

Profile of Accomplishments, Challenges and Lessons of DDR Inter-Agency Working Group in Developing IDDRS (2004 to May 2007)

Introduction: Between 2005 and 2007, a group of fifteen United Agencies worked together to develop an integrated set of United Nations standards for DDR. Through its first two active and formative years, the Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) on DDR achieved significant accomplishments in a number of key result areas, listed below. The experience yielded many lessons which were analyzed at the first face-to-face retreat of the full IAWG in May 2007. The challenges and lessons learned through the first two years of the IAWG and IDDRS development process are organized in relation to major areas of accomplishment. This framework serves a useful organizational purpose, but in reality, the lessons learned through one part of the experience made progress and further lessons possible in other areas: the lessons learned slip across categories in a more integrated way than the following narrative profile suggests. The lessons learned are drawn from experience with what worked to the group's success, and they reflect pooled intelligence based on that experience, more than rigorously codified and defined good practice. The purpose of the present document is to organize the lessons learned from experience to use for future reference and to share with others facing challenges of inter-agency processes to *deliver as one*.

Accomplishment 1.1: development and establishment of the Inter-Agency Working Group and its Terms of Reference

Accomplishment 1.2: development of United Nations integrated DDR standards (IDDRS) and common policy

Accomplishment 2: development of the on-line DDR Resource Centre

Accomplishment 3: pilot of integrated DDR units in Haiti and Sudan and deepening collaboration in other countries

Accomplishment 4: inter-agency simulation in spring 2005

Accomplishment 5: informing of in-depth General Assembly discussion on use of assessed contributions for DDR activities

Accomplishment 6: DDR training based on IDDRS to UN and EU staff, working with International Peacekeeping Training Centres to ensure DDR courses are based on IDDRS

Accomplishment 7: production of the Secretary-General's Report on DDR

Accomplishment 8: participation in OSAA/Government of Sierra Leone initiative on DDR and Stability in Africa (June 2005)

Accomplishment 9: consolidated strong working relationships between and among the fifteen members

New Areas of Challenge – to be incorporated into IAWG meeting process in 2007 (and lessons learned added to the profile)

Putting the Achievements and Challenges into Perspective

Accomplishment 1.1: development and establishment of the Inter-Agency Working Group and its Terms of Reference

Challenges	Lessons
Establishing the inter-agency working group as the vehicle for developing the IDDRS – when no coordinating mechanism exists	The leadership of a core group of agencies directly involved in DDR and committed to working together towards a common approach was essential at the beginning of the process. Willingness on the part of those agencies to invest the substantive time for formative discussions and resources required to “kick-start” the process were key, as was the vision for a set of standards and policy guidance that could make a difference on the ground.
Maintaining an open process across difference	The openness of the process to different agencies and entities with varying degrees and different kinds of involvement in DDR was part of its success,
Varying capacity to bring resources to the table	IAWG members recognized and accepted the varying capacity of each agency to allocate resources. The group did not expect or pretend that all members would allocate the same time, human and financial resources to the process. But all did contribute, and the process needed to incorporate those contributions as well as recognize them, even if individual ones were marginal in the process or not part of the entire product.
Symbolic and practical securing of “buy in” with a basic minimum contribution	All participating agencies were at one point asked to contribute \$10,000 towards the IDDRS, which quite literally ensured “buy-in” and that all had a stake in the programme. It may also have helped to even the playing field as all members were seen to have participated financially rather than the process being bankrolled by one party.
Differences in perspective of IAWG members	All players had to be engaged and to participate, but not everybody was looking from the same perspective. The key lesson from experience relates to flexibility and compromise for higher goals. Each entity had a different goal but all contributed to a final, single, clear product.
Organizational differences in perspective	Differences in perspective was a challenge at the level of individuals representing entities in IAWG, <i>and</i> participating agencies. Specifically in relation to organizational differences in perspective, the members had to “continue believing in this project, keep up our expectations and our sense of vision, and continue onward”, an approach which led to the achievement being realized.
Initial absence of a shared common understanding and purpose	In addition to flexibly recognizing and acknowledging differences, a major lesson learned was the importance of building a common understanding to bridge those differences. Along the way, tensions have to be able to be aired about why all the entities are involved.
Different priorities of different agencies determining varying levels of involvement and types of engagement	Priorities of each agency determine the levels of involvement, and types of engagement. Recognized to be the case with all inter-agency work, one lesson is that the current priorities of different partners need to regularly be taken into account and prepared for as much as possible. Some agencies will be faster than others in responding; some will be more determined to be involved than others, and every inter-agency process needs to anticipate, prepare for and manage this reality as part of the terrain.

<p>Communications is key – especially face to face</p>	<p>Communications is crucial to a successful inter-agency process, and has to be built into the process itself. Key is face to face communications, individuals knowing each other. “If we did not create this community of practice, if we do not expand it, if we do not introduce people to each other, there is no communication whatsoever.” Technology assists but cannot replace building relationships face to face.</p>
<p>Trust has to be built</p>	<p>A lesson in common across IAWG member entities was that the process was a trust-building one. At the beginning, the level of trust was not ideal. Through the two year process, people got to know each other, and to relate to each other in a trusting environment, working together. Once built, that mutual trust is the group’s capital.</p>
<p>Lack of funding for work planning and a related negative cycle</p>	<p>IAWG lacked funding to implement its workplan, so found it difficult to do so, but because of funding lacks, the Secretariat had insufficient resources. One important move is to develop a precise vision of how the IAWG will operate, from this point on, including with a joint resource mobilization strategy to implement the collaboratively developed work plan.</p>
<p>Resource mobilization, in particular to equalize variations in contribution</p>	<p>Resource mobilization was a real problem, as each member did not have the same level of resources available. “If resources are not equalized, if there is no redistribution of resources among agencies, the product cannot be on an equal level across the board.”</p>
<p>Terms of Reference get outdated, require revisiting and clarification.</p>	<p>The emphasis for two years was on developing policy and guidance in the form of the IDDRS. The IAWG recognizes that the ToR is outdated (reporting to a structure that no longer exists in the UN) and that the TOR for an IAWG requires periodic / regular review and updating.</p>
<p>Need to refresh common vision and clarify agency roles in relation to IAWG role, in roll-out and support for implementation</p>	<p>Along with a regular periodic review of the IAWG’s Terms of Reference, the group sees a need to regularly refresh and reinvigorate a common vision and sense of purpose. As the two year policy development process shifts emphasis to support for use and implementation of the IDDRS at country level, more clarity needs to be established in terms of what the IAWG wants to do as a group, and what each member needs to do within the respective agencies.</p>
<p>Getting approvals, endorsement and support for the IAWG and acceptance of the TOR at all necessary levels and through appropriate processes</p>	<p>Lead agencies had to be fully familiar with the way the UN system works and able to work with all of the necessary decision-making bodies and related networks so that the rationale for the IAWG was strongly presented and endorsed, and the Terms of Reference clearly defining a common goal were accepted. This required a longer time-frame but ensured the full integration of the IDDRS in UN system processes at all levels.</p>
<p>Securing principal level engagement, confirming senior level buy-in</p>	<p>The IAWG members had to set and follow an internal strategy to secure principal level engagement and senior level buy-in, in part with internal information, communications and advocacy, and in part through securing endorsement and support from the ECPS. (See time-line, attached, for illustration of key dates.)</p>

Accomplishment 1.2: development of United Nations integrated DDR standards (IDDRS) and common policy

Challenges	Lessons
<p>Developing the common approach with different mandates and cultures</p>	<p>With each organization having individual mandates and ways of operating, one of the largest challenges proved to be developing a common approach. Advocacy through senior management is identified as being particularly important, involving senior managers so they can talk to senior managers in other agencies. Taking continuous note of agency priorities is also important to success.</p>
<p>Deciding on structure and format in the policy guidance</p>	<p>Learning from and drawing on other examples of inter-agency achievements were valuable in the initial developmental phase. The Mine Action policy guidance also follows a modular format, a design that is also consistent with ISO standards. The policy guidance was developed in stages. Fifteen modules were developed first, then gaps identified, and further modules developed. That phased process permitted the decision about structure and format (normative, operational, and cross-cutting) to be made when the shape and scope of the over-all standards were emerging from the early base of collaboration.</p>
<p>Building ownership, across the system and participating agencies</p>	<p>Ownership is a pre-requirement, and the participation of all agencies, all actors, was essential in IDDRS success. <i>“Without that, the process would have been nullified, and in vain.”</i></p>
<p>Overlap of mandates</p>	<p>The IAWG realized early the challenge of overlapping mandates. Work began on the modules without a coherent analysis of the overlaps and how to avoid them. One way to do that would have been to work according to themes and areas of expertise, putting together resources and people working on similar things (although the different approaches, gains and levels of commitments are also recognized).</p>
<p>Independent parallel development of modules and related reduced opportunity to integrate differences and build synergy</p>	<p>Exploring ways to strengthen synergy and use the process of developing products together as a way of integrating and addressing differences is important for the development of future modules. More room is recognized to exist for this in the work of the IAWG.</p>
<p>Timelines for module production being inconsistently met</p>	<p>With other resource constraints, human and financial, agreed-to timelines were not always met, making the development and production process more complex and onerous on staff tasked with particular IDDRS roles, including at the Secretariat. One lesson is that just as timelines are essential, so is some flexibility, and even more, a key function to be tasked with taking decisions when time has run out.</p>
<p>Working for integration in a non-integrated reality – silo agency realities can work against integration, requiring people to stick with it until a sense of “we” becomes normal</p>	<p>Two years ago, all agencies had different approaches to DDR. The IAWG in developing the IDDRS had to work against the familiar grain of the UN system, which is agencies working in silos in a non-integrated way. Throughout the process, the number of times people did not agree “could not be counted”. There was no sense of “we”. Through leadership, holding on to a common vision, being willing to accept differences, among other factors, “we have a sense of we now”, which did not exist at the beginning. Now, the IAWG takes the “we” spirit for granted, and wants to do better, multiply and replicate it in the field.</p>

Accomplishment 2: development of the on-line DDR Resource Centre

Challenges	Lessons
Limited capacity of the IAWG to deliver in a timely way for the Resource Centre	The group had to be realistic, recognizing that this was a lengthy process. The Resource Centre had to be put together gradually. A key transferable lesson is to not overestimate the capacity of members to contribute, to accept that such processes will be gradual, and to avoid upset if the process is slow.
Establishment and maintenance of the Resource Centre	The challenge of establishing the Resource Centre as a nucleus and platform of knowledge was significant: IAWG recognizes that the maintenance and upgrading of it will be even more so. The next stage priorities are to create awareness around the resource centre, and to make it a real vehicle for communication and for knowledge.
Balancing collective ownership with necessary practical work	Collective ownership is recognized to be important, but the key balance to be struck is with the practical work that has to be put into it. Every step these processes require cannot be censored. A critical lesson relates to the importance of having a dedicated editor with the power to edit, to decide on products, and to place information without delay.
Information gathering and sustaining current information in the on-line Resource Centre	Sustainability is essential. The Resource Centre needs to be updated. All members need to contribute, and all need to take ownership and keep it updated.

Accomplishment 3: piloting of the Integrated DDR units in Haiti and Sudan and deepening collaboration in other countries

Challenges	Lessons
Sequencing - integrated pilots being conducted in a policy vacuum , as the policy was being developed in parallel	The Haiti and Sudan pilots suffered from being piloted in a policy vacuum, as the IDDRS was being developed in parallel. Substantial difficulties present in piloting something in a policy vacuum. To have a formulated policy and guidance presented to the integrated DDR units would have made a big difference to the pilots.
Absence of a support mechanism for learning from pilot experience in implementing new policy	A mechanism for supporting implementation pilots in applying new policy, and systematically extracting lessons learned from experience, remains a task for the future for the IAWG, because of the sequencing of the two integrated DDR pilot experiences.
Inadequate support and guidance in translating policy into specific practical actions	Policy implementation pilots need more clarity in terms of translating policy into practical action. Those supporting them need to provide direction and guidance on specific action to the units involved on the ground. Training and advocacy requirements need to be addressed, up front.
Different importance DDR takes in respective organizations and implications for integrated work at country level	In developing the IDDRS, different agencies had different perspectives, levels of awareness and engagement. Those are replicated in country contexts. In the DRC, for example, different levels of responsibility and levels of awareness exist about the IDDRS in general. Factors to be considered include the size of the mission, and partnerships, identified as being a particular help to the integrated approach, along with training.

<p>People doing the DDR work on the ground may have little knowledge of the IDDRS or UN structures</p>	<p>A lot of the work in DDR is being carried out by individuals with limited knowledge of the IDDRS and UN structures. A new partnership particularly important to an integrated approach on the ground at country level is UNV, specifically with respect to training.</p>
<p>Integrating different organizational cultures and modus operandi</p>	<p>Building on lessons learned from the pilot experiences results in two main recommendations. The first is that integrated pilots be implemented with country level operational and administrative guidelines, similar to an operational order, that details how each agency will address its components. The second is that integrated DDR (including integrated DDR Units) require the establishment of a UN Steering Group on DDR that is able to set policy and provide strategic oversight.</p>
<p>Lack of a common understanding of what “integrated” means undermines the possibility of more effective DDR through integrated approaches</p>	<p>The word “integrated” is used in different ways that mean different things: integrated DDR, integrated DDR team, and DDR happening within an integrate mission. A common understanding is needed. Integrated DDR in its current usage can mean two things:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) a DDR programme compliant with the IDDRS, conceived in a way to integrate different perspectives so the result is a comprehensive approach; 2) an integrated DDR team, which may or may not be implementing DDR programmes that are integrated. Two integrated DDR teams exist now, in Sudan and Haiti – UNICEF, DPKO and UNDP are implementing one programme. <p>Integration has to be “unpacked” to clarify whether it means having a joint programme, a joint team, a joint Steering Committee, a joint funding structure.</p> <p>The IDDRS defines a UN approach to DDR as being integrated because it ensures three points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) joint and coherent planning and funding and programming at country level; 2) adequate and appropriate links to related programmes, recovery and rule of law; 3) appropriate links with regional initiatives. <p>Establishing an integrated team with an agreed MOU of participating agencies is recommended as much as possible. The clarity in the standards is available to be brought to the development of shared understanding in real life.</p>
<p>Lack of clarity on roles reduces possibility of successful integration</p>	<p>Greater clarity is needed of the core task of people in integrated DDR units and other agencies – lesson from experience is mission and mandate creep example in Sudan.</p>
<p>Absence of institutional set-up undermines integration</p>	<p>The integrated pilot DDR units in Haiti and Sudan have established that the IDDRS is “on the mark”, but without clear institutional arrangements, even people committed to integration will have difficulty implementing the policy and standards. A clear MoU is needed detailing tasks, roles and responsibilities and agency relationships and administrative arrangements.</p>

Without attention to the human factor and a joint culture, integration won't happen	Common understanding of integration and clarity in role and arrangements are “necessary but insufficient” conditions. People in different agencies need to be both supported in and required to develop a common culture that can cut through and across silo identities, some parts of which will continue far into the future.
Support from central levels is needed to facilitate integration on the ground	The IAWG is able to facilitate on-the-ground integration through development of policy, strategy, Memoranda of Understanding that provide the detailed administrative and organizational arrangements that enable further and more successful integration. This enables synergy between HQ and field.

Accomplishment 4: inter-agency simulation in spring 2005

Challenges	Lessons
Preparing and empowering individuals for the task of using the product	The simulation exercise was viewed as a personal experience by some participants. Not all prepared equally or were able to digest the product being tested, to apply it. A phased preparation ahead of time is recommended, as well as a shorter duration.
Length of the simulation and varying participation	The process was difficult because individuals from different agencies had to commit for two weeks, which is long. Some appeared for two or three days, some stayed for the whole thing. A different time period, a shorter engagement from all the IAWG members, and a phased, consultative approach to preparing ahead of time are recommended.

Accomplishment 5: informing in-depth General Assembly discussion on use of assessed contributions for DDR activities

Challenges	Lessons
Coordination and reporting	Advocacy through senior management, and engaging influential member states, were highlighted as lessons learned with respect to coordination and reporting (applicable to a number of IAWG activities in the last two years, including this one.)

Accomplishment 6: DDR training based on IDDRS to UN and EU Staff, working with International Peacekeeping Training Centres to ensure DDR courses are based on IDDRS

Challenges	Lessons
Coordination and sensitization on benefits of coordinated training using IDDRS standards	The main lesson learned is to make strategic links with training partners and operational partners, in order to ensure that everybody understands how important it is that “we sing off the same sheet.” This does not always happen naturally and has at times to be encouraged (e.g. the IAWG was instrumental in bringing the training partners together to form the Integrated DDR Training Group).
Need to be fully familiar with and have contacts / networks with training centres	Having IAWG members with established relationships and contacts in the International Peacekeeping Training Centres, involved with DDR, as well as with UN and EU staff, facilitated the accomplishment in this area (as relationships did not have to be built from scratch).

Accomplishment 7: production of the Secretary-General's Report on DDR (A/60/705)

Challenges	Lessons
Strict timeline and IAWG capacity	The report is a good one, an appreciated document. It was a work completed under pressure, with a strict timeline. The IAWG is not the ideal mechanism to work under time constraints. If a different way to operate could be found, it would be better, but one conclusion is that the strict timeline was probably good, with the IAWG having to accept the time constraints and work within them.
Coordination and reporting	Advocacy through senior management, and engaging influential member states, were highlighted as lessons learned with respect to coordination and reporting (applicable to a number of IAWG activities in the last two years, this being one of them.)

Accomplishment 8: participation in OSAA/Government of Sierra Leone initiative on DDR and Stability in Africa (June 2005)

Challenges	Lessons
Coordination and reporting	Advocacy through senior management, and engaging influential member states, were highlighted as lessons learned with respect to coordination and reporting (applicable to a number of IAWG activities in the last two years, including this one.)

Accomplishment 9: consolidated strong working relationships between and among the fifteen members

Challenges	Lessons
Sustaining positive working relationships	<i>Advocacy and awareness</i> are critical to the future roll out and use of the IDDRS - advocacy at the highest levels of respective agencies, and awareness across the board. These two lessons are drawn from the IAWG experience so far.
Maintaining a strong IAWG through inevitable changes in representation	The constituency needs to be broadened within the agencies, at all levels including senior, and also expanded to have a list of eventual backups so if current members move, change jobs or go to mission, their agency is still kept informed and enabled to continue to participate meaningfully. While all IAWG members commit to trying to work on expanding the internal constituency, and identify an alternate, for a number of those for whom DDR is not a central priority, it may not be possible.
Participation in IAWG being in addition to people's Terms of Reference	Two factors are recognized as being particularly important in relation to the inter-agency work being "on top of" some people's regular jobs. The first is to encourage and maintain the sense of shared responsibility, and the second is to ensure people are acknowledged for the work they put into the process and its successes. Receiving acknowledgement of the achievements as a common effort, not at an individual level, is seen to enhance the quality of the work.

Challenges	Lessons
Burden sharing and building stronger relationships, capitalizing on all agencies' contributions and synergies	Some agencies are carrying a much greater burden than others. "We recognize we have different capacities and levels of engagement, and while recognizing that, there may be some room for reassigning tasks." Burden sharing applies to not only chairing meetings and driving the IAWG forward. It also applies to individual engagement. Those operating on the periphery of DDR can still engage in more substantive ways, not just taking on specific tasks, but making sure the IAWG as a whole benefits from energies of and synergies between different agencies.
Distinguishing key Secretariat roles – operational from coordination	Some tension developed in carrying out the role of the supporting Secretariat, relating to challenges of burden sharing. It proved difficult to distinguish an operational role and responsibility from the simpler coordination role required to take the group forward as a whole. Lessons have been applied directly to plans for support in the next years and other IAWG decisions relating to burden sharing and support.
Reaching consensus across 15 agencies	Reaching consensus across 15 agencies will always be a challenge. The IAWG recognizes that the more work that can be done on this, the better.
Managing partnerships	Partnerships require management. Although all members must buy-in and their perspective must be taken on board there is also a need for leadership (e.g. a chair or co-chairs). Focal points/agency contacts often change. When these happen it must be made known to the group and member lists/contact points need to be regularly updated. It should also be recognized that membership of a working groups may grow or shrink as its constituent members change.
Spin-offs	The success of the IAWG on DDR prompted a separate closer working relationship between UNFPA, UNAIDS and DPKO on HIV/AIDS which might not have happened otherwise (i.e. agencies self-identified that without the IAWG it would have been unlikely to have happened.)
Replicating the IAWG in the field	The IAWG has built a strong inter-agency partnership at headquarters level. This partnership must be taken from "the headquarters to the field", and as one IAWG member phrased it, "the positive spirit replicated at other levels".

New Areas of Challenge – to be incorporated into IAWG meeting process in 2007

1. As approaches to conflict and peace evolve, the IDDRS will have to evolve with it.
2. Although the bulk of the IDDRS can be applied in non-peacekeeping contexts, there is a need to develop guidelines on this subject.
3. Human rights and how the subject will be covered in the IDDRS is a next area for development.
4. Information sharing and knowledge management that contributes to IAWG results remains on the agenda

Putting the Achievements and Challenges into Perspective

Against the backdrop of the collected challenges and lessons learned through the first two years of the IAWG and IDDRS process, the fact of fifteen entities coming together and being able to accomplish the noted achievements is significant. Regardless of all the challenges, the group has crystallized an appropriate concept of DDR, and mapped this part of the evolution from conflict to peace. Before 2004, every agency had a different approach. Now, discussion is of a UN approach. This transformation is huge, not small.

The General Assembly decided to expand funding for aspects of demobilization for one year, addressing political, security and funding gaps, because the UN system as a whole was able to stand shoulder to shoulder and articulate a concept as to why it needed to be so. If there had been any doubt that the UN agencies were trying to get financial resources from voluntary as well as assessed contributions for the same set of activities, without coordination within the UN system, the policy would never have passed the General Assembly. Member States expect the UN system to be finely tuned in its coordination. Reorientation of concept was a transformation, not a minor achievement.

“I look at all the challenges we faced, and we’re still here today, and we have the funds to be here, and the resources, and the energy. To me, it was great. Every challenge raised was one challenge we were successful in dealing with.”