

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)

Overview

The successful reintegration of former combatants is recognized as a key component of peacebuilding - addressing the need for immediate security and long-term recovery in the transition from conflict to peace. In an emergency context, DDR efforts may begin even while humanitarian operations are still underway. IOM supports DDR efforts principally by focusing on successful reinsertion and reintegration, by assisting former combatants with their transition to civilian life, and by supporting communities to recover, absorb, and accept returning former fighters and other conflict-affected populations. This may include socio-economic recovery programming, social cohesion programming, provision of services such as health and psycho-social assistance, and a broad array of peacebuilding support interventions, as well as efforts to strengthen reconciliation at the national and community levels and contribute to restoring trust through confidence-building measures.

IOM has also adapted its DDR programming to more adequately respond to the complex contexts of ongoing or unresolved conflicts or insecurity, or where UN-sanctioned violent extremist groups are involved through a modified DDR approach focused on disengagement, disassociation, reintegration, and reconciliation (DDRR). DDRR programming supports governments in developing legal and operational frameworks for the viable, reliable, transparent, and accountable 'off-ramping' of eligible associates of UN-sanctioned violent extremist groups, to assist in their transition to productive and peaceful civilian lives and integration into their communities.

Key Points

- DDR is a tool that can contribute towards sustainable peace and the resolution of displacement crises by addressing the needs of former combatants, their families, and of the communities of return.
- IOM supports DDR efforts principally by focusing on reinsertion and reintegration, including programming such as socio-economic recovery, social cohesion programming, and health and psychosocial assistance amongst other interventions, but also works with governments on policies and operational frameworks for DDR.
- IOM is an active member of the Interagency Working Group on DDR, which is involved in setting the standards for DDR and DDR-related tools.
- In ongoing conflicts, where no peace agreement exists, or where UN sanctioned groups are involved, IOM has developed specific tools to support governments develop operational and legal frameworks to facilitate the de-escalation of conflict and create viable pathways out of armed groups.

Key Considerations

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- DDR programs are a critical contribution to peace and stability and work at the individual, community, and institutional levels. IOM is not involved in weapon collection but may be involved in technical assistance to governments to develop legal and operational frameworks and processes of cantonment and to manage demobilization processes. IOM coordinates with UNICEF on any activities involving children.
- IOM's principal contribution is supporting individuals and communities with sustainable reintegration and recovery from conflict through socioeconomic support and psycho-social and health assistance, ensuring service provision and community driven recovery programming to facilitate sustainable recovery and reintegration.
- DDR programming - while principally focused on assisting individuals and communities to reintegrate and recover from conflict - also intends to contribute to security and peace objectives. As such, IOM programs should be designed and implemented in a manner that contributes to humanitarian, development, security, and peace processes.
- DDR programming can include Information, Counselling and Referral Systems (ICRS), a case management tool to

facilitate the provision of personalized services for ex-combatants and their dependents in their transition from demobilization to reintegration.

- DDR programming must be undertaken in a coordinated manner and led by the government. A wide array of UN actors have a role in DDR programming. The Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR sets standards and oversees DDR work globally. The Integrated DDR Standards ([available online](#)) serve as the overarching guide for DDR programming.
- DDR programming is often tied to complex political processes. As such, implementation can be impacted by these processes. Thought should be given to implementation timelines, with consideration for possible disruptions.
- Data collection and management related to DDR programs must follow IOM's [Data Protection Principles](#) and, in accordance with those standards, data should be collected in a manner that affords sharing with other UN entities and the government.
- DDR can be a sensitive and labour-intensive area of work. Experienced staff are necessary and robust staffing patterns are often needed.
- A gender-sensitive approach should be taken when conducting DDR programming to recognize the different and separate roles of men and women within armed groups and addresses the unique needs and responsibilities of women as fighters, helpers, dependents, and victims of sexual violence.
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Relevance to IOM's Emergency Operations

As part of its mandate to support reintegration and address drivers of displacement, IOM has developed significant conflict management experience since its first engagement in Mozambique in 1992, including the design and implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) activities. IOM has expanded and diversified its tools to address the socio-economic and social cohesion needs of individuals and communities facing the challenges of reintegration. IOM's current DDR engagements include programmes in Colombia, Central African Republic, Kenya, Mozambique, Somalia and in the Lake Chad Basin Region (Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria), amongst others.

Coordination

IOM is an active member of the Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR, which sets standards and policies for DDR work worldwide and serves as a coordination platform for inter-agency collaboration. DDR programs in-country should be government led, with support from the UN and other entities. The programmes should be well coordinated with the government under a legal and operational framework that adheres to international human rights standards. IOM is frequently a lead actor in DDR programming and may take on a coordinating role. Under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, IOM and other actors work with the government on program design and implementation.

The implementation of DDR programming should be accompanied by strong levels of coordination to ensure that the multiple objectives of DDR are being addressed simultaneously and that beneficiary selection and benefits are appropriate and aligned. Given the sensitivities and political dimensions of DDR, uncoordinated responses can lead to a breakdown in trust and even a resumption of violence.

Operations

IOM has supported the establishment and implementation of national frameworks and policies, the management of transition and cantonment facilities, and the transportation and repatriation of ex-combatants. However, IOM focuses primarily on reintegration, working at the individual, community, and institutional levels through the provision of vocational, educational and skills training, health and psychosocial support, and administrative assistance to individuals. Concurrently, at the community level, IOM facilitates the development of social cohesion and material recovery to strengthen communities and create receptive environments conducive to return, reintegration, and reconciliation. At the institutional level, IOM often supports local, regional, and national government structures to revitalize governance and improve the responsiveness of authorities to the challenges of sustainable reintegration.

Example activities include:

- Vocational training support to enhance labour market participation of former combatants and their access to meaningful livelihood opportunities;
- Community-based recovery and reintegration programming, focusing on former fighters and child soldiers, as well as dependents and hosting/receiving communities;
- Provision of targeted health interventions and/or psychosocial support measures benefitting former combatants traumatized by conflict;
- Information, Counselling and Referral Services (ICRS) to profile and de-brief former combatants and build individualized reintegration plans in preparation for return to civilian life, facilitating links to healthcare, legal support, housing services, education, training, and business development activities;
- Measures to prevent and reduce community violence (Community Violence Reduction/CVR) within or outside of formal DDR processes through community-oriented approaches that include victim assistance and socio-economic support to local neighbourhoods; and,
- Reintegration support to former violent extremists and family members through prevention/countering violent extremism (P/CVE) measures around job creation, youth engagement, access to justice, citizen-government collaboration, and social cohesion.

Important note: DDR can be highly political and sensitive. If your Country Office has been approached to support or organize DDR programming it is mandatory practice to consult with the Transition and Recovery Division (TRD) at Headquarters before any commitment is made.

Links

- [DDR SharePoint \(INTERNAL to IOM\)](#)
- [DDR Training on I-Learn \(INTERNAL to IOM\)](#)
- [Integrated DDR Standards](#)

References and Tools

- [DDR Compendium \(2010-2017\)](#)
- [New Contexts on Ongoing Conflict and Violent Extremism](#)
- [Disengagement, Disassociation, Reintegration and Reconciliation \(DDRR\) Eligibility Conditions and Practice](#)
- [Gendered Dimensions of Disengagement, Disassociation, Reintegration and Reconciliation \(DDRR\) in the LCB Region](#)

Contacts

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