a genuine political willingness to always end conflicts by peaceful means;

- Social deterrents against gun use, such as measures that address education and childhood development, promote social cohesion and support high risk groups and those that break the cycle of violence, need to be introduced as part of the education curricula; and
- Public awareness and sensitisation programmes, as well as peace education, should be promoted.

FUND ONE OF THE "D"'S IN DDR, BUT…

Donors should support one "D" (Disarmament) of DDR programmes. However, this should be done only on the condition that:

- All confiscated weapons are publicly destroyed; and
- There must be an effort by other donors to fund the remaining "D" (Demobilisation) and "R" (Reintegration) in parallel, so that all of the DDR components are implemented at the same time.

SUPPORT SECURITY SECTOR REFORMS (SSR), BUT…

Donors should continue to fund SSR, especially in countries where weapon collection has been implemented and/or in post-conflict transition countries. However, donors need also to insist that:

- Reforms undertaken must be aimed at counteracting the real security threats to the general population;
- The "security threat" must be defined in accordance with "real people's" feelings, not merely according to government officials;
- The "command and control" structures of both uniformed forces and civilian security services must be restructured, so that the latter serve the interests of all citizens, rather than only those in power;
- It must be ascertained whether there is a link between weapon collection and the need for SSR, rather than simply following a continuum from weapon collection to SSR; and
- Capacity must be built at the lower levels of government, to crack down on illegal weapon fabricators.

SUPPORT SUB-REGIONAL SCOPED INITIATIVES, BUT…

Donors should support sub-regional initiatives where countries have come together and synergised their resources and efforts to fight SALW proliferation along their common borders. However, donors should also insist that:

- Initiatives must be driven and supported by all political, social and economic forces, rather than only being in the interest of those in power;
- Regional member states must demonstrate their political will by committing some resources to the pool;
- Effort must be made in the region to harmonise national policies to fight the proliferation of SALW and address crime-related issues; and
- States in the region must agree to implement projects that cut across borders.

CONTINUE TO SUPPORT RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY INSTITUTIONS

Donors should continue to fund research and advocacy institutions working on SALW issues. However, donors should also insist that:

- Participatory approaches must be applied, which involve the actual people affected;
- The research findings should unravel new issues surrounding SALW proliferation and use;
- Various tools must be developed to help in the fight against SALW proliferation, including a handbook on weapon collection for policymakers, planners and programme managers/directors;
- There must be evidence that the findings are making their way to the public domain; and
- There must be sustained momentum worldwide to control SALW proliferation.

Notes

1   The current UNIDIR study is referred to, within the current report, using any of the various terms "WfD project", "PM&E project", "WfD study" or "PM&E study".

2   Section III, para. 18.

3   Henny J. van der Graaf (ed.), Weapons for Development: Report of the UNDP mission for an Arms Collection Pilot Programme in the Gramsh district, 4 September 1998.

4   Colonel Sangare, the head of the Commission, attended the Geneva Conference of 9 December 2002.

5   In this report, "WfD Management team" refers to the Project Core team based in Geneva, while the "Field Core team" refers to the WfD team plus other members (field consultants and facilitators) that joined it in Mali.

6   Where quotation marks are used in this text, they denote a direct, quoted statement from the person/people interviewed.

7   These were simply pictures—for example, a guitar represented a local artist. In general, the pictures were of men.

8   Information about the meeting reached the community late; the PM&E team arrived on Saturday morning, and yet the community meeting was held on Monday.

9   There was no focus group based on status.

10 "SWOT", an acronym for "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats", is an evaluation research methodology.

11 The leaders all noted that although people traditionally possess guns in Mali, these guns are not typically of military-style; their use is prescribed by certain traditional norms.

12 The team later learned that the women were the first to take up these campaigns, by convincing their husbands (elders, chiefs, etc.) at the household level. However, due to traditional impediments, their efforts could not take place on a more public level.

13 The PM&E team was shown the register.

14 Those that hand in weapons also fear that the community may discover their identity. As such, LCs handle these issues by acting confidentially. The names of those who hand in weapons are never recorded, and they remain forever anonymous.

15 The PM&E team learned that, at present, the issue of surrendering weapons is handled administratively rather than judicially. It follows that the fate of those handing in weapons depends on the LC's respect

for the anonymity rule; in other words, those giving up their arms are at the mercy of the administrators.

16   Note that these are local and community level interventions; therefore, issues like gun licensing, which are functions of the central government rather than the local authorities, are not mentioned.

17   Niono is the largest commercial and industrial city near Lere, and is famous for its irrigation projects for sugar and rice production.

18   The influence of community leaders, religious leaders, artists, meetings of youth and different associations helped to convince those possessing weapons to hand them over.

19   These meetings involved officials from neighbouring countries, such as the Governor of Nema, Mauritania, who was invited to Lere to talk about controlling arms along his country's border (Lere is located 60 kilometers from Mauritania).

20   Tribal groups include the Bambara, Songhor, Tamasek (both black and white) and Pheul (blacksmiths), as well as Arabs (black and white). Inter-tribal confidence was at a low ebb at the time of project planning.

21   From the young men's experience, most ex-weapon holders prefer to be reintegrated into the regular armed forces, civil service or other services where salaried employment is offered.

22   The PM&E team was informed that women had organised peace demonstrations, which raised funds that were subsequently given to ex-weapon holders.

23   According to the young men, authority was decentralised after the communities had agreed to disarm; decentralisation was therefore an attribute of Weapons for Development programmes.

24   Placement in cantonments was a precondition imposed upon those handing over weapons; the benefits received in return, by those surrendering their weapons, included food, money and other privileges whose exploitation was limited to those in the cantonments.

25   This explanation was provided as a principal factor explaining why the WfD approach managed to convince weapon holders to turn in their weapons. As an example of the results of weapon collection, 340 weapons were collected in a period of eight and one-half months. The participants observed, "the benefits from WfD are worth the resources and efforts invested in them".

26   This implies that, in the first place, people resorted to the acquisition and use of arms as a result of a failure to meet their basic needs.

27   Only one French-to-English interpreter was used in all of the areas where the research was carried out.

28 This amnesty applied only to specific rebel groups, and lasted only for a short period.

29 The National Pact had been signed between the government and five rebel fighting groups.

30 These are the water tanks that have been built to supply water in various towns.

31 The ex-combatants jealously admired their former leaders, and claimed that they were given extravagant reintegration packages compared to those given to ordinary ex-combatants. This assertion was not refuted by the UNDP.

32 An agency for assisting ex-combatants in northern Mali.

33 The majority of ex-combatants were of the view that this category did not represent many people.

34 The age bracket for ex-combatants was 25-45 years.

35 It was noted that the ex-combatants were more concerned with their own individual benefits than the projects that benefited the whole community. Thus, as long as they did not receive their full packages, they considered the rest of the projects as failures.

36 Handing in a weapon was a precondition for access to a cantonment, as well as for access to other privileges.

37 In Gao City, the weapons handed in were transferred to Timbuktu, where the first "Flame of Peace" destruction event was conducted. The people of Gao were disappointed that the Flame of Peace was conducted in a different region.

38 Because of this perceived unequal treatment, participants from Gao were generally bitter, feeling as if their region did not contribute to the peace efforts. Hence, they recommended that, in the future, all weapons be destroyed in the areas where they are collected.

39 This perspective was displayed particularly by the ex-combatants, because they admired the success of their ex-leaders, most of whom had received large sums of money as loans to begin transportation businesses.

40 A majority of the ex-combatants considered "reintegration" into the armed forces as a project.

41 This is true because it is impossible for most of the project beneficiaries (the entire community) to be involved in the day-to-day operations of the projects.

42 The PM&E team discovered that most of the ex-combatants' former leaders received generous reintegration packages, often including large

loans, while the ordinary ex-combatant received very little or nothing at all.

43   Programme d'appui **à** la Réinsertion Socio-économique des Ex-combattants du Nord Mali (Programme for Socio-economic reintegration of Northern Mali Ex-Combatants).

44   According to the women, some of the provisions of the National Pact, such as the reintegration of ex-combatants, were never achieved.

45   Differences in views given by rural-based and urban-based women could also be attributed in part to differences in the facilitators' abilities to understand. The latter became progressively more skilled at conducting conversational interviews—and with PM&E techniques in general—as Lere was their first trial.

46   In the case of Gao, weapons that were handed in were transferred to Timbuktu.

47   It seemed that none of the women had ever joined any of the fighting groups.

48   The majority of weapon holders in the Mali context were men.