

# OG 2.30: Participants, Beneficiaries and Partners

## Objectives

This module will:

- ✓ define groups who usually fall under the category of participants and beneficiaries in the DDR process;
- ✓ explain eligibility criteria for participation in DDR and the screening process; and
- ✓ explain the roles of local, national and international partners in the DDR process.

## 1. Introduction

Having a clear idea of who the participants and beneficiaries *usually are* in DDR programmes will help DDR practitioners to identify potential participants in and beneficiaries of a *specific* DDR programme.

While the peace agreement generally states which armed forces and groups will be downsized or disbanded, DDR programmes will have to develop the criteria to identify those eligible for DDR within these armed forces and groups. This process is required to avoid the perception that any particular group is being favoured or victimized.

It is vital to be aware of the range of local, national and international partners that may be involved in DDR processes, and the roles they are likely to play. DDR is a highly complex multidimensional and multi-stakeholder process. It cannot be successful without the support of public authorities, civil society organizations (CSOs), the private sector, bilateral agencies and international organizations.

### Box 2.30.1: Who are participants and beneficiaries?


**Participants:** All persons who will receive *direct* assistance through the DDR process, including male and female combatants, those associated with armed forces and groups, including women and children, the disabled and chronically ill, dependants and others identified during negotiations of the political framework and planning for a UN-supported DDR process.


**Beneficiaries:** Both individuals and groups who receive *indirect* benefits through a UN-supported DDR operation or programme. They are communities in which DDR programme participants resettle, civil society organizations that are empowered and capacitated, businesses where ex-combatants work as part of the DDR programme, etc.

## 2. Eligibility criteria

The DDR programme should develop *transparent, easily understood* and *unambiguous* eligibility criteria at the *beginning* of the DDR planning and design process. When developing these criteria for selecting participants in DDR programmes, several factors are important:

- *A balance between security and equity:* Deciding about eligibility criteria requires striking a delicate balance between security and equity. Whereas the main focus of DDR should be on improving security by assisting those who pose the greatest threat to peace, DDR programmes should also try to provide non-discriminatory, fair and equitable treatment to all eligible members of armed forces and groups, including women, children and the disabled, who are often excluded;
- *Planning figures:* For planning purposes, DDR programmes should get an independent estimate of the number of members of the armed forces and groups that are likely to be selected to be downsized or disbanded. It is important to keep in mind that armed forces and groups often conceal their real strength, especially the numbers of children. Real numbers of women may also be concealed, or their role within armed forces and groups misrepresented;
- *Logistic and financial impact:* The cost of inclusive eligibility criteria on the overall programme should be assessed. Different scenarios should also be explored before the final decision is made. Contingency planning should also be undertaken to ensure that the programme is flexible in its implementation and is able to adjust to unexpected events and changed circumstances;
- *Weapons and/or ammunition possession:* Entry into a DDR programme should *not* depend on people possessing weapons and/or ammunition, as participants may include individuals in non-combat and support roles. Some may have had their weapons redistributed either as a result of an incapacitating injury or because commanders may not wish to acknowledge their role as combatants, as is sometimes the case for women, children and the disabled.

 This section was compiled on the basis of information found in IDDRS 2.30 on Participants, Beneficiaries and Partners, section 6.5.3.4 of IDDRS 3.20 on DDR Programme Design and section 7.3.1 of IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament.

 Eligibility should be considered for each component of DDR. For example, unarmed members of armed forces and groups are not eligible for disarmament, but should be eligible for demobilization and reintegration; dependants are not eligible for disarmament and demobilization, but should be eligible for reintegration; while abductees and children may need to be disarmed, but may not be formally demobilized, and should be eligible to receive reintegration assistance.

## 3. Screening/verification

The DDR programme should include a screening or verification process. Commanders are usually responsible for 'delivering' their units to DDR sites, and

screening is the only way to ensure that only those who meet previously agreed eligibility criteria will be registered in DDR programmes and will receive DDR-specific assistance. On the one hand, it is important to avoid the entry of non-combatants, petty criminals or civilians in possession of illicit weapons into the programme under false pretences, as this might discredit the DDR process. On the other hand, it is vital to ensure that ‘invisible’ members of armed forces and groups, such as women, children or the disabled, enter the DDR programme and are present during screening. The screening process should also be designed to prevent combatants from ‘double-dipping’ by registering more than once to gain more benefits, and should make it difficult for commanders to exploit the process by entering their friends and families.

### 3.1. Who carries out the screening process?



- In peacekeeping operations, screening is carried out by UN military personnel. These are normally military observers (MILOBs) supported by specialist civilian disarmament staff and military staff who provide both security and specialized technical advice on all aspects of disarmament.
- Local advisers (social workers, reliable members of the community such as members of women’s peace groups, religious organizations or established non-governmental organizations [NGOs]) who know the local languages, customs and history should be recruited and trained to assist in the screening process. Confidentiality is essential when dealing with local advisers.

### 3.2. What screening methodology should be used?

- Detailed cross-examination of DDR candidates’ knowledge of key battles, commanders and armed force or group structure can be used to confirm eligibility; yet this will only be effective if knowledgeable local staff are available to assist with this task. Female staff should be included to screen female combatants who may otherwise feel too intimidated to come forward.
- Methods such as biometric registration (e.g. iris scanning, finger printing) are useful for instant identification, verification and traceability. This technology eliminates the problem of double counting. Screening methods and data storage and interpretation should be standardized and applied equally in all disarmament sites.
- Close cooperation with the leadership of armed forces and groups, civil society, local police and national DDR-related bodies, and a well-conducted information and sensitization campaign are essential tools to ensure that only qualified combatants and those associated with armed forces and groups participate in a DDR programme.

### 3.3. What other options are available to assess eligibility?


- *For foreign combatants*, a language and culture test can determine both their foreign and combatant status.


- *For combatants claiming to have taken part in active combat*, a weapons procedures test will identify their familiarity with, and ability to handle, weapons. This test should be balanced against others to ascertain combatant status. Children and women with weapons should be disarmed, but should not be required to demonstrate their capacity to use a weapon or prove familiarity with weaponry to be admitted to the DDR programme.
  - *For local militias* (groups that did not travel outside their communities of origin), community verification may also be used as a method to determine combatant status. Verification should be carried out by both female and male community members to ensure that all women (and girls) in armed forces and groups are accounted for.
-  **On screening**, see section 7.3 of IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament and section 8.2 of IDDRS 4.20 on Demobilization.
  -  **On foreign combatants**, see OG 5.40 on Cross-border Population Movements.

## 4. Participants and beneficiaries

There are five groups/types of individuals that should be taken into consideration when planning and designing DDR programmes:

1. members of armed forces and groups;
2. abductees;
3. dependants;
4. civilian returnees; and
5. communities.

 *Special consideration should be given to women, children, youth and disabled combatants in each of these categories, but in group 1 in particular.*

 *When managing a regional conflict, it may be necessary to deal with foreign combatants and mercenaries, for whom separate, multinational strategies should be developed.*

 **OG 5.40 on Cross-border Population Movements**

### **Box 2.30.2: What are armed forces and groups?**

**Armed forces:** The military organization of a state with a legal basis, and supporting institutional infrastructure (salaries, benefits, basic services, etc.).

**Armed groups:** A group that has the potential to employ arms in the use of force to achieve political, ideological or economic objectives; is not within the formal military structures of a state, state-alliance or intergovernmental organization; and is not under the control of the state(s) in which it operates.

## 4.1. The five main groups of participants/beneficiaries

### ■ *Group 1: Members of armed forces and groups*

The majority of participants in DDR programmes are usually made up of members of armed forces and groups who served in combat and/or support roles. These members are usually *mostly* men, but there are often also women, boys and girls.

Although most members will have been actively engaged as combatants, many will have carried out logistic tasks and worked as cooks, porters, messengers and administrators, or have been women and girls used for sexual exploitation. This is often the case for women and children. Those who have been associated with armed forces and groups in the above roles shall be considered part of the armed force and/or group.

### ■ *Group 2: Abductees*

Abduction or forced recruitment is a broadly practised but largely unrecognized phenomenon of modern conflicts, and is a serious violation of humanitarian and human rights law. It must be recognized that:

- men, women and children are all vulnerable to abduction or forced recruitment by armed forces and groups; and
- such people are forced to participate in combat and support roles, and are usually exposed to extreme and long-term violence.

The UN shall work for the unconditional release of abductees associated with armed forces and groups at all times – while conflict is ongoing, during peace negotiations and before the establishment of a national DDR process. Therefore, from the start of the DDR programme, the priority must be to identify all those who were abducted so that they can be released and assisted accordingly.

### ■ *Group 3: Dependants*

These are civilians who rely on combatants for their livelihood. Because they are civilians, they do not directly participate in the disarmament and demobilization process, but efforts should be made to extend reintegration assistance to all dependants. Where dependants have accompanied armed forces or groups during the armed conflict, the unity of the family shall be respected throughout the DDR process. In relation to dependants, DDR practitioners should:

- develop criteria for establishing dependant status according to local contexts and social norms;
- provide dependants with access to information and counselling;
- provide for their needs if cantonment is planned during disarmament and demobilization;
- include dependants in return/transportation plans to communities of origin;
- formulate policies and strategies regarding their access to reintegration benefits and opportunities;

- ensure their participation in the planning and delivery of reinsertion and reintegration support programmes;
- provide for the special needs of vulnerable dependants, such as children, widows, orphans, the disabled and the chronically ill; and
- ensure family tracing is made available for those who have been separated from other members of their family.

#### ■ **Group 4: Civilian returnees**

Individuals who have been associated with armed forces/groups are not granted refugee status by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as they may have committed serious human rights violations or war crimes. However, this does not prevent ex-combatants, possibly self-demobilized, from being present among refugee and returnee populations. It will be necessary to identify them in consultation with the general local population, UNHCR and the refugee/internally displaced persons (IDPs) committee, before determining their eligibility to enter the DDR programme.



### OG 5.40 on Cross-border Population Movements

#### ■ **Group 5: Communities**

While the initial focus of DDR is on members of armed groups and forces, communities often gain from the process. For example, they become safer when ex-combatants are disarmed, demobilized and assisted to become productive members of society. They also benefit from those programmes that are established to improve the capacity of communities to receive ex-combatants and their families. Conversely, badly planned and executed DDR can be a threat to receiving communities.

DDR programmes should ensure that individually-focused reintegration assistance to ex-combatants (training, employment, health services, etc.) is limited in time and scope, and delivered through community-based mechanisms as far as possible. Communities are important *indirect* beneficiaries of reintegration assistance, and should therefore be allowed to participate in the planning and implementation of reintegration programmes within DDR processes.



*After war, 'communities' may be quite precarious and vulnerable, having been newly formed as a result of conflict. DDR programmes shall not re-establish traditional power structures that may have contributed to the outbreak of violent conflict. DDR programmes must encourage reconciliation and inclusion, by consulting marginalized groups such as women, youth, minorities and disabled persons.*



*Warlords and mid-level commanders can become either cornerstones or spoilers of peace, depending on whether the DDR programme meets their interests and expectations or not. Buy-in to the peace and DDR process by these key players should therefore be one of the first considerations of planning and programme design. Either the national government, supported by the national commission on DDR (NCDDR), should deal with their concerns directly, which is the best method, or the DDR programme should devise a two-tier system of benefit packages, one for these commanders, whose expectations are usually quite high, and another for the rest of the demobilized participants/beneficiaries.*

## 4.2. Special participants/beneficiaries

As mentioned above, special consideration should be given to women, children, youth and disabled combatants *in each of the five categories discussed above*, but in group 1 in particular. Below are the key considerations that DDR practitioners need to take into account.

### ■ *Women*

Female members of armed forces and groups who participated in armed conflict in both combat and support roles shall not be left out of formal DDR processes. In the past, they often ‘self-demobilized’ and experienced difficulties and stigma during their reintegration into civilian life. When they were included in formal DDR processes, their special needs were often ignored. Their failure to reintegrate securely undermines overall security in communities and can destabilize the overall DDR programme.

Women have also been too often excluded from peace talks, and were not represented on NCDDRs and other decision-making bodies. It is vital to ensure that women participate in all stages of DDR, from programme development, to implementation, to monitoring and evaluation, and that their special needs are taken into account during all stages of the DDR process.



### OG 5.10 on Women, Gender and DDR

### ■ *Youth*

In many conflicts, a large proportion of members of armed forces and groups who participate in DDR programmes are between 15 and 24 years old. Many of these young ex-combatants may have been recruited as children, but were not demobilized until they became young adults. They have therefore not experienced normal socialization by families and communities; they have also often missed educational and vocational opportunities. DDR programmes shall consider the particular needs and potential of older children and younger adults participating in DDR programmes.



### OG 5.20 on Youth and DDR

### ■ *Children*

The recruitment of boys and girls under the age of 18 into armed forces and groups is illegal and one of the worst forms of child labour. The recruitment and use of children under 15 in armed forces and groups are war crimes. The UN shall actively seek the unconditional release of children from armed forces and groups at all times: during open conflict, while peace negotiations are taking place and before the establishment of a national DDR process.

Children formerly associated with armed forces and groups are stakeholders, and should be carefully consulted when DDR processes are set up. To successfully provide for children’s needs, programme development and implementation should

be participatory, and registration strategies should be adapted to meet the different needs, roles and responsibilities of children in each post-conflict situation. To ease their return to civilian life, children formerly associated with armed forces and groups should be integrated into programmes that benefit all war-affected children.



## OG 5.30 on Children and DDR

### ■ *The disabled and chronically ill*

Ex-combatants suffering from disability, chronic illness or substance addiction will, because of their health status, be ineligible for integration into new national security forces. They shall not be excluded from formal DDR processes, and they will require specialized assistance. DDR programmes will need to do the following to provide for their needs:

- establish the capacity for health screening, including voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) for HIV/AIDS, to be able to identify rehabilitation and/or treatment options (through referral to existing health care systems);
- provide specialized reintegration assistance, such as adapted living and vocational training, medical and psychosocial support to disabled and chronically ill ex-combatants, their families and caregivers, and those with substance addictions; and
- work closely with families of the disabled and chronically ill to ensure that they are well supported during reintegration.

Disabled and chronically ill ex-combatants should also be given opportunities to participate and have their concerns reflected in decisions that affect their treatment and reintegration. Special provisions should be made to ensure that disabled ex-combatants are able to reach screening and registration points, and are included in membership numbers provided by armed forces and groups.



*Where applicable, priority should be given to community-based care and independent living. Institutionalization of disabled ex-combatants should only be considered in extreme cases.*



## Section 8.3.3 of IDDRS 4.30 on Social and Economic Reintegration and section 8.4.2 of IDDRS 5.70 on Health and DDR

## 5. Partners

DDR cannot be planned and implemented in isolation from key national and international actors and stakeholders. DDR is a multi-stakeholder process, which necessarily requires the creation of information-sharing, consultation, coordination and partnership mechanisms that bring key actors and stakeholders together.


### 5.1. National actors


The responsibility for the DDR process rests with national actors and stakeholders. Ensuring the genuine, effective and broad ownership of DDR is vital for the

sustainability of the process. DDR practitioners should ensure that key national actors become genuine partners in DDR. Table 2.30.1 identifies key actions that should be taken in this regard:

<b>Political parties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Political parties should be involved in the development of DDR policy and institutions through a DDR coordinating body to ensure the success of a national DDR process.</li> <li>■ They should be involved in advisory or consultative mechanisms or through informal meetings, seminars and communication strategies.</li> </ul>
<b>Governments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Governments establish national institutions for DDR, such as a national commission on DDR (NCDDR).</li> <li>■ They ensure that line ministries responsible for longer-term national recovery and reintegration strategies are represented in an NCDDR.</li> <li>■ They maintain central oversight of national DDR programmes.</li> <li>■ They establish and support provincial and local authorities during the planning and delivery of DDR programmes.</li> </ul>
<b>The military</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The military decide, in consultation with other security actors, other parts of the government and other stakeholders, the strength of armed forces that will be downsized or disbanded.</li> <li>■ They represent armed forces in the development of DDR policies and institutions.</li> <li>■ They may further contribute by participating in coordination mechanisms and establishing military liaison officers in an NCDDR.</li> </ul>
<b>Signatory armed groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Armed groups that have signed the peace accord decide, in consultation with other security actors and stakeholders, the strength of signatory armed groups that will be disbanded.</li> <li>■ They participate in the development of DDR policies and institutions.</li> <li>■ They may further contribute by participating in coordination mechanisms and establishing military liaison officers in an NCDDR.</li> </ul>
<b>Non-signatory armed groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A framework shall be set up to secure buy-in and participation of armed groups that were not represented in political processes or formal institutional mechanisms for DDR.</li> </ul>
<b>CSOs, including women's organizations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ These organizations should be seen as stakeholders in the policy development and planning phases of DDR, and should be consulted through formal and informal mechanisms.</li> <li>■ They may become partners in DDR by providing individuals with opportunities for reintegration through employment and training as one of many economic recovery strategies.</li> </ul>

<b>The media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The media inform the public about and build its confidence in the DDR process.</li> <li>■ A DDR public information and communications strategy should be prepared to deal with the media.</li> </ul>
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 *National authorities may be perceived – rightly or wrongly – to favour one party over another. They may also reflect a fragile balance of power among parties to the conflict, and may lack the technical expertise and capacity to manage complex processes such as DDR. The UN plays a crucial neutral role in the DDR process, and its relationship with the parties should be clear and unambiguous.*

 *Potential spoilers should be identified early in the assessment phase and strategies developed to win their support. They should not be allowed to delay or hamper DDR in order to further their political, personal, commercial or criminal interests.*

## 5.2. International actors

While the responsibility for DDR rests with national actors and stakeholders, international actors are often called upon to provide strategic, technical, operational and financial support to DDR. National capacity also tends to be weak in post-conflict settings, and international actors play an important role in systematically strengthening and developing it.

**Table 2.30.2: Roles of international actors**

<b>The UN system</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) has overall responsibility for the UN system in-country, as well as direct responsibility for the UN mission, including the DDR unit/team. He/she may also represent the UN in political negotiations on DDR, although a technical DDR adviser is also recommended.</li> <li>■ Where there is no peacekeeping operation, the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC)/Resident Coordinator (RC) has the overall responsibility for DDR coordination within the UN system.</li> <li>■ UN specialized agencies, programmes and funds will be present in the affected country before the establishment of a peacekeeping mission, during its operation and after its exit. Together they make up the UN country team, headed by the RC.</li> <li>■ The RC usually becomes the Deputy SRSG responsible for development and humanitarian affairs, and integrated DDR units/teams report to him/her.</li> </ul>
<b>Regional actors/ organizations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ These may have been direct or indirect parties to the conflict, and DDR will have an impact on them when foreign combatants are repatriated.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ They need to be consulted in the planning phases of DDR so that appropriate coordination mechanisms are established to deal with the regional dimensions of DDR.</li> </ul>
<b>UN Member States and bilateral partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ These act as guarantors and supporters of political transition processes and as donors for peace-building and recovery programmes.</li> <li>■ They use diplomatic pressure to remove political obstacles.</li> <li>■ They may even assume responsibilities as primary international sponsors of particular components of DDR and security sector reform (SSR) processes.</li> </ul>
<b>The World Bank and regional development banks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ These have to date been involved in the financing, programme development and monitoring of a number of DDR programmes.</li> <li>■ The World Bank offers a number of funding mechanisms, including International Development Association (IDA) loans, credits and post-conflict grants. In addition, it manages multi-donor trust funds.</li> </ul>
<b>International NGOs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ These are often engaged in humanitarian and development activities in the countries where DDR programmes are established, and can become important implementing partners.</li> <li>■ Good coordination is required to ensure effective collaboration and avoid duplication of international assistance in support of DDR. Where possible, DDR practitioners should build upon existing coordinating mechanisms, e.g. those established by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).</li> </ul>
<b>International corporations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The actual and potential roles of these corporations should be understood when designing DDR programmes.</li> <li>■ They can support economic or employment programmes, and sponsor information and sensitization campaigns, and special initiatives within the DDR programme.</li> </ul>
<b>Research and policy centres</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ These contribute to the development, monitoring and review of past and current DDR programmes. The UN DDR online Resource Centre (<a href="http://www.unddr.org">http://www.unddr.org</a>) provides a list of national and international research and policy centres.</li> </ul>

## 6. Summary of key guidance on DDR participants, beneficiaries and partners

Participants in DDR programmes are made up of many different groups. It is vital to understand who these groups are and the special needs they may have in order to ensure the success of the DDR process.

- ✓ Special efforts should be made to include those often excluded from DDR programmes, such as women, children and the disabled.

- ✓ Clear and unambiguous criteria for eligibility to take part in a DDR programme should be established before the programme starts. Careful screening during the programme should systematically, fairly and equitably apply these criteria.
- ✓ DDR programmes cannot be planned and implemented in isolation at the central government level. Local authorities at the community level play an important role, particularly during reintegration, and should therefore participate in planning and implementation.
- ✓ International actors are also varied, and can play a range of supportive roles in DDR. It is vital to understand them and how they can best contribute to the process.