

# OG 4.60: Public Information and Strategic Communication in Support of DDR

## Objectives

This module will:

- ✓ identify how information and sensitization can help form attitudes towards DDR;
- ✓ outline audiences, materials and the means of communication available; and
- ✓ explain key factors for planning, designing, implementing and monitoring an information and sensitization strategy.

## 1. Introduction

Information and sensitization<sup>1</sup> play a key support function in the DDR process. They can help increase awareness among DDR participants and beneficiaries on what the DDR process involves, and encourage eligible people to participate in the programme. They also help receiving communities understand how the DDR programme will affect them and what will be expected of them.

The basic rule for devising an effective information and sensitization strategy is to have clear overall objectives derived from a careful assessment of the situation in which DDR will take place. DDR planners should define these objectives working with public information counterparts at the country level.

The Public Information Office of most large-scale UN peacekeeping operations usually includes the following components: a spokesperson's office, radio unit, TV unit, print and publications unit, and community outreach officers. The Spokesperson's Office, working closely with local advisers and the leadership of the

### **Box 4.60.1: Key questions in devising an information and sensitization strategy**

- What stage is the DDR process at?
- Who are the primary and secondary audiences for the information and sensitization campaign?
- What behavioural/attitude changes does the campaign want to achieve?
- What media are best suited to achieve these changes?
- What other organizations are involved and what are their strategies?
- How can the campaign be monitored?

peacekeeping mission, can assist the UN DDR unit/team to devise messages regarding the DDR process.

DDR-related information and sensitization can target a much wider audience than just those directly involved in or affected by the DDR process within a particular country. Messages can be devised to apply pressure on potential spoilers and to gain the support of both the international and local donor communities. These messages can be delivered in press conferences (including background briefings), through media interviews or in press releases.

## 2. Audiences

The intended audiences will vary according to the phase of the DDR process and the attitudinal change that DDR planners want to achieve.

**Table 4.60.1: Primary and secondary audiences for DDR-related information and sensitization**

	Who they are	Why they are important
Primary audiences: participants and beneficiaries	Political leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ They are signatories of ceasefires and peace agreements.</li> <li>■ They may or may not represent armed branches.</li> </ul>
	Military leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ They are key players in DDR, whose forces will be directly affected by the programme.</li> </ul>
	Ordinary soldiers of armed forces and groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ It is important to make a distinction between leadership and ordinary soldiers, because their motivations and interests may differ.</li> </ul>
	Women associated with armed forces and groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ It is important to cater for their information needs, especially those who have been abducted.</li> <li>■ Community women's groups should be informed about how to further assist women who managed to leave an armed force or group.</li> </ul>
	Children associated with armed forces and groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ These children need child-friendly information to help reassure them and remove any who are illegally held by an armed force or group.</li> <li>■ Communities should also be informed on how to assist children when they return.</li> </ul>

	Disabled combatants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is important to ensure that disabled combatants have access to information available to members of armed forces and groups. If not, it is essential to identify locations where disabled combatants are gathered and ensure that information reaches them.</li> </ul>
	Receiving communities, and families and dependants of ex-combatants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These groups need to be prepared to receive ex-combatants and their dependants.</li> </ul>
Secondary audiences: groups that influence the DDR process	Civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civil society can help bring about buy-in and support DDR.</li> </ul>
	International and local media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is important to keep the media supplied with accurate and up-to-date information on DDR to increase support for the process and avoid bad press.</li> </ul>
	Regional stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These are particularly important where conflict has regional dimensions.</li> </ul>
	International community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is important to gain the support of the international community for DDR, as it can help put pressure on the parties to implement and comply with agreements.</li> </ul>

### 3. Behavioural objectives

Information and sensitization can provide knowledge, change perceptions, and influence behaviour and attitudes of DDR participants and beneficiaries towards the programme. If successful, they will secure the buy-in of key stakeholders to the DDR process and will help neutralize potential spoilers. Table 4.60.2 outlines some specific types of behaviour that information and sensitization will aim to bring about:

**Table 4.60.2: Behavioural objectives during the DDR process**

Pre-DDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Armed forces and groups, including their commanders, understand, endorse and engage in the DDR process.</li> <li>The civilian population, civil society representatives and local government institutions in the receiving communities are aware of and endorse the DDR process.</li> <li>Local and international donors support and contribute to the DDR programme.</li> </ul>
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<b>Disarmament and demobilization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ DDR participants have realistic expectations, and know what is expected of them.</li> <li>■ Women combatants and other females associated with armed forces and groups participate confidently in the DDR process, and come forward to receive any special assistance provided for them.</li> <li>■ Commanders become willing to release unconditionally children associated with their armed forces and groups.</li> <li>■ Foreign combatants and cross-border communities participate in any repatriation activities associated with DDR.</li> <li>■ Connections are made in people's minds with ongoing justice and security sector reform, and arms control.</li> </ul>
<b>Reintegration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Communities are willing to welcome former ex-combatants and their dependants.</li> <li>■ Communities have reasonable expectations of what reintegration will bring.</li> <li>■ Victims of sexual violence and/or people living with HIV/AIDS are not stigmatized.</li> <li>■ Positive attitudes are developed for community disarmament and longer-term arms management to take place.</li> </ul>

DDR practitioners and public information experts should also develop information and sensitization strategies to counter messages distributed by potential spoilers, particularly when the latter gain control of radios and other media. Public information experts may:

- review national and local legal frameworks regulating the media;
- create special mechanisms to monitor and limit or prevent the distribution of messages inciting hate between armed forces and groups that undermine the DDR process;
- use other forms of media to denounce such counter-productive messages, including those that run against the smooth implementation of the DDR programme; and
- if those who are distributing these messages are considered legitimate role-players, approach them for negotiation to end the spoiling action.

## 4. Media


Many media can be used to deliver DDR-related information and sensitization messages. Visual media are the most effective means of communication, but television is often inaccessible to the majority of the population in most post-conflict countries. Print media will be limited by the level of literacy of the intended audi-

ence. The radio is widely used in post-conflict countries, but DDR practitioners and public information experts should not assume that women and children have the same access to radio as men.

DDR practitioners and public information experts should select the media they use in accordance with the habits and preferences of the audience they want to target and the specific country context in which the DDR programme takes place. It is also important to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each type of media, as Table 4.60.3 describes:

<b>Table 4.60.3: Tools or means of communication available for DDR information and sensitization</b>	
<b>Radio</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Messages can be broadcast on either FM or short-wave frequencies. While FM radio is usually available in a limited radius around urban areas, short-wave radio can be picked up anywhere. However, short-wave transmitters are costly, bulky and need a specialized technician for maintenance.</li> <li>■ To ensure access to radio broadcasts, especially among the most marginalized members of society, portable wind-up short-wave/FM radios may be distributed to possible participants and beneficiaries. A choice can be made between radios that can receive many stations and those that are pre-set to a particular frequency. The latter may be favoured if the DDR programming is broadcast only on one radio station.</li> </ul>
<b>Print media: leaflets, pamphlets, posters/cartoons, newsletters and magazines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ These last a long time and can therefore be passed from person to person.</li> <li>■ They can reach varying levels of literacy and age when they have little text and include graphic depictions, such as cartoons, photos and drawings.</li> <li>■ Audiences are as follows:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ <i>pamphlets/leaflets</i>: literate members of local civil society, locally based donors;</li> <li>□ <i>cartoons</i>: literate and illiterate members of society, excellent for children;</li> <li>□ <i>posters</i>: all local actors;</li> <li>□ <i>local newspapers</i>: local literate stakeholders; and</li> <li>□ <i>international newspapers</i>: international stakeholders.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Visual media: TV and video</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ These can be the most effective and attractive means of communication to all audiences, where available.</li> <li>■ Scheduling and frequency of TV broadcasts should be carefully planned to respond to the needs of the widest possible audience.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ In countries where TV is inaccessible to the majority of the population, video can play an important role in transmitting DDR messages. However, this requires electricity, a video player and a TV set, which are not always available.</li> <li>■ In some contexts, potential viewers may be prevented from watching films and videos; cultural constraints may mean that women, in particular, cannot watch films in public. In such cases, it may be possible to negotiate a women-only screening.</li> </ul>
<b>Interactive means: theatre, music, art, exhibitions, community meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ These allow for portraying ideas and concepts figuratively and can be based on local folklore, culture and humour.</li> <li>■ They are particularly effective in places where oral forms of communication are important.</li> </ul>
<b>The Internet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ This is particularly effective for communicating with the wider international audience, particularly the donor community, troop-contributing countries and international media.</li> <li>■ Print materials, digital video clips, and live or recorded radio programmes can be posted on the Web.</li> </ul>

 *DDR practitioners and public information experts should choose a radio or TV station to channel DDR-related messages with great care, as it may hold positions or views that are very different from UN principles and goals. As this is often the case in post-conflict countries, the UN generally has its own radio/TV station, or has made arrangements to air its own programmes from public and/or private local TV stations.*

Radio is one of the most accessible means of communication during a DDR programme.

#### **Box 4.60.2: Basic components of a DDR radio programme**

A DDR radio programme should include the following components:

- basic information on the procedure for DDR, especially eligibility, entitlements, and dates and locations for assembly;
- updates on the DDR process, such as the opening of demobilization sites and the inauguration of reintegration projects;
- debates on the return of the ex-combatants and their dependants to communities, and related issues such as reconciliation, justice and the peace process (possibly including interviews);
- information on the rule of law and judicial process that ex-combatants might be subject to;
- messages targeting women and girl combatants and those associated with armed forces and groups to encourage their participation in the process;
- messages on the rights of children associated with armed forces and groups, and the consequences of enlisting or holding them; and
- messages to help reunite separated family members, particularly children formerly associated with armed forces and groups and their families.

To ensure the appropriateness of messages and media, DDR practitioners and public information experts should pre-test them on local audiences through focus groups and questionnaires.

The following are key points to consider when testing messages, materials and media:


- Are images, illustrations, messages and/or footage clearly presented and correctly understood?
- Are messages culturally sensitive and convincing?
- Is the medium selected appropriate for the intended audience?
- Are there more effective ways of reaching the intended audience?

## 5. Specific planning factors

In addition to respecting DDR principles outlined in section 4 of OG 2.10, DDR planners and public information experts should take into consideration some specific planning factors when devising an information and sensitization strategy, as described in Table 4.60.4:

<b>Table 4.60.4: Planning considerations for an information and sensitization strategy</b>	
<b>Understanding the local context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Carry out a media mapping, including geographic reach, access, political slant and cost.</li> <li>■ Identify key communicators in the society (academics, politicians, religious leaders, commanders, theatre troupes and animators), gain their support and use them to channel DDR-related messages.</li> <li>■ Learn about literacy rates, and understand the role oral communication plays in urban and rural environments.</li> <li>■ Identify gender and cultural perceptions of women, the disabled, rape survivors, extra-marital childbearing, etc.</li> <li>■ Understand the present attitudes of community members towards combatants.</li> <li>■ Identify the local languages that are commonly used among audiences.</li> <li>■ Create DDR-specific material on a country-by-country basis to ensure context-specific and culturally sensitive messages.</li> </ul>
<b>Integration and/or coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Where possible, integrate public information officers into the UN DDR unit to ensure the best possible collaboration with the Public Information Office of the peacekeeping operation.</li> <li>■ If such integration is not possible, establish coordination mechanisms, such as weekly meetings or email groups.</li> </ul>

<b>Production time-lines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Take into account the lengthy time-lines for the production of information and sensitization materials, particularly where production and/or translation into several other local languages are/is required.</li> </ul>
<b>Financial and human resource requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Compile budgetary requirements and ensure the proposed budget makes provision for unforeseen expenses.</li> <li>■ Identify the number of public information experts and/or animators needed to implement the strategy in light of the media that will be used. Use ex-combatants and locals as much as possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identify measurable indicators (e.g. number, sex, age and location of people listening to DDR radio programmes) and determine means of verifying the effectiveness of the campaign (e.g. surveys, interviews, media reports).</li> <li>■ Make the necessary changes and adapt the information and sensitization strategy to achieve the desired effect.</li> </ul>

 **Do you know how to prepare a planning framework for DDR information and sensitization? Annex B of IDDRS 4.60 on Public Information and Strategic Communication in Support of DDR provides a matrix that can be used for this purpose.**

## 6. Summary of key guidance on public information and strategic communication in support of DDR

- ✓ The key to managing stakeholders' expectations about a DDR programme is being clear, realistic, honest and consistent about what DDR can and cannot deliver.
- ✓ Cultural sensitivity and appropriateness should be carefully considered when devising an information and sensitization strategy, to increase effectiveness.
- ✓ Information and sensitization messages that try to influence attitudes towards DDR should be devised by the people who know the target audience best: the locals themselves.
- ✓ Information and sensitization cannot correct a poorly conceived DDR programme. If this is the case, it will be difficult to convince potential participants to enter the programme or beneficiaries that the programme will bring positive changes to their communities.