

The Conundrum of DDR Coordination

The Case of South Sudan

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The coordination of activities within peace support operations is a process that takes place between a variety of entities at multiple levels and often occurs in the context of complex and fluctuating environments. Such coordination represents efforts to achieve complementary outcomes, as well as reduces the potential for duplication, waste, institutional rivalries and conflicts. Over the past three decades, the intricacy of such coordination within peace support operations has intensified with the inclusion of additional actors, such as regional organizations, private sector companies, and various types of civil society organizations.¹

Consequently, effective coordination has often been difficult to achieve in contemporary post-conflict environments, and it has become an issue of concern for both scholars and practitioners alike.² The importance of coordination in terms of multi-agency operations is not confined to peacebuilding, but has also been identified by scholars that have studied disaster management, for example. In this sector, scholars have suggested that coordination problems have arisen due to the disordered nature of the operational environment; the diversity of organizations; a lack of resources; and the aversion of some organizations to collaborate with others.³

The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants are frequently key components of peace support operations. In basic terms, DDR is the process through which armaments (particularly firearms) are recovered from combatants, who are in the process of exiting their respective military organizations and becoming civilians. Support by international organizations, government and civil society organizations is usually provided for this transition.

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The coordination of the DDR components and the synchronization of DDR with other aspects of the peace support operation has been particularly complex and challenging. The reason being is that the three constitutive elements of DDR have typically been directed by entities with juxtaposing organizational cultures, implementation approaches and often differing strategic institutional objectives. That is, the armed forces or peacekeepers are generally allocated the responsibility of arranging the disarmament and demobilization, while reintegration has usually been mandated to civilian-led development agencies and non-governmental organizations. In this regard, military organizations are, due to their hierarchical and martial nature, often reluctant to collaborate actively with non-military organizations.⁴ Furthermore, the nature of the reintegration programming has become considerably diversified over time drawing in a wider range of local and international non-governmental entities, which has exacerbated the complexity of DDR coordination.

The coordination aspects of DDR have not been a major focus of scholarly literature. Where discussed, the analyses have tended to be descriptive and lacking in theory relating to inter-organizational cooperation. Such theory has been derived from numerous studies of the endeavors of a wide variety of organizations to solve complex societal problems jointly in different sectors including job creation, education reform, housing delivery, substance abuse, and environmental degradation.⁵ It has particular relevance for the study of DDR coordination because DDR is also a multi-faceted issue that affects both government and civil society.

Given this state of affairs, this article will draw on theories of inter-organizational collaboration and alliances to analyze the nature of DDR coordination, and will make detailed reference to the contemporary DDR program in South Sudan as an illustrative case study. South Sudan is a highly relevant example of a combination of international and local attempts to facilitate DDR coordination in a fragile and complex political and operational environment. It analyses the nature and extent of coordination between the various DDR stakeholders during the design and implementation of the DDR undertaking in South Sudan and offers explanations as to why certain challenges were encountered. The data used in this article draws entirely from peer-reviewed and policy-oriented publications that have focused on DDR.

The Complexity of Peacebuilding and DDR Coordination

Major peacebuilding interventions have grown in complexity since the 1990s. Such interventions are now generally required to fulfill an expanded set of

objectives, perform a wider range of tasks, and engage with a more diverse set of stakeholders. With such a variety of entities working towards a common general objective, many of which have different organizational cultures, constituencies and competencies and incongruities, conflicts are almost inevitable. Differences at the individual level further exacerbate this problem since peacebuilding missions bring together people from highly varied cultural and ethnic backgrounds.⁶ These dynamics could in turn disrupt, delay or even derail the entire peacebuilding process.

Hence, a key imperative within multi-agency peacebuilding is that of coordination as a means to promote communication, cooperation, mission coherence and conflict management. This is based on the normative assumption that coordination will eliminate duplication, lessen competition over resources, and minimize transaction costs, which will ultimately enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the entire peacebuilding mission.⁷

Published research on DDR and security sector reform (SSR) programs has indicated that the successful outcomes of DDR and SSR programs have often been dependent on the efficacy of coordination and communication between the key DDR/SSR stakeholders. In Sierra Leone, for example, Williamson noted that interventions that targeted former child soldiers were particularly effective due to efficient coordination and collaboration between the various civil society organizations that worked in the sector, which was combined with the astute collaborative leadership provided by UNICEF.⁸ On the other hand, Onana and Taylor stressed that DDR and other SSR initiatives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo had been delayed and their effectiveness diluted due to coordination difficulties.⁹

Coordination was a fundamental component of the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP), which was in place from 2002 to 2009 in Central Africa.¹⁰ The MDRP, which was established by the World Bank and the United Nations (UN), has been one of the most complex and ambitious demobilization and reintegration programs to date. This program, which had a budget of approximately US\$500 million, sought to concurrently facilitate the financing and program implementation for the demobilization and reintegration of some 350,000 ex-combatants in Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the DRC, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda.¹¹ According to the MDRP, a lack of coordination in this context would most likely have “led to duplication, inefficiencies, and gaps in programming, and could have affected the goals of bringing stability to the region.”¹² Specific coordination mechanisms, such as the Technical Coordination Group (TCG), were created to foster and maintain coordination and build trust. However, the TCG coordination activities

were not optimized due to insufficient strategic thinking and inadequate implementation of TCG decisions at the national level.¹³

In 2006 the UN published its Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) as a means to promote greater coordination and harmonization of its DDR programming. This was a response to the fact that in the past DDR programs had often been pursued in a fragmented manner due to inadequate coordination and planning and had been hampered by institutional rivalries.¹⁴ In effect the IDDRS were not strict standards but were rather generic (detailed) guidelines for the design and implementation of DDR interventions under the auspices of the UN. The IDDRS subsequently became the official template for UN directed DDR interventions in South Sudan. The IDDRS, however, have been critiqued by some scholars as being inadequate, especially in the context of complex operational environments.¹⁵

Theorizing Peacebuilding and DDR Coordination: Strategic Alliances

There has been very little scholarly consideration in the peacebuilding, SSR, and DDR literature as to why effective coordination has been accomplished in some contexts but not in others. Studies that provide some commentary on coordination (or the lack thereof) have generally suggested that SSR and DDR have been ineffective due to a lack of cooperative behavior between stakeholders; political tensions; insufficient communication and accountability between parties; and a lack of sufficient resources and incentive to cooperate. In Afghanistan, for example, factionalism within the government and rivalries between donors has undermined the realization of comprehensive SSR.¹⁶ In the case of East Timor, Hood attributed inadequate cooperative leadership as a major contributing factor to the unimpressive outcomes of the SSR interventions in this country.¹⁷ However, these assessments about SSR/DDR coordination are largely speculative and not based on theory or generated as the result of rigorous research and analysis. Therefore, in order to gain some theoretical insights in the areas of DDR it is necessary to explore pertinent theory from other academic disciplines, especially organizational theory. In short, organizational theory has been developed as a means to understand how organizations, which are viewed as social entities, function and relate to other organizations.

Conceptually, multifaceted DDR processes can be likened to inter-organizational alliances, which are mutually beneficial partnerships that are established between various entities. Within organizational theory, substantial research on strategic business alliances and why such alliances succeed and fail in particular, has some relevance for examining coordination in the context of multifaceted DDR opera-

tions. In this regard, published research findings suggest that strategic business alliances frequently fail due to inter-organizational rivalries and the complexity associated with managing such alliances.

In particular, strategic alliances often collapse as a result of opportunistic behavior in which participants in the alliance prioritize their own interests over those of the alliance, as well as the irreconcilability of organizational culture and values between members of the alliance.¹⁸ Hence, prominent scholars in this area have emphasized the following key ingredients for sustainable and fruitful alliances: trust; the effective management of tensions between all parties; knowledge management and sharing; the availability of relevant resources; and accountability.¹⁹ Studies have also shown that establishment of coordination routines within the alliance and establishment of less hierarchical and formal structures and processes with the various partners are vital factors for the efficacy of alliances.²⁰

Building and maintaining trust between alliance partners, as well as the management of inter-organizational tensions, are two key elements of strategic alliance theory that will be explored within the context of DDR in South Sudan. In this regard trust is comprised of two crucial elements, namely goodwill towards alliance partners, and confidence in the competency of the other parties in the strategic arrangement.²¹ Tensions between parties, which are inherent to strategic alliances, will fundamentally destabilize the alliance if not appropriately managed.²² This is especially the case concerning the manner in which decisions are made and relationships are managed. Tensions in this regard are typically more acute in multi-cultural environments.²³

The complexity of such alliances has also been affected by external factors, particularly the nature of the economic and political environments within which the alliances have been created.²⁴ Such contexts can either hamper or enable the effectiveness and sustainability of strategic alliances. For example, in Canada significant progress on inter-organizational collaboration to improve environmental protection was greatly facilitated by a common agreement across government and society on the need to prioritize the protection of the environment, combined with a political culture that emphasized consultation and consensus-building.²⁵

Historically external factors to DDR processes have been key determinants for the effectiveness of DDR interventions, particularly firm commitments of all parties to the conflict to adhere to some form of peacebuilding undertaking, and an economic environment that can adequately accommodate the reintegration of ex-combatants. For instance, two major DDR efforts in Angola in the 1990s essentially collapsed due to lack of commitment to the peace processes by one of the conflicting parties (UNITA), and inadequate responses by the United Nations to violations of the peace agreements by all parties.²⁶ Furthermore, fragile economies

and a lack of income generating opportunities for ex-combatants, particularly in Africa, have led to the underperformance of DDR programs.²⁷

Hence, based on theories of strategic alliances, and observations by DDR scholars, this article seeks to evaluate the hypothesis that the coordination of multi-stakeholder DDR processes is undermined in contexts where there are heightened tensions and deficiency of trust between parties. The recent DDR program in South Sudan will serve as an illustrative case study.

DDR in South Sudan: Overview

The DDR program in Sudan and South Sudan was initiated through the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005. An Interim DDR Program (IDDRP) was established with DDR commissions being established in the Republic of Sudan and South Sudan, which was to fulfil the objectives outlined in the 2007 National DDR Strategic Plan.²⁸ The primary purpose of this DDR undertaking was “to consolidate the peace process and to create an enabling environment to undertake the activities related to human security, reconstruction and development.”²⁹ However, while the IDDRP developed an overall strategy for the DDR program, it did not stipulate the specific implementation details or undertake any significant DDR operations, other than a small project for elderly and disabled combatants, and children associated with armed forces and minority groups.³⁰

The full-scale DDR program for the entire territory of Sudan, the Multi-Year DDR Program (MYDDRP), was launched in June 2009, and was subsequently split along national lines following South Sudan’s independence in 2011. Phase I of the MYDDRP in South Sudan was concluded in December 2012. Phase II did not gain significant momentum and was severely weakened with the eruption of civil war in December 2013.

A key principle of the CPA in relation to the DDR program was that of national ownership, namely that “the capabilities of the national institutions shall be built to effectively lead the overall DDR process”; and that “international partners shall only play a supportive role to these [national] institutions.”³¹ This is to provide technical, financial and material support and help with capacity building and program implementation.³²

The UN Security Council Resolution 1590 in 2005 mandated the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) to provide support and assistance to the newly formed Government of National Unity (GoU) and Government of South Sudan (GoSS) in the areas of planning, developing and implementing the entire DDR program.³³ It was agreed between the leadership of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and UNMIS that disarmament and demobilization support was

to be led by UNMIS, and that UNDP would take the lead on reintegration support. In 2011 the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) was established and assumed UNMIS' responsibilities in South Sudan. In addition it was agreed by the UN and the government in South Sudan that DDR technical and financial support would also be provided by a number of international donors and implementation partners (IPs), such as the International Organization of Migration (IOM), the Food and Agriculture Organization, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, and the Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee.³⁴

The South Sudan DDR Commission (SSDDRC), which was comprised of government officials with imbedded technical supported provided by the Bonn International Center for Conversion, was mandated to provide the overall leadership for the South Sudan DDR program.³⁵ The intention was that international organizations, including UN agencies, would then partner with national actors, such as the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA), to design and implement the DDR program under the direction of the SSDDRC. In this regard, the SSDDRC was to organize regular coordination meetings and workshops for government stakeholders, non-governmental organizations and donors. In these meetings, the various stakeholders were supposed to develop strategies, determine objectives, share information, determine roles and responsibilities, and mobilize resources. The Reintegration Technical Coordination Committee (RTCC), comprised of key organizations was established.³⁶

The IDDRS were envisaged to provide the UN entities, and other DDR stakeholders, with a consolidated implementation framework that would facilitate a more integrated and coordinated approach to planning, management and implementation. In accordance with the IDDRS, an Integrated UN DDR Unit (IUNDDRU) was established in South Sudan, which sought to synchronize the activities of the numerous UN entities with other actors and the relevant national institutions. The UNMIS head of DDR in South Sudan became the IUNDDRU chief, with the head of UNDP South Sudan becoming the deputy head of the Unit.

However, as will be shown below, the operationalization of such an integrated DDR approach was not a simple paint-by-numbers process. Tensions, conflict, inadequate communication, and incongruences in terms of organizational culture and priorities characterized the relationships between the key organizations and entities responsible for DDR. This was to undermine the effectiveness of the DDR coordination infrastructure, which was further encumbered by external factors, such as an unstable security environment.

DDR Coordination Infrastructure and Organizational Dynamics

As indicated above, structures and processes were established with the objective to direct and manage collaborative DDR planning and activities between the various organizations in South Sudan in a coherent and systematic manner. This was in line with the key theoretical literature on strategic alliances, which asserts that control is an essential component of alliance viability. In essence, control involves the creation of systems and mechanisms of regulation that facilitate the predictability and consistency of decision-making and actions within the alliance that are geared towards specific objectives.³⁷ The theoretical literature further suggests that the establishment and maintenance of context-appropriate control mechanisms results in trust-building between participant organizations in the alliance. Nonetheless, overly formal, hierarchical and opaque control mechanisms that are pursued in the absence of social controls that promote regular interaction, mutual respect, cultural sensitivity, and the development of shared values at all levels, may undermine trust between organizations.³⁸

Prior to South Sudan's independence in 2011, decision-making and the management of the DDR process was highly centralized and based in Khartoum (Republic of Sudan). The overall management structure provided very little autonomy to the key local stakeholders in South Sudan and there was a general "lack of transparency, inadequate consultation and the absence of regular [coordination] meetings."³⁹ The effect of this was that SSDDRC was generally relegated to a bystander role in terms of leadership, oversight and coordination of this phase of the DDR process. Moreover, prior to 2011, there was acute political tension and a lack of trust between government officials responsible for DDR in Khartoum and those in Juba, and inadequate local DDR expertise within the DDR commission in South Sudan.⁴⁰

Relations between the SSDDRC and the IUNDDRU were described as being "strained," with low levels of goodwill and trust between parties. This was exacerbated by a high turnover rate of IUNDDRU staff, with many appearing to have lacked the necessary DDR experience and knowledge.⁴¹ Consequently, given these dynamics, bilateral interaction was favored between the SSDDRC and individual international stakeholders. This jeopardized the ability of the entire DDR program to have a coherent and synchronized strategy in which the timing and implementation of the various DDR activities would be effectively coordinated between all the relevant participant organizations.⁴²

The UN's multifaceted integrated mission approach was largely untested prior to its implementation in the Sudanese territories. This approach was envisaged to coordinate all the key activities of the UN intervention and to facilitate

harmonization of activities with other relevant international entities. However, in reality, this approach resulted in “a proliferation of mission functions, [...] managerial challenges, [...] coordination fatigue,” and thwarted the UN mission from focusing on “priority tasks.”⁴³ Additionally, high-level coordination and oversight was weak. For example, prior to South Sudan’s referendum in 2011, only one meeting of the DDR Oversight Committee that focused on South Sudan was held in Khartoum.⁴⁴ As indicated in the literature on organizational theory, such tenuous circumstances make trust and confidence building within the alliance difficult to achieve.

This state of affairs further undermined the ability of the UN bodies that were responsible for DDR to adhere adequately to the IDDRS, which in turn compromised the ability of the IUNDDRU to coordinate DDR activities effectively.⁴⁵ This was particularly noticeable in relation to demobilization in which UNMIS encountered significant delays in establishing its demobilization resources and programs, and had to contend with unwieldy managerial and administrative systems and structures.⁴⁶

There were palpable tensions and a trust deficit between UNDP and UNMIS during the IDDRP and into the early stages of the MYDDRP in 2009. This was primarily in relation to how DDR should be implemented. For example, an evaluation report undertaken for UNDP stated that the working relationship between UNDP and UNMIS had been negatively affected by “a lack of adherence” to the IUNDDR procedures.⁴⁷ An independent assessment conducted in November 2009 found that communication between the various agencies involved in the DDR process could have been more effective.⁴⁸ As a result, during much of the DDR process these two UN bodies maintained separate systems for recruitment, procurement, financial management, human resource management and communications and maintained separate offices in different locations in Juba.⁴⁹ Likewise, the development of constructive working relations was undermined by structural factors. That is, UN regulations at the time prohibited UN staff from one UN agency being directly managed by staff from another UN entity.⁵⁰

A joint review by UNDP and UNMIS took cognizance of the management challenges and coordination problems that had plagued the implementation of the DDR program in the early stages. The review reportedly resulted in changes to the coordination and management mechanisms in which the UN engaged with the SSDDRC. This eventually led to: a more decentralized decision-making and implementation structure; more influence for the SSDDRC in the process; and attempted to address the inter-agency challenges concerning the IUNDDRU. It was reported that there was a “notable success” in terms of fostering unity of purpose and trust.⁵¹ However, internal tensions within the IUNDDRU contin-

ued to persist, which ultimately led to the withdrawal of UNDP from the process and ultimately the IUNDDRU's dissolution in 2010. In the following sections, which will specifically assess each of the three DDR components, relations between the various entities responsible for DDR will be considered in more detail.

Disarmament

The National DDR Strategic Plan stipulated that the process of disarmament was the responsibility of the country's two main armed formations—the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the SPLA—which would be supported by the two respective national DDR commissions.⁵² UNMIS was mandated to assist the SAF, the SPLA and other relevant stakeholders with the establishment of voluntary disarmament and weapons destruction processes. However, no official systems and mechanisms were created to facilitate coordination and communication, as well as manage institutional tensions between the various organizations directly involved in DDR.⁵³ This state of affairs, as specified by strategic alliance theory, increases the risk of self-serving and myopic behavior by one or more parties to the alliance. Hence, taking such theory into account, it was not unexpected that the SPLA, informed by distinctive martial and authoritarian values, opted for a process of unilateral forced disarmament and pacification in 2005 and 2006. This included the highly coercive seizure of weapons from militias and the civilian population.⁵⁴ This subsequently resulted in violent clashes and skirmishes in Jonglei state between the SPLA and those militias targeted for disarmament. It was estimated that at least 1,600 individuals died as a result of this disarmament intervention, with 3,000 firearms being confiscated.⁵⁵

The SPLA's approach to disarmament presented the UN mission in Sudan with a fundamental dilemma in terms of its continued involvement in the DDR process. That is, the forceful nature of the Jonglei intervention was at odds with the UN's mandate to support voluntary civilian disarmament and protect human rights. At the time the UN was seeking to develop good working relations with the SPLA and did not want to see the fragile peace agreement derailed, and *hence* the UN did not publicly criticize the SPLA.⁵⁶ The UN mission subsequently established partnerships with community-based organizations and initiated limited non-aggressive small-scale disarmament programs without the involvement of the SPLA, which resulted in the surrender of close to 1,400 firearms.⁵⁷

In 2008 a disarmament decree was issued by the President of southern Sudan which authorized the SPLA to disarm civilians throughout the territory over a six month period. There was no involvement of UNMIS in this process. A voluntary disarmament approach was initially envisaged that entailed allocating traditional leaders the responsibility for weapons collection, but such an approach

yielded poor results. Consequently, the SPLA resorted to more belligerent collection methods with human rights violations and destruction of property being reported. In addition, the operation did not result in large quantities of firearms being confiscated.⁵⁸ Ad hoc forceful disarmament measures have been pursued by the SPLA over the past 10 years, but nonetheless, civilian firearm possession in South Sudan remains widespread and has been mainly driven by high levels of insecurity and the needs of rural households and communities to protect livestock from armed raiders.⁵⁹

As indicated above, theory on strategic alliances indicates that a complementarity of institutional cultures is required for alliance prosperity, and therefore it is conceivable that the disarmament interventions could have been more effective if common ground had been found between the various DDR actors concerning the disarmament method. The decision by the SPLA to use force during disarmament operations effectively side-lined UNMIS and other international organizations from providing substantial resources and technical support. This approach also undermined the coordination of activities and multi-dimensional long-term planning that could have resulted in the implementation of measures to address the unstable security environment that was driving the civilian demand for firearms.

Demobilisation

The SSDDRC planned to demobilize 90,000 combatants during the CPA-linked DDR process.⁶⁰ In phase I of the program, some 34,000 of these individuals could come from special needs groups comprised of children, women who worked in a non-military role, disabled people and the elderly associated with armed forces and groups. The remainder of the ex-combatants to be demobilized were supposed to originate from the SPLA, and the demobilization of this population group was envisaged to take place in phase II.⁶¹

A Joint Monitoring Team, composed of SPLA members, the SSDDRC and the IUNDDR, as well as UN military observers, was appointed to oversee and verify the demobilization process. The participants were to be transported to the demobilization sites by the SPLA and/or UNMIS before being discharged as civilians.⁶² The UN mission, operating with the support from the SSDDRC and other implementing partners, funded and organized the establishment and maintenance of the demobilization sites.

The SPLA, however, was exceedingly reluctant to demobilize large segments of its armed forces due to the view that the CPA was more of a ceasefire than a sustainable peace agreement, combined with anxieties of possible attacks and invasion by the Sudanese military and militias. In addition, the DDR process was not aligned to a process of defense transformation within the SPLA that had at-

tracted considerable donor funds.⁶³ Added to this, the SPLA members received a monthly salary (in an economy with very limited employment opportunities). Hence there were serious concerns both within the SPLA leadership and the government in South Sudan that the significant downsizing of the SPLA would undermine SPLA morale and negatively affect its dominant political influence within South Sudan, as well as its privileged access to resources.⁶⁴ Furthermore, the downsizing of the personnel size of the SPLA may have led to the destabilization of what was already a relatively ethnically-fractioned military organization.⁶⁵

Given this state of affairs, the personnel size of the SPLA actually increased by more than 30% between 2009 and 2013, from approximately 250,000 to around 330,000 personnel.⁶⁶ Additionally, the SPLA had been required to include various militia groups following the signing of the CPA, and therefore there were concerns that if demobilized, these groups may engage in subverting acts.⁶⁷ Such circumstances likely contributed to the SPLA remaining aloof from the DDR coordination efforts, which led to friction between the SPLA, the UN agencies and the DDR Commission. This in turn exacerbated tensions and undermined goodwill between the various UN entities and the SSDDRC. These developments correspond with the key aspects of strategic alliance theory, namely, that alliances are likely to be fragile where there is a lack of a consensus regarding the objectives of the alliance and a complementarity of institutional cultures between partner organizations.

The Joint Monitoring Teams were responsible for verifying whether discharge certificates submitted by ex-combatants matched the names on the master demobilization lists provided by the SPLA and SSDDRC. The master lists were supposed to have been prepared and submitted to UNMIS a month prior to actual launch of the demobilization process.⁶⁸ However, these master lists were not provided timeously, mostly due to the dynamics within the SPLA (mentioned above), which meant that the necessary verifications could not be adequately conducted. This resulted in numerous ineligible candidates acquiring demobilization benefits.⁶⁹ The demobilization process was terminated in April 2011, with 12,525 combatants having been demobilized by the end of the process, a figure well below the initial 34,000-target. Those that had been demobilized then became the target group for reintegration support.

According to theory on inter-organizational collaboration, trust between organizations is an essential ingredient for the sustainability of alliances and the effectiveness of outcomes. Trust is eroded in circumstances where there is insufficient veracity and commitment to the alliance by the participant organizations. That is, organizations participating in the alliance are not transparent in terms of their actual intended involvement within the alliance; and do not consistently

adhere to agreed timeframes and quality controls.⁷⁰ Hence, a larger number of eligible individuals could have been demobilized if all the collaborating entities had adhered to the agreed deadlines and deliverables with respect to the DDR process.

Reintegration

The reintegration process was largely driven by the UNDP in collaboration with UN mission in South Sudan and the SSDDRC, with funds being provided the governments of the UK, Canada, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Japan. The UNDP administered the donor funds, while the UN mission and the various implementing partners undertook the bulk of the reintegration workload.⁷¹ The reintegration component of South Sudan's CPA-linked DDR program received US\$ 50,678,958 from donors, with donors largely managing their financial support through bilateral relations with the SPLA, the SSDDRC or the UN mission.⁷²

Participants in the reintegration component were given the choice of selecting one of the following reintegration support options, namely: agriculture and livestock; small business development; vocational training; and adult education.⁷³ Initially 34,000 individuals were targeted for reintegration support, but by the end of 2012, when the CPA-mandated DDR program was terminated, less than half that number, that is 12,525 persons, had benefited from reintegration programs.⁷⁴ Plans to undertake phase II of the DDR process did not gain significant momentum as a result of logistical issues, inadequate funding and "political wrangling over ownership," further compounded by the outbreak of civil war in December 2013.⁷⁵

There is relative consensus in the theoretical literature on strategic alliances, that power imbalances and unequal access to resources by participating organizations, if not adequately managed, have the potential to undermine trust within alliances.⁷⁶ Hence, it was foreseeable that given the inequitable relations between collaborating organizations in the reintegration phase, conflicts would emerge. There were frequent reports of rivalries and tensions between UN entities; between the UN and the SSDDRC; and between donors and the SSDDRC.⁷⁷ Such tensions existed between stakeholders located in Juba, as well as between those based at the UN headquarters in New York. This often resulted in a breakdown in communication and trust and ineffective coordination of the reintegration process. In 2010, William Deng Deng, the Chairman of the SSDDRC, commenting on the DDR process in South Sudan reportedly bemoaned that: "There has been no [reintegration] boss. Who is the boss? Is it the UNDP? Is it the donors? Is it the government of South Sudan? It must be the government of South Sudan because this is a government project."⁷⁸

A major source of tension between the SSDDRC and the UN was over the management and transparency of funds during the reintegration process. As described by Lamb: “the UN also kept a tight rein on the financial resources allocated for DDR in South Sudan, which provided UN agencies with considerable leverage in determining the type, content and manner of support provided as well as the organizations and agencies that would be contracted to implement the processes and activities.”⁷⁹ This meant that the SSDDRC was unable to be the central driving force of the reintegration program as was initially intended. Trust between the SSDDRC and the UNDP deteriorated further in 2010 when the UNDP failed to account for how US\$ 450,000 was spent on 44 missing laptops.⁸⁰

In 2011 the SSDDRC fundamentally changed its approach to the DDR program (particularly reintegration), and with it came improved coordination between it and the UN agencies.⁸¹ The granting of independence to South Sudan meant that the DDR program focusing on South Sudan would be completely detached from the larger DDR undertaking that had also included the Republic of Sudan. In addition, the SSDDRC became more actively involved in the DDR activities and in coordinating with the UN and the various implementing partners.⁸²

Moreover, from 2011 the UNDP introduced major changes to the management structure of the program, which reportedly resulted in 1) regular meetings being held between the SSDDRC, the UNDP and implementing partners, 2) improved transparency and consultation, and 3) greater decision-making authority being entrusted to the SSDDRC. In addition, The National DDR Coordination Council and Oversight Committee, consisting of the Commission, UNDP, UNMISS donors and other UN agencies, became more active in overseeing program implementation and held more effective monthly meetings.⁸³ However, the lack of sufficient commitment from the SPLA to the DDR process and the outbreak of civil war in South Sudan in 2013 meant that these inter-organizational management reforms ultimately did not have a significant long-term meaningful impact on the DDR process.

Conclusion

Effective coordination of DDR interventions and programs within complex, multi-actor institutional settings and fragile political environments is difficult to achieve and preserve. By focusing on South Sudan and drawing on theories of inter-organizational collaboration and alliances it was shown that inter-organizational coordination of DDR appeared to have been negatively affected by overly hierarchical, convoluted and inflexible organizational processes and arrangements, not only between organizations, but within organizations as well. In addition, further

contributing factors included inadequate communication; power imbalances; deficiencies in DDR expertise; unequal access to financial resources; and a lack of adequate commitment to the alliance by some of the participating organizations.

In the case of South Sudan, it was apparent that these arrangements and dynamics contributed to inter-organizational tensions and eroded trust between stakeholders. This ultimately resulted in fragmented and sub-standard DDR outcomes. Furthermore, as the South Sudan case conspicuously reveals, effective coordination of DDR can only be achieved if all the key stakeholders are genuinely committed and open to coordinating with others. For instance, the nearly entire absence of the SPLA from the structures and activities geared towards DDR synchronization and implementation had major adverse effects on the outcomes of this peacebuilding endeavor.

Notes

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