

INSTITUT DES NATIONS UNIES POUR
LA RECHERCHE SUR LE DÉSARMEMENT



UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE
FOR DISARMAMENT RESEARCH

*APPLYING PARTICIPATORY MONITORING AND
EVALUATION (PM&E) APPROACHES TO WEAPONS
COLLECTION AND WEAPONS FOR DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMMES*

A report on the conference *Problems of Small Arms and Light
Weapons of Human Security: Lessons Learned from Field
Experiences*

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I. Introduction

A Conference on “Applying the Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) Approach in Weapons Collections and ‘Weapons for Development’” was held on 9 December 2002 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. Over 50 participants from missions of donor and war-torn countries, United Nations humanitarian and development agencies, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and academic research institutes attended the meeting. Dr Patricia Lewis, Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), chaired the conference.

Purpose of the Conference

The purpose of the meeting was to facilitate discussion of issues related to UNIDIR’s “Weapons for Development” (WfD) project. Specifically, the conference endeavoured to examine how PM&E can be applied in weapons collection programmes.

What is Weapons for Development?

WfD is a strategy for micro-disarmament in which weapons are collected in exchange for development goods and services that benefit the whole community. Such programmes try to address simultaneously security and development concerns, to ensure a more integrated response to the root causes of violent conflict. They differ from buy-back programmes in that cash is not offered and the development projects are for the benefit of the collectivity.

What is Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation (PM&E)?

PM&E is a well-established method of project management. PM&E is defined as “collaborative problem solving through the generation and use of knowledge. A process that leads to corrective action by involving all levels of stakeholders in a shared decision making process.” In particular, PM&E involves bringing people at the grass roots to actively participate in all stages of project management and evaluation.

What is the Role of PM&E?

PM&E has been successfully applied in various World Bank development projects since the 1980s. However, it has only recently been applied in the disarmament field. Past approaches to evaluate disarmament programmes have been conducted in a classical “consultants and clipboard” manner, with poor involvement of major stakeholders such as women, children and ex-combatants. UNIDIR, through its WfD project, tries to address the need for new management techniques of micro-disarmament. The WfD project will use PM&E to evaluate the relevance and sustainability of weapons collection programmes. PM&E is a promising tool, which could help to better address the problems of war-torn and crime-affected communities.

Conference Structure

Throughout six sessions, the conference addressed four major themes:

Driving reasons for the possession of a weapon;

Dynamics of weapons proliferation;

Disarmament and peace-building; and

Understanding incentives for weapons collection programmes.

Participants presented their own perspectives on micro-disarmament, weapons collections and weapons for development strategies, and also on PM&E. In general, UNIDIR's WfD project and its methodology were welcomed.

It is hoped that the ideas and recommendations contained in this report will serve as a basis for defining a clear strategy in designing weapons collection and WfD programmes and also setting up arrangements that will ensure a swift, participatory, effective and above all, holistic response to tackle Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) proliferation.

This not an agreed report but rather our account of the gist of the discussions that took place at the conference. Our goal is not to reproduce the discussions per se but rather to give a sense of their direction and outcome. Evidently, the contents of this report remain our responsibility.

II. Aims of the WfD Project

UNIDIR's WfD Project aims to document lessons learned and best practices from previous weapons collection programmes as well as the incentives provided to communities to encourage individuals to voluntarily hand over weapons.

Beyond this, the WfD project aims to:

- Enhance understanding of extremely complex multi-disciplinary issues surrounding weapons collection programmes and communities affected by SALW such as the nature of funding, funding conditionality, disarmament incentives, the type of incentives offered, security fulfilment, the selection of target communities, etc., and how these relate to one another;
- Provide policy recommendations to improve the design for WfD programmes on the basis of the lessons learned and best practises resulting from the cases of weapons collection studied;
- Create a mechanism for analyzing the capabilities and vulnerabilities of the communities affected by SALW proliferation;

- Build mechanisms for dialogue and information sharing among communities which have been hostile to each other; and
- Enhance the research skills of individuals in case study countries.

III. Proceedings of the Conference

The meeting took place in Geneva, away from conflict areas. This neutral location provided an atmosphere conducive to a frank exchange of ideas and experience. Participants represented all the different interest groups including local actors and policy makers. This enabled varied views to thrive and animate the discussion. The presence of representatives from SALW-affected communities enriched the discussions by providing practical experience, researchers brought theoretical understanding, and practitioners exposed the challenges and pitfalls in applying participatory approaches. The result was a profound debate remarkably rich in constructive ideas.

The Conference opened with messages from Dr Patricia Lewis, UNIDIR Director and Ambassador Dr Kuniko Inoguchi, Japanese Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

Dr Lewis pointed out that past evaluation of weapons collection programmes has been far too incoherent. Therefore UNIDIR with the support of the Government of Japan is looking at the evaluation of several different weapon collection projects using the PM&E approach. She expressed hope that the research findings would benefit WfD project planners, staff and funders, as well as the victims of SALW proliferation. Since weapons collection programmes are controversial, and conflict resolution complex, UNIDIR hopes to enhance practitioners' understanding of these issues.

Ambassador Dr Inoguchi noted that currently there was a lack of resources and expertise to effectively and fully implement the United Nations Programme of Action (PoA) as agreed at the 2001 United Nations Conference on SALW. She was of the view that the UNIDIR initiative will provide useful suggestions on the way forward. She expressed her support for the application of PM&E and hoped that UNIDIR would be able to present some of its findings to the forthcoming biennial meeting in July 2003 (to review the implementation of the PoA). Ambassador Dr Inoguchi emphasized the importance that her government attaches to this kind of approach and stressed that it was important for WfD programmes to link the proliferation of SALW, human security, sustainable development and the involvement of the affected population groups, such as women and children.

Geoffrey Mugumya, Project Leader of the WfD Project, presented a background paper entitled *The Impact of SALW on Human Security*. The paper highlighted the cause and effect relationship of SALW proliferation, human security and sustainable development. It also presented the existing measures and their shortcomings that fight the proliferation of SALW. The third point of the paper

addressed the issues of applying PM&E in weapons collection programmes. The paper showed the value this new approach would add to existing measures.

Sessions II to V were each composed of two presentations accompanied by open discussions.

Speakers brought hands-on experience on SALW from various parts of the world: Sierra Leone, Brazil, Albania, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Mali, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The themes discussed reflected the following three areas of concern:

- **Understanding the contextual situation of areas affected by SALW;**
- **Considering implementation strategies that should be pursued to ensure that the benefits accruing from WfD programmes reach the whole community;**
- **Finding which incentives are considered most effective by the affected communities themselves.**

In particular the following specific questions were posed to both the discussants and the audience:

- What is the range of social, economic, political and environmental factors at play in the communities affected by SALW? How do these factors fuel the demand for use of weapons?
- How much do we have to understand and agree on the causes of violence to deal with the situation effectively?
- What are the impacts of proliferation of SALW on the community, the national, regional and global levels?
- When SALW spread widely i.e. nationally, regionally and globally, how can local communities tackle the proliferation?
- Under what conditions can disarmament programmes have a real impact?
- How can disarmament reduce the likelihood of conflicts recurring? What is the best timing for a disarmament programme?
- What kinds of incentives exist to entice those holding weapons illegally to voluntarily hand over their weapons? Which incentives, when and where are most effective?
- What are the coping mechanisms that sustain communities that are victims of SALW proliferation?

- How do we measure impact and know it really means something?

The final session (Session VI) reviewed the main conclusions and recommendations. Since all session themes were fundamentally related, there was a marked tendency for the same themes to recur and a degree of cross-fertilization between the sessions. As a result, the outcomes of the discussions did not necessarily reflect the theme and questions asked, but rather the issues that participants considered to be the most pertinent, based on their own experiences, perspectives and knowledge.

IV. The Methodology: PM&E

PM&E ties research to the needs of those being studied, by encouraging them to participate in the research design methodology and projected outcome, with an external researcher acting as moderator. People bring deep but unsystematic knowledge; the researcher brings analytical tools to systematize this knowledge and make it usable for strategic action.

PM&E as a research methodology is premised on four key principles:

- Local people are active participants, not just sources of information;
- Stakeholders evaluate, outsiders facilitate;
- Focus on building stakeholder capacity for analysis and problem solving;
- Process builds commitment to implementing any recommended corrective action.

The PM&E methodology was thoroughly discussed during the deliberations. Views were expressed as to the contribution this approach could make to disarmament programmes. Risks and drawbacks were also raised.

Participants mentioned the following merits of PM&E:

- Potential to infuse a participatory approach in micro-disarmament programmes;
- Enable better targeted action;
- Gives the community ownership of its development process and products;
- Gives voice to all segments of the community since all are allowed to contribute in the process;
- Builds self-esteem of individuals within the community;
- Reinforces community solidarity, cooperation, involvement and follow-up on the agreed action;

- Matches the skills and aptitudes of the beneficiaries;
- Enhances the design of future projects that fit people's day-to-day activities and normal responsibilities;
- Promotes dialogue and debate on the problems the community faces—people assemble and discuss their common problems;
- Provides ground for reconciliation and for local dispute resolution mechanisms;
- Creates a premise for a culture of peace;
- Provides timely information for decision-making; and
- Produces quantitative and qualitative results that previously inaccessible.
- Concern was expressed about the risks and shortcomings of PM&E in weapons collection:
 - PM&E as a research method cannot operate alone: it should be combined with other conventional research methods;
 - Ethical issues are bound to arise in the researcher's fieldwork;
 - Success depends on the political will of the leadership, which may fear to empower the community;
 - Benefits of the project may be unequally shared within the community;
 - Raising the expectations of communities;
 - Unrealistic demands by intended beneficiaries—divergence between funders' objectives and what communities perceive as their interest;
 - Perturbation of community customs; and
 - Implementation requires a lot of time and resources.

It was concluded that PM&E is not a "panacea", but will go a long way to advance understanding of the factors that drive demand to possess weapons from the point of view of the affected communities themselves. This would facilitate the spelling out of strategies to deal with communities where weapons and the use of violence is a way of life.

Successful implementation of PM&E will depend on outreach: teaming and building up of alliances with the grass-root organizations and the people themselves. Sensitivity to cultural issues, respect as well as political awareness, are

major ingredients upon which earning the trust of the affected communities will be premised.

V. *Common Themes of Weapons Collection and WfD Programmes*

A diversity of opinions, perspectives and understandings were acknowledged during the seminar. However, common themes and preoccupations also emerged:

- The recognition of the application of PM&E approach as a vehicle to reach out and get the perspective of those affected by the proliferation of SALW;
- The need for a holistic approach: recognize the interrelation of political, economic, social, cultural and psychological factors at play in the community;
- The need for a standard measure of human security;
- The need to link physical security, human security and human development: these three elements are interrelated and require integrated policies;
- A definition of human security based on the wide range of vulnerabilities the community faces: disease, hunger, unemployment, disillusioned future, social decomposition and instability, crime, political repression, loss of identity, cultural disintegration and resource scarcity;
- The need to understand global, international, national, and local dynamics surrounding the proliferation of SALW;
- The need for global information on who does what and where in the area of WfD,
- The need to pay greater attention to action aimed at preventing the recurrence of conflict;
- The development needs of a society emerging from war or acute turmoil are qualitatively different from those of a stable society. This entails a reordering of normal priorities as well as incorporating new ones—SALW non-proliferation programmes must be given a high priority;
- The differing agendas of actors—which may influence the success or failure of one projects;
- The need for all actors to work together;
- Mandates and limitations of agencies;
- The recognition that institutions responsible for civilian protection, such as the police, are those which are most deformed during conflict; and

- WfD programmes cannot on their own, suffice to answer all development questions, and therefore are not a substitute for other development efforts.

Other issues of common concern were:

- The need to study factors that drive the demand and supply of weapons;
- The need for equal emphasis of quantitative and qualitative performance/impact indicators. Traditionally, emphasis has been put on quantitative indicators, which do not give a clear reflection of the programmes' impact;
- The need to reconcile community interests with the interests of warlords and other actors;
- The need to acknowledge cross-community channels and cross-border channels;
- The need to relate the needs of local communities and vulnerable groups (women, children, refugees) to those of ex-combatants;
- The need to distinguish between crime-precipitated insecurity and war-related insecurity;
- The need to facilitate information sharing and coordination at the global, regional, national and local levels;
- UNHCR in particular noted that the availability of SALW undermines the principle of asylum and also jeopardizes local integration/reintegration efforts, because of the presence of armed elements among the refugees in camps;
- The lack of adequate and reliable information on SALW in a community;
- The importance of cultural sensitivity in programme designs; and
- In some cases, insufficient institutions and the inexistence of a state as well as the lack of civil organizations impede the possibility of running a micro-disarmament programme.

Participants concluded that the need to develop impact and performance indicators to measure the efficacy of WfD programmes was of particular importance. These could take the form of measures to assess the results of SALW non-proliferation instruments such as: conferences, protocols, declarations, national legislation, weapon collection and WfD programmes.

At the levels of the state or the community, impact indicators could be developed to measure the outcomes of specific projects on human security, the frequency of violence, homicides, crimes, where SALW are involved. The development of such

indicators would be an important vehicle for assessing the effect of WfD programmes.

VI. Priority Objectives and Programmes

Based on the above suggestions, the following priority objectives and programmes were identified:

Actions

- UNIDIR's WfD project should select case studies with the view to best answer the above issues;
- The project should emphasize applying the tools that will enhance the active participation of people at all levels;
- The project should focus on building the capacity of analysis and problem solving of the beneficiaries (through the whole project implementation process);
- The project should ensure that the process builds commitment to implement any recommended corrective action;
- The project should engage as much as possible locally identified researchers to do the evaluation; and
- To the extent possible, the project should seek to involve civil society.

Policy Orientations

- International funding institutions should consider funding non-traditional projects;
- Long-term perspectives on projects and research activities must be reinforced, because unlike conventional evaluations, PM&E takes longer to yield results;
- Greater emphasis should be placed on project preparation, as preliminary research prior to project implementation, is key to making projects locally friendly and tailored to the needs and context of the intended beneficiaries.
- Humanitarian and development assistance agencies must recognize their crucial role in disarmament, especially through their income generation projects, because economic empowerment is key to changing incentives to hold guns in post-conflict societies; and
- Political will and unwavering resolve from state and non-state actors is necessity for WfD implementation.

Programmes Support

- Support programmes for promoting the sharing of information related to SALW non-proliferation;
- Support capacity building for police as well as security sector reform (SSR);
- Community policing programmes should be considered in development assistance;
- Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants;
- General weapon collection programmes: aimed at those who may possess weapons, having directly or indirectly acquired them by virtue of a war situation to protect themselves, but who may no longer need them. Also the weapons that might be found abandoned,
- Awareness and sensitization programmes: sensitize communities to the dangers of keeping weapons;
- Support for weapon collection centres and focal points;
- Storage facilities for weapons collected to ensure that recovered and decommissioned weapons are safely stored;
- Destruction of excess weapons;
- Support for licensing offices and the registration of arms in circulation in the country;
- Domestic Legislation: assist national governments in enacting and/or reviewing domestic laws with a view to manage, regulate and control SALW; and
- Training of frontier guards and customs officials.

Belatedly, it was noted that these interventions—crucial as they may appear to laying down a foundation for a smooth transition to recovery, are often not high on both the national and international post-conflict reconstruction agenda.

VII. Way Forward: from Geneva to the Field

On 10 December 2002, a follow-up meeting to the conference, which was attended by a cross-section of the delegates, mapped out criteria for the selection of case studies. The following criteria was agreed upon:

- Availability of local contacts;
- Experience with weapons collection programmes;

- Knowledge of the nature of the conflict;
- On-going post-crisis condition; and
- Geographical representation.

Based on these criteria, it was suggested that the methodology first be tried in a few countries and later be applied to others. Originally there were ten candidate case studies: Albania, Angola, Brazil, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mali, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone and Sri-Lanka. These have been reduced to three preliminary studies: Albania, Cambodia and Mali, with others to follow later on.

The initial three case studies are selected due to their rich experience with weapons collection programmes. The field research planned for 2003 in these countries is expected to scrutinize all phases of implementing weapons collection and WfD programmes. Thereafter the research will be extended to other countries, where similar programmes have been implemented.

How the Research Will Be Conducted:

- Local researchers in case study countries will be identified. Together with UNIDIR, they will develop key questions for research;
- Field facilitators, 5-10 per location (depending on the project area) will be selected and trained in PM&E implementation;
- Different PM&E tools will be tested before trial in the field;
- The trained local field facilitators under the supervision of the local researchers will conduct the actual field research; and
- Data will be gathered from different respondents sampled according to gender and other differences (i.e. age, wealth, dwelling, political, ethnicity, language, plus other crosscutting factors).

Dissemination of Research Findings:

The research findings will be quickly fed into the public domain for policy improvement, through a series of publications.

The publications will include:

- **Reports** on various themes (e.g.: role of women in WfD, youth, etc.)
- **Country Reports:** lessons learned and best practices from each country case study (Albania, Cambodia, Mali, etc.)

- A *Final Report* that will provide a clear statement of lessons to be drawn and best practices to be learned, with a view to enhancing the design of WfD programmes, as a contribution to the overall aim of improving human security.

Conference Outcomes

The Conference succeeded in its objective of soliciting perspectives and experiences, as well as outlining practical proposals for effective action by all actors involved in WfD programmes. These findings, however, need to be further developed and also acted upon if the issue of non-proliferation of SALW is to be adequately addressed. This demands action at many levels—involving all actors and interested parties—the United Nations system, donor governments and international financial institutions, governments, non-governmental organizations, research institutions and the affected communities themselves.

Beyond the identification of key elements necessary for applying PM&E in WfD programmes, the next step demands that all concerned actors should aim to translate the identified strategies and issues into practice—each playing a role where they have a comparative advantage. Still, the success of participation will depend on the acceptance by the community.

VIII. List of Participants

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