Independent Evaluation of Special Projects for Child Soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Final Report

Presented to

The World Bank’s Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP)

Contract No. 7137037

February 5, 2007
Executive Summary

1. In nations emerging from years of conflict, the discharge, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of children associated with fighting forces (CAFF) is more than a mere stabilization measure. Child DDR also serves to reconnect former child soldiers with their families and communities, to rehabilitate individual lives and to reweave the social fabric as a positive foundation for the future. To succeed, the specific components of child DDR must be executed in a timely and coordinated fashion. This is very difficult to ensure in such a complicated working environment as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

2. In the DRC, the Multi-Country Trust Fund provided funding, under the auspices of the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP), for four child-focused Special Projects. Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) was contracted to conduct an external evaluation of these projects. The following report provides the findings of the evaluation and complements a power point presentation provided by the team to stakeholders in Kinshasa upon the conclusion of the field work.

3. Within the two-year timeframe envisioned by the Congolese government’s Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Program (EDRP), the four projects evaluated here have achieved the following results, as of March 2006:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children Demobilized</th>
<th>Children Reunified</th>
<th>Children in Reintegration</th>
<th>Children Having Completed DDR Process</th>
<th>Percentage of Target</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Self-demobilized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21,827</td>
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<td>604</td>
<td>2.9 percent of 20,291</td>
<td>3,538</td>
<td>2,336</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Together, the four projects targeted 20,291 children for demobilization and reintegration over two years. The total target figure was compiled from IDA grants signed with each agency, including the various amendments. In March 2006, agencies reported to independent evaluators the demobilization of 21,827 children. As of March 2006, 12,511 children were involved in reintegration programming. This means that 9,316 are therefore either in transit or have been reunified and await vocational training and education support. The number of children who have completed the entire process is a mere 604, according to data provided by participating agencies (with the exception of UNICEF, who provided none). It is disconcerting that the social, educational and economic reintegration of children has only barely begun, due to operational delays and planning problems.

4. The four Special Projects managed to process 3,538 girls and 2,336 self-demobilized former child soldiers. All agencies assert that the number of girls accessed by their programs is in no way indicative of the total figure, currently unknown, but which is surely higher. As a general indicator, UNICEF claims that girls represent 16 percent of its national caseload, except in Ituri where they comprise 24 percent.
5. A mix of internal and external constraints is to blame for this performance shortfall. Some problems lie beyond the scope of the implementing agencies: conflict, political uncertainty, a deeply fractured socio-cultural sphere, a barren national economy, and a national infrastructure in ruins. But the primary factor is the delay to implement reintegration activities for reunified children. Many agencies did not prepare sufficiently for the remote working conditions in five of the seven provinces of operation: lack of physical access, high costs of air transport and the absence of reliable infrastructure all conspired to delay project start-up. Many project activities remain confined to urban areas. Follow-up supervision in rural areas is scant.

6. Evaluation findings combine output or process indicators and the performance of ongoing demobilization and reintegration activities for the 21,827 children at various stages within the program, as of March 2006. No children who had completed the entire process were visited; the majority of reunified children met were still waiting for their reintegration activities to begin and had received little agency follow-up. Apart from the low number of children having completed the DDR process in the two year period, the demobilization and reunification components of the children’s program have been executed in a satisfactory manner. An urgent focus is now needed on accelerating the much-delayed reintegration activities, particularly in rural areas. Donors should not consider the chapter of Congolese child soldiers closed. Many needs remain regarding their transition to productive civilian lives in their home communities.

7. The problem of re-recruitment continues, against which every agency struggles. It is an ongoing battle between agencies implementing reintegration activities and the armed groups who seek to re-recruit them. It is difficult to offer viable alternatives to military life given the country’s current economic climate, especially in the countryside. Serious delays in the reintegration component only increase the vulnerability of demobilized and reunified children: they are left without constructive activity and are an added burden on family. The likelihood of voluntary re-enrollment in armed groups or a slide into delinquency is high given the pressures of daily survival.

8. In addition to evaluating the design, implementation and outputs of the Special Projects, the evaluation team examined the contribution and impact of the Commission Nationale de Démobilisation et Réintégration (CONADER) to date. CONADER came into existence in late 2004, almost a year after the Special Projects had begun. Their primary role was to fill the gaps in child DDR until the National DDR Program and Commission could be formed and begin operations. Yet in its supervisory and coordination roles as lead agency of the children’s DDR process since its creation, CONADER performance has been inadequate. There is no proactive analysis of program gaps or resources needed. Supervision and program monitoring are weak. The requisite professional capacity to anticipate gaps in agency programming and to harness the energies of disparate actors towards a common work plan subject to shared indicators and evaluation criteria is lacking.
9. The work to integrate the Special Projects into the National DDR Program is currently accelerating but the MDRP goal of ‘national ownership’ is far from complete. Responsibility for the delay lies in part with implementing agencies, which had planned for gradual integration with the national program in their project proposals, but is also attributable to CONADER. If national integration is to take place, CONADER will need to quickly scale up to an acceptable professional standard. It can do this by accepting the training of UNICEF, which it has thus far refused, particularly in the area of proactive coordination and supervision.

10. Strategic analysis critical to the future of the children’s DDR program is underway within the MDRP concerning the integration of the Special Projects into the full National DDR Program under the tutelage of CONADER. Several implementing agencies report that they will be submitting funding proposals to CONADER. MDRP support to CONADER is currently planned to continue through March 2008.

Summary of Finding and Recommendations

11. Many child DDR needs remain: Given the specific needs of child soldiers before, during and after their DDR process, MDTF donors should recognize the importance of respecting the different needs and timelines of adult and child programs. As long as instability reigns in the eastern and southern provinces, the risks and realities of re-recruitment will persist. Lack of economic opportunities for demobilized youth aids and abets re-recruitment. **Recommendation:** DDR needs will continue long after the MDRP Special Projects Funding Window closes. Reticence by implementing agencies to seek funding from CONADER indicates a lack of confidence in the latter’s abilities as an ‘operational donor’, not that the child soldier phenomenon in the DRC is in any way resolved.

12. Goal of ‘national ownership’ stalled: The planned integration of the four Special Projects with the National DDR Program is delayed. Responsibility for this delay lies with all partners: CONADER for its lack of leadership and failure to decentralize; MDRP for its lack of effective stewardship and oversight regarding CONADER; and the implementing agencies themselves. More precisely, their unwillingness to accept their place within the larger framework of the National DDR Program, and UNICEF’s unsuccessful efforts to prepare CONADER to assume its roles, according to a binding timeline to guide that process. **Recommendation:** The evaluation recommends that the MDTF donors and the MDRP Secretariat create, by ‘executive fiat,’ a small mobile team composed of high-level representatives from CONADER, MDRP, UNICEF and the NGO Group. This official body would routinely conduct joint monitoring and evaluation missions to ensure proper supervision and coordination of ongoing activities in view of emerging needs. The body would also have the power to hear and resolve disputes at the provincial level and to adjudicate blockages. An effective, proactive CONADER and the prospect of national ownership go hand in hand. The latter aim is unrealistic under the current conditions.
13. **Obstacles are considerable; many agencies are underperforming.** Implementing agencies have provided adequate transitional care, but the number of children having completed the DDR process falls well below the expected two-year target. **Recommendation:** (1) Poor project management by implementing agencies and MDRP itself is one probable cause and should be investigated. (2) Agency capacity is an additional issue. The evaluation also found that Belgian Red Cross and IFESH possess neither the experience nor the managerial wherewithal to conduct operations in Equateur and North Katanga.

14. **Delays in social and economic reintegration:** In March 2006 agencies reported that 12,511 children were engaged with reintegration activities, but only 604 had completed the entire process – a mere 2.9 percent of the two-year target. Reintegration is the most demanding phase of the broader DDR process, but inadequate planning, preparation and resource allocation (particularly for logistics and transport) are the primary reasons for the delay. **Recommendation:** MDRP, implementing agencies and CONADER must show immediate concern for the urgent reintegration needs of reunified children to avoid voluntary re-enrolment in armed groups, delinquency, rejection by family and community, and other serious shortcomings in the Special Projects.

15. **Poor documentation practices:** Accurate documentation at the field level requires improvement, both in terms of numbers of children processed and the completion of the specific forms pertaining to each stage of the child’s movement through the system. At the time of the evaluation, UNICEF possessed no accurate figures on the number of child soldiers having completed the DDR process. **Recommendation:** Responsibility for the overall accuracy and stewardship of the national database rests with CONADER, a duty it has been loath to assume. The evaluation team recommends that responsibility for adequate documentation and reporting practices nationwide be accorded to the core monitoring and evaluation mechanism proposed above.

16. **National and provincial coordination and supervision is under-performing:** CONADER has so far failed to assume its coordination and supervisory responsibilities. Implementing agencies compensate for this failure through ad hoc planning and informal information sharing. **Recommendation:** The joint body recommended above should be tasked with ensuring systematic, proactive coordination by holding CONADER accountable to its commitments and responsibilities under the NDDR for the children over which it presides. A subsequent MDRP assessment of CONADER’s capacity to drive coordination single-handedly would follow one year later.

17. Section I of the report is the introduction. Section II provides background on the special projects generally and in the DRC in particular, including those supporting assistance to child soldiers. It also presents analysis and findings focused on the performance of MDRP supported child soldiers programs in the DRC as well as associated results to date. Section III focuses on lessons and best practices with an emphasis on improving efficacy of this and other such
programs. Conclusions and recommendations are summarized in Section IV in what is the final chapter of the report.
I. Introduction

1. Background to the Study

18. In 2003-04, the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) for the Great Lakes region launched a series of specialized activities focused on child combatants in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). These included discharge, demobilization, family tracing, reintegration and recruitment prevention. The MDRP’s Special Projects Window (SPFW) funded four sub-projects executed by international non-governmental partners in support of the DRC’s National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Program (NDDRP) for children associated with fighting forces (CAFF).

19. The MDRP Secretariat (MDRP-S), following a competitive selection process, contracted Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) to conduct an independent evaluation of the Special Projects funded by the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF). The focus was on both the national and individual beneficiary levels.

20. Focus of the study: The evaluation examined the NGO-executed Special Projects in terms of (i) assessed needs, (ii) best practices, (iii) MDRP strategic objectives and (iv) internationally established principles and policies concerning child soldiers and children associated with fighting forces (CAFF). The evaluation analyzed project design, operational issues, and project impact to evaluate progress in achieving program results to date. The evaluators also examined the buy-in of the DRC government, partners, project participants and other key constituencies – including the beneficiaries, their families and communities.

21. Why and why now? By initiating the evaluation in January 2006, the MDRP Secretariat sought to gather the information needed to inform changes at a juncture when most implementing partners were in the second year of their MDRP-supported activities for child combatants. The findings are also intended to help inform future programming in the DRC – including the integration of non-governmental efforts into the framework of the national discharge, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program – and elsewhere.

22. Who is the audience? The report is primarily intended for MDRP partners and grantees: the Secretariat, program staff in the DRC, donors, implementing agencies and Congolese counterparts, including the Commission nationale de démobilisation et réintégration (CONADER).

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1 Within this document, the acronym for the Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Program, MDRP, is used when referring to the actual program; ‘Secretariat’ refers to the World Bank unit overseeing it; while the ‘MDRP approach’ refers to the conceptual underpinnings of the program, as outlined in the MDRP’s founding document, the MDRP Regional Strategy (WB report no. 23869-AFR).

2 MDTF donors include Belgium, Canada, Denmark, European Community, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.
2. The Evaluation Team, Objectives, and Methodology

Composition and timing

23. The evaluation team consisted of a lead evaluator, Edward Rackley, accompanied by Steven Morgan, a child protection specialist, and Quentin Kanyatsi, a researcher and field facilitator. Following meetings in Kinshasa from January 29 to 31, 2006, the team traveled to Ituri District (Orientale Province) and worked there until February 7. The team continued to North and South Kivu through February 14, and then on to North Katanga and Maniema for a total of 7 days before returning to Kinshasa and departing for Equateur from February 28 to March 4. From March 5 to 11, the team continued interviewing key partners in Kinshasa. Two presentations of preliminary findings were given: the first on March 6 for implementing partners and key MDRP personnel, the second on March 9 for MDTF donors and MDRP staff. These briefings were an opportunity to register initial feedback from stakeholders.

Objectives

24. The evaluation aimed to assess the design, operational arrangements and outcome of the MDTF-financed components of the Special Projects at national and local levels, including beneficiaries. It sought to provide recommendations for both the DRC and the wider region. Finally, as the Special Projects were funded prior to the activation of the National DDR Program, the degree to which implementing agencies had successfully transitioned into the NDDR Program was also evaluated. By the time the initial SOW for the evaluation was issued, the Special Projects grant to UNICEF for institutional support to CONADER had already been effective for a year, providing a chance to review its performance along with that of the other implementing agencies.

Methodology

25. Prior to leaving for the field, the DAI team endeavored to meet with the task manager and other World Bank and Secretariat staff in Washington to discuss the evaluation approach, review key documentation and identify key stakeholders to be interviewed. Our team mobilized 48 hours after receiving the contract, but the Task Manager was traveling and other key staff were not available to meet. Neither were other MDRP-S technical and management personnel.

26. The evaluation was largely field driven – including field data, interview results, analysis and observations from Kinshasa and site visits throughout the country. The MDRP task manager engaged with the team via email, but interaction with MDRP staff in the field proved difficult. No internal MDRP reports or memos were made available to the team while in the DRC.

27. The tools used by the evaluation team included:
• field visits to agency offices and project sites, both rural and urban;
• reviews of monitoring reports, statistical findings and information management systems (using random selection);
• structured interviews, written and oral, with agency management, national staff and local partner groups;
• semi-structured focus group discussions with beneficiaries, local authorities and village-level associations including community protection networks and parent associations.

28. The semi-structured interviews employed a probing approach that proceeded opportunistically from the general to the specific. A survey of implementing agencies was conducted which served as a help anchor and complement the structured and semi-structured interviews as well as focus group discussions.

29. DRC is an exceptionally difficult working environment. The DAI evaluators faced the same difficulties as implementing agencies, particularly insecurity and lack of infrastructure. Access to several areas was difficult, especially in North and South Kivu, Ituri and North Katanga. Site visits in these provinces were predominantly urban and peri-urban. The result is a clear urban bias to the evaluation, particularly in the review of transit centers and reintegration activities. Even where security was better, such as southern Equateur, lack of infrastructure made it impossible to visit rural reintegration activities and reunified children as thoroughly as was possible with urban children.

30. Finally, the quality of quantitative data and statistics generated, maintained and managed by the implementing agencies and CONADER via the national database was, with rare exception, so consistently poor that we determined it unreliable and of marginal utility in assessing program output and performance.

II. Evaluation of Child Soldier Programs in the DRC

2.1 MDRP-funded Child Soldier Special Projects in the DRC

31. MDRP efforts in the DRC have focused on assisting the demobilization of up to 150,000 adult combatants, including an estimated 30,000 child combatants. Specific projects focused on child soldiers were funded prior to the start of the National DDR Program, which is considered best practice in field of child protection generally and child DDR specifically.3

3 The difficulty of estimating the numbers of children associated with fighting forces in times of war is widely recognized, and informed agencies estimate that the number of to be roughly 10% of the number of adult combatants. In 2004, the NDDR initially cited 33,000 CAFF as its target estimate (or 10% of estimated combatants countrywide).
32. Special projects have been central to the MDRP since its inception in 2002. They provide a vehicle for DDR support in atypical circumstances or to specifically targeted groups, and thus complement the main national programs as well as the regionally focused efforts. As the Special Projects got underway and the large (but still inestimable) number of self-demobilized children became apparent, the number qualifying for direct assistance has accordingly risen and surpassed the initial 30,000 estimate.

2.1.1 Background of Special Projects in the MDRP:

33. The Special Projects Funding Window (SPFW) exists to meet urgent needs:

(i) Demobilization and reintegration in areas of a participating country outside the control of the relevant government authorities

(ii) Support to special target groups (e.g. child soldiers, ex-combatants settling in third countries); and

(iii) Immediate demobilization and reintegration needs where national capacity is insufficient.

Guidelines for the Special Projects indicate that NGOs and UN agencies must design and implement projects according to local needs and in consultation with national authorities. Special projects must also be consistent with MDRP guiding principles, including consistency in approach, national ownership and transparency in implementation.

34. In original MDRP financing estimates, Special Projects were not expected to exceed $37.5 million out of the $500 million total MDRP value. However, within the context of delays in advancing national programs, Special Projects acquired significance beyond their proportion of the MDRP’s overall budget. They became a means to demonstrate MDRP’s relevance as the program sought to establish itself.

35. Nevertheless, Special Projects were slow in taking hold during the first half of MDRP. Only $2.5 million were disbursed in 2003-2004 (to UNDP Angola). During 2005, commitments and corresponding disbursements of Special Projects funding increased considerably.

36. During the first two and a half years, the MDRP failed the expectations of many partners, donors in particular. The implementation of core activities was slow. Special projects also suffered delays, though the reasons lay mostly beyond the control of the Secretariat: lack of progress on the political front, lack of political commitment on the part of the parties to the
conflicts, limits inherent to capacity-building, delays triggered by World Bank administrative requirements, and the lack of pre-negotiated framework agreements with UN partners.  

2.1.2 Genesis of Child Soldier Programs in the DRC

37. The Special Projects mechanism provides a set of broad strategic orientations rather than specific guidelines for programs focusing on child soldiers. The most important requirement is that the Special Projects both strengthen national capacity and complement national DDR programs. Ultimately, the transition of the projects to government supervision and national oversight should be apparent in agency project proposals.

38. In DRC, two MDRP Special Projects implemented by UNDP, the Mécanisme de réponse rapide (MRR) and ComRec, helped respond to gaps through rapid-reaction mechanisms to support emerging DDR efforts. The MRR for example provided bridge funding to CONADER until MDRP funding became available. British funds to UNICEF in 2004 and 2005 helped initiate the type of activities that MDRP Special Projects for child soldiers would subsequently expand.

i. Prior to the MDRP (UNICEF’s role before the MDRP)

39. UNICEF has been active in the demobilization of children associated with the fighting groups in DRC since 1997. In early 2003, UNDP tasked UNICEF, as the lead international agency for child protection in the country, to lead the development of the child DDR program in collaboration with the Transitional Government. A series of workshops followed, and an interim national DDR program for children was established. Under the current Special Projects grant, UNICEF is charged with two fundamental objectives.

40. UNICEF’s first objective is the finalization of the NDDRP in collaboration with the DRC government and the major child protection actors. In parallel, a large training component targets key staff from CONADER, the national commission for DDR, in order to accelerate national ownership and specifically to develop a national coordination strategy for child DDR. More information on this training is provided in the annex. Given the size of the country, the low level of institutional capacity and the scale of the child soldier phenomenon, this objective alone was an enormous undertaking.

41. The second UNICEF objective is purely operational and involves the design and implementation of projects to assist demobilized children, create and disseminate information related to child DDR, and to set up and deploy rapid response mechanisms in the event of mass spontaneous demobilization. In its proposal for Special Projects funding, UNICEF estimated that 23,000 children were involved with armed groups throughout the country and that 3,000 of them would benefit directly from the projects. All 23,000 would benefit indirectly from the

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4 MDRP Mid-Term Review (2005).
national scope and reach of the Operational Framework, a set of standardized practices and activities to be implemented by all child protection agencies working with CAFF across the country.

Table 1: Chronology of Key Events in Child DDR in DRC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2001 | January: Creation of BUNADER.³  
July: MOU between UNICEF and RCD-Goma to release 2,600 children in Kivus  
December: DRC government army (Forces Armées Congolaises) agrees to release 300 children. |
| 2003 | April: National workshop to construct common strategy for child DDR in Kinshasa.  
April: Constitution of DRC Transitional Government ratified.  
July: Creation of Comité Technique de Planification et de Coordination du DDR (CTPC).  
August: BUNADER dissolved.  
September: Interim Operational Framework presented by Protection Working Group to CTPC.  
September: SC-UK signs first IDA grant for assisting 2,000 children.  
October: CARE and IFESH sign their first IDA grant to assist 733 children each; IRC signs first IDA grant to assist 1,000 children.  
December: Dissolution of CTPC; creation of CONADER by presidential decree. |
| 2004 | March: First training of “Emergency response team” to train child DDR specialists across the country (project developed and run by UNICEF and SC-UK). These trainings are ongoing.  
April: Belgian Red Cross signs IDA grant to assist 2,400 children.  
May: World Bank Board approves the Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Project (EDRP), developed within the framework of the MDRP.  
July: Official launch of the National DDR Program. Despite the absence of identification efforts, 33,000 children are officially estimated across DRC.⁶  
October: Final version of Operational Framework, elaborated by Protection Working Group, presented to CONADER.  
December: UNICEF signs IDA grant for 3,000 children. |
| 2005 | April: IFESH signs second IDA grant for 2,215 children, IRC signs second IDA grant for 2,870 children, and CARE signs second IDA grant for 2,840 children.  
May: Official presentation of Operational Framework by CONADER.  
June: SC-UK signs second IDA grant for 2,500 children. |
| 2006 | January – March: Independent Evaluation of Special Projects |

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³ BUNADER, precursor of CONADER, was created as an inter-ministerial body to coordinate the national DDR process. It linked the Defense and Human Rights Ministries.

⁶ It is important to note here that the release and demobilization of CAFF preceded the NDDR. These efforts continued apace independently of the national program and CONADER as these latter went to scale.
42. The design of the program: How was it supposed to work? The Special Projects are discrete grant agreements between the MDRP and implementing agencies. The agreements sought to (i) secure the release, demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers, trace and identify families of origin, (ii) establish mechanisms to prevent re-recruitment and (iii) ensure the sustainable integration of children back into the families and communities of origin. The MDRP considers the latter as a major factor in the long-term success of the program. Though the agreements were signed in advance of the National DDR Program, the activities initiated through the Special Projects were intended from the outset to integrate into the NDDRP.

iii. Special Projects established and their specific objectives

43. To implement the assistance to child soldiers, Special Projects with funding from the MDTF were awarded to the following implementing agencies:

- The Belgian Red Cross
- The ‘NGO Group’ – CARE International, the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH), and the International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- Save the Children UK (SC-UK)
- The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)

44. Table 2 provides a synopsis of Special Project objectives of each of the referenced implementing agencies.

**Table 2: Summary of Objectives Special Project Implementing Agencies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Project Implementing Agency</th>
<th>Program Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgian Red Cross</td>
<td>Training of staff and officials in DR, sensitization and prevention; reintegration activities for 2,400 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO Group (CARE, IFESH, IRC)</td>
<td>Assess feasibility of children release from armed groups in MA, KT and OR; community sensitization and training; develop and implement DR plan for 10,391 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save the Children-UK</td>
<td>Develop / implement strategies to reach girls involved with armed groups; Build capacity for government and NGO partners in child protection and child DDR; Implement socio-economic reintegration programs; and Strengthen community protection capacities for 4,500 children and 3,500 OVC in SK, NK and OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>Assist GoDRC to accelerate implementation and ownership of NDDRP; implement child DDR activities nationwide for 3,000 children (primarily North EQ, SK, NK, OR)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The individual grants were intended not only as stand-alone projects by independent implementing agencies, but also to contribute to higher level objectives, including increased
national capacity and ownership to address the child soldier phenomenon and the conditions that gave rise to it.

45. Table 3 summarizes basic process indicators from each of the four Special Projects under evaluation. The last columns highlight the limited achievements of the grants and the large backlog of children currently in the reintegration phase.

**Table 3: Overview of MDRP Funding and Performance by Implementing Agencies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Project</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Duration &amp; Province</th>
<th>Children who have completed the program</th>
<th>Percentage of target</th>
<th>Children Currently in Reintegration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgian Red Cross</td>
<td>$2.15 m</td>
<td>May 04 - May 06; Kinshasa &amp; South EQ</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>4.2% of 2,400</td>
<td>195 [8% of 2,400]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO Group</td>
<td>$9.16 m</td>
<td>Apr. 03 – Mar. 05; OR, MA, KT</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>2.6% of 10,391</td>
<td>5,863 [56% of 10,391]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save the Children UK</td>
<td>$5.37 m</td>
<td>June 03-June 06; OR, SK, NK</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>5.1% of 4500</td>
<td>3,092 [68% of 4,500]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>$4.99 m</td>
<td>Jan. 05—Jan. 07; Nationwide</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,361 [112% of 3,000]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$21.67 m</strong></td>
<td><strong>Concentration in seven provinces</strong></td>
<td><strong>604</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.9% of 20,291</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,511 [61% of 20,291]</strong></td>
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### 2.1.3 Institutional Arrangements, Specific Roles and Responsibilities: UNICEF, NGOs, CONADER, MDRP Secretariat

46. In addition to the Special Projects, the evaluation examined the impact to date of CONADER, which came into existence in late 2004 almost a year after the Special Projects began. The primary role of the Special Projects was to meet critical needs in child DDR until the National DDR Program and Commission could be formed and begin operations. Having nominally assumed its roles and responsibilities, CONADER’s supervision and coordination performance has been sub-standard. It lack the requisite professional capacities and institutional instincts specific to program monitoring, characterized by its inability to anticipate gaps in agency programming or to coordinate disparate actors under a common work plan with shared performance indicators and evaluation criteria. UNICEF has invested significantly—but with few results—in helping CONADER to develop its capacity to coordinate and supervise child DDR efforts.

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7 The number of current beneficiaries corresponds to CAFF engaged in reintegration activities as of March 2006. A more accurate figure would have to include CAFF currently in transit care structures plus those reunified but still waiting for reintegration support. These figures are constantly in flux, which complicates a determination of the total current caseload of the four Special Projects.

8 A total number for CAFF who have completed the DDR process was not available as of March 2006 because UNICEF did not provide the evaluation team with its beneficiary statistics.
2.2 Performance of Programs

47. Helping children associated with fighting forces disengage from armed groups is more than a security measure to help stabilize countries emerging from years of conflict like DRC. Demobilized child combatants can reconnect with families and communities by re-entering and contributing to the broader social fabric. The specific components of child DDR – demobilization from military life, reunification with family, and integration into communities – should be sequenced, timely and well coordinated. The subsequent analysis focuses primarily on design and implementation issues, including instances where internal or external factors influenced performance.

48. Experience shows that the greatest obstacles to lasting results often lie with factors beyond the control of the programs themselves. In the DRC, however, while all implementing agencies confront obstacles that include ongoing conflict, destroyed infrastructure, political uncertainty, deeply fractured socio-cultural relations and a barren economy, some have clearly performed better than others.

49. With over half of the time elapsed in the scheduled two-year timeframe of the Special Projects the combined activities undertaken by implementing agencies to support child soldiers have generated the following results, as of March 2006:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children Demobilized</th>
<th>Children Reunified</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

The numbers of children demobilized and reunited with family members are positive. But reintegration, the final critical component of the DDR process has suffered from delays and poor performance. On the whole, implementing agencies have managed to provide the existing caseload with adequate transitional care while their families are located and they are returned to their community of origin. However, performance on reintegration falls well below the expected two-year target for children seeking to complete the full DDR process.

50. Table 4 below presents the overall results achieved by each implementing agency, according to the data provided to evaluators in March 2006.

Table 4: Outputs by Individual Agencies Implementing Special Projects

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⁹ UNICEF did not provide beneficiary figures to this evaluation, and is currently reinforcing and training its field staff in order to rectify this program failure.

¹⁰ Insufficient documentation exists in order to determine whether girls were officially or self-demobilized. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the majority of registered girls are self-demobilized.

¹¹ All agencies except for UNICEF contributed to this figure.
2.2.1 Direct services provided to children through Special Projects

Overall performance

51. The four Special Projects anticipated assisting 20,291 children for demobilization and reintegration, according to the combined figures in existing MDRP grants held by each agency. As of March 2006, agencies reported that 21,827 children had been demobilized or discharged – a figure exceeding the combined target of the Special Projects by nearly eight percent. Over 85 percent of the anticipated beneficiaries were reunified with family members. Of the kids who have been reunified, 12,511, or 61 percent, were engaged in reintegration efforts. The combined total of child soldiers in the MDRP-funded DDR process having completed the entire process is 604, or 2.9 percent of the overall two-year target with over half of the Special Projects’ established timeframe elapsed.

52. Data from implementing agencies since 2004 indicate a progressive increase in demand for services, with occasional peaks associated with release. While reunification and reintegration efforts continue, the volume of children entering the process has been in steady decline over past months, a trend likely to continue. Agencies can now focus on children already in the process and on the prevention of re-recruitment.

Results of activities undertaken by agencies for child soldiers

53. Late start on reintegration activities: At the time of the evaluation, the social, educational and economic reintegration of children had barely begun, due to operational delays. The agencies reported that 12,511 children are currently engaged in reintegration activities, meaning the remaining 9,316 were either in transit (the majority) or had been reunified and were awaiting reintegration support.

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12 Generally, agencies do not keep separate records of official and self-demobilized girls; hence the likelihood of duplication among reported total figures in the ‘girls’ and ‘self-demobilized’ categories.
54. Agencies have been less successful with the third and most challenging phase of child DDR: the social and economic reintegration of the child in his or her home community. Reintegration delays are due primarily to the inability of agencies to adapt to difficulties encountered during project implementation. Agencies appear overwhelmed by demobilization and transit activities, with little time, resources or planning dedicated to the preparation and execution of reintegration activities. Specific delays were noted in procuring and distributing start-up kits for children who had completed their professional training (in some cases, waiting over a year). Another example of poor planning is the absence of local labor market studies to confirm the viability of vocational training relative to market supply and demand. As noted, agencies report that 12,511 children are currently involved with reintegration activities (61 percent of the total target). Only 604 children have completed the entire demobilization and reintegration process. This figure may be higher (for March 2006) but again, UNICEF did not provide beneficiary figures to the evaluators.

55. **Urban bias:** The evaluation team found that the more remote a child was from urban areas (and agency offices), the less likely s/he was to receive reintegration assistance or follow-up visits. Reintegration efforts therefore tend to be better organized and supervised in urban areas than in rural areas, but the latter is where most children return. Reaching remote areas is daunting, and logistics and procurement are much more difficult in rural areas. It is impossible to cover an entire province with one vehicle and a small fleet of motorcycles, yet certain agencies (IFESH and BRC specifically) have only this at their disposal. The United Nations Mission in DRC (MONUC) is reducing its presence in many provinces, and the UN flights used to transport materials and transfer CAFF between provinces are increasingly scarce. Such challenges were foreseeable – and given that the implementing agencies had prior experience in the DRC, it is disappointing that these operational challenges were not more effectively anticipated.

**Transit Centers vs. the Transit Family approach:**

56. **Transit Centers:** In terms of transit care structures, all but one agency uses the Transit Center (CTO) approach as their principal transit care mechanism, although all also use the Transit Family structure (TF) on occasion. IRC only uses the Transit Family approach in instances of spontaneous mass demobilization, when they transform their Day Centers into temporary CTOs.¹³ The quality of care provided at the CTOs evaluated was seen to vary greatly. Some failed to provide adequate measures of child protection.¹⁴ Many CTOs had low or no occupancy, with all salaried staff on permanent stand-by, suggesting that the TF system

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¹³ A Day Centre is a location where CAFF in transit families congregate during weekdays to receive medical, educational and psychological support and occasionally to access vocational training.

¹⁴ See individual agency analysis for details. Adequate measures for child protection would include adequate facilities, protection mechanisms for girls, screening and support regarding sexual abuse, improved sleeping arrangements (one bed per child, separation by age group), social workers and security guards on site at night, regular follow up for children with TFs, etc.
is more flexible, cost efficient, and more adapted to the fluctuating and unpredictable numbers of CAFF in the system at any given location.

57. **Transit Family approach:** A successful example of engagement at the community level is the Transit Family model. This model appeared to respond better to individual children needs and facilitated an easier return to their community – with caveats. SC UK staff in Bunia, who had previously utilized the CTO model, commented that, proportionately, the Transit Family children were better prepared to return and found it easier to adapt to life in the family structure. IRC and IFESH staff echoed this perspective. Positive feedback came from both family and children interviewed. Some children commented that the transit families were their “second families”—all said they would try and visit after they returned home. Most transit families were also positive about the experience of having hosted these children in their homes, citing very few difficulties (except for the infamous Muanda children, who burned down transit family homes in Mbandaka). Transit Families are also less expensive than CTOs, which have fixed costs regardless of how many children are in the centre. Transit families receive monthly in-kind support, and despite these additional expenses to agencies, their overhead costs remain low.

58. A striking aspect of the Transit Family approach was the number of parents who noted that although the in-kind assistance they received was welcome, taking a child into their home gave them an opportunity to help in the rebuilding of their country. The Transit Family approach allows an exchange of experiences and perspectives between CAFF and community members, while allowing the family to feel civic pride in assisting in the development of peace in their country.

59. **Transfer of children between provinces:** Significant problems were noted with the transfer of children between provinces. Typically, transferred children arrived lacking correct documentation, were unaccompanied and were uninformed of the steps in the process. The gravest concerns related to transfers to and from areas where CONADER operates through local partners (Bas-Congo, the Kasais and Bandundu). In several such instances, CONADER wrongly identified adults as children—the Muanda group being the most egregious instance. Once in the system, these adults created serious unrest during their errant journey from Kitona to Mbandaka, where they burned down homes and shops, and then on to the various Eastern provinces, where they continued to harass agency staff and incite other CAFF to vandalism and physical violence against CTO staff.

60. **Tensions due to non-standardized kits:** At various junctures during the DDR process children receive different types of kits – clothing, shoes, toiletries, sheets, other personal articles. Those enrolled in an economic reintegration program are supposed to receive a vocational start-up kit after completing a period of professional training. Problems and even violence arise from the fact that different kits vary significantly between agencies – a source of tension and even violence against agency staff when children compare kit contents and demand the same or better of their agency minders.
61. **No standard practice for ‘Special Groups’ (self-demobilized, girls, 16-18-year olds):** No common practice has been established for any of these special groups. Strategies to reach and incorporate them differ among agencies.

62. **Self-demobilized:** Discussions with all agencies revealed that planning for self-demobilized groups was a low priority relative to the challenge of establishing a working program for official CAFF (i.e., those entering the process via official Orientation Centers). Understandable though this may be, insufficient planning for this category of spontaneous beneficiaries left several agencies (IFESH, BRC particularly) with inadequate resources to deal with the unprecedented numbers. This is especially worrying as self-demobilized have accounted for a strong proportion of children in the DDR process. CARE has processed more self-demobilized than official children, for example, with serious consequences for resources earmarked for reintegration start-up kits. BRC did not plan for them at all and is now debating how to cope with their presence. Agencies argue that many more self-demobilized remain undocumented and that, in general, their needs have not been met. Girls continue to be affiliated with the armed groups, but are not recognized as combatants. Limited information about these children exists. Under the Cape Town Definitions they clearly fall within the category of children associated with fighting forces. Anecdotal evidence from beneficiary interviews leads us to conclude that, except for Maniema, many self-demobilized remain outside current programming.\(^{15}\)

63. **Obstacles to reaching girls:** An important obstacle to reaching girls is that they do not perceive themselves as ‘associated with the fighting forces’ – a view shared by many military commanders charged with presenting CAFF at the Orientation Centers.\(^{16}\) In order to survive, many of the girls have slipped into prostitution around armed camps. Others perceive themselves as wives or cooks and prefer these social categories to that of child soldiers, which appears to yield little economic benefit or security and much social stigma. Consequently, both as a result of agencies’ inability to reach these children and of these children’s own self-perception, they continue to fall outside the DDR process.\(^{17}\)

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\(^{15}\) A series of interviews with a number of actors related to the child DDR process, including regional military commanders, confirmed CARE’s position that very few CAFF remain in Maniema. It serves to recall that Maniema has seen active, if informal and undocumented, CAFF demobilization since 1999.

\(^{16}\) UNICEF Goma and the Kalima community leaders in Maniema raised this issue.

\(^{17}\) Suspicion of the official process by girl CAFF is reinforced by the fact that very few girls are involved in reintegration activities. In Ituri where a CTO and numerous activities are directed towards girls (led by COOPI in Ituri, a UNICEF partner), far more girls have passed through the formal DDR system. This is exceptional. Although other factors surely influence their participation, it is probable that the high-profile support offered to girls in Ituri, coupled with a cadre of trained staff undertaking sensitisation of military and communities, is responsible for this success.
64. *Programming for 16-18 year olds*: Beneficiary needs vary significantly according to age and gender, even among children. Views on the proper approach to the 16-18 year old age group are divided. Some agencies maintain that they require special reintegration programming, just as 8-10 year olds may have particular needs. Other agencies defend the current approach, arguing that 16-18 year olds inevitably choose what is right for them among available options, and vocational training or income-generating activities tend to be their primary pursuit. It should be noted that, outside the DRC, 16-18 year olds are increasingly allowed to participate in adult programs while remaining under the supervision of trained social workers.

65. *Challenges posed by re-recruitment continue*: Individual agencies have reported ongoing efforts by armed groups to re-recruit children involved in MDRP programs and have implemented initiatives to counter them. These efforts are viewed favorably, but the gradual reduction in re-recruitment is more the result of diminished conflict rather than of agency mitigation efforts – especially as reintegration efforts have been delayed. In places where there is potential or actual violent conflict, there is greater opportunity for former child soldiers to return the armed groups. In these circumstances, reintegration efforts – while more difficult to provide – are even more critical. The delays in the reintegration program only increase the vulnerability of former child soldiers, thus resulting in voluntary re-enrollment or a slide into delinquency. These delays result from inadequate planning and resource allocation—especially a poor estimation of logistical needs—to provide CAFF with vocational start-up kits and necessary follow-up visits.

2.2.2 **Strengthening the Institutional Framework for Child Soldier Programs in the DRC (Coordination, Monitoring, Etc.)**

**Overall accomplishments**

66. CONADER’s establishment and its subsequent deployment in all 11 provinces was itself an accomplishment. Most other government institutions had little or no funding and have been functioning minimally if at all. The operational framework developed in late 2004, largely by UNICEF, with input from implementing agencies and government partners at the time, helped create a standardized set of principles that informed the response of agencies working with children associated with armed groups.

**Results of knowledge-building and institutional strengthening activities**

67. *Capacity-building for child protection agencies*: International NGOs involved in child protection, CONADER and UNICEF—with support from MDRP—created the national training team. UNICEF developed the curricula, with specific modules for the release, transit care, reunification and reintegration efforts, as well as documentation. These combined efforts to implement training consistent with the Operational Framework was intended to put
standardized principles into practice among all stakeholder agencies, international and national alike. First a recipient of these trainings, CONADER then helped further develop the training regimen and delivered training to participating agencies. Over time, CONADER is expected to assume leadership of all such training as part of the institution’s overall mandate covering national DDR efforts. Here, as elsewhere, its legitimacy and credibility is widely questioned as CONADER possesses no prior experience in either child protection or conducting ‘training of trainers’ as a pedagogical form.

68. **Capacity-building for communities:** This was intended to be a key component of the reintegration effort as communities are integral to the sustainable reintegration of all child soldiers and to child protection broadly.

69. Programmatically, implementing agencies sought to engage communities to ensure sustainable ownership of the reintegration process. The first step consisted in sensitization efforts to help communities understand, and in time accept, the needs of returning child soldiers. Community Protection Networks (CPNs) include up to a dozen volunteer officials elected at the community level who direct community participation and follow progress in the reintegration effort. The CPNs also serve as a conduit between the national program and the children. They receive training from CONADER or implementing agencies, and are provided with in-kind support (e.g., office supplies, bicycles).

70. **Capacity-building for CONADER and government:** Critical analysis of the future support of the children’s DDR program is currently ongoing, particularly with regard to the integration of the Special Projects within the full auspices of the NDDR Program and CONADER. Implementing agencies report that they will begin submitting funding proposals to CONADER, which is fully funded through March 2008.

71. Efforts to successfully integrate the Special Projects into the National DDR Program are currently accelerating, yet effective ‘national ownership’ remains little more than an aspiration. If more purposeful integration is to occur, CONADER’s institutional capacity will need to be further strengthened. UNICEF took the lead in helping build CONADER and governmental capacity to coordinate, supervise, monitor and plan child DDR activities in all provinces, starting at the national level. But problems existed on both sides. UNICEF found CONADER a prickly and ultimately unwilling recipient of its capacity-building efforts. CONADER on the other hand faulted delays in MDRP activities – most of the provincial representatives interviewed in the seven provinces visited claimed that delays in MDRP funding had prevented them from establishing their coordination role in a timely manner. The problem is that UNICEF’s relationship with CONADER is strained and marked by distrust and competition

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18 The evaluation team presented a number of scenarios to representatives from the MDRP and donor partners during the final debriefing in Kinshasa on March 9 2006.
19 The Belgian Red Cross has obtained follow-on funding from Belgian Cooperation. Representatives from the other implementing agencies indicate they will submit proposals to CONADER.
rather than cooperation. Implementing agencies share this lack of faith and distrust in the capacity and professionalism of CONADER. It is difficult to contemplate improved capacity without the active support of implementing agencies and UNICEF as well as the demonstrated will on the part of CONADER to accept this support. The MDRP, including donor partners, are uniquely positioned to help address this problem.

Results of coordination and information-sharing activities

72. **Coordination:** National and provincial coordination mechanisms are under-performing. In its Special Project proposal, UNICEF committed to “assisting the DRC government in speeding up the development, implementation and coordination of NDDR program” and to “establish mechanisms of coordination for the national program at the provincial and national level.”

73. Coordination at the national and provincial levels remains a work in progress. In essence, with the exception of Ituri, nowhere does a genuinely functional system of coordination exist. Many agencies, national and international, are loath to submit to CONADER’s authority given its limited experience and alleged heavy-handed style. In many provinces visited, agencies view CONADER efforts at coordination as haphazard and reactive. Many have simply disengaged from the formal province-level coordination mechanisms and now collaborate and share information only to meet their immediate interests. Clearly CONADER shoulders the brunt of the problems raised by the general DDR program – a constant distraction. In North Kivu, for instance, the CONADER representative for child DDR reportedly attends only 10 percent of child-focused meetings, according to UNICEF and SC-UK.

74. Ituri is a bright spot in coordination for child DDR. Personalities play an important role, as does the former pilot DDR program for Ituri which, given its emergency short-term nature, saw constructive inter-agency collaboration. Perhaps most important, however, is that CONADER’s decentralization objective has been respected in Ituri. Its representative for child DDR is dynamic, engaged and enjoys significant decision-making power – unlike his colleagues in other provinces visited by the evaluation team. As a complement to its support role to CONADER, UNICEF Ituri informally supervises other agencies, compiling all statistics, and providing its reports to CONADER for the national database.

75. The decentralization of decision-making power is key to CONADER’s legitimacy as the lead coordination actor, because decisions must be made in real-time. UNICEF has trained CONADER staff in DDR processes and coordination, but it cannot control how CONADER executes its mandate or decentralizes authority internally. Again, MDRP and donors are ideally positioned to facilitate these institutional directives.

76. **The documentation process:** The documentation process culminates in the national database. Its purpose is to inform the supervisory and planning functions of CONADER and the agencies, not to feed an inert statistical archive. Unfortunately, we found no indication that the documentation process and statistical database were serving any predictive or analytical
capacity. Weak documentation compromises the accuracy of provincial and national statistics. Agencies may accurately record the number of children reunified, for example, but then lack reliable data on children’s progress in reintegrating. No agency appears to keep records of children who abandon the process (defaulters). Such tracking should be a key performance indicator in all DDR programs.

77. Data makes its way to Kinshasa, but is never subsequently applied to inform or guide activities in the field. While a lot of effort went into developing the Operational Framework and the database concept, agency archivists and data entry clerks still fail to grasp the overall purpose and importance of the documentation process. Archivists from CARE and IFESH were open about their lack of training, and BRC field staff clearly had only limited understanding of the correct forms and their utility.

78. The documentation system consists of a number of forms that register and track the child’s progress in the demobilization and reintegration process. The correct use of these forms varies considerably. Most worrisome is that fact that Form H (follow-up of reinserted children) is not used by some agencies. All implementing agencies claim that case follow-up is regular and consistent, but existing documentation clearly suggests otherwise. No agency except IRC seems to have effective supervisory systems in place to ensure that field data is accurate, that the data entered is shared appropriately, that entered data is sent to the central system in Kinshasa, and that there is a useful ‘dividend’ to all this work such that it results in tangible improvements for informed decision making and an improved national coordination system. Criteria to determine when a child has completed the entire DDR program are also not shared by all agencies, and should be standardized.

79. The complications of an unwieldy documentation process – added to high staff turn-over, low education levels and a host of logistical constraints – should have been anticipated and addressed. As this did not happen, the quality of existing documentation is consistently poor. Scant effort has gone into resolving this substantive failing over the last two years. While CONADER is responsible for the global stewardship of the national database, its quality depends on the quality of input from implementing agencies. The institution’s efforts to address these shortcomings have thus far proven inadequate.

80. The mapping tool: The mapping instrument (cartographie) that was developed by UNICEF for CONADER to help lead coordination and then revised and finalized by CONADER, is a case in point. This tool records all child reunifications carried out by all actors in child DDR in every province, district, collectivity and locality. Its cumulative historical data comprises all children demobilized and reintegrated before, during and after the ‘Plan DRC’ executed in 2004 in Ituri. It is continuously updated by UNICEF with new information from the field. Unfortunately, as far as we could tell, the tool has not been adopted for use by CONADER.
81. An initial draft of the mapping instrument was sent to CONADER in March 2005. CONADER completed its own version towards the end of 2005, according to UNICEF. UNICEF said it encouraged CONADER Kinshasa to send the tool to its provincial offices, to decentralize the role of information dissemination and promote CONADER’s coordination in the field. Instead, the tool was sent to implementing partners who were asked to enter their data and return it to CONADER Kinshasa. Provincial CONADER offices remain excluded from the process. Based on interviews, the evaluation team concluded that this tool now possesses the raw data necessary to render it operational for the purposes of supervision and coordination, as it was designed. The tool, however, is not being used to such ends, as far as we could determine.

82. **Unclear division of roles and responsibilities:** After CONADER’s establishment in late 2004, a transition period with UNICEF was planned to serve as a training period for CONADER staff involved with child DDR. Once CONADER had assumed its full responsibilities, the thinking went, UNICEF would continue to provide support in logistics, technical assistance and coordination. According to UNICEF, CONADER management did not respect this arrangement, and chose instead to exclude UNICEF from subsequent coordination activities. Nor did CONADER Kinshasa accept repeated formal offers for additional training in the various tools necessary for proper planning and coordination. At this point, UNICEF made official overtures to CONADER to formalize their institutional collaboration regarding the failing coordination mechanism, but were turned down by CONADER.\(^{20}\)

83. **Need for joint field monitoring:** As a possible solution to this impasse, the evaluation recommends the creation of a small mobile team composed of high-level representatives from CONADER, MDRP, UNICEF and the NGO Group. This official body would routinely conduct joint monitoring and evaluation missions to ensure proper supervision and coordination of ongoing activities in view of emerging needs. Such a mechanism would enable the restoration of fractured relations between CONADER, UNICEF and implementing agencies, as well as ensuring direct MDRP involvement in the supervision and coordination of the Special Projects.

2.3 **Further Findings**

84. Given the delays in establishing the National DDR Program and the urgent needs of children associated with fighting forces in DRC, the decision to prioritize support to child soldiers was the right one. Going ahead with the DDR of children, independently of adult programs, is increasingly seen as best practice. The Secretariat, MDRP partners and other key

\(^{20}\) The evaluation team was provided with the record of minutes from meetings between UNICEF and CONADER concerning stalled coordination, poor monitoring and evaluation, and the fallible field data entering the national database. The meeting notes and various emails serve to record the acknowledgement of CONADER representatives of the institution’s shortcomings in these areas.
stakeholders should work to keep the adult and child programs separate in aim, method and criteria of evaluation.

85. The Special Projects proved to be an adequate vehicle for channeling MDRP support for priority assistance to a vulnerable group and as a basis for the challenging task of coordinating with national authorities. However, the Special Projects fell short in fulfilling other key objectives. Specifically, the design of efforts to assist child soldiers underestimated the magnitude of local needs and challenges to addressing them. Approaches adopted were not especially consistent throughout provinces of activity or between implementing agencies. In terms of implementation, the Special Projects have been unsuccessful in both building national confidence and ownership and in ensuring transparency in the delivery of activities.

86. With respect to implementation performance by the responsible agencies, they have generally performed adequately, albeit unevenly, generating quality results associated with release, tracing and reunification. Implementing agencies have managed to provide the existing caseload with adequate transitional care while their families are located and participants are returned to their communities. Yet reintegration efforts by all implementing agencies have suffered from serious delays and considerable shortcomings in terms of results achieved to date.

87. While a degree of underperformance is attributable to exogenous factors – especially continued instability and poor infrastructure – poor project management is a major contributing factor. The Belgian Red Cross and IFESH possess neither the prior experience nor the managerial wherewithal to conduct operations on such a scale and in face of such logistical complexity as encountered in Equateur and North Katanga. Their questionable suitability is confirmed by their inadequate performance. Inadequate planning and resource allocation, combined with poor estimation of logistical needs, are other endogenous factors that contributed to serious delay.

88. The project management burden also seems to have exceeded MDRP’s capacity to ensure effective monitoring of the implementing agencies’ basic performance and practices (e.g. data collection and reporting). The delays, shortcomings and institutional weaknesses should have been apparent to the MDRP much earlier in the process, and become the focus of corrective measures by the Secretariat well before an independent evaluation was conducted.

89. Despite shortcomings to date and ongoing obstacles such as the lack of enabling environment, there is considerable need for continued demobilization and reintegration support for child soldiers beyond the scheduled closing of the MDRP’s Special Projects Funding Window. This includes still unmet needs, especially for reintegration support to a large number of current participants in MDRP funded special projects, as well as for those child soldiers who have yet to benefit from any programmatic support. CONADER and implementing agencies are crucial to addressing those needs, though the evaluation found ample basis to characterize their current relationship as dysfunctional. Failure to address this
dynamic will only obstruct progress in the already formidable challenge of resolving the child soldier phenomenon in the DRC.

III. Lessons in Implementing Child Soldier Programs

3.1 Cape Town Principles: Did They Set Agencies Up for Failure?

90. The full parameters enshrined by the Cape Town Principles (CTP) appear to have figured into all agency programming from the beginning of the Special Projects. This pre-dates MDRP involvement in child DDR programming in the DRC – the result of UNICEF initiating the first large-scale child DDR initiative (over 300 children) in Kimwenza in 2001. This experience directly informed the drafting of the Interim Operational Framework with BUNADER and other child protection agencies.

91. A critical CTP principle applied to programming in the DRC, both before and after the MDRP became involved in child DDR, is the determination that all combatant support roles, particularly those not involving weapons handling, qualify a child to participate in the DDR process. ‘Combatant’ status, pending verification, is therefore accorded to the full range of support roles played by children during their association with armed groups. Girls abducted or voluntarily associated with combatants, boys serving as spies, munitions bearers, even fetish handlers: all are eligible for the benefits of demobilization and reintegration.

92. However appropriate the CTP may be to contexts such as the DRC where children primarily play unarmed support roles, as long as children remain inaccessible, hidden, or choose not to present themselves to DDR institutions, the CTP have little or no impact on agencies’ ability to reach these children. This is particularly the case with girls who continue to be affiliated with armed groups, but are hardly represented in special project beneficiary statistics. The Bunia project run by UNICEF partner COOPI is an exception; elsewhere the number of girls reached by the by the DDR process is not representative of their true numbers.

93. The reasons for this are primarily cultural: girls see themselves as the partners or wives of combatants, and depend on them for their material livelihood, in addition to starting families. The prospect of leaving the family for the insecurity and uncertainty of the DDR process is often a disincentive for girls associated with armed groups. Thus, a cultural and economic logic effectively rejects the offer of assistance from implementing agencies working under the CTP.

3.2 Good Practices from Institutional Arrangements for Child Soldier Programs

94. There are essentially two levels of institutional arrangements at work in the field of child DDR in DRC today. The first is that between the national commission for DDR (CONADER)
and the various implementing agencies. The second is the collection of arrangements between the implementing agencies themselves and their local partners.  

95. Both levels are characterized by complexity and conflict of interest, despite the common goal of effective demobilization and reintegration of the beneficiary group. Arrangements that are ‘vertical’, whose terms are strictly contractual, avoid ‘horizontal’ commitments such as institutional capacity building. Contracts, as opposed to grant-based agreements, appear to deliver the most consistently positive results in the Congolese context.

96. Of the Special Project implementing agencies, only IRC operates on a contractual basis with its local partners. In practice, this means that it does not, for example, wait for the partner to present its monthly accounting reports before financing the next month’s activities. This mechanism, used by UNICEF and others, is slow and tedious because agencies using grant mechanisms cannot authorize further funding until prior expenditures are accounted for according to UN standards. Misappropriation of funds is commonplace, and agencies are obligated to require a month-to-month reporting mechanism. Even honest local partners rarely meet the basic accounting standards required to receive next month’s funding, despite repeated training and constant coaching. Because local NGOs have no cash buffer, activities stop at the end of the month when funds expire. This in turn can lead to violence in a CTO, when food stocks run dry, for example.

97. IRC avoids this problem in its institutional arrangements with local partners by running partner accounts itself. The inspiration behind this approach is both a concern for practical, results-based relationships with local partners, as well as skepticism of the added value of institutional capacity building in the crisis context that is Congo today.

98. Neither grant-based or contractual in nature, institutional relationships such as that between the Belgian and Congolese Red Cross lack the accountability and control mechanisms necessary to gauge performance and output over time. In such instances, the MDRP should assume a more assertive monitoring role and demand that clear performance indicators be established in reference to the primary executing agency.

99. Regarding the institutional arrangement between CONADER and the implementing agencies, informality is the primary source of conflict and lack of cooperation between the two sides. No formal agreement (or timetable in the case of UNICEF handover to CONADER) exists that lays out the exact terms of the relationship between CONADER and the implementing agencies. The result is that personal relationships are the sole determinant of

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21 As the reintegration component of the process gains momentum, CONADER is increasingly contracting local NGOs to execute projects in vocational training, follow up of reunited children, and in income generating projects. This particular evolution was not in evidence during the timeframe of this evaluation (February-March 2006) but was observed subsequently during the months of May and June 2006 during a separate evaluation.

22 From discussions with IRC field coordinator, Bunia.
whether relations between CONADER and agencies in any given region are productive or dysfunctional.

3.3 Good Practice on Implementing Child Soldier Projects

100. Girls and self-demobilized children are best reached through community protection networks. Supporting the performance of such networks requires a long-term commitment from donors and implementing agencies. UNICEF and Save UK are prepared for such a commitment; other agencies are ill-equipped or unprepared.

101. The Transit Family approach appeared to respond better to individual children’s needs and facilitated an easier return to their community. This approach is more appropriate and more cost effective with a smaller number of CAFF and is more problematic at times of mass demobilization. Agency staff from Save UK in Bunia, who had previously utilized the CTO model, commented that the Transit Family (TF) children were better prepared to return and found it easier to adapt to life in the family structure. The TF facilitates a more participatory approach in which community members and CAFF are able to share experiences and perspectives, also allowing the family to feel civic pride in assisting in the development of peace in their country.

102. UNICEF partner COOPI in Bunia run an effective program for girl CAFF by combining specific psycho-social care for victims of sexual violence with the standard package of transit care, family reunification and social reintegration projects (vocational training, income generating activities). BVES, a UNICEF partner in Bukavu, replicates on a smaller (and less expensive) scale the COOPI approach with seemingly positive results. Other provinces lack such projects specifically tailored to the needs of girl CAFF.

3.4 Lessons Specific to the DRC

103. Government ownership of the national DDR program: Implementing agencies responsible for building government capacity and ultimately handing over the national DDR program to a state entity such as CONADER require a clear timetable of benchmarks and evaluation points to keep the process moving forward and to manage expectations appropriately. UNICEF did not have such a timetable, with clear benchmarks to indicate progress towards national ownership. In such instances, MDRP should conduct participatory evaluations of the coaching and transition process as it evolves, implicating stakeholders from both government and UNICEF, in this case.

104. Quality of local partners is an under-estimated yet key factor in program delivery. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. In a country as vast as the DRC, even the most experienced and effective implementing agencies cannot make up for the generally poor
performance of their local partners. Local agencies in the Kivus are the sole exception to this generalization. This is because DDR initiatives date back to 1998 in the East; Save UK and UNICEF have been working with some of them for as long as eight years (BVES in Bukavu; SOS Grands Lacs and CAJED in Goma). In addition, local partners working in remote areas are few and inexperienced, making reintegration of rural CAFF even more difficult to manage successfully.

105. Implementing agencies and partners were insufficiently prepared for the challenges of reintegration. Demobilization, transit care and family reunification are tangible, predominantly urban exercises – child spaces and orientation centers are physical systems that are relatively easy to set up and run. Reintegration activities are entirely unrelated and require a different operational dynamic as they depend less on materials and logistics and more on human mobility and regular, attentive communication with beneficiaries as they make the precarious passage to civilian livelihoods in their communities. Having mastered the logistics and type of care required in orientation centers, many agencies were unable to shift resources and energy into the unfamiliar dynamic of reintegration in a timely and effective manner. Reintegration should be recognized as the weakest link in the DDR chain. Should it falter or fail, re-enrollment and criminal activity are the immediate consequences, thereby undoing all the preceding work of demobilization, transit care, transfer between provinces, and family reunification.

106. Extremely poor documentation practices beg the question of the relevance of a national database to the success of a national program. Other large, largely illiterate countries, such as Sudan, should consider by-passing the national database entirely. Weak documentation practices in the field, despite heavy investments in training and coaching, compromise the accuracy of provincial and national statistics, rendering the database itself valueless.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 General Conclusions and Recommendations

107. The four Special Projects evaluated in this report targeted 20,291 children for demobilization and reintegration over a two-year program period, which for most agencies began in early 2004. By February 2006, over 85 percent of the target figure had been reunified, and 61 percent of these are currently in reintegration programming. But only 604 (2.9 percent) of the target have completed the entire program. How will agencies complete the reintegration process for the remaining caseload?

108. Several possible scenarios to improve this situation were presented to donors during the team’s initial debriefing in Kinshasa after completing five weeks of field visits.
1. **Return to bilateral funding**: Many agencies desire this arrangement but as traditional DDR donors are also MDTF donors, they recognize that possibilities here are limited. All agencies except UNICEF plan to submit funding proposals to CONADER.

2. **Special Projects funding extension**: Prolongation of the current funding mechanism in order to see reintegration through to conclusion and to facilitate progress toward national ownership.

3. **UNICEF as steward of ongoing child DDR activities**: Donors may consider tasking UNICEF with overall supervision and coordination of remaining DDR activities for children, and channeling their funding through UNICEF for this express purpose.

109. Implementing agencies are still engaged in the release and demobilization of children, though the rate of release slowed in late 2005. A better system needs to be adopted than the current practice of asking military commanders to provide lists of the children within their ranks as it is impossible to confirm the veracity of the numbers presented, which leaves DDR actors no means of leverage over military commanders. Mixed teams of civilian protection specialists and military should conduct the identification process.

110. Agencies have had mixed success in identifying self-demobilized children, particularly girls. Continued attention should be accorded to current strategies for the identification and inclusion of self-demobilized into agency programming, particularly reintegration activities. Re-recruitment, forced and voluntary, is ongoing and delayed reintegration activities provide additional incentive for demobilized children to re-enroll.

111. Although all agencies have sought to provide special measures to care for girls in transit care, the low numbers of girl arrivals have led to a relaxed attitude from some practitioners. The current strategies used to reach girls (e.g., community protection networks, etc.) appear to be appropriate given the cultural complications surrounding girl CAFF. Finally, kits given to CAFF at various stages of the DDR process must be standardized across the country. Discrepancies have created serious problems (open conflict) between agencies and CAFF in their care. CONADER shall be responsible for establishing and enforcing the national standards.

112. An urgent focus is now needed on accelerating much-delayed reintegration activities, particularly in rural areas. Besides the need to develop clear reintegration and documentation guidelines for the different age groups and the self-demobilized, the long transit times witnessed in every province visited must be shortened.
4.2 Specific Conclusions and Recommendations For MDTF Donors and the MDRP Secretariat

113. Independence of child and adult DDR: Given the delays experienced by the National DDR Program and the urgent social and security needs of children associated with fighting forces in the DRC, MDTF donors were right to fund these four Special Projects in advance of the National DDR Program.

**Recommendation:** Prioritizing children’s DDR independently of national adult programs is increasingly recognized as best practice and should be continued.

114. Many child DDR needs remain: Given the specific needs of child soldiers before, during and after their DDR process, MDTF donors should recognize the importance of keeping the adult and child programs separate in aim, method and criteria of evaluation.

**Recommendation:** The findings of this evaluation indicate that demobilization and reintegration needs will continue long after the MDRP Special Projects Funding Window has closed. Implementing agency reticence to seek funding from CONADER indicates a lack of confidence in the latter’s abilities as an ‘operational donor;’ it does not mean that work to resolve the child soldier phenomenon in the DRC is in any way complete.

115. Coordination crisis: The evaluation documented the immediate problems of coordination.

**Recommendation:** An official core body should be created, composed of high-level representatives from CONADER, MDRP, UNICEF and the NGO Group. This limited group would routinely conduct join monitoring and evaluation missions to ensure proper supervision and coordination of ongoing activities in view of emerging needs. It would ensure proactive coordination by CONADER, thus expediting the MDRP goal of national ownership.

116. Goal of ‘national ownership’ stalled: The planned integration of the four Special Projects with the National DDR Program is delayed. No single party is to blame; among the setbacks are: lack of will among implementing agencies to accept their role within the larger framework of the National DDR Program and the supervision of CONADER; and the lack of leadership and a failure to decentralize by CONADER, which also explains its current legitimacy crisis in the eyes of agencies. CONADER’s shortcomings raise the question of UNICEF’s role in preparing CONADER to assume its role.

**Recommendation:** The evaluation recommends the creation of a small mobile team composed of high-level representatives from CONADER, MDRP, UNICEF and the NGO Group. This

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23 MDTF donors include Belgium, Canada, Denmark, European Community, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.
official body would routinely conduct joining monitoring and evaluation missions to ensure proper supervision and coordination of ongoing activities in view of emerging needs. With the power to hear and resolve disputes at the provincial level, undo blockages, and facilitate transparency, such a body could rebuild trust and restore a much-needed sense of urgency and common commitment to the child DDR program. National ownership is otherwise unrealistic under current conditions.

For Implementing Agencies and the MDRP Program

117. **Obstacles are considerable; many agencies are underperforming.** On the whole, implementing agencies have managed to provide the existing caseload with adequate transitional care while their families are located and they are returned to their community of origin. However, their statistical output falls well below the expected two-year target for children to complete the demobilization and reintegration process. These deficiencies raise a number of questions and suggest possible causes.

**Recommendation:** (1) The quality of project management at agency and MDRP levels is one possible source of this underperformance and should be investigated by a subsequent evaluation. (2) The capacity of some agencies implementing Special Projects is of equal concern: Belgian Red Cross and IFESH possess neither the prior experience nor the managerial wherewithal to conduct operations on such a scale and in face of such logistical complexity as encountered in Equateur and North Katanga. Their questionable suitability is borne out by their inadequate performance as represented in the findings of this evaluation.

118. **Delays in social and economic reintegration:** Agencies report that only 604 children have completed the reintegration process, a mere 2.9 percent of the two-year target. It is important to measure the performance of Special Projects against the numbers of CAFF who have completed the process, not merely because it is the language agencies employed in their proposals and for which they originally signed with IDA. More importantly, pursuing the reintegration process to completion is essential to ensuring sustainable results: children left in limbo will inevitably fail to reintegrate properly into their communities, raising security and social issues. Inadequate planning and resource allocation combined with poor estimation of logistical needs are largely responsible for this serious delay. Reintegration is the most demanding phase of the broader DDR process. If incompletely executed, the cumulative gains of the preceding phases risk being lost entirely.

**Recommendation:** Without immediate attention from MDRP, implementing agencies and CONADER to reintegration, the program will fail. Such risks include voluntary re-enrolment in armed groups, delinquency, rejection by family and community, and other forms of failure in reconnecting with productive civilian lives.
119. **National and provincial coordination mechanisms are under-performing**: The promised coordination and supervisory roles of CONADER have thus far failed to deliver, leaving a vacuum that implementing agencies are filling through ad hoc planning and partial information sharing. Urgent attention is needed to restore this faltering mechanism, which requires a dynamic and transparent collaboration with UNICEF and implementing agencies, relationships that are currently dysfunctional.

**Recommendation**: The joint body recommended above, created by ‘executive fiat’ from MDTF donors and the MDRP Secretariat, should be tasked with ensuring a properly systematic, proactive coordination. This joint body would enable the restoration of fractured relations between CONADER, UNICEF and implementing agencies, as well as ensuring direct MDRP involvement in the supervision and coordination of the Special Projects. A subsequent assessment of CONADER’s capacity to drive coordination single-handedly would follow one year later.

120. **Poor documentation practices**: Accurate documentation at the field level, both in terms of numbers of children processed and the completion of the specific forms pertaining to each stage of the child’s movement through the system, requires improvement. While the MDRP specifies that accurate statistical reporting remains the responsibility of implementing agencies, responsibility for the global accuracy and stewardship of the national database rests with CONADER.

**Recommendation**: Accuracy in reporting, documentation and a quality national database cannot have two masters. The evaluation team recommends that responsibility for adequate documentation and reporting practices nationwide be accorded to the core monitoring and evaluation mechanism proposed above. Such a body would facilitate the transition to a unified system or ‘single master’, improve the accuracy of national statistics, and promote conformity of practice between implementing agencies as data is collected in the provinces and then consolidated at the national level.

4.3 **CONADER**

121. CONADER remains a work in progress in every sense. Its slow progress and rigid centralization calls into question the feasibility of establishing national ownership within a two-year period. UNICEF is charged with training and supporting CONADER to assume its coordination and supervisory roles, but ultimate responsibility for the successful implementation of coordination itself lies with CONADER and MDRP.

122. Besides Ituri, the evaluation team noted a lack of leadership, of anticipation and proactivity towards current and future challenges (particularly reintegration). Disputes and mutual accusations between CONADER and agencies are the norm, not the exception. Where coordination does function as intended (Ituri), this is due solely to the personalities in place,
and the scale of need they face. There is nothing, however, resembling a systematic or proactive approach to planning and coordinating the child DDR effort, underpinning this good faith. While there are monthly meetings ostensibly to coordinate agency activities, the meetings are organized and chaired by CONADER representatives who have no decision-making power, no resources at their disposal, and who must wait weeks before receiving permission to act or a final decision on a local emergency or institutional dilemma.

123. Lack of needed transparency on CONADER’s CAFF budget: As of February 2006, CONADER had spent a mere $624,000 USD on CAFF-related projects in two provinces (Equateur and Bas-Congo). The evaluation team was not provided with a figure for planned spending or CAFF-specific budget, although the figure seems very low. We have already mentioned the reopening of a CTO in Mbandaka, previously closed by BRC for lack of CAFF. Such errors of judgment give rise to suspicions of misuse of funds, in addition to representing the poor strategic decisions that are responsible for CONADER’s present legitimacy crisis.

124. Questions about local partner selection: Concerns have been raised by a variety of interlocutors, including CONADER itself, about the rationale behind CONADER’s selection of partners to run the child spaces inside the various Orientation Centers (COs). In Kalemie, the selection of CAPED instead of IFESH was viewed with suspicion by a variety of actors. The selection of APEE to run the child space in the Mbandaka CO and the subsequent request for the same organization to re-open a closed BRC CTO, despite low numbers of CAFF and the existence of two CTOs run by the Red Cross, is also of concern.

125. Probable poor quality of care in provinces where CONADER and local partners run operations: Very little information, if any, is available about those CAFF returning to provinces covered by CONADER/local partners. There is very real concern that these CAFF will either continue to spend excessive time in transit facilities or receive no follow-up support, let alone an adequate reintegration package.

126. Difficult transition to ‘national ownership’ of Special Projects: The MDRP Secretariat is concerned about what it perceives as hesitance on the part of implementing agencies to submit to the supervision and coordination of CONADER. While the ‘independence’ of international NGOs may be one source of this resistance, the differences go deeper. International NGOs, and many UN Agencies, do not share the MDRP’s ideal of fostering national ownership. Their primary motivation, particularly so in the DRC context, is to respond to humanitarian emergencies in the interest of local populations—and this not always with the prior consent of the host government. This latent contradiction in mission and vision has been described in greater detail by other analysts.24

Recommendations for CONADER

127. Relations between agencies and CONADER are deeply embittered; neither party possesses the modicum of good faith needed to re-build bridges and resuscitate the coordination program as it was originally planned. We propose the creation of a three person mobile mediation team (composed of one representative from CONADER, UNICEF, and the NGO group) to travel to sites of conflict in order to resolve problems before they destroy inter-agency coordination and collaboration, as is currently the case.

128. MDTF donors should focus immediately on resolving CONADER’s technical incapacity to carry out basic tasks associated with coordination and supervision. CONADER should be made to accept the necessary training and, for an agreed period, direction from UNICEF to begin implementing a systematic, proactive form of coordination. Its performance should be subject to review using standard performance indicators. The evaluation recommends the creation of a small mobile mediation team composed of one high-level CONADER, MDRP, UNICEF and NGO representative, with the power to conduct joint monitoring and evaluation missions to ensure proper supervision and coordination of ongoing activities in view of emerging needs. Finally, future evaluations of CONADER by MDTF donors must include third-party views, particularly those of implementing agencies, local partners, and local officials.

129. As the steward of the national database, CONADER must ensure proper analysis of this data, and that findings inform the supervision and coordination of the national program. The national database was never intended to be the inert archive it is today.

130. CAFF spending by CONADER should not duplicate efforts by MDRP-funded partners (as CONADER has done by reopening closed BRC CTOs in Southern Equateur) but should focus exclusively on Bas-Congo and the two Kasai provinces (or other areas not covered by any of the four Special Projects).
Independent Evaluation of Special Projects for Child Soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Appendices

Presented to

The World Bank’s Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP)

Contract No. 7137037

February 5, 2007
APPENDIX I

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE REPORT

BRC – Belgian Red Cross
BUNADER – Bureau National du DDR
CAFF – Children Associated with Fighting Forces
CONADER – Commission Nationale du DDR
CPN – Child Protection Network
CTO – Transit and Orientation Center
CTP – Cape Town Principles
CTPC – Comite Technique de Planification et de Coordination du DDR
DAI – Development Alternatives, Incorporated
DDR – Discharge, Demobilization and Reintegration (for children)
DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo
EDRP – Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Program
EQ – Equateur Province
IDA – International Development Association
IFESH – International Foundation for Education and Self-Help
IRC – International Rescue Committee
KT – Katanga Province
MA – Maniema Province
MDRP – Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program
MDTF – Multi-Donor Trust Fund
MONUC – United Nations Mission in the DR Congo
NDDRP – National DDR Program
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
NK – North Kivu Province
OC – Orientation Center
OR – Orientale Province
RECOPE – Reseau communautaire pour la protection de l’enfance
SC-UK – Save the Children UK
SK – South Kivu Province
SOW – Statement of Work
SPFW – Special Projects Funding Window
TF – Transit Family
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund
APPENDIX II

DETAILED ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS OF DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTPUT OF EACH MDRP IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

**United Nations Children’s Fund**

(a) **United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)**, project title: “Support for the development and implementation of the National Program for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of children involved with armed groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo,” to process 3000 CAFF directly, and to assist 26,000 others through support to the national DDR program. Program budget is for a total of $4.99 million and spans from January 2005 to January 2007.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Duration &amp; Province</th>
<th>Program Objectives</th>
<th>Completed Program</th>
<th>Percentage of Target</th>
<th>Currently in Reintegration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$4.99 million</td>
<td>Jan. 05—Jan. 07; Nationwide</td>
<td>Assist DRC Government to accelerate implementation and ownership of NDDRP; implement child DDR activities nationwide for 3,000 CAFF (primarily in North EQ, SK, NK, OR)</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td>?? of 3000</td>
<td>3361</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Specific objectives include:

- Develop and implement the NDDRP for children in close collaboration with the Transition Government;

- Establish coordination mechanisms at the national and provincial levels and ensure their implementation;

- Establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the national program and support their implementation;

- Train government and NGO personnel in the approach, mechanisms and tools involved in the NDDRP for children;
- Support projects promoting child reintegration into their families and communities, including the creation of 14 community protection networks;

- Develop information and sensitization programs, and assist their implementation;

- Enhance national partner capacity, both governmental and nongovernmental, through regular trainings across the country;

- Establish rapid response mechanisms for the spontaneous demobilization and reintegration of children from armed forces.

- **Transfer statistics:** No transfer statistics were provided to the evaluation team.

### Analysis

#### i. Program Design

2. UNICEF has been active in the demobilization of children associated with fighting forces in the DRC since 1997. As the lead international agency for children’s rights and child protection, it was asked by UNDP in early 2003 to lead the development of the child DDR program in collaboration with the Transition Government. A series of national workshops followed, and an interim national DDR program for children was born. Under the current MDRP grant, UNICEF is charged with two fundamental objectives.

3. The first is the finalization of the N DDRP in collaboration with the Transition Government and the major child protection actors working on child DDR in the DRC. Parallel to the finalization of the national program is a large training component targeting key staff in the national commission for child DDR (CONADER). This training and capacity building will accelerate government ownership of the child DDR process. Integral to the foregoing is the development and implementation of a national coordination strategy for child DDR and prevention of re-recruitment, to be led by CONADER. These integrated activities aim collectively towards the national ownership of the child DDR program, and the integration of all ongoing DDR activities within the purview (supervision and coordination) of CONADER. Given the size of the country, the low level of national capacity and the scale of the child soldier phenomenon, this objective alone is an enormous undertaking.
4. The second overarching objective is purely operational and involves the design and implementation of projects to assist demobilized children, create and disseminate information related to child DDR, and set up and deploy rapid response mechanisms in the event of mass spontaneous demobilization.

5. In its project proposal, UNICEF estimates that 23,000 children are involved with armed groups throughout the DRC. It claims 3,000 of these as direct beneficiaries of UNICEF-led demobilization activities and reintegration programs; 23,000 other CAFF will benefit from this national coordination structure and the harmonized operational standards that will result, particularly in the area of demobilization from armed groups and reintegration services upon reunification with families and communities of origin.

6. Finally, UNICEF emphasizes in its project proposal that its primary role will remain that of supporting the child DDR program of the Transition Government and to strengthen national capacities on a priority basis.

Some observed weak points in program design:

7. **Insufficient staff to support/supervise local partners**: The amount of UNICEF staff allocated to supporting local partners has not been sufficient. This was particularly noticeable in Bunia, where three UNICEF protection staff have to cover the Ituri region, undertaking a host of other tasks not related to the MDRP program. In Equateur province, the scale of responsibilities, the geographic coverage at stake, and the two protection specialists (neither of whom are based in the province) tasked with implementation and supervision, all make for an overwhelming workload. The same core staff are meant to provide technical support to six local partners in Ituri and three in Equateur, including those such as APEC that have been created expressly for the implementation of DDR activities and whose experience is extremely limited. UNICEF was aware that partner weakness was a major threat to program implementation from the outset. Scaling up to meet these needs in terms of protection staffing is still ongoing, and appears to remain insufficient.

8. A new provincial office in Mbandaka will improve coverage and support in Equateur, but many challenges remain. Field visits to the five sites across the province (including Mbandaka) are rare and local partners work independently and without supervision. In North Katanga, UNICEF has not been present since 2004, and is presently re-opening its office there (Kalemie).

9. **Late planning for reintegration activities**: In its project proposal to the MDRP, this evaluation notes that UNICEF is the sole agency seen to anticipate, based on previous experience, that demobilization and reunification efforts tend to crowd out necessary reintegration preparations until too late. While this challenge is recognized in the proposal, the problem has not been averted. According to the UNICEF coordinator in
Bunia, “one major mistake was not being sufficiently prepared for reintegration work.” This view is held by other UNICEF staff in the Kivus, who maintain that the necessary prior analysis did not commence until the operational demands of reintegration were already upon them. Consequently, implementation of these activities has been rushed due to substantial delays.

10. **No roadmap to handover coordination to CONADER.** UNICEF drafted and completed the ‘Cadre Operationnel’ or Operational Framework in late 2004 and handed it over to CONADER, where the document waited another five months before receiving official status. The official document was assumed by all parties to serve as a guidebook for the rollout of the planned phases of the national DDR program, and it was assumed that CONADER would follow its guidance, as would all other implicated actors. It was clear to the evaluators that CONADER did not assume its responsibilities and activities as stipulated in the Operational Framework, however. Numerous informal and formal initiatives were undertaken by UNICEF to hold CONADER accountable to its commitments (records of such documents were provided to the evaluators), with apparently little effect. Among these initiatives, the evaluation team did not learn of any roadmap or timeline for the training, implementation and gradual handover of coordination mechanisms at the provincial and national level. Absence of a joint workplan for the development of CONADER’s coordination capacities, a lack recognized by UNICEF, has left CONADER, UNICEF, and the MDRP Secretariat with no means of holding each other accountable for the current state of affairs. MDRP blames UNICEF, UNICEF claims it is not ultimately responsible for CONADER’s failure to perform, and CONADER does not acknowledge that its coordination and supervision are inadequate. Establishment of such a roadmap at the outset, with clear roles and responsibilities, might have prevented this problem.

**ii. Implementation**

11. **DDR programming:** Finally, UNICEF supports 18 local partners in ten provinces, which it divides into three zones of operation: Kinshasa, East, and West.\(^{25}\) Statistical output for UNICEF activities after one year of activities, at first glance, dwarfs that of other implementing agencies. UNICEF reports that 11,752 children have been demobilized, 9,341 children have been reunified and 3,361 are currently involved in reintegration activities. The evaluation team believes that these figures are cumulative and include DDR activities initiated prior to MDRP funding in January 2005. UNICEF was ultimately unable to provide the evaluators with process indicators (number of children having completed the DDR program) for its activities under MDRP, which

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\(^{25}\) Zone Kinshasa (Equateur and Bandundu), Zone East (North & South Kivu, Orientale and Maniema), and Zone West (Katanga, Kasai Oriental and Occidental).
suggests a lack of clear beneficiary data according to year of activity, specific donor or funding agency, etc. It is presently focusing energy and resources on rectifying this failure, by hiring and training data entry clerks for the national database, as well as improving its follow-up for children in the reintegration phase.

In total, of the 66 national trainings initially projected, 32 were realized in 2005. The 32 trainings, implemented around the country, instructed a total of 682 key staff. Coordination activities are ongoing; development of the ‘mapping tool’ was finalized and handed over to CONADER, although this latter was not used or applied by CONADER in the field to anticipate gaps and allocate resources as planned.

12. In order to achieve its monumental tasks, UNICEF has recruited and trained a total of 21 child protection agents, and has dispatched them to eleven provinces to help CONADER set up operations and to accelerate DDR activities for children. Of the four international staff, two are located in Zone East, one in Zone West, and one in Zone Kinshasa. Of the 17 national staff, six are in Zone Kinshasa, four in Zone West, seven in Zone East. UNICEF thereby works to establish and maintain mechanisms of inter-agency coordination, initiate systems for program follow-up, and backstops CONADER with technical support and guidance while they scale up to speed. Forms of technical support include logistics and equipment, mapping of interventions: the roles, responsibilities and resources of key actors in all provinces of operations, as well as the development of a monitoring and evaluation plan for them all.

a. Coordination

13. While coordination is a collective activity and all agencies are implicated, responsibility for its success lies primarily with UNICEF and CONADER, essentially the ‘trainer’ and the ‘trainee’. In its project proposal, UNICEF committed to ‘assisting the DRC government in speeding up the development, implementation and coordination of NDDR’ and to ‘establish mechanisms of coordination for the national program at the provincial and national level’. It had been actively pursuing these objectives long before receiving MDRP funding, and continues to do so with MDRP support.

14. There is room for confusion about ultimate responsibility for the current failings of the desired coordination mechanism. The evaluation team understands that UNICEF is responsible for all training and support to CONADER necessary to facilitate implementation of coordination at national and provincial levels, but that ultimate responsibility for the execution and performance of these activities rests with MDRP,
CONADER’s immediate supervisory body.\textsuperscript{26} Furthermore, the evaluation team esteems that UNICEF has trained and provided CONADER with the necessary tools and skills to execute effective coordination and supervision, and that UNICEF cannot be blamed for CONADER’s failure to realize its commitments. National institutions must be held accountable for their actions if ‘national ownership’ is to have any meaning. The evaluators were not provided with any record of MDRP efforts to supervise CONADER or hold it accountable, whereas numerous written traces of UNICEF efforts to do so exist.

15. **Current situation**: Coordination at the national and provincial levels remains a work in progress. To be clear, with the exception of Ituri, nowhere does a genuinely functional, robust system of coordination yet exist. Many agencies, national and international, are loath to submit to CONADER’s authority given its limited experience and heavy-handed style. It is the case that implementing partners have had difficulty adjusting to the supervisory role assumed by CONADER over their activities. A closer analysis of the reasons for this resistance to national oversight is offered in the Thematic Issues section, under the ‘CONADER’ heading.

16. All parties interviewed for this evaluation agree that coordination by CONADER is currently unsystematic and insufficiently proactive in the face of needs and emergencies, particularly regarding the current demands of reintegration. In many provinces visited, agencies have simply disengaged from the formal coordination mechanisms by province (weekly meetings, etc.), and now conduct ad hoc information exchange and collaborative efforts where their immediate interests are concerned. Problems and pressures stemming from the adult DDR program are legion, and CONADER bears the brunt of these conflicts. This constant distraction no doubt affects their ability to invest and engage in the child DDR process, but cannot excuse CONADER’s failure to invest in the national child DDR program. In North Kivu, for instance, the CONADER representative for child DDR reportedly attends only 10% of child-focused meetings, according to UNICEF and SC-UK.

17. Decentralization of decision-making power is key to CONADER’s legitimacy as the lead coordination actor, as real-time decisions affecting children and programming must be made without delay. While UNICEF has trained CONADER staff in DDR processes, and has provided them with coordination tools and know-how, it cannot control whether CONADER executes its mandate or decentralizes authority internally, or how it conducts itself vis à vis the implementing agencies.

\textsuperscript{26} MDRP, Ad Hoc Working Group Meeting (April 2005): “The Secretariat should assist the National Commissions in the establishment of the necessary technical coordination mechanisms to plan, design and implement the necessary components of the DDR program.” Copy with author.
18. In Ituri where coordination functions fairly well, personalities play an important role, as does the former pilot DDR program for Ituri which, given its emergency short-term nature, saw intensive and lasting inter-agency collaboration. This work ethic continues to inform coordination efforts, and Ituri itself remains a charged environment for child DDR. Perhaps most importantly, however, is that CONADER’s decentralization objective has been respected in Ituri. Its representative for child DDR (Flory Kitoko) is dynamic, engaged and enjoys significant decision-making power unlike his colleagues in other provinces visited by the evaluation team. Collaboration between UNICEF and CONADER is therefore healthy in Ituri, by all accounts. As a complement to its support role to CONADER, UNICEF Ituri informally supervises other agencies, compiling all statistics, and providing its reports to CONADER for the national database.

19. **Coordination tools supplied to CONADER:** As part of its commitment to support and train CONADER, UNICEF worked together with MDRP staff from July 2005 through February 2006 to finalize a monitoring and evaluation plan with CONADER. As of March 2006, UNICEF claims, this activity will be underway for the entire child DDR program. An important cross-cutting component of CONADER-led coordination is the so-called ‘mapping’ tool (‘cartographie’) created by UNICEF and given to CONADER for implementation. This tool has three primary uses and aims: (1) It clarifies and records all child reunifications carried out by all actors in child DDR in every province, district, collectivity and locality; (2) Its historical aspect means that its cumulative data comprises all children demobilized and reintegrated before, during and after the Plan DRC in Ituri; (3) It does not incorporate data on self-demobilized as there currently is no official policy or strategy; (4) It is regularly and continuously updated by UNICEF with new information from the field. While it represents an important tool for planning and supervision created by UNICEF for CONADER with ample training for its proper implementation, as far as we could tell the tool is not being used.

20. **Informal roadmap, unclear division of roles and responsibilities:** After the formation of CONADER in September 2004, a transition period was planned to facilitate an effective handover from UNICEF. This transition period was also to serve as a training period for CONADER staff involved with child DDR, so that the skills of planning, coordination and supervision would be acquired gradually and applied in time. Once CONADER had assumed its full responsibilities, UNICEF would continue to provide support in three domains: logistics, technical assistance and coordination.

21. According to UNICEF, CONADER management did not respect this arrangement, and chose instead to exclude UNICEF from subsequent coordination activities. Nor did CONADER Kinshasa accept repeated formal offers for training in the various tools necessary for proper planning and coordination. At this point, UNICEF made official overtures to CONADER to formalize their institutional collaboration regarding the failing coordination mechanism, entreaties not entertained by
The mapping instrument developed by UNICEF and finalized by CONADER is a case in point. This tool was developed to enable CONADER to map existing child DDR activities and to record available resources of implementing agencies and their local partners. By comparing this data with a real-time analysis of emerging needs, CONADER would be easily able to plan, direct, and coordinate activities both nationally and provincially.

An initial draft of the mapping tool was sent to CONADER in March 2005 and a version was completed by CONADER towards the end of 2005, according to UNICEF. UNICEF reported its attempts to encourage CONADER Kinshasa to send the tool to its provincial offices, thereby decentralizing the role of information dissemination and promoting CONADER’s coordination role in the field. Instead, the tool was sent to implementing partners who were asked to enter their data, and then return the data to CONADER Kinshasa. Provincial CONADER offices remain excluded from the process. Based on a series of interviews with UNICEF and CONADER, the evaluation team concluded that CONADER disposes of sufficient raw data to use the mapping tool for supervision and coordination, as it was designed. The tool is not being used to such ends, however, as far as we could determine.

As a possible solution to this impasse, the evaluation recommends the creation of a small mobile team composed of high-level representatives from CONADER, MDRP, UNICEF and the NGO Group. This official body would routinely conduct joint monitoring and evaluation missions to ensure proper supervision and coordination of ongoing activities in view of emerging needs. Such a mechanism would enable the restoration of fractured relations between CONADER, UNICEF and implementing agencies, as well as ensuring direct MDRP involvement in the supervision and coordination of the Special Projects.

b. CTOs and FATs

The evaluation noted a number of problems with the current Centre d’Orientation (CO) structure and the lack of children passing through since their implementation.

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27 Several meeting notes were provided to the evaluation team that record official exchanges between UNICEF and CONADER on stalled coordination, poor monitoring and evaluation, and the fallible field data entering the national database. These documents are of interest insofar as they document UNICEF’s efforts to gain leverage over CONADER’s coordination activities. The minutes also serve to record CONADER’s own acknowledgment of its shortcomings in these areas—normally signaling a commitment to improve performance. Yet none of these official offers of direct collaboration on coordination issues were ever accepted by CONADER.
25. UNICEF primarily use the Centre de Transit et d’Orientation (CTO) approach, always contracting local partners to run the centers. We were able to visit two CTOs in Goma, run by S.O.S. Grands Lacs and CAJED; the BVES CTO in Bukavu; and the COOPI CTO for girls in Bunia. Other CTOs occasionally accepted girls but were geared principally for boys.

26. The two CTOs visited in Goma had only 27 CAFF between them. This raises questions about why two CTOs are necessary given the low numbers and the need for better cost-efficiency and whether the Transit Family model (or FAT: Famille d’Acceuil Transitoire) is not more appropriate as long as occupancy is so low. The Transit Family approach is at least as effective as the CTO approach, is far cheaper and often facilitates an easier reinsertion process for children into their families and communities.

27. A generally acceptable environment: Perhaps because of their low numbers, the four CTOs visited were clean and well kept. Higher occupancy rates tend to make order and hygiene more difficult to maintain. Staff were all present and appeared to have a good relationship with the children, who themselves were seemingly positive about CTO conditions.

28. The evaluation team experienced exceptional complications with COOPI staff in Bunia: difficulty of access, inordinate suspicion over the purposes and veracity of the evaluation and the identity of its members, etc.

c. Family Tracing, Transfers, and Reunification

29. UNICEF has completed the tracing and reunification of 9,341 out of 11,752 demobilized, meaning that 2,411 are still in transit care. We note the following issue with transferring children.

30. Difficulties to transfer children out of the Kivus: In the opinion of UNICEF and their local partners, SC-UK is responsible for the coordination of CAFF transfers between provinces. SC-UK is overwhelmed and this causes delays. Consequently, on occasion partners such as CAJED circumvent the system by directly facilitating transfers themselves. Such actions are considered exceptional given the circumstances but risk becoming the norm, according to CAFED and UNICEF, unless action is taken to avoid further delays and the conflict this causes among CAFF in transit care.
d. Special Groups: Self-demobilized, Girls, 16-18 year olds

31. UNICEF did not provide the evaluation team with statistics on self-demobilized. The number of girls processed is 1550. According to the Operational Framework, a self-demobilized child is to be verified and incorporated into the DDR process as would any child presenting at a Centre d’Orientation. This means that the term ‘self-demobilized’ is practically irrelevant, as all agencies should automatically verify and include them as a matter of course. Only UNICEF deals with the large number of self-demobilized children in this way; other agencies continue to count and classify them as such, however unnecessary.

32. **Identification and verification:** Self-demobilized children present themselves at the CTO or at the offices of the various protection agencies or, alternately, they are identified by various civil society associations or community members. They are then subjected to the same identification procedure as all other ex-combatants. Their claims of military association, for instance, are verified with local leaders. This data is recorded on Form B, the ‘verification form.’

33. Self-demobilized who are already reunified with their families are allowed to participate in reintegration activities with all other CAFF. If they are identified as unaccompanied (no immediate relatives) and without shelter, they are entered into a local CTO or FAT as appropriate until an alternate long-term solution is found.

34. **Concerns about documentation of self-demobilized:** Local partners and RECOPE members from both South and North Kivu cited ‘large numbers’ of self-demobilized CAFF still not reached in their provinces. UNICEF did not provide figures for self-demobilized in the eastern provinces (although it reported in December 2005 that 48 self-demobilized were registered among 1397 CAFF in North Equateur). As noted with other agencies, the general focus on CAFF passing through the official process means less concern to document the self-demobilized, raising the risk that these CAFF will not receive proper follow up and thereby ‘disappear’ from the system.

35. **Girls:** Proportionately, girls represent a mere 6% of the 26,000 caseload. Of the 1,550 girls reported as registered, UNICEF cites 872 from Ituri and 95 for the Kivus.

36. **Many female CAFF outside process:** Although UNICEF has made a strong effort to ensure that girls in its program access reintegration support, all interlocutors claimed that many more girls were resisting the process. These testimonies came from CTO staff (including COOPI), girl CAFF themselves and senior UNICEF staff. As is widely documented, girls are either hidden by military commanders or do not perceive themselves as soldiers (or victims). Many simply see no net gain in what a DDR program can offer them compared to the relative material security they enjoy as a ‘military wife’.
UNICEF recognizes these shortcomings but rightly maintain that the best way, however indirect, to reach girls is through community protection networks. Communities are the link to the girls, and must also understand that girls are CAFF and that with this comes certain rights, privileges and access to assistance programs. Interviews with boy CAFF also serve as a source of insight into girls’ general avoidance of the DDR process.

37. **Lack of a tailored approach for 16-18 year olds:** The reintegration process cannot remain formulaic (‘one size fits all’) but should strive to be sufficiently nuanced to meet the particular needs of each age group. No particular programs or options are available for this age group, although UNICEF reports being ‘convinced that their needs are categorically different from younger CAFF’. One program officer claimed that UNICEF was now advocating that a maximum number of 16-18 year olds be incorporated into the adult DDR program, their progress regularly monitored by protection agents.

38. **Formal education options:** UNICEF does offer the novelty of allowing 16-18 year olds to attend a three-year condensed academic program, modified for young adults, that allows them to complete all six years of primary school in three years. This makes them eligible to take the final exam for primary school and, if successful, to receive a diploma.

**Social, economic, educational reintegration**

39. UNICEF offers three possible reintegration activities: 1) Combination of socio-economic with educational reintegration; 2) Vocational training for community reintegration; and 3) Education.

40. In its three zones of operation, UNICEF reports the following statistics on reintegration activities:

- Zone East: 2,112
- Zone Kinshasa: 967
- Zone West: 282
- Total: 3,361

41. In the current context of Ituri and North Kivu, where conflict continues, UNICEF maintains that economic reintegration programming is premature. This is evidenced by the fact that local NGOs are unable to identify sufficient economic activities to generate revenue for trained CAFF. Urban areas plagued by political instability and high crime rates do not provide sufficient economic opportunity to absorb the recently skilled. In such an environment, vocational training programs take a long time to produce positive, measurable results. An obvious risk for rural and urban reintegrated children whose families lack adequate survival means is the increased susceptibility to pressures of re-recruitment.
42. **Community Child Protection Mechanisms:** Since 2005, UNICEF has been piloting its new ‘multi-sector’ approach to child protection in North Equateur with interesting results for child DDR, particularly in the area of sustainable reintegration and community-led prevention of re-recruitment and regular follow-up of reunified CAFF. Under the broad rubric of vulnerability, CAFF are but one category of beneficiary alongside several others (girls, handicapped, victims of forced labor, etc.), all of whom receive in principle direct attention, support and follow up by a wide-ranging network of community protection ‘cells’. These are teams of local volunteers trained by UNICEF and its local partners, based strategically in rural and urban areas of CAFF concentration. Although its MDRP proposal indicates 14 such networks are to be established, forty are currently being developed across the country.

43. **Reintegration follow-up and case monitoring poor:** The urban/rural disparity is evident in UNICEF’s work as with other agencies. UNICEF partner BEVES, for example, has reunified 222 children (17 girls) in 2005, although none have yet to commence reintegration activities. Follow-up visits are supposedly underway by local partners; UNICEF awaits their reports and findings, which it will then counter-verify with field visits of its own. In South Kivu this system is rather complicated, as UNICEF partners such as BEVES have their own local partners who do case reporting and follow-up on behalf of BEVES, and whose findings must be verified as well. UNICEF reports the widespread concern prevalent that these remote, tertiary local partners may try to inflate CAFF numbers or duplicate names to receive more assistance. Such risks are common in operational environments where local economies are ruined and the ‘victim population’ (CAFF in this instance) constitutes a source of livelihood for some.

44. **Weakness of local partners:** As acknowledged by UNICEF, many local partners are weak and lack professionalism. Repeated trainings can rectify this in some cases, but low literacy rates and lack of higher education among the available ‘professional class’ are endemic. Coupled with limited UNICEF staff support (six partner agencies in South Kivu alone to be covered by three UNICEF who oversee non-MDRP operations as well), this has impact on the quality of work, particularly in social and economic reintegration, where local partner experience is most limited.

45. **Late start to reintegration activities:** As mentioned elsewhere, insufficient planning and preparation for the reintegration phase has hampered its implementation. Of the 9,341 reunified, only 3,361 are currently involved in reintegration, meaning that 5,980 await post reunification support.

46. **The urban—rural divide:** UNICEF recognizes that reunified children in more isolated areas are being overlooked. This is exacerbated by the fact that although some local agencies have full-time staff in these places, many are volunteers with other preoccupations and receive little follow-up or supervision.
47. **Problems with follow-up:** According to UNICEF staff, the only kind of follow-up that occurs is the verification of whether reunified children have been accepted by their biological families. Inaccessibility due to insecurity is a major constraint here. UNICEF is now investing in Community Protection Networks to further engage communities in the follow-up to reintegration activities once these get underway.

f. Documentation

48. UNICEF has no central system for coordinating documentation and there appears to be no single individual responsible for managing the data. In the Kivus, data from UNICEF partners gets sent to SC UK, the provincial center for the processing and managing of CAFF information. With regards to file management, UNICEF does not appear to insist on a common approach amongst CTOs, as information management systems differed significantly between CTOs visited. This impression is based on our reviews of documentation at two Goma CTO sites (S.O.S. and CAJED), the BVES CTO in Bukavu and the COOPI CTO in Bunia.

49. In the Kivus, there is a division of responsibilities between different parties. For example, in Goma, a separate organization, (PAMI, an SC UK partner) runs the child space at the local CO. Once the CAFF were demobilized, PAMI then delivers the children to the transit facility, run by either a UNICEF partner (SOS, CAJED) or a SC UK partner (DIVAS). PAMI would be separated from the process until the family tracing began and if this fell into their zone of operation around Goma, they would once again be involved. This has an impact on the quality of documentation produced.

50. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** UNICEF maintains that the documentation system alone is insufficient as a means of monitoring an agency’s progress regarding the various stages of the DDR process. The information being entered into the system is not reliable. To rectify this, UNICEF couples field data with community indicators, largely qualitative, such as the informed views of community leaders regarding re-recruitment trends, local economic opportunities, education needs, etc. UNICEF recently initiated a tool for quarterly monitoring and evaluation for local partners in order to better follow their activities and achievements within a three-month period. UNICEF maintains that this will help ensure that targets and objectives are effectively reached by regular comparison with objective indicators. This is feasible provided that the dedicated staff travel to the field with sufficient regularity and duration to ensure these tools are applied correctly. A common problem for many agencies is that field visits occur regularly but the amount of time actually spent on the ground (sometimes only hours) is often
insufficient. This is true of implementing agencies and local partners visiting reunified CAFF and community protection committees as well.

51. UNICEF claims to monitor and evaluate its local partners regularly, and has developed specific indicators for this task. Generally it finds that its partners do decent community mobilization work but lack managerial skill, particularly in accounting, and require regular capacity building and training. There is a synergistic effect in some cases, as in the case of PAMI, who is managed and funded by SC-UK while also performing follow-up activities for UNICEF. Selection criteria are applied to candidate agencies, which if met lead to a partnership, whereupon a formal agreement is signed with the agencies validating their proposed activities. Local community members participate in this validation process.

iii. Conclusions

52. The table below summarizes UNICEF performance in its own DDR programming.

Table 7: Statistical Summary of Output—UNICEF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Demobilization</th>
<th>Reunification</th>
<th>Reintegration (ongoing)</th>
<th>Completed Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientale</td>
<td>6,738</td>
<td>4,764</td>
<td>1,610</td>
<td>No numbers provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kivus (2)</td>
<td>1,778</td>
<td>1,778</td>
<td>502</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Equateur28</td>
<td>1,377</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>956</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandundu</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katanga</td>
<td>1,405</td>
<td>1,243</td>
<td>174</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasais (2)</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>108</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11,752</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,341</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,361</strong></td>
<td><strong>No numbers provided</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last 6 months</td>
<td>Numbers not provided</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Goal</td>
<td>112% of 3,000 target (due likely to cumulative data prior to MDRP grant)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls demobilized</td>
<td>1,550</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-demobilized</td>
<td>Numbers not provided</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28 UNICEF estimates 3000 CAFF in EQ, meaning 46% of this estimate has already been demobilized in northern EQ alone. Added to the 553 demobilized by BRC in the south, the total (1,930) represents 64% of the CAFF estimate for the entire province.
53. Among its primary objectives, UNICEF successfully finalized the interim NDDRDP for children. The Operational Framework is now in CONADER hands, under its full supervision and authority. Demobilization and reintegration activities are ongoing, although numbers are not as high as anticipated. The projected transition to national ownership of the child DDR program is delayed, blocked by the poor state of coordination.

54. Several internal and external factors were raised by UNICEF as performance constraints, primarily the heavy bureaucracy of UN organizations generally, the insufficient number of staff allocated to child protection, the infrastructural challenges of the country, and ongoing insecurity preventing access to rural areas.

55. In accordance with commitments made in its project proposal, UNICEF has committed significant time and energy to train and equip CONADER staff, provide technical assistance and relevant equipment and logistics—but it cannot implement CONADER’s roles and responsibilities on its behalf. As far as this evaluation is concerned, it was evident that none of the analytical tools or supervisory mechanisms imparted by UNICEF were being applied in CONADER’s day-to-day activities. CONADER planning and coordination appears entirely reactive and intuitive, with little proactive analysis or quantitative assessment of needs, roles and appropriate actions for itself or the agencies it purports to supervise and coordinate.

56. CONADER alone is responsible for decentralizing its power structures and delegating authority to its provincial offices. This has not happened, and this continued rigid centralization (compounded by the above inadequacies) delays the activities of all agencies seeking to collaborate with CONADER. Beneficiaries, more importantly, bear the brunt of its continuing weak performance.

57. **Training:** In total, 66 trainings were initially planned by UNICEF, 32 of which have been realized. UNICEF conducted 17, CONADER 2, and SC-UK 13. 34 trainings will occur between now and December 2006, with 24 of these dealing exclusively with reintegration strategy and practices. The 32 trainings realized thus far occurred in the following provinces: Kinshasa (4), Bas-Congo (1), Bandundu (2), Equateur (3), Kasai Oriental (3), Province Orientale (3), Maniema (3), Katanga (6), South Kivu (3) and North Kivu (5). These trainings have reached 682 key staff, of which 370 were attained with MDRP funding, according to UNICEF.
58. The content of these trainings is divided into two different curricula, consisting of five and eight modules, respectively. The first concentrates on the ‘training of trainers’ component and involves provincial facilitators of the national child DDR program. The second is more technical, providing specific instruction on all details of the DDR process for children: verification of CAFF status, running of a CO (and child spaces), best practices and standards for CTOs, the intricacies of the documentation system and its specific forms.

59. **Transit Families as a pacification measure for difficult children:** While UNICEF’s community protection networks are advancing and expanding in pioneering ways, it has yet to experiment with FATs and the strategic compliment they offer to dealing with difficult CAFF. In Northern EQ (Gemena) UNICEF’s local partner, AASD, has experienced the extreme forms of vandalism and retaliation in its CTOs. Structures and furnishings destroyed, all goods and materials stolen (for resale) or simply destroyed, its staff taken hostage and physically abused. CTO staff have been trained in mediation techniques and understand the necessity of pacific resolution of conflict with CAFF in their care, but are not able to control them once the momentum of mass psychology has taken over, sometimes for days. FATs offer the means to separate the catalyzing minority, and to remove them from the group before a destructive momentum takes over. Such a strategy was tried and proven in several other provinces visited.

60. **Prevention of re-recruitment:** UNICEF is aware of re-recruitment movements in the provinces, and has recorded 224 instances of re-recruitment thus far. While this is in part due to direct pressure from military groups, former CAFF are driven to re-enroll given economic pressures at home and the lack of economic opportunities in their communities.

61. **Future funding:** Unless deep transformation takes place within CONADER as a system, according to UNICEF, it does not envision submitting any funding proposals. UNICEF will submit proposals to other donors, particularly for socio-economic reintegration.
Belgian Red Cross

(b) Belgian Red Cross (BRC), project title: “Capacity-building and support for the prevention of recruitment, the demobilization and the reintegration of children associated with armed forces,” for a total of $2.15 million and a duration of two years (May 2004-May 2006). The project is implemented in two locations: Kinshasa and the southern half of Equateur around Mbandaka. The table below summarizes project parameters and key results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Duration &amp; Province</th>
<th>Program Objectives</th>
<th>Completed Program</th>
<th>Percentage of Target</th>
<th>Currently in Reintegration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$2.15 million</td>
<td>May 04 - May 06; Kinshasa &amp; South EQ</td>
<td>Training of staff and officials in DR, sensitization and prevention; reintegration activities for 2,400 CAFF</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>4.2% of 2,400</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

62. In addition to reaching 2,400 children associated with armed groups, the general objectives of the project are threefold:

- **Training of personnel in demobilization and reintegration activities.** 2,000 Red Cross volunteers will be trained by 340 ‘communicators’ to work with demobilized child soldiers at transit centers, to mediate with their families and to conduct sensitization activities as the community level. This training of trainers will cover psycho-social development and counseling of children and child soldiers, mediation techniques, education activities.

- **Sensitization and prevention.** Target training groups include government, local authorities, communities, families, teachers and students, Red Cross volunteers. Training will increase understanding of child protection, the situation of child soldiers, their reintegration needs associated processes at community level.

- **Reintegration of 2,400 child soldiers into families and communities.** Transit Centers will be opened along with Transit Family structures, to facilitate care and preparation of children who will stay on average three months before returning to their families and communities. Preparation in these transit care facilities will include psycho-social counseling, skills-oriented training, sports and religious activities. Planning for reintegration activities (school or apprenticeship) and subsequent follow-up visits will begin (once-a-month minimum over one year).

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29 MDRP registers the BRC target beneficiary number as 800. This is not what BRC signed up for in its IDA grant, the official source of the 2,400 figure used by this evaluation.
- **Transfer statistics for Kinshasa and Equateur Provinces:** Kinshasa received 288 CAFF coming from North Equateur and Kasai; 276 of these were sent to the Kivus and Orientale provinces. Equateur (Mbandaka) received 190 CAFF, via Kinshasa, from the Eastern provinces that were sent on to North Equateur.

**Analysis**

**i. Program Design**

63. The Belgian Red Cross works closely with its national counterpart, the Congolese Red Cross, in the implementation of its programs in Kinshasa and Equateur. The first of its primary objectives—training of trainers and staff—has taken place, although the evaluation team was not able to view the training in process, only to meet with former trainees now working as program staff in Kinshasa and Equateur (CTOs, mobile teams, etc.). Of the 340 communicators and 2000 volunteers to be trained, 100 communicators and approximately 1000 volunteers ultimately received the planned training. According to BRC staff, of the 100 communicators trained, only 56 are actively involved in the program today.

64. Staff training would serve the dual function of ensuring proper care of the demobilized child in transit and during reintegration activities, as well as creating awareness in the communities of origin where the children were returning. Training for CTO staff would include all personnel associated with project, including guards and drivers. This is good practice, as all staff will interact with the children in varying degrees. All staff need to understand the complexities at stake, particularly the importance of non-discrimination and/or preferential treatment vis à vis local children.

65. Despite not having reached its training target, our overall impression of BRC national staff was one of competence and commitment, even if prior specialized knowledge or training regarding child DDR within BRC as an institution does not exist to the degree found in Save the Children or UNICEF, for instance. 30 CTO staff in Kinshasa and Mbandaka seemed competent and qualified. Transit Families clearly understood the intricacies of the DDR process for children, its risks and rewards in terms of peace and stability for the nation. Whether this high degree of comprehension and commitment was

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30 Remarks about BRC’s comparative lack of institutional expertise with child DDR were made to us in numerous frank discussions both in Kinshasa and in Equateur. The possibility of a short, informal ‘in-house training’ for BRC program managers with SC-UK in Goma, for instance, was also raised and recommended.
the result of training or due instead to almost two years of direct involvement with the project and its daily realities is difficult to judge at this late stage in the project cycle.

66. The second primary objective—sensitization and prevention—is laudable and relevant but difficult to quantify or evaluate. The project proposal rightly recognizes local authorities and communities as essential to the long-term success of the DR process, including the prevention of re-recruitment. Also evident in the language of the proposal is the long-term nature of the DR process, as dire poverty and instability will jeopardize reintegration efforts. This contextual variable in the long-term, sustainable success of child DDR in the DRC is beyond the control of the Special Projects.

67. BRC also stresses the importance of community ownership of the CAFF phenomenon if the DDR process is to succeed over time, and anticipates a ‘repercussive effect’ of its training of trainers and various sensitization campaigns within the community. Such a ‘multiplier effect’ within communities and among local authorities is certainly imaginable, but the project proposal does not go further towards a clear delineation of the specific causality required to achieve such an effect. As a result, its insinuation that ‘community protection networks’ will arise organically through repeated community sensitization is but an idealization. Important operational details are lacking in the project proposal: clear tasks for trained Red Cross volunteers at the community level; a monthly workplan for the mobile teams; an exact definition of ‘prevention of re-recruitment’. Finally, while BRC acknowledges that a regular cycle of refresher trainings will be necessary, the proposal does not elaborate how or when this will transpire in the operational framework.

68. On the third overall objective, that of the transit care, reunification and reintegration of 2400 CAFF, the BRC proposal is more realistic and detailed. This goal was not met: 553 children were demobilized (23% of 2,400) and 101 children have been reintegrated (4.2% of 2,400). Further comments on this phase of the work follow in the section on transit care below.

69. Regarding project design, specific activities within the CTO are detailed in the project proposal, as is the ‘family orientation’ of the transit structure itself. Particular attention is accorded to the psycho-social component of certain activities. Family tracing begins upon arrival, as does psycho-social and medical evaluation. BRC envisions an average stay in the transit structure (CTO or FAT) of three months, and expects to use CTOs exclusively for boys and to place girls with transit families. BRC also makes frequent reference to its substantial experience with street children and unaccompanied minors (‘other vulnerable children’, or OVCs), experiences that will inform and guide its approach to CAFF during their stay in transit structures. From their proposal, the BRC appear to have a convincing grasp of how to orient ‘difficult’ children towards more meaningful, self-directed lives. Such prior experience is no doubt appropriate to the interpersonal skill set required of CTO staff in their interactions with CAFF. OVCs are
anticipated in the project proposal as potential beneficiaries (no target number is provided), and will have access to activities and teachings offered by the transit care structures (literacy, numeracy, etc.) in their community.

70. How exactly reunification will occur is not detailed, except that Red Cross volunteers will prepare families for the difficulties of integrating CAFF back into the household. Such precautionary measures are warranted as rejection often occurs after the child has been accepted and returned to the home. These same volunteers are to be responsible for the monthly follow-up of reunified children throughout their reintegration process. Finally, BRC anticipates a number of immediate reunifications (where the family is local and child is ready), and describes how its mobile team will provide follow-up for these cases.

71. The reintegration component of the project proposal appears insufficiently planned. Apart from individual follow-up for reunified children, BRC does not appear to anticipate the fact that educational and economic reintegration activities require considerable effort to plan, implement and supervise. Guiding the child’s choice of reintegration activity in the transit stage is an important aspect, but no child can be expected to implement his/her reintegration activities all alone once back in the village. BRC does not describe in its proposal how it will establish these activities locally for each child.

72. Overall, the initial program design is vague, despite a recurring statement that the program will adapt to needs as they arise. Such an approach is reactive instead of proactive, suggesting a lack of planning. Without an initial logframe or clear monitoring & evaluation plan (except a promise of monthly visits to reunified children), progress over time is difficult to evaluate, internally or externally, as is presently the case. As with many of the other agencies evaluated, BRC appears to have relied on its monthly statistical reporting on CAFF to serve as a surrogate form of M&E. Statistics are, however, an insufficient substitute for performance indicators, which the program lacks.

73. Related to these ambiguities in the project proposal, particular gaps are evident in the project design. These oversights have had direct impact on the project as it has unfolded over the last two years. These include:

- **Underestimation of the number of CAFF to be transferred, the logistical complexity involved, and of the high cost of inter-provincial transfers.** The number of cases and the great expense of transferring CAFF were not appreciated or factored into program design. The fact that Kinshasa would play such a key role in the transfer of children between provinces was not envisaged. Logistical complexity including the unreliability of MONUC flights, costs of commercial carriers, and delays in family tracing between provinces have all exceeded BRC planning.
- **Underestimation of duration of CAFF in transit care.** Many CAFF have taken much longer than expected to reunify. BRC are dependent on other agencies in other provinces to trace many of the families, resulting in serious delays. Insecurity in the Eastern Provinces has also decelerated CAFF return to these areas.

- **Insufficient logistical capacity in Equateur.** Considering the distances to be covered and lack of infrastructure in EQ, weak logistical support and equipment has hindered BRC from providing follow up to reunified CAFF.31 A more realistic assessment of equipment needs should have been apparent in the project proposal.

- **Limited planning for the post reunification phase.** Reintegration activities have only begun in earnest in recent months. Focus has been principally on the demobilization, transit care and reunification components of the program. It appears that the complexity of reintegration programming (esp. follow-up) was not anticipated. More generally, the logistical and managerial complexity of running the various elements of the program concurrently was not grasped at the outset.

- **The challenges of reaching and adequately supporting ‘special groups’—self-demobilized, girls, 16-18 year olds—were not factored in at the outset.** This is due in part to BRC’s relative inexperience in child DDR, but should have been foreseen nonetheless.

- **Operational constraint of neutrality for BRC:** Although pertinent in many humanitarian contexts, BRC neutrality prevented it from conducting direct advocacy and CAFF identification missions among armed groups in South Equateur. Repercussions include CONADER’s choice of local NGO (APEE) to carry out identification and verification across South EQ, resulting in competition with BRC as roles were not clearly defined at the outset.

### ii. Implementation

74. Analysis of the implementation of the BRC program is best approached directly through the following operational components: modes of transit care (CTOs and FATs); family tracing, transfers and reunification; self-demobilized and girls; social, economic, 

31 BRC underestimated equipment needs for its work in EQ. The project proposal foresaw a need for 1 4WD, 4 motos, 1 pirogue (etc)—insufficient to do follow-up, supervise reintegration activities, sensitize communities and families, and deploy mobile team on a regular basis. During our visit, only two motos worked, and there was no pirogue (they had to rent).
and educational reintegration; and documentation practices. Analysis of implementation is necessarily a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data; operational components of overall implementation are assessed accordingly below.

75. Coordination occurs at Mbandaka and Kinshasa levels regarding CAFF transfer between provinces and, in Equateur, between CONADER and BRC regarding program activities across the province. CONADER supports a number of local partners in southern Equateur. Relations between CONADER and BRC are cordial but marred by a mutual lack of trust. Currently, the two actors operate in parallel, not in tandem.

a. Transit Care

76. The evaluation team visited three CTOs run by BRC via their local partners, the Congolese Red Cross. One CTO was in Kinshasa, the other two (CTO ‘Brussels’ & CTO ‘Air Congo’) in Mbandaka, Equateur Province. The CTOs in Mbandaka only accepted male CAFF; the Transit Family (TF or FAT) mechanism was used for girls. The evaluation team met with transit families in Mbandaka, not in Kinshasa, due to time constraints.

- **Clean, functional conditions:** The three CTOs visited were clean and well kept, although this may not have been the case if occupancy were much higher. The rooms had enough space—again, with the lower number of CAFF presently at the site. Staff were present and appeared to have a good relationship with the CAFF, who themselves were relatively positive about the CTO conditions. In keeping with CTOs elsewhere, the minimal comforts were deliberate in order to maximize parallels with conditions of the child’s destination.

- **Family atmosphere:** A married couple was installed in each CTO, interacting with the children formally (through lessons and activities) and informally throughout the day. Children were given household chores and received disciplinary measures when their behavior transgressed acceptable norms. Particularly in Mbandaka, the evaluation team was impressed with the genuinely positive, collaborative spirit evident in both CTOs, despite the presence of some clearly difficult CAFF.

- **Doubts about the capacity of CTO “Air Congo”:** Although the Air Congo CTO has never had more than 50 CAFF at any one time, it had recently been categorized as having capacity for 100. This is not feasible—50 is already too numerous. There is not enough living space, sleeping space, latrines, showers, etc.

- **Indiscriminate sleeping arrangements:** Although single-sex, sleeping arrangements were not structured with protection concerns in mind. Older and younger boys slept in
the same rooms; all were free to choose where they slept. The possibility that younger boys could face protection risks of sexual and physical abuse by older boys, particularly at night, had not occurred to the local staff. Such abuses have been documented in a number of transit facilities in Ituri and the Kivus—rarely do victims raise their abuse with caretakers for fear of reprisal.

- **Encouraging children to play:** Interactive play and group discussions are encouraged at the centers. Adequate space provided for indoor and outdoor play (adjacent fields and footballs, as well as tables, cards and board games). This seems simple enough but it was not widely shared by other CTOs elsewhere, despite its obvious therapeutic benefits. We did not get to see instances of ballet or silent theatre described in the project proposal.

- **Alternate activities for delayed transfers:** The majority of the children visited in the Kinshasa CTO were en route to another part of the country, as part of their transfer process. Because of delays in family tracing and insecurity in their home provinces, many of these children had spent more than three months waiting to be transferred. In Mbandaka we met children who’d been waiting more than a year. Now in ‘child-headed households’ (‘autonomie’), they enjoyed their independence but were literally begging to begin their vocational training. The Operational Framework prohibits vocational training in advance of reunification, but in such extreme cases we believe some form of training should be allowed.³²

- **Transit Families for difficult children:** BRC currently has a network of over 70 FATs. They reserve this option for particularly difficult children, who apparently are more restrained in a family environment than in a CTO where instances of ‘group hysteria’ are common. We visited three FATs and were very impressed with them. BRC claims to visit CAFF in FATs once every two weeks, although no written records are kept. Families were recruited through church networks, and selected after interviews and an assessment of their socio-economic stability. Selected families also underwent one week of training, with a focus on the psychological needs and difficulties to expect from CAFF. Exploitation of CAFF in the home and of the compensatory system itself (non-food items, not cash), had been registered on several occasions. BRC sought to avoid this recurrence.

³² As these children were from North Katanga, their delay was sure to continue due to security concerns and logistical obstacles between Lubumbashi and North Katanga (no one had told them this; they were hoping to leave any day). Allowing them some form of income-generating activity, if not vocational training, is recommended.
b. Family Tracing, Transfers, and Reunification

77. More than any other agency, BRC has had to process a high number of transfers, a scale of activity not foreseen in its project design. They have experienced all the attendant problems of this complex and often costly process. Of the 478 CAFF that have passed through Kinshasa CTOs since the start of the program, 137 were reunified in the Kinshasa area—341 were transferred. This also means that children ‘stuck in transit’ are recorded as demobilized but not reunified, hence the difference between the two columns.

78. As is the case with every agency under evaluation, the numbers of reunified CAFF are far below those reported as demobilized. Where are these children? For BRC, only 238 out of the 553 demobilized have been reunified. The remaining 315 are either in CTOs or in transit to their province of origin. In any event, the number of unaccounted children seems high and warrants closer scrutiny.

79. For BRC, the basic transfer process unfolds as follows:

1. Contact receiving agency in province of destination and send Form D
2. Confirm positive family tracing and acceptance by family to receive child
3. Contact MONUC to arrange air transport for CAFF (plus accompanying adult + dossier), or purchase of commercial flight (2 tickets, one round-trip)
4. Inform transit care structure in province of destination of CAFF ETA

80. BRC estimates in its project proposal that the above process would take a maximum of three months. We met numerous cases of children in Kinshasa and Mbandaka who had been in several CTOs during their inter-provincial transfer process. Some of these children had languished more than a year; these cases warrant immediate attention. BRC is not responsible for the unreliability of MONUC flights, for instance, or that insecurity in the East continues to prevent many CAFF from returning. Three unexpected challenges have emerged in the course of the program: an unexpected high number of CAFF to be transferred, the enormous logistical complications resulting in unforeseen delays, and the unforeseen costs associated with inter-provincial transfers. More specific observations include:

- **Effective tracing and reunification of 238 CAFF:** BRC and the Congolese Red Cross have substantial experience in the area of family tracing. As with other agencies, their capacity to facilitate the successful return of hundreds of children to their families should be acknowledged. It is clear from discussions with staff and management that this has been a primary area of focus in their operations. Although an effective service, 238 represents only 9% of BRC’s overall two year target.
- **Difficulties of transfer to other provinces:** As mentioned above, high numbers of children passed through Kinshasa on their way to other provinces. In several interviews and discussions, the point was raised that partner agencies in destination provinces did not trace the families of BRC CAFF in a timely fashion, resulting in delays and increasing frustration. In areas where no implementing partner (aside from CONADER) was operational, these delays were reported to be much longer.

- **Incomplete documentation:** CAFF arriving from other provinces often lack correct documentation. Although such problems were commonplace between the major implementing partners, problems of documentation and information exchange were far more pronounced in areas where no major partner (aside CONADER) was present.

- **Difficult follow-up for remote reunified CAFF:** Urban reunified CAFF we met in Mbandaka were not yet psychologically acclimated to their new environment, and difficult to penetrate. Vocational training was underway; its attendant complications made more manageable by constant BRC intervention and supervision. Our deduction that rural reintegration, given the infrequency and difficulty of follow-up, must be going poorly was confirmed when we met rural CAFF, previously reunified, who had since returned to Mbandaka town to pursue their vocational training. They were staying with relatives, and explained to us that there were neither training options nor economic opportunities in their villages for their chosen vocation (sewing and tailoring). BRC had the flexibility and sense to find urban solutions for such cases.

c. **Special Groups: Self-demobilized, Girls and 16-18 year olds**

81. BRC has managed to process 186 self-demobilized children, 43 of them girls. These numbers are low compared to other provinces primarily because the agency had no specific strategy with regard to these groups at the outset of their program. Furthermore, it has yet to develop special programs or particular approaches tailored to the challenge of self-demobilized children generally, although it helps them obtain their certificate of release (‘attestation de sortie’). Numbers of self-demobilized probably remain high in rural Southern Equateur, BRC believes.

82. Through its community sensitization campaigns on general child DDR issues, self-demobilized and girl CAFF began making themselves known to Red Cross volunteers. This strategy, with minor variations, is carried out by all implementing agencies, even those who have studied the phenomenon in detail, simply because there is no proven formula to access this group. Word of mouth can be effective, but is generally more so when self-demobilized understand that existing programs—particularly economic or educational reintegration—offer them no-risk benefits. Conveying this
simple message to the target population is more difficult than it sounds, however, as disinformation and false rumor are the norm in many provinces, in rural and urban areas alike.

83. Indeed, many CAFF we spoke with often had an inaccurate understanding of the child DDR process generally, and what exactly was their due in terms of kits, training options, support, etc. Our primary concern with the BRC program is its lack of systematic incorporation of self-demobilized CAFF into ongoing reintegration activities. Further remarks on the special groups include:

- **Numbers of remaining self-demobilized:** BRC staff in Equateur believe that there are many self-demobilized CAFF in their region (no numerical estimate), and that a proportionally significant number of them are girls. While basic sensitization campaigns exist to help self-demobilized CAFF obtain their certificate of release, no concerted effort is underway to incorporate them into existing reintegration programs. Documented self-demobilized do not enter a CTO; they are supervised from home and may visit a Day Center if they wish.

- **Girls:** 43 girls have accessed the program, 29 of these in the last six months. BRC does not indicate whether these girls are auto-demobilized or official. The program offers girl CAFF and their babies medical, nutritional and some material support. This assistance amplifies the ‘word of mouth’ effect and, BRC claims, serves to attract more girl CAFF in an ad hoc fashion. While not systematic or readily measured in terms of performance, such an approach is arguably more appropriate than widely publicized, highly visible efforts to reach girls given the stigma, denial and reticence girl CAFF are known to experience vis-à-vis DDR programs. The BRC approach does not openly declare or advertise the girl CAFF phenomenon; in so doing it may attract more beneficiaries—this hypothesis is however difficult to prove.

- **The 16-18 year olds:** No specific measures are taken to address the particular needs of this age group. BRC have greater problems with severely delayed CAFF who are deeply frustrated and can be volatile. Given the low numbers of CAFF processed by the program, it is likely that issues specific to the 16-18 year-old group have not had a chance to surface, as they have in other provinces where hundreds more CAFF are being processed.

- **OVC (Orphans and Vulnerable Children):** Literacy courses in Kinshasa and around Mbandaka are open to local OVC. During the 3rd quarter of 2005, BRC reported 57 OVC registered in its literacy courses between both provinces.

- **Effective radio communications essential to dispel disinformation:** The DDR process is complex and entails a number of distinctions and differentiations that are not self-evident to the combatant or civilian population. The distinction between adult
and child combatant and the differences in their respective DDR programs are explained in radio programs and leaflets produced by the MDRP in conjunction with implementing agencies, UN agencies and other DDR actors. Despite these efforts, serious misunderstandings remain (perhaps deliberate) among child and adult ex-combatants, and with local authorities as well. In Kalemie, for instance, the evaluation team witnessed an organized effort by former Mai Mai commanders (through written notes addressed to reunified CAFF) to direct previously reunified CAFF from their villages to a recently opened Orientation Center to claim cash benefits. A then-current radio message was claiming that ‘all ex-combatants should meet at the CO to qualify for benefits’. No distinction was made between adult and child combatants, particularly those processed prior to the creation of the CO. Local authorities also believed previously reunified CAFF were eligible for these cash benefits.

d. Social, Economic, Educational Reintegration

84. On the whole, 35% of demobilized CAFF in Kinshasa and Southern Equateur are active in the BRC reintegration programs. Activities visited in southern Equateur are marked by start-up delays and lower participation numbers, where only 20% of demobilized are involved in reintegration activities. In Kinshasa, the numbers are higher, reflecting an urban bias seen throughout the evaluation: 69% of demobilized CAFF are active in reintegration programming.

85. According to statistics received from BRC, 43 CAFF have been reunified but are not accessing reintegration activities. 101 are recorded as having completed the entire program, which is over half of those currently in reintegration activities. Specific observations include:

- **No follow-up documentation**: As mentioned above, no Form H was available for review in Mbandaka. There was documented follow up available for the 29 children who had accessed vocational training of some sort but none for the other 218 children who had been reunified in their operational area. In Kinshasa, follow-up visits were made ‘according to need’; i.e., relative to the difficulties to reintegrate experienced by the child.

- **Urban—rural disparity**: Even though substantial effort is made to trace families and ensure that the CAFF are reunified in their community, it became apparent from discussions with local staff that remote rural CAFF do not receive regular follow-up visits, if any at all. Three such visits are foreseen per year.
- **Educational support:** Three schools are being assisted with physical rehabilitation in exchange for accepting OVC and CAFF without tuition for one year. Ten literacy centers are also available for OVC in Kinshasa and Equateur.

- **Disparity among the various kits creates tensions:** As other agencies, BRC reports a lack of coherence among agencies providing kits to CAFF, particularly those in transit. The actual differences in material content are insignificant but are readily exploited by children in order to demand further benefits and handouts.

e. Documentation

86. The BRC has no central system for coordinating documentation and no single individual manages the data, which is first treated at the provincial level. BRC has recently introduced a database system in Kinshasa, but Mbandaka had not managed to start the system at the time of our visit. Regarding individual file management, it is difficult to ascertain whether BRC uses a common approach between CTOs, as files and data were managed differently from CTO to CTO. Generally an individual dossier per child system is used. Although not all the forms (A-H) are in use, a number of improvised forms have been created by local teams. Our findings are based on reviews of documentation at one Kinshasa CTO and the ‘Brussels’ CTO in Mbandaka.

iv. Conclusions

87. The table below conveys statistical results by BRC in a number of categories. Much of this information was generated through the Agency Questionnaire and through subsequent correspondence.

**Table 5: Statistical Summary of Output—BRC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Demobilization</th>
<th>Reunification</th>
<th>Reintegration (ongoing)</th>
<th>Completed Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinshasa</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Equateur</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>553</strong></td>
<td><strong>238</strong></td>
<td><strong>195</strong></td>
<td><strong>101</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last 6 months</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Goal (2400 CAFF)</td>
<td>4.2% have completed program [8.1% are in reintegration]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>43 (29 in last six months)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
88. As of February 2006, BRC had realized 553 demobilized CAFF, 238 reunified, 195 currently in reintegration and 101 who have completed the program. The completion figure is but 4.2% of the two-year total target of 2,400. BRC has documented 6 instances of prevention of re-recruitment. These low figures, particularly in Equateur, are due to incomplete coverage in rural areas, although this should have been anticipated in the project design.

89. Although many national Red Cross staff demonstrated commitment and capacity with regard to many elements of the DDR program, there is a disconnect between some of the methods they were applying and those outlined in the Cadre Operationel. This was apparent in their misunderstanding of the official documentation process, their limited inclusion of self-demobilized in programs and the extremely restricted reach of their reintegration activities. The last point may reflect the fact that their strength has always been in tracing and reunification. The fact that they had little or no experience in the follow-up or other outreach work with demobilized CAFF, and their subsequent struggle with related documentation, should have been addressed in the design phase or, at the latest, in the early stages of program implementation.

90. BRC is also hampered by a lack of appropriate logistical means to implement the rural component of its reintegration activities. As a result, it conducts substantially less follow-up than other agencies. As elsewhere, a marked difference in quality of treatment and follow-up is seen between rural and urban CAFF. In Equateur, based as it is along the Congo River, a natural high-way, its work would have been facilitated by the purchase of inexpensive pirogues and outboard motors, with sufficient fuel supplies procured in advance.

91. Finally, BRC did not plan effectively for the challenge of implementing the three major components of the program—demobilization, transit care and reunification, and reintegration—simultaneously. While these phases occur successively for the child, they are simultaneous and ongoing for the implementing agency. It is clear that the logistical, staffing and budgetary pressures of demobilization, transit and reunification activities have consumed BRC capacity, to the detriment of the reintegration phase of the program. Further observations include:

- Insufficient consideration of exit strategy: The level of effort directed towards planning an exit strategy beyond the life of MDRP funding seems to have been minimal. While BRC has secured additional funding to continue activities from the Belgian Cooperation, the lack of exit strategy is evident in the design of the project
and from discussions with staff. The general hope is that since the reintegration component is far from over, more funding will be made available.

- **Poor supervision; agency staff not getting to field:** Our visit to Equateur coincided with that of a program manager based in Kinshasa who had not seen the field for over a year (some of this was due to maternity leave). A recent visit to Boende by boat was the first for many staff when in fact such visits should be far more regular. If agency staff themselves are unable to visit rural project sites, it follows that CAFF follow-up post-reunification is equally difficult and infrequent, with direct negative impact on the overall quality of the project.

- **Human resource challenges:** BRC has had difficulty filling and maintaining posts in key management positions. Since May/June 2005, there has been little direct oversight of work in Equateur, with much responsibility falling on the provincial president of national society based in Mbandaka. BRC staff acknowledged that the poor follow up of reunified children and weak case documentation was in part caused by these management gaps.
NGO Group

(c) The ‘NGO Group’ is comprised of CARE International, the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH), and the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Project title: “Situation Assessment and Pilot Projects for Demobilization and Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Orientale, North Katanga and Maniema Provinces,” for a total of $9.16 million to demobilize and reintegrate 10,391 children between April 2003 and March 2005. Individually, the agencies committed to the following beneficiary target figures in separate IDA agreements: IRC 3,870 (2,870 + 1,000), IFESH 2,948 (733 + 2,215), and CARE 3,573 (733 + 2,840).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Duration &amp; Province</th>
<th>Program Objectives</th>
<th>Completed Program</th>
<th>Percentage of Target</th>
<th>Currently in Reintegration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$9.16 million</td>
<td>Apr. 03 - Mar. 05; OR, MA, KT</td>
<td>Assess feasibility of CAFF release from armed groups in MA, KT and OR; community sensitization and training; develop and implement DR plan for 10,391 CAFF</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>2.6% of 10,391</td>
<td>5,863</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

92. Collectively and across three provinces, the objectives of the NGO Group are fourfold:

- **Assess willingness of armed groups to demobilize children.** Develop a profile of the situation of child soldiers in or originating from Orientale, North Katanga and Maniema Provinces, and evaluate the good faith of all accessible armed groups to provide access to and develop DDR programs for these children.

- **Community sensitization and training.** Assess the current capacity of families and communities to facilitate the reintegration of children returning from armed groups, and identify and develop potential partners and resources needed for successful reintegration and prevention of recruitment.

- **Develop provincial plans for demobilization and reintegration.** Design a comprehensive demobilization and reintegration (DR) program for child soldiers in selected provinces within the framework of the national demobilization and reinsertion program as it evolves.
- **Child soldier reintegration.** Implement the comprehensive DR program in Maniema, Orientale, and North Katanga Provinces, in close collaboration with the national program, UNICEF and other key actors for a trial implementation period of six months and produce a proposal for a second implementation phase in year two.

Transfer Statistics

- **North Katanga:** IFESH has received 77 CAFF from Bas-Congo (64), Maniema (5), Orientale (5) and South Kivu (3). In total, IFESH has transferred 45 children from Katanga to N/S Kivu (20), Maniema (5), Kasai Orientale (8), Kinshasa (1), Orientale (2), Equateur (2).

- **Maniema:** CARE has received in total 18 children from other provinces: Bas Congo (5), Katanga (7), Orientale (2) and South Kivu (4). It has transferred 99 children out of the province: North Kivu (32), South Kivu (33), Orientale (8), Kinshasa (3), Kasai Occidental (7) and Katanga (6).

- **Orientale:** IRC has transferred 63 children to other provinces: Equateur (22), 5 in Katanga (5), 4 in Kinshasa (4), 10 in Maniema (10), 20 in North Kivu (20), 2 in South Kivu (2). IRC received 76 children from other provinces: Bas-Congo (25), Equateur (11), Kasai Orientale (7), Kinshasa (4), Maniema (10) and North Kivu (19).

Analysis

i. Program Design

93. The NGO Group states in its project proposal that it will collaborate with established actors in the field of child DDR, including CONADER, UNICEF, MONUC, ICRC and Save the Children UK in order to harmonize its activities with standard practice, and to complement the work of others where possible. The actual mode of internal collaboration to be pursued by the NGO Group is defined in an MOU signed between the three actors, whose efforts will are coordinated by a steering committee and NGO Group coordinator, both based in Kinshasa. Coherence in program implementation, monitoring and evaluation as well as the common database is thus ensured between the three actors.

94. The partnership is informed by the principle that child protection in a DDR context is best facilitated by strengthening families and communities to optimize the care and guidance they are able to provide children. The partnership therefore prioritizes
community-based programming over so-called ‘institutional approaches’, and aims to maximize community and child participation in the process. In this way, the child DDR program is quite distinct from the adult program, with its emphasis on direct cash and material handouts to the individual ex-combatant.

### a. Specific Objectives of the NGO Group

95. The three-month timeframe for the first project objective, the profile of armed groups and their readiness to demobilize children, was respected and appears to have achieved its aims. This research resulted in the publication of a report,\(^{33}\) whose relevance to program planning and operations by province may have been quite high. It is difficult to know whether report findings were applied directly or merely discussed and considered by agencies and program managers. The exercise itself is useful at the outset of such a program, particularly for three agencies without extensive experience in child DDR. A basic mapping of armed groups and potential CAFF was one tangible output of this research. The second practical use was the initial data it generated towards the establishment of the common database.

96. The second objective was to assess the capacity of families and communities to facilitate CAFF reintegration, and to identify potential local partners and resources to this end. The findings of this assessment were incorporated into the above report. The exercise was clearly definitive for the NGO Group insofar as it presented an initial opportunity to test the Group’s coordination skills, knowledge sharing and potential for synergy—whether or not research findings were ultimately applied in detail by each agency. Overall, the objective as described in the project proposal is extremely ambitious, and the final report does not accomplish the entirety of promised outputs. Market and vocational surveys, composite mapping of reintegration needs in all target areas, trial-running of various pilot projects in child protection, family tracing and reunification, reintegration support, etc., were not reflected in the final publication. Field research was clearly conducted with an eye to the practicalities and feasibility of community-focused child DDR. An important and useful array of insights and recommendations were generated and form the core of the mentioned publication. But this is far from the quantitative and qualitative field studies using random-sampling techniques and detailed questionnaires described in the original project proposal.

97. Objectives three and four were to design and implement a comprehensive demobilization and reintegration program for child soldiers in the three selected provinces, conformant with the NDDRP as it evolves. This plan, the ‘Project

Implementation Manual’ is in many ways a reflection of the strategy and operational orientation found in the project proposal submitted to MDRP. It is the result of the ‘preparatory phase’ described in the first and second objectives of the project proposal. Greater focus and detail are found on the community approach to be implemented, particularly regarding the development of community protection networks and similar local structures. This approach is considered essential to ensure the community ownership of child DR necessary for long-term, sustainable impact, particularly in the areas of preventing re-recruitment, OVC assistance, and successful socio-economic reintegration.

98. As with the other Special Projects, it is evident from the program design of the NGO Group that although the duration of operations was fixed at two years by the MDRP, the agencies involved did not understand their mission as a simple ‘stop-gap measure’. They were clearly aiming at sustainable reintegration, implying durable impact. MDRP chose to fund such activities, which were clearly described as community-focused and—particularly for the proposed reintegration component—for which sustainability would stand as a key indicator of success. Since the work began in early 2004, significant efforts were made by the NGO Group to adhere to these aims and to achieve lasting impact for both the direct and indirect beneficiaries: CAFF and their communities.

b. Program Design by Agency

CARE/Maniema

- **Failure to incorporate auto-demobilized CAFF in planning:** CARE staff acknowledged that the project design didn’t factor in the large number of self-demobilized CAFF they now need to cover (1,315 of 3,573, or 36% of total caseload). This has led to strains on the budget and impacts on their capacity to reach many rural CAFF involved in reintegration activities.

- **Lack of experience in sector:** Design did not take into account the lack of local technical capacity and experience needed for child DDR. Much time has been spent building capacity of national staff and local partners. It is only now at the end of the project that CARE staff feel they have a solid understanding of the subject and the milieu.

- **Logistical constraints not sufficiently factored into planning:** The difficulties of accessing materials and goods required for project implementation has caused significant delays. These realities should have been incorporated into project planning.
- **Disparity among kits**: Lack of a planning for the provision of reintegration kits to children after training: No clear policy was in place as to whether individual or group kits should be given to children after their training. It was only during the implementation of vocational training that CARE decided to provide kits to groups instead of individual trained CAFF. This has caused enormous frustration for children who have been trained but have yet to receive the materials necessary to commence their income-generating activities.

- **MONUC’s shift in focus impacted on budget**: MONUC had been extremely helpful in terms of facilitating transport prior to July 2005, after which this logistical support was substantially curtailed. The ensuing transport costs were not foreseen and have impacted on program implementation. The likelihood that MONUC could not provide constant support should have been considered at the time of project design.

### c. IFESH/North Katanga

99. IFESH staff confirmed many of our initial impressions in discussions during our visit. The most salient points regarding program design include:

- **Disproportionate reliance on MONUC for logistics and security**: the assumption that MONUC would be a key and willing partner in facilitating transport and logistics was never guaranteed. Further, the assumption that MONUC would be more proactive in guaranteeing the security of various territories in North Katanga was misguided. This never occurred, with deployment in most of IFESH operational areas happening only recently and in very small numbers.\(^{34}\) Access remains limited to many parts of North Katanga.

- **Assumed support from UNICEF**: UNICEF has long intended but never realized a presence in Kalemie. With little prior experience, IFESH has operated entirely alone, as CONADER is not present either.

- **Insufficient transport for project needs**: The assumption that one jeep and six motorbikes could cover the entire project area was not realistic.

\(^{34}\) According to IFESH, Kongolo has 3 MONUC troops, 3 for Manono, & 4 in Moba. All troops have observer status.
d. IRC/Orientale

100. Demobilization activities and CAFF presence have not proved to be as evenly distributed throughout Orientale province as IRC had planned. Ituri is the locus of child DDR in Orientale, and IRC has been able to shift its resources and staff to meet this reality. Although Orientale is a massive province, the concentration of CAFF work in Ituri thereby limits the geographic distribution of the project, making transport of goods and staff, as well as implementation and supervision, a much more manageable affair than in Maniema or North Katanga. MONUC has not decreased its deployment levels in Ituri, and IRC is able to rely with some certainty on regular flights and logistics support from MONUC—not the case in Maniema or North Katanga.

101. Ongoing conflict across Ituri remains a constant variable. It impedes access to project sites, self-demobilized and reunified CAFF; it jeopardizes the continuity of operations and fuels re-recruitment activities. IRC has nonetheless benefited from the fact that Bunia remains a logistics and planning center for both the peacekeeping and humanitarian aid missions. Mongbwalu, despite surrounding insecurity, remains accessible by air only because small private air charters (Aviations Sans Frontières) operate out of Bunia. While Kalemie and Kindu are served by Air Serv, their smaller, more remote project sites are far less accessible than the equally small, remote areas of Ituri. The IRC Ituri program is simply less isolated than CARE and IFESH are in their respective provinces, and this has benefited IRC operations in immeasurable ways.

102. Finally, positive coordination with CONADER and constant synergy with UNICEF and its partners has no doubt benefited the work of IRC. Although anticipated at the outset, this has not transpired as hoped for CARE and IFESH in their areas of activity. Overall, however, IRC appear far better equipped in terms of quality national staff, logistics and communications infrastructure to implement their program successfully. This is the result of proper planning and leaving as little to chance as possible.

ii. Implementation

103. Here we present overall findings for the NGO Group, representing the experiences and challenges of specific agencies where relevant.
a. CAFF Release from Military Groups

104. Over the two year program cycle, activity devoted to securing the release of CAFF has evolved considerably. The arrival of CONADER is perhaps the largest single shift in this activity for the agencies under evaluation. A few remarks about this process in two different provinces will also provide a glimpse into the nature of provincial coordination with CONADER.

105. **CARE/Maniema:** CARE’s experience in Maniema offers an illustrative example of how release strategies changed pre and post-CONADER, and how inter-agency coordination functions. Prior to CONADER, CARE conducted sensitization visits to local military commanders. Local protection committees, local NGOs, MONUC and OCHA also participated in these visits. Since the arrival of CONADER, a coordination unit was formed to coordinate, prepare and undertake visits to armed groups. Members of the unit include staff from MONUC, OCHA, CONADER, UNICEF, CARE, and the commander of the Seventh Military Region. In addition to securing lists of CAFF from various commanders, these visits also served to rectify misinformation and misunderstandings regarding the PNDDR among armed groups, particularly regarding special provisions for child combatants. After children are identified by a given commander, CARE verifies their age and confirms their status before obtaining their release certificate (‘attestation de sortie’), at which point CAFF are escorted to a transit structure.

106. **IRC/Orientale:** Coordination at the provincial level is an ad hoc affair, whose quality and utility is entirely dependent on the personalities involved. In Ituri, inter-agency coordination benefits from a common sense of urgency and commitment to the challenges at hand; there is little dysfunctional competition or gratuitous infighting as seen in all other provinces. Inter-agency coordination is exemplified by the release process, led by CONADER. As there is no Orientation Center in Bunia, IRC, together with other agencies (under the auspices of CONADER), receives children directly from FARDC commanders once combat with a given militia is over and the children are apprehended. IRC does the verification of children, medical control and kit distribution, then escorts them to a transit family or FAT. If the number of available FAT is insufficient, children are kept for few days under IRC supervision in tents provided by UNICEF and erected in the nearest Day Center. Those whose parents are immediately identified are sent directly home.

107. **IFESH/North Katanga:** In the absence of CONADER and UNICEF, IFESH assumes the lead coordination role for North Katanga. This includes chairing the Comité Technique DDR Enfant, which meets on a weekly basis. Participants include representatives of MONUC, CONADER and OCHA (when these latter are present), and local partners. Although there are efforts to start up similar committees around North Katanga, the Kalemie Committee is the only structure of its type. The main coordinating
systems in the other territories are the local protection committees or CPNs. While these coordination efforts provide valuable fora for sharing information and prescribing action, IFESH and other partners maintain that UNICEF’s absence in Kalemie has had a negative effect on the quality of child protection coordination in the region.

b. Transit Care

108. **CARE/Maniema:** CARE is equipped to use CTOs and FATs in its transit care activities, although these structures were barely operational during our visit as new CAFF releases are infrequent. This reflects the general sense that few if any CAFF remain in Maniema. At different times during the project cycle, CARE has used up to three CTOs, all of which are run by local partners. It has also prepared 29 transit families for girls, although these have apparently never been used.

109. At present only one CTO remains in Kindu town. It is run by Maniema Libertes (MALI). No CAFF have been received since September 2006 and at the time of visit there were no children and only a skeleton staff present.

110. **IFESH/Katanga:** IFESH is responsible, either directly or through partners, for four CTOs in North Katanga: Kalemie, Kongolo, Moba, and Manono. We were able to visit only the Kalemie CTO, due to time and logistics constraints. Given its sub-standard state, we feel justified in assuming that more remote CTOs are in equally bad shape, probably worse.

111. **IRC/Orientale:** IRC has its base office in Bunia and works in Mongbwalu, Mahagi and Aru. It is planning to open a new center in Djugu-Fataki. In each of these places, IRC has a center to receive children called a “Centre du Jour” or Day Center. These centers are managed by a local partner under IRC supervision. In Bunia, however, IRC staff work in the center to assist the partner. Bunia has more work due to the large number of arriving children. Bunia has received 1,050 children so far, whereas only 60 have been processed in Kisangani.

112. IRC prefers not use the transit center (CTO) approach and has developed a substantial network of Transit Families (TF or FATs). These are responsible for providing interim care to CAFF between their release from the military and their return to their family. A FAT is a stable, substitute, temporary family environment where a child can begin his/her transition to civilian and family life. There are no specific criteria to select FATs, which are identified through churches, and friends. Once selected after an...

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35 Our evaluation included a number of visits and interviews with FATs in both Bunia and Mongbwalu.
interview process, families are trained how to look after CAFF and on possible complications relating to trauma, ill discipline, etc.

113. The FAT receives a regular food distribution, ostensibly for the child but which is shared by the whole family. Children in FAT spend their days in a Day Center, whose activities include informal education such as alphabetization, moral education, and vocational training. A child can stay with a FAT for a total period of two months during the family tracing process, although instances of longer stays due to delayed family identification are not uncommon.

114. IRC has three Day Centers in four areas of operation. Its preference is for the Centers to be run by local partners working under IRC supervision. The Bunia Center we visited was run by APEI. In Mongbwalu, difficulties finding an appropriate local partner meant that IRC ran the center itself. When interviewed about their FAT experience, children responded favorably about their ‘second families’ whom they claimed they would continue to visit after reunification with their biological families. When asked if they would prefer a CTO, all declined. Most FAT parents were very positive about the experience of having CAFF in their homes, citing very few difficulties.

c. Family Tracing, Transfers, and Reunification

115. All NGO Group members reported similarities in their respective processes for transferring children, and of difficulties encountered. The generic process sees Form D (family tracing) being sent to the relevant protection agency in the child’s province of origin. If positive, the child is sent off on the first plane available. Responsibility for his case is then transferred to the organization that did the tracing. This organization then takes responsibility for his reunification, reintegration activities and follow-up.

116. All agencies report significant delays in receiving confirmation from partner agencies in other provinces, sometimes even within the agency’s own province. Another recurring problem is wrongly identified children (over 18 years old), particularly those coming from Bas-Congo where CONADER operates with local partners. All agencies rely on MONUC to provide air transport, but departures are unreliable. Commercial air transport is expensive yet equally unreliable. The result is that children in transit experience lengthy delays, sometimes more than a year, before being reunited with their families.
d. Special Groups: Self-demobilized, Girls, 16-18 Year Olds, OVC

117. There exists no standard approach to the various special categories of CAFF by the NGO Group. Conditions and circumstances differ significantly from province to province, and for this reason greater conformity in approach would not necessarily enhance performance. According to province, we find the following scenarios, to which agencies have tailored their programmatic response.

118. **Self-demobilized**

- In North Katanga, IFESH has reached 239 self-demobilized children in the last two years, 12 of these are girls. North Katanga has experienced waves of self-demobilization, large groups who periodically present themselves at IFESH seeking a release certificate and program benefits. Otherwise, individual cases are sporadic. IFESH accompanies self-demobilized CAFF to the local FARDC office or MONUC where they undergo an identification process. If certified, they receive their release certificate and a one-time ‘kit de sortie’ and return to their family (immediate reunification). They are then supervised by community protection networks.

- In Maniema, the identification of self-demobilized was facilitated by CARE’s strategy of basing its staff directly in rural communities, who then could liaise directly with local protection committees and authorities. Most successful, however, was the initiation of skills training for self-demobilized and OVC, which brought many more forward. CARE also facilitates verification and the procurement of the release certificate. Indicative of the lack of standardization of practice regarding self-demobilized CAFF, CARE does not offer them reunification kits, as it does to official CAFF.

- In Orientale, IRC noted in its answers to the agency questionnaire drafted by the evaluation team that it not distinguish between official and self-demobilized CAFF. In subsequent correspondence, however, IRC claimed 156 self-demobilized had entered their program in two years. Different strategies to reach official and self-demobilized CAFF are of course necessary. IRC manages to identify self-demobilized CAFF during its family tracing and identification activities in rural areas by directly sensitizing communities and families about the importance of CAFF status recognition, the role of the attestation de sortie, and the existence of socio-economic reintegration activities. IRC also informs local authorities (traditional and official), religious leaders and military chiefs. Self-demobilized CAFF then voluntarily present themselves at the IRC offices.

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36 December 2004: 100 self-demobilized CAFF presented themselves in Ankoro.
37 On Jan. 31, 2006 51 self-demobilized presented themselves in Bunia for inclusion into the program.
Girls

- IFESH/North Katanga: Girls constitute 11% of IFESH’s caseload (106), with 91 having arrived in the last six months through the official process. IFESH has no specific strategy to reach girls, apart from community sensitization practiced by its 16 RECOPEs, or community protection networks.

- In Maniema, CARE registers 813 girls in its program, or 26% of total caseload (146 are official CAFF, the 383 others are self-demobilized). CARE believes many more exist in rural communities who have yet to present themselves to the program. With its OVC program for girl orphans and female-headed households, CARE registers a further 284 girls. As in other provinces, CARE uses community outreach to sensitize the female population, although experience has demonstrated that one-on-one discussion between female social workers and girl ex-CAFF is the most effective strategy. This more discreet approach also aids the development of the appropriate form of reintegration assistance (training, schooling, etc) for the individual CAFF. As community trust in CARE developed over time, community members themselves have spontaneously undertaken the work of counseling girls (suspected CAFF) to encourage their involvement in reintegration activities.

- In Orientale, 155 girls have benefited from IRC program activities, which is 16.5% of its total caseload. Given the difficulties to reach them, IRC estimates there are many more girls outside the program. This inaccessibility is related to their social marginalization and difficulty to find acceptance within their community. This high degree of social marginalization is further echoed in the low degree of girl involvement in the DDR process: a high-visibility program and thus unattractive to girl CAFF seeking to avoid further social stigma. IRC has received 26 girls in the last six months, whom it reaches via other vulnerable girls and ‘military wives’ who are already involved in the program. Girls then may access social and economic reintegration programs of their choice through consultation with IRC.

- The 16-18 year olds: IFESH supports special programs for this age group, suggesting appropriate revisions to the Operational Framework. CAFF of this age group claim that the existing provisions do not conform to the reality of their situation and the expectations of family and society. This stands to reason, as 16-18 year olds generally have the same responsibilities as adults; in particular, family expectations that they generate income and provide for dependents. Many 16-18 year olds, male and female, already have dependents of their own, in addition to younger siblings whom they are expected to assist.
120. Based on its experience in Maniema, CARE supports income-generating activities for the 16-18 year old group. In its program, boys concentrate on carpentry and masonry, girls on sewing and tailoring.

121. IRC in Orientale has no specific program for the 16-18 year old group, although it cites vagueness in the Operational Framework on standard practice for this age group.

e. Social, Economic, Educational Reintegration

122. NGO Group members utilize varying reintegration approaches in relation to prevailing circumstances. However, all agencies use both individual and community support strategies in their follow-up activities. All are committed to community-focused reintegration: inputs need not be long-term, but impact should be community owned and thereby longer lasting. The period of dependency on implementing agencies should be as brief as possible.

123. Reintegration requires CAFF acceptance by communities—not everywhere is this the case. Sensitization is required in some provinces to facilitate acceptance and forgiveness in order for CAFF to be reunified and to begin reintegration activities. In Maniema, for instance, CARE reports that many communities were initially hostile to CAFF return, particularly those known to have committed atrocities. Sensitization efforts thus sought to multiply local communication vectors by using churches and religious leaders, village chiefs and notables, local follow-up committees (Comités locales de suivi, or CLS) and schools to facilitate local understanding of the children’s DR program. Working through these local partners, CARE sought to emphasize the role of communities in the DDR process generally. More specifically, it communicated the importance of accepting returning CAFF as a component of the broader peace process. A record of rates of acceptance or rejection were not kept on returning children, however. Such quantification should comprise standard follow-up procedure post-reunification.

Key findings on reintegration by agency

124. IRC/Orientale: Due to a range of logistical and contextual factors, visits to the field were difficult to arrange. In Mongbwalu, the one rural area visited, the program had begun only 3 months earlier; consequently, there was little to see in terms of follow up programs. With regard to incorporating other OVC in their reintegration programs, inclusion is determined in proportion to the number of CAFF in the community. If number of CAFF returning to school is less than 30% of the overall pupil total, for example, IRC support will support the school rather than individual OVC. If the number
of CAFF in the school is more than 30%, IRC will offer direct help to OVCs—with local partners deciding who should receive this and how it should be utilized.

125. IRC reports that, of the 1,449 children in reintegration activities, 1,102 are in school and 347 in an economic program. Those in school are expected to remain so with community support. 131 of those in economic programs have completed their training. IRC has initiated a livestock project and 30 children are already engaged. Each child will be given 2 cows, 3 goats and chickens with the condition that parents and the community provide space and agree to protect these animals. In Kasenyi a fishing project has begun and expects 52 children to participate. These projects have so far been implemented on an individual scale but IRC is planning to open it up to larger groups once a market study has been conducted.

126. CARE/Maniema: CARE has demobilized and reunified 899 CAFF but counts 3,184 in reintegration: the difference of 2,285 should be self-demobilized but CARE reports only 1,315 self-demobilized in its answers to the evaluation questionnaire. This discrepancy is unexplained. Educational reintegration: Among the 3,184 CAFF in reintegration activities (or already completed), 1,520 are doing professional/economic activities and 1,664 are in school. Of the 3,184, girls number 808 or 25%. CARE has social workers in the field and community structures that monitor the activities of the children. The social worker reports to the zone supervisor who in turn reports to the project manager on a monthly basis. In line with the different skill sets, resource people (‘personnes de resource’) have been identified in the field who train the children on job skills. These skilled adults also report on the trainees’ progress. The same system is used for the self-demobilized.

127. A variety of income-generating activities (or ‘microprojects’) are available to children undergoing educational reintegration. These include agriculture and small animal husbandry, soap and bread making, fishing, brick-making and small commerce. These activities were selected by CARE as being most appropriate to the “survival and self-sufficiency” of the target group, including OVCs, as families must pay their own school fees once the year of subsidy ends. CARE also supports school rehabilitation as a mode of community-level subsidy; five such schools have been rehabilitated in areas of high concentration of reunified CAFF pursuing education. Yet the evaluation team noted no clear follow up of second year children, nor is the number of dropouts during the first year of subsidized schooling registered. This negligence is indicative of the state of reintegration follow-up generally.

128. Economic reintegration: CARE reports 120 children have completed vocational training and are now working alone or in groups. For the 1,520 CAFF still learning a

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38 This beneficiary ratio consists of 75% reintegrated CAFF and 25% OVC, whose degree of destitution, CARE claims, marks them as ‘at risk’ of recruitment by armed groups.
trade, training in carpentry and sewing is not lacking. Rather, once the training cycle is completed children are not receiving promised start-up kits specific to their trade. Delays in some cases have exceeded one year. Further, due to funding constraints, CARE now claims it can no longer provide vocational tool kits to individual children pursuing vocational training. Children are now expected to organize themselves in groups according to activity and geographical proximity. Each group will receive one start-up kit.

129. CARE began distributing individual start-up kits in May 2005, and many children we spoke with (including local committees) confirmed that they had been promised individual kits. CARE national staff confirmed this, although in our debriefing with higher management it was denied. In addition to budgetary limitations, CARE management explained that grouping trainees together is better for them, given CARE’s concern that the children will sell the kit materials for quick cash then have no means to work. This risk could of course be overcome by proper supervision and follow-up.

130. The town of Alunguli, across the river from Kindu, illustrates this problem. Of the 17 boys reunified in March 2005, 13 are still in training, despite the three month intended duration of the program (the other four dropped out). The children continue to occupy the training center because they have not received their startup kits. Since March 2005, 12 others were reunified in the same area but cannot begin the training program because the original 13 are still there. No alternative programming has been planned for these children. The evaluation team met with both groups and found them discouraged and frustrated.39

131. IFESH/North Katanga: IFESH reports that with 1,035 demobilized and reunified in the last two years, 1,230 are currently participating in reintegration activities (just under 200 self-demobilized make up this difference). Only 745 CAFF reportedly receive some follow up, with 153 CAFF receiving educational support, either literacy courses or reinsertion into their local school. 66 have received a vocational training course of some sort. In four of the seven districts where IFESH work and where they have reunified 368 children, not one CAFF has accessed a program to facilitate integration, be it educational or vocational.40

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39 UNICEF sees a direct link between high dropout rate (again, CARE keeps no figures) due to long reintegration delays and continued CAFF efforts to enter the adult DDR program for its monetary benefits. UNICEF also suspects a link between disaffected CAFF and the unregulated mines across the province (which UNICEF has visited) where child laborers are the majority. Many child miners tend to be OVC and migrants, but ex-CAFF among them are probable. UNICEF will soon initiate a study of this phenomenon, suspecting a probable overlap between the general ‘kadogo phenomenon’ and child miners in unregulated extraction areas.

40 These are Nyunzu, Kabalo, Ankoro, Manono. Numbers have improved since late February, as an email update of IFESH figures on April 6 showed an increase in current reinsertion figures from 219 to 745
132. Of the 114 children reunified in Moba, 52 are receiving educational support but none have accessed vocational training. In Kongolo, a large percentage of children have been reached, with 41 of 52 CAFF reunified having received or currently receiving vocational training. There are no educational reinsertion programs currently in place. Finally, in Kalemie, of 341 children reunified, 101 have received or are receiving educational support and a further 25 receive vocational training.41

133. **Remarks on economic reintegration (training centers):** Two vocational workshops were visited in Kalemie (carpentry and sewing), where CAFF complained of not receiving their kits after completing their training. Materials for these kits are bought in Tanzania, adding cost and delay to the process. The difficult logistics of kit procurement and distribution were not recognized at the outset, nor have they been rectified during the life of the project.

134. **Insufficient logistical support:** During the evaluation’s four-day visit to Kalemie and environs, it was evident that IFESH was lacking logistical support. That its projects further afield suffer the same inadequacies is certain, and the impact of this immobility was born out by the lack of field supervision and CAFF follow-up. It is impossible to access and support CAFF in their communities without the necessary logistical tools and structures. To cover seven territories across all of North Katanga,42 IFESH has one 4-wheel drive vehicle and six motorbikes, of which only two were working during our visit.

135. **Inadequate staff numbers:** Aside from the staff working in the CTO, the IFESH Kalemie team includes two additional social workers that undertake family tracing and follow up activities in the Kalemie area. Considering the 341 children reunified in the area, this seems an inappropriate number of staff to provide quality and effective support. In addition, two Program Assistants are responsible for supervising all seven districts in North Katanga. Until June 2005, a single staff member was dedicated to all these tasks and yet the same person was out of the region between March–June 2005 because he was assigned to Kamina. Bearing in mind the complexity of the area, the vast distances covered and the number of activities to be supported, monitored and evaluated, it is clear that the staff complement for all these tasks is insufficient.

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over a five week period, a large jump. This provides no indication, however, that follow-up practices have accordingly improved.

41 One CAFF visited in his school in Kalemie stated the lack of follow up visits and the difficulties that his parents (like many others) encounter to pay his school fees. Since September 2005 he has received only one IFESH visit at school.

42 Kalame, Manano, Moba, Kabalo, Nynzu, Kongolo and Ankoro.
f. Documentation

136. All three agencies provide monthly statistics to CONADER, MONUC and the NGO Group. They also recognize that the national database and agency’s individual documentation practice should help plan reintegration activities for the youth. CONADER’s mapping tool, created and provided by UNICEF, should indicate geographic concentrations of children recruited and therefore facilitate the design of preventive activities for these areas. These important aims of the national database have yet to be realized by CONADER.

Documentation findings per Agency

137. **CARE/Maniema:** To contribute to the national database, CARE sends a monthly file containing the statistical situation of the children participating in the project to the coordination unit based in Kinshasa who in turn send this to CONADER.

138. The provincial documentation system used by CARE is part of the shared NGO group approach; the data entry work is done at provincial level and sent into Kinshasa. The system depends on CARE staff and their partners in the field to fill in the forms and send them into the Kindu Office, where the database is situated. CARE does not use an individual dossier per CAFF approach, but keep a single file for all copies of the different forms (making it very difficult to determine if a child’s forms are all accounted for). The archivist has been in post for seven months and has a relatively good grasp of many of the pertinent issues. CARE did not commence with the form-based documentation structure until one year after the program began in December 2003.

139. **IFESH/North Katanga:** Documentation practices need immediate attention. The system depends on partners and IFESH staff in the field to fill in the forms and send them into the Kalemie Office, where the database is situated. They do not utilize the form D as a matter of course. The archivist is a new member of the team, having joined IFESH in November 2005 with very little training.

140. **IRC/Orientale:** Among all the agencies involved in the Special Projects, IRC has the only truly functional and organized documentation system. It is part of the shared NGO group approach; the data entry work is done at provincial level and sent into Kinshasa. The system depends on partners and IRC staff in the field to fill in the forms and send them into the Bunia Office, where the database is situated. CAFF case files are kept separately—an individual dossier per child system is used. Although relatively new, the archivist seemed to have a good understanding of his subject. He is responsible for overseeing the system and ensuring timely data entry into the database.
141. **Files well-organized:** The filing system was well coordinated and substantial effort had been made to organize the system. IRC is the only agency whose archivist successfully manages a broader documentation system, beyond the forms themselves, such as correspondence between child protection agencies or statistical data. This centralization of documentation clearly facilitates information sharing between agencies and provinces when necessary.

142. **Useful ‘management oversight’ document:** This matrix document is a simple and effective one-page tool that allows managers to understand which child has received what support, how many visits, what their choice of reintegration support is, etc. Managers in other organizations struggle to keep an overview of the many reunified children—this document may be of use. An additional column that allows staff to include a reason for not visiting a child—such as ‘inaccessible due to conflict’—appears to be a useful addition. There was also an interesting ‘rapport des activités journaliers’ that works as a planning document to apportion tasks to different field agents and thus avoids duplication. Again this may be of interest to other partners.

143. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Although conceived collectively in the NGO Group project proposal, it is clear that practically each agency undertakes M&E, including CAFF follow-up, according to its own capacity and degree of professionalism. The NGO Group anticipates a collective evaluation of its activities in December 2006. Staff interviewed in all three agencies spoke of the various forms comprised in the documentation system for CAFF as a form of M&E for the agency itself. While this is practical, it suggests that no other M&E system is being implemented to assess progress and performance, or that specific performance indicators are being applied to this end.

144. Only CARE discussed in detail its internal M&E program in its answer to the evaluation questionnaire: “The staff have individual operation plans to help monitor their own progress and this is appraised at the mid term and at the end of every year. At the community level, the three month evaluation meeting that we do with the committees and resource people has been of much help in tracking the progress of the project.”

## iii. Conclusions

### Table 5: Statistical Summary of Output—NGO Group

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43 Composition of aggregate figures is different for each agency. CARE does not include self-demobilized in its total for the ‘demobilization’ and ‘reunification’ columns. For the ‘reintegration (ongoing)’ and ‘completed program’ columns it adds the self-demobilized figure (1,315). Evaluating statistical output and comparing between agencies is further complicated by the fact that no agency has clear criteria to determine the number of CAFF who have completed the entire DR program.
Demobilization | Reunification | Reintegration (ongoing) | Completed Program | Target
---|---|---|---|---
Orientale/IRC | 1,686 | 1,212 | 1,449$^{44}$ | 131$^{45}$ | 3,870
Maniema/CARE | 899 | 899 | 3,184 | 120 | 3,573
North Katanga / IFESH | 1,035 | 1,035 | 1,230 | 22 | 2,948
**Total** | **3,620** | **3,146** | **5,863** | **273** | **10,391**

% of Goal (10,391 CAFF) | 2.6% [56% of target are in reintegration]

Last 6 months | 1,067

Girls demobilized | 1,074 (120 in last six months in OR and KT)

Self-demobilized | 1,710$^{46}$

Re-recruitment | 119

145. DDR programs can fail because the demobilized have no means of employment and find themselves marginalized by their communities. Most children who were in armed groups do not want to go back, provided they have a means of making a living or studying, however basic, benefit from community and, preferably, family support. MDRP funding has helped the NGO Group to engage both the children and community members to ensure their reintegration into communities. Many of the these community activities have been in effect little more than a year, as most of the work in the first year was aimed at releasing children from armed groups, tracing their families, transferring and reuniting them. More work needs to be done to insure that the reintegration is permanent and that communities understand their responsibilities vis-à-vis these children.

146. As of November 2005, the NGO Group presented the following achievements.$^{47}$ (We compare these with figures received in February 2005 during this evaluation. Here we do not compare with number of CAFF who have reportedly completed their reintegration activities, as seen in the first NGO Group tables, as these have not been

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$^{44}$ That reintegration numbers are higher than reunification numbers is explained by the inclusion of self-demobilized into beneficiary caseload—they were neither demobilized or reunified so do not appear in these columns.

$^{45}$ For Orientale, IRC clarifies that of the 1,449 in reintegration activities, 1,102 are in school and 347 in an economic program. Those in school are expected to remain so with community support, but no figure is cited for those who have completed their one year of school subsidy. However, 131 of those in economic programs have completed their training.

$^{46}$ This total is from IFESH (239), CARE (1,315) and IRC (156).

$^{47}$ From a Nov. 2005 Powerpoint presentation to MDRP and donors.
disaggregated from CAFF presently involved in reintegration activities. We compare, then, ‘released’ and ‘reintegrating’ between November 2005 and February 2006 with overall CAFF target figures):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAFF Status</th>
<th>IRC Orientale</th>
<th>CARE Maniema</th>
<th>IFESH Katanga</th>
<th>N.</th>
<th>Total CAFF</th>
<th>Program Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>November 2005</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated CAFF</td>
<td>6,450</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>11,450</td>
<td>10,391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then released</td>
<td>1,341</td>
<td>2,075</td>
<td>509</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,925</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then reintegrating</td>
<td>1,174</td>
<td>2,872</td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,153</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>February 2006</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated CAFF</td>
<td>6,450</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>11,450</td>
<td>10,391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now released</td>
<td>1,686</td>
<td>2,214(^{48})</td>
<td>1,035</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,935</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now reintegrating</td>
<td>1,449</td>
<td>3,184</td>
<td>1,230</td>
<td></td>
<td>5,863</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

147. Total estimated CAFF for the area of operations is 11,450, 1,059 more than the target beneficiary number for this Special Project. All three agencies continue to augment their activities and increase their numbers, slowly but steadily, although the NGO Group falls well below its target beneficiary number for the two year project. In the four months between November 2005 and February 2006 IRC had 345 CAFF released, adding 275 to those currently engaged in reintegration activities. CARE had 139 CAFF released, and added 312 to its reintegration caseload. In the same period, IFESH managed to release 526 CAFF and added 112 to its reintegration activities. As of February 2006, the NGO Group thus achieved 47% of its goal in terms of children released from armed groups, and 56% of its goal in terms of children involved in reintegration activities. All agencies need to develop common criteria to determine when individual CAFF cases are closed.

148. **Maniema/CARE:** CARE is having difficulty delivering a successful reintegration program in a rapid and coordinated fashion. The reintegration figure of 3,184 for February 2006 exceeds the 3,000 estimated CAFF because of the large influx of self-demobilized (1,315). The number of CAFF released directly through CARE intervention (899) is only 29% of the 3,000 CAFF estimate for the province.

\(^{48}\) The CARE November 2005 demobilized figure includes self-demobilized. For February 2006, 899 are official CAFF; self-demobilized are 1315. Combined this equals 2214.
149. The reintegration component, along with documentation and case follow-up, is severely delayed and complicated by unclear or changing strategies regarding the allocation of professional start-up kits to those in training. If the aim of the project is to enable CAFF to exercise skills learned in their place of origin, it is impossible to achieve if the necessary materials (start-up kits) are not provided, either to groups or individuals.

150. Finally, why did CARE not request further funding once it became clear that the number of self-demobilized would increase the beneficiary caseload far beyond that foreseen in the original budget? If reintegration activities began only last year, what happened to the funding allocated to this purpose—why have children waited one year for start-up kits? These delays require immediate solutions.

151. IFESH/North Katanga: IFESH is also experiencing difficulties running all three major activities of its program (release, transit care and reunification, and reintegration) simultaneously. This is most evident in the shortcoming of its reintegration activities (61% of the 2,000 estimated CAFF have accessed reintegration activities), weak case follow-up and poor documentation practices. 51% of the total CAFF estimate was released from armed groups.

152. It is important to acknowledge that IFESH, as the sole child protection operator in North Katanga, faces external constraints not shared by the other two member agencies. These are summarized briefly below.

153. First, CONADER presence is very weak, effectively absent in North Katanga, and official DDR extremely late to commence. CONADER is present in North Katanga since January with the opening of the Centre d’Orientation in Kalemie, but has no dedicated child protection staff in the area. This long delay has made it impossible for armed actors to officially disarm, resulting in mass confusion and frustration among adult ex-combatants, CAFF, and the general population. Related to the CONADER absence, the evaluation team noted with concern a general lack of understanding among the local population on the distinction between the adult and child DDR programs.

154. Second, the absence of UNICEF in the area has meant that long-term child protection issues are unaddressed and proper coordination of CAFF and child protection activities are lacking. UNICEF expects to initiate activities in March 2006.

155. Third, local infrastructure is devastated, making operational logistics more complicated and expensive than other provinces where the NGO Group operates. MONUC is not as useful as in Ituri, for example, given their small numbers and limited capacity to assist NGOs.
156. Finally, because there are no integrated FARDC brigades (only FAC) or permanent CONADER presence, the work of sensitizing armed groups on child DDR and unconditional release of CAFF falls to IFESH and MONUC Child Protection. The result is an extremely ad hoc and unpredictable pattern of CAFF liberation, which often overwhelms IFESH readiness and capacity at its four CTOs.

157. IFESH recognizes its neglect of follow-up and reinsertion activities for reunified children, but attributes this to an ‘ongoing state of emergency’ in North Katanga: sporadic and unpredictable waves of massive CAFF release continue across the province. The necessary IDTR and transit care duties fall to IFESH alone, reducing the agency’s forward planning to a state of constant crisis management.

158. IRC/Orientale: As of February 2006, IRC had managed to release 26% of the 6,450 estimated CAFF in Orientale. By the same period, it had 22% of this CAFF estimate in its reintegration programs. As with the other two member agencies of the NGO Group, these numbers are sub-standard. IRC has succeeded in other ways, however.

159. The transit family system presents some advantages over CTOs, in particular the immediate integration of a child into family life upon release from the armed forces. The FAT system, combined with the Day Centers, is less costly than CTOs in the sense that children eat less frequently, and fewer people are required to run a Day Center than a CTO. The FAT system appeals to the innate sense of voluntarism and sacrifice among participants.

160. Also positive, the productive relations between CONADER and all agencies in Bunia, including IRC, is to be commended. Good documentation practices and adequate logistics with proper planning are all positive aspects of the IRC program in Orientale.

161. IRC needs to accelerate its reintegration activities, which remain a challenge to all agencies. Like the other agencies, IRC does not have a program to assist CAFF in need of psycho-traumatic counseling or treatment. Selection criteria for OVC are not clear: IRC should define a mechanism of selecting and integrating OVC in its socio and economic reintegration programs.

162. Prevention of re-recruitment: In North Katanga, re-recruitment has claimed only 1.2% of reintegrated CAFF (14 out of 1,035) but certain zones remain high risk: Manono, Kabalo, Nyunzu, Moba, Kalemie. Its long-term strategy is to reinforce Community Protection Networks (RECOPEs) to enhance community responsibility for prevention of re-recruitment. Stronger implication with UNICEF and CONADER should bolster these activities.
163. In Maniema, CARE recorded 94 re-recruited children. All 94 were successfully re-released after direct negotiations between Mai Mai leaders and community protection committees.

164. In Orientale, IRC recorded 11 cases of re-recruitment. For re-recruited children, IRC pursues direct negotiations and advocacy with the military group concerned.

165. **Exit Strategy and future:** A joint funding proposal for the NGO Group was submitted to CONADER. The Group will seek additional funding from other donors but reports no success thus far, as major donors are already committed to MDRP and, therefore, to CONADER as well.
**Save The Children, UK**

(d) **Save the Children, UK (SC-UK):** two separate grants under the title “Support for the Reunification and Reintegration of Former Child Soldiers in the DRC,” for a total of $5.37 million. The first of the two grants runs from March 2003 to April 2005, the second from April 2005 to June 2006. Operating in three provinces, North and South Kivu, and Ituri/Orientale, the two IDA grants committed to reaching a combined 4,500 formally recognized CAFF plus 3,500 vulnerable children. Self-demobilized children would be absorbed as needed, although no target number was set.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Duration &amp; Province</th>
<th>Program Objectives</th>
<th>Completed Program</th>
<th>Percentage of Target</th>
<th>Currently in Reintegration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$5.37 million</td>
<td>June 03- June 06; OR, SK, NK</td>
<td>Develop and implement strategies to reach girl CAFF; capacity building for government and NGO partners in child protection and child DDR; implement socio-economic reintegration programs; strengthen community protection capacities for 4,500 CAFF and 3,500 OVC in SK, NK and OR</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>5.1% of 4,500</td>
<td>3,092</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

166. Taken together, the two consecutive project phases have pursued the following four general objectives:

- **Study and develop strategies to reach girl CAFF.** To contribute to an improved understanding of the needs of children associated with the fighting forces—including girls—and to promote their rights during the transition from military to civilian life;

- **Strengthen institutional capacity of government and NGO partners to ensure protection of child soldiers within NDDRP.** Through a training of trainers program, to prepare and strengthen the institutional capacity of government and NGO partners to ensure the protection of child soldiers within the NDDRP context;

- **Facilitate socio-economic reintegration.** To ensure the lasting socio-economic reintegration of 4,500 former child soldiers within their communities through support for their interim care, family reunification and strengthening of community capacity;
- **Strengthen community capacities to protect children and ensure the social, economic and educational reintegration of 3,500 vulnerable children.** This will involve training and capacity building for local partners and the eleven existing community protection networks and the creation of three more.

- **Transfer statistics:** SC-UK has transferred a total of 315 children to other provinces and countries (Rwanda and Burundi). It has received 129 children in South Kivu from other provinces (CAFF transfer numbers received in North Kivu and Orientale were not reported).

### Analysis

#### i. Program Design

167. SC-UK has been supporting the demobilization and reintegration of former child soldiers in eastern DRC since 1999. The design document of the current program presents four basic strategies through which SC-UK will contribute directly to the development and implementation of the national DDR program at the national and provincial levels, while simultaneously strengthening the capacity of local partners and community associations to facilitate this implementation, thereby ensuring lasting and sustainable impact through direct community involvement.

168. **Targets:** Direct beneficiaries of the project include some 4,500 boys and girls associated with armed forces, who will receive support for demobilization and community reintegration in North and South Kivu, and Ituri. In addition, the project is designed in such a way that 3,500 vulnerable children will indirectly benefit through the community support model. SC-UK expects to reinforce capacity for at least fourteen community child protection networks, eleven of which are already operational in North and South Kivu. Through the training of trainers component, government and partner staff involved in the implementation of the National DDR Program at the national and provincial levels will receive training and support in all practical elements of the child DDR process as well as the rights framework of child protection generally. Directly, this should reach some 240 people.

169. **Community focus:** SC-UK has long been a proponent of community-focused reintegration, and the current program seeks to expand and test this orientation. Such a ‘comprehensive and integrated approach’ to reintegrating former child soldiers into their communities aims, furthermore, to be no different to that adopted in relation to other vulnerable children. Stigmatization of returning child soldiers can derail their
reintegration process, and SC-UK maintains that their community-based approach reduces the risk of stigmatization, thus minimizing conflicts surrounding their reintegration. In this regard, a community approach implies that training courses or technical apprenticeships offered cannot be limited to ex-combatant children alone but must also be offered to other vulnerable children in the communities where these latter will be reintegrated. In so doing, SC-UK claims, the strategy aims ‘to prevent abuse and protect all vulnerable children.’

170. A key factor in the success of this approach lies in the strengthening of Community Child Protection Networks, which provide an effective framework for community mobilization in relation to the search for solutions for, and through, the communities. Community representation in these networks will be comprised of local authorities, church members, teachers and other social structures of the community in question, along with local NGO representatives, etc. This model of community mobilization, SC-UK maintains in its project proposal, has proved effective not only in providing follow-up during the reintegration phase but also in preventing re-recruitment.

171. **Implementation of the four objectives:** Between the project proposal and the ‘Project Implementation Manual’, adequate detail is provided on many aspects of implementation, particularly the training of trainers program and support to local partners and RECOPEs. A clear rationale is provided for the community reintegration model, and the agency’s interest in studying the context of girl CAFF. The logistical framework, job descriptions of key posts and timeframe are all of standard quality. One shortcoming, mentioned below, is the absence of a precise roadmap for the reintegration phase, particularly regarding vocational training, educational support, specific inputs and expectations of communities, mode of follow-up, and duration of this phase for each child. Finally, although 3,500 OVC are claimed as indirect beneficiaries, program design lacks detail on how exactly these children will be selected and incorporated into activities designed primarily for returning child soldiers.

Other specific findings on design include:

172. **Longer experience in DDR:** SC-UK has benefited substantially from its extensive prior experience in this field, both in the DRC and the region. Advocacy work with the various armed groups and reunification activities were ongoing before the peace process began. Valuable lessons were learned from the mistakes made during the Kimwenza demobilization debacle. This experience informs their community approach and systematic concern for sustainable reintegration.

173. **Insufficient planning of reintegration activities:** Despite the fact that SC-UK developed two proposals in which they make ambitious claims for CAFF reintegration, this evaluation found that the practical complexities of implementing the numerous moving parts of the proposed reintegration program did not become apparent until late
into the program cycle. Consequently, implementation of these activities has been substantially delayed and somewhat compromised in certain areas, particularly concerning follow-up of children involved in economic or educational reintegration projects.

174. **Unplanned and exorbitant costs for transferring CAFF between provinces:** SC-UK underestimated both the number of children and the cost of transferring them between provinces. These costs led to delays in transferring CAFF, while reducing the budget for other activities.

175. **Insufficient staff to provide support to partners:** The amount of SC-UK staff allocated to supporting local partners has not been sufficient. In the case of Walikale (North Kivu) for instance, one staff member is expected to initiate activities throughout the entire district while providing technical support and supervision to numerous (minimally trained) members of local partners and associations. It is unsurprising that activities are behind schedule. SC-UK was aware that partner capacity was weak and posed a threat to program implementation from the outset, yet seems to have been inadequately prepared to compensate for this lacuna.

### ii. Implementation

176. SC-UK uses a program structure in its three provinces of operation that is designed to allow the implementation of all aspects of the child DDR process simultaneously. Current statistical trends suggest that demobilization and reunification needs are decreasing as the reintegration caseload grows, requiring a re-weighting of programmatic focus on reintegration activities. These include supervision of local partners and the follow-up of beneficiaries, communities and RECOPEs. SC-UK supports 20 local partners and 17 RECOPEs in all.

177. The challenges of increased reintegration programming and follow-up for more rural and often insecure areas were noted by all SC-UK staff. These difficulties relate to the fact that reintegration programming requires ‘proxy’ or remote implementation via local partners and RECOPEs, as SC-UK cannot directly access many of these areas. SC-UK is thus forced to rely on reporting and documentation provided by local partners without being able to verify these reports first-hand. Such are the challenges of providing quality care via proxy actors, who are largely untrained but intimately familiar with their highly insecure areas of operation.

**Program components by province:**
North Kivu has three project offices in Goma, Walikale and Beni; one CTO that it directly supports in Goma, and three others that are run by local associations but for which SC-UK provides reintegration kits and helps with family tracing, reunification and follow up. It does not pay salaries or cover running costs for these three CTOs. Also in North Kivu, SC-UK supports seven RECOPEs, seven local partners, and is implicated in two CO sites (Mangango and Mubambiro).

South Kivu has offices in Bukavu, Shabunda and Uvira, and runs two CTOs in Uvira and Bukavu. It supports seven RECOPEs, nine local partners, and serves as the provincial focal point for all tracing and reunification activities.

Orientale/Ituri has one project office, one CTO (currently closed; using FATs instead), and one site for the previous pilot DDR program in Ituri (Programme DRC), now concluded. It supports three RECOPEs and four local partners.

A. CTOs and FATs

While SC-UK principally uses the CTO model, in Bunia the transit family approach was initiated in October 2005 due to the small number of children being released from armed groups. Besides the greater flexibility offered by the FAT system, the structure is less costly to run.

SC-UK also maintains that the FAT system has contributed to the development of strategies for controlling and calming difficult children. Because children in FATs spend their days in Day Centers, this facilitates regular follow up by SC-UK and local partner staff, and it allows the children a chance to change their surroundings on a daily basis, to meet different people and to avoid the comparatively confining and monotonous rhythm of CTO life. Overall SC-UK reports fewer disciplinary issues with children in FATs. This may be attributed to the absence of the ‘crowd psychology’ phenomenon common in many CTOs, where children band together to control or destroy the structure, sometimes taking staff hostage. All FATs in a given area try to meet once a month to exchange experiences and share lessons learned.

In addition to visiting FATs in Ituri, the evaluation team visited the DIVAS-run CTO in Goma, the PAMI-run child space at the Mubambiro CO (also North Kivu), and the SACD-run CTO outside Bukavu. Pertinent observations include:

Shift towards FAT model in Bunia: SC-UK staff were fulsome in their praise for the transit family model which has replaced the CTO system around Bunia. This shift is related to the reduction in CAFF numbers entering the SC-UK network (more go the direction of UNICEF and IRC), and to the dissatisfaction with a local partner who
previously ran the CTO. Additionally, family and community reunification appears to be facilitated by the FAT approach. Children appear to be more quickly ‘de-militarized’ and thus better psychologically prepared for life with their biological family and surrounding civilian community, having first spent a transition period alone within a surrogate family unit, as opposed to the volatile group dynamic of fellow CAFF in a CTO.

185. **FAT cost effectiveness:** The FAT experience has demonstrated its comparative cost efficiency, especially when CAFF numbers are low. CTOs are expensive to run and many of the core costs remain the same, regardless of the occupancy rate. Guards, cooks, directors, nurses and some social workers are always required, even if the local partner seeks to reduce costs. Additionally, the motivation to reduce costs is less for the local partner, for whom child soldiers constitute a livelihood, a source of income.

186. **Division of labor between organizations:** One particularly challenging aspect of SC-UK’s work in North Kivu is the division of responsibilities between numerous collaborating parties. The result is a long chain of many links, whereas previously (prior to CONADER and the CO structure), individual local partners would cover all the steps and activities between demobilization and reintegration of the child into his/her community. Obvious benefits of this system were: (1) the child remained with one agency for the duration of the transit and reunification process, instead of being handed off to different agencies for each step of the process, creating confusion and undermining trust, and (2) the child’s documentation remained intact and follow-up was better informed by longer relationships between protection agents and the child.

187. In the current set up, one organization, PAMI, ran the child space at the Mubambiro CO and had previously been active—prior to the existence of the CO—in outreach programs advocating for children’s release from armed groups. Once demobilized, PAMI would then deliver the children to the transit facility, run by either a UNICEF partner (SOS, CAJED) or a SC-UK partner (DIVAS). PAMI would then resume its involvement when family tracing and the reunification process began, provided the child originated in PAMI’s area of operation. Once transferred from the CTO, CTO staff had no further contact with or information from the child. The reason given for this complicated division of labor between the multiple partners was that each agency had its respective area of expertise and none could alone manage the entirety of activities involved. It was true that a reasonably high standard was maintained by most of the partners involved, but previously SOS Grands Lacs, for instance, covered all these activities without major incident.

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49 Carving up the roles of a single actor and distributing them equally among other, generally new and inexperienced actors is an inefficient but superficially satisfactory means of generating employment. In North Kivu, CONADER would be responsible for this decision.
b. Family Tracing, Transfers, and Reunification

188. As of February 2006, SC-UK reported 4,580 children as having been reunified and 5,902 demobilized. According to these statistics, 1,322 children are in transit structures awaiting reunification and reintegration activities.

189. SC-UK and its partners transfer children to other provinces in much the same way as do other agencies. They begin by verifying that family tracing results are positive via the reference agency in the province of destination. They then coordinate transport logistics with the same reference agency, and transfer the child with his dossier and an accompanying adult. After confirmation of a successful transfer with relevant attestation documents, statistical data is recorded into the SC-UK database and subsequently enters the national database.

190. SC-UK reports similar difficulties with the transfer process as do other agencies. Exorbitant costs of inter-provincial transfers (even transfers to remote areas within the same province are costly); serious delays in the tracing and identification process between provinces; lack of kit standardization between the different agencies is annoying to children in transit; and the difficulty of obtaining release certificates for children without them who arrive from distant provinces. Other points include:

191. **Immediate reunification—problematic children:** This evaluation raised questions about the rationale for reunifying certain children immediately. From discussions with CTO staff in Goma and Bukavu, it appears that “difficult” children are most likely to be reunified immediately, provided, of course, their families are nearby. Such children are seen as most likely to destabilize the group dynamic of a CTO. In light of previous bad experiences, staff understandably wish to keep unruly children out. Yet it is precisely such children who require the most support and preparation. It is essential in such instances to ensure adequate preparation for the child, family and community, and to plan appropriately for future reintegration activities.

192. **Problems with non-standardized kits in cases of transfer:** Problems arise when children from other provinces are transferred into SC-UK transit structures with higher quality clothes, shoes, personal effects etc., than those received by local CAFF. This point has been raised elsewhere and is addressed in more detail in the ‘Key Observations’ section.

193. **Concerns about transfers into SC-UK operational areas:** SC-UK staff raised a number of concerns about transfers to and from provinces where CONADER is running operations indirectly through local partners, and where no implementing agency is present. Correct procedures were rarely followed, CAFF inexplicably delayed and, on occasion, adult ex-combatants were wrongly identified as children.
c. Special Groups: Self-demobilized, Girls, 16-18 Year Olds

194. **Self-demobilized:** SC-UK reported 440 self-demobilized children in its programs. It claimed that, in the absence of any agreed documentation process for this category of CAFF (self-demobilized are, by definition, not officially documented because they undergo no recognized demobilization process), these numbers cannot be considered an accurate reflection of actual numbers of self-demobilized. SC-UK regrets the absence of precise guidelines or common approach to self-demobilized in the Operational Framework, not only regarding documentation practices but, more importantly, concerning their inclusion in reintegration programming.

195. For its part, SC-UK identifies and incorporates self-demobilized into its reintegration activities with the aid of local partners, RECOPEs and by sensitizing local communities. Self-demobilized CAFF are regularly harassed by local civil and military authorities, accused of being deserters and therefore criminals. Land local partners conduct these sensitization campaigns, which aim to mitigate such false perceptions, foster tolerance and thereby promote their gradual acceptance by the community.

196. **Girls:** SC-UK has processed a comparatively high number of girls in its three provinces of operation: 472 in North Kivu (27% of total), 290 in Ituri (16% of total), and 109 in South Kivu (10% of total). Methods for reaching this elusive group are little different from those applied to self-demobilized generally: informal, word-of-mouth campaigns that avoid unwelcome visibility, as both girls and boy self-demobilized fear discrimination by society and harassment from authorities. The risk of re-recruitment is heightened by such negative publicity.

197. To inform girl CAFF of the existence of reintegration programs and related assistance, SC-UK relies upon community protection networks to sensitize the population, including local authorities. Various women’s associations are included in the effort, as girls’ clubs and ‘listening points’ (‘points d’écoute’) are established locally for girl CAFF to air their concerns in a secure and non-threatening environment. Girls’ clubs are facilitated by RECOPE staff in order to address women’s health issues, hygiene, and maternity; even reconciliation/mediation with girls’ parents where rupture or rejection has occurred. The overall aim is to reduce stigma against girl CAFF by engaging local associations and leaders to educate the wider community about the child soldier problem in general, the importance of forgiveness and acceptance, and to emphasize local responsibility to prevent recurrence of the problem.

198. **Local partners specializing in girl CAFF:** Local partners are a key element of the SC-UK community approach. Given space constraints, this evaluation cannot analyze
every local partner in detail, but certain cases are worth mentioning. In Goma we visited a hybrid activity, partially SC-UK funded, run by the ‘Association des Guides du Congo’ (or AGC, a variant of the international Scout movement). Here 26 girl OVC and 54 girl CAFF are enrolled in six-month training cycles for specific professional trades.50 Sewing and tailoring appeared to be the most popular activity. Only 37 CAFF are actively attending the trainings, however. Given the pressures of daily economic survival as single mothers, many girls cannot afford the 4-6 hour daily commitment, which those present described to us as ‘a luxury’. Yet the benefits of the training far outweighed associated problems, specifically the time ‘lost’ studying a trade instead of working odd jobs to satisfy daily needs. Many girls mentioned improved self-esteem and increased respect from their families now that they could perform a skill (sewing), produce basic garments and sell or trade them. With this skill came increased independence and more leverage in what had long seemed a hopeless situation: social rejection, sexual exploitation, and abject poverty.

199. Graduates of the program do not receive ‘start-up kits’, such as a sewing machine or fabric to produce garments. The girls are currently encouraged to find work with established tailors, a prospect few believe feasible. This is another instance of the lack of standardization with the various kits allocated to CAFF at different stages of the demobilization and reintegration process.

200. ‘Reaching the Girls’: An informative practical tool as well as a provocative lobbying document, this report sets the bar for the state of operational awareness on girl CAFF today. The document has been available to all Special Projects as well, in the hope that its practical recommendations and strategies would be more widely implemented. It is with some disappointment, then, that the evaluation team did not register a greater degree of operational commitment to the implementation of the many tactical and strategic approaches defended in this text. Their efficacy must ultimately be tested, lest the exercise remain one of wishful thinking born of empirical research.

201. In our discussions with girl CAFF in SC-UK projects and elsewhere, many of the insights and descriptions of the complex socio-cultural dynamic to which these girls are hostage proved accurate. That all-too-common panacea, ‘sensitization’, is here broken down into key components and given much needed ballast and nuance specific to the DRC context. We were, as mentioned, unable to detect any agency initiative to implement in a systematic or formal fashion the findings and recommendations generated by this piece of research. As with many such efforts, once the document is produced it is hailed as essential and then left to gather dust. At the very least, its core findings and recommendations should be subject to a (e.g., two-day) national seminar, its ideas put forward for debate and possible incorporation as standard practice among protection

50 Girl OVC are also single underage mothers. Classes are mixed to avoid CAFF-related stigma and promote tolerance, acceptance and reintegration.
agencies currently working in child DDR. These conclusions should then be included in a revised version of the Operational Framework.

202. For 16-18 year olds, no specific approach is defined or advocated. SC-UK maintains that reintegration activities should be better tailored to different age groups, as the needs of 8-10 year olds are entirely different from 16-18 year olds. For CAFF who were demobilized as minors but have since turned 19, the Operational Framework does not prescribe a specific course of action, particularly regarding their eligibility for adult programs. This ambiguity has of course caused much frustration among CAFF in this circumstance, as they all prefer the benefits offered by the adult program over that of child DDR. Finally, CAFF in this age category sometimes have children of their own, and no criteria exists to determine whether these children are eligible for assistance.

d. Social, Economic, Educational Reintegration

203. As of February 2006, 3,092 children were reported as being involved in reintegration activities.\(^{51}\) Given the 4,580 children reported as reunified, 1,488 appear to be back in their villages of origin, waiting for reintegration activities to begin. This seems a disconcertingly high number.

204. SC-UK works with four different reintegration activities, one of which may be selected by reinserted children as their path of choice. Duration of school assistance is one year, vocational training lasts from three to eight months. The four activities are:

   i. ‘Pre-professional’ training including carpentry and woodworking, sewing and tailoring, knitting, hair-dressing, mechanics, masonry, and soap-making.
   ii. Education: primary and secondary school support for one year.
   iii. Economic or ‘income-generating activities’: micro-credit schemes and start-up kits for completed ‘pre-professional’ training.
   iv. Community reintegration: range of group activities involving ‘youth clubs’, ‘girls clubs’ that may include literacy and numeracy training, training and assistance in health care, sporting activities, etc.

205. In Bunia, SC-UK attempted to implement a micro-project scheme involving parental input into activity selection and areas of opportunity but found this approach failed to integrate the interests and wishes of the child. It has since reoriented this strategy to directly involve the children as deciders and implementers of their activities, no longer relying heavily on parental involvement. Children now receive agricultural and livestock inputs while parents are requested to provide adequate land/space for their child’s

\(^{51}\) Of the 3092 in reintegration, 1281 children are in North Kivu, 945 in Ituri and 866 in South Kivu.
activities. RECOPEs provide independent oversight and guidance to the process, as parents previously tended to orient reintegration activities in their interest, not the child’s.

206. **Community Protection Networks:** RECOPEs are the primary supervision instrument available to SC-UK, particularly as many reintegration activities are in remote rural areas where sporadic fighting continues and state authority has not been re-established. The evaluation team was not able to visit these RECOPEs in their place of activity, though an informative meeting was organized with all RECOPE representatives in North Kivu. Eleven RECOPEs have been active with SC-UK since 1999. The creation of three more was a stated goal of the present program; it has created these plus three more. SC-UK now supports seventeen RECOPEs in three provinces.

207. Although the RECOPE representatives we met understood the finite nature of SC-UK’s activities in the region and their own role in ensuring sustainability to child DDR, particularly in rural areas, their high expectations of SC-UK as material provider were evident. Such expectations are a constant in the current operating environment of aggrieved endemic poverty, although this does not invalidate the importance of careful expectation management by implementing agencies of their local partners, whose self-interests are understandably primary, given current living conditions across the DRC.

208. **Education:** In its support for students returning to formal education, SC-UK insists on parental involvement and supervision. While parents are responsible for school tuition after one year of subsidy, SC-UK does not abandon families who are evidently indigent and unable to pay. Various income-generating activities (including micro-credit schemes) are available to such families to ensure that the child’s education is not interrupted a second time. As do other agencies, SC-UK supports schools who accept CAFF and OVC with in-kind materials for rehabilitation and maintenance.

209. **Lack of common approach:** SC-UK notes that while all agencies involved in child DDR are committed to a community-focused approach, no common standards or parameters are defined in the Operational Framework regarding training formats, composition of reintegration kits (start-up materials), kind and degree of support to training centers and workshops, etc. This evaluation found that the form and content of reintegration support to children presently appears to be determined by available budget, not by any ‘common standard’ or lack thereof. Providing start-up kits to groups when individuals were first promised the kits, as CARE has done, cannot be called ‘best practice’ when the decision to do so is driven by insufficient funds. Standardization of kit and approach may be attractive on some levels but it is not realistic given the very different operating conditions, caseloads and available budgets of the various implementing agencies, particularly at this late stage in the MDRP funding cycle. An inter-agency sharing of lessons learned and problems encountered is the more realistic suggestion, we believe, and the situation even more propitious now as reintegration activities increasingly come to dominate agency programming.
e. Documentation

210. SC-UK understands the purpose of the national database is to enable all protection agencies and CONADER to supervise and follow the progress of reunified children at the community level. Community sensitization campaigns and reintegration programming should be informed by data trends raised through a regular analysis of the national database.

211. Of all the implementing agencies, SC-UK has the largest caseload to process and enter into the database. In February 2006 SC-UK reported having reunified 4,580 children in its three provinces of operation. Our overall impression of the SC-UK documentation system was that the system itself was comprehensive and logical with sufficient staff dedicated to its upkeep but that the quality of the files themselves was lackluster, particularly in Ituri. In other words, there was a disparity between the quality of the documentation management and the quality of the field data being entered into the system.

212. SC-UK sends its monthly statistics to CONADER in addition to tri-monthly report to the MDRP. Its documentation system depends on partners and SC-UK staff in the field to fill in the fiches and send them into the Provincial Offices. The documentation from South Kivu (Bukavu) and Ituri (Bunia) is sent on a monthly basis to Goma, where the database is situated. SC-UK has been using a different data entry system than the NGO group, but intends to adopt the shared system, beginning April 2006. The evaluation team was told that SC-UK also receives CAFF data from UNICEF partners in North and South Kivu. Owing to the large numbers of CAFF involved, SC-UK employs two archivists. SC-UK allocates an individual dossier for each child, which are codified and divided by province. In analyzing SC-UK file management, a review took place in all three provincial offices and interviews were held with the responsible staff. The documentation practices of four SC-UK partners were also reviewed.52

iii. Conclusions

213. The table below presents statistical results of SC-UK activities in its three provinces of operation. The following table compares these key indicators with those of six months prior.

Table 6: Statistical Summary of Output—Save the Children UK

52 DIVAS CTO and PAMI in Goma, PAV in Ituri, and SACD in Bukavu.
Demobilization  | Reunification  | Reintegration (ongoing)  | Completed Program
--- | --- | --- | ---
Ituri | 1,727 | 1,727 | 945 | 7
South Kivu | 1,374 | 1,130 | 866 | 0
North Kivu | 2,801 | 1,723 | 1,281 | 223
**Total** | **5,902** | **4,580** | **3,092** | **230**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Last 6 months</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of Goal</td>
<td>5% [68% of 4,500 target are in reintegration]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls demobilized</td>
<td>871</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-demobilized</td>
<td>440</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-recruitment</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

214. Progress indicators compared with six months prior:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAFF status</th>
<th>SC-UK</th>
<th>Percentage of target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>November 2005</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Target</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then released</td>
<td>4,776</td>
<td>106%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then reintegrating</td>
<td>2,873</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>February 2006</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Target</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now released</td>
<td>5,902</td>
<td>131%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now reintegrating</td>
<td>3,092</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

215. SC-UK showed itself capable and sufficiently well-prepared for the logistical challenges of operating in the Eastern provinces. This capacity is, of course, partly technical (well-maintained equipment and vehicles) but it is primarily human: SC-UK has the greatest institutional continuity of any Special Project agency (least number of turnovers of senior management), coupled with personal relationships with national staff, local partners and RECOPEs cultivated over years. This amounts to significant comparative advantage, particularly in light of the fact that SC-UK has been operating in this context for almost eight years.
216. One primary external condition on its performance is the prevailing insecurity: South Kivu, North Kivu and Ituri have all continued to be theatres of serious conflict since 2003. Such insecurity cannot be overcome by any level of logistical expertise. The Bukavu office was looted in 2004, access to Masisi, Walikale, Shabunda and Rutshuru remains precarious, as do points south and north of Bunia in Ituri.

217. Two internal constraints recognized by this evaluation are (1) absence of a program manager in Bunia throughout 2004 (prior to Maiga, who now needs replacement) and, (2) continuing sub-standard performance by local partners (and continuous ongoing training needs), coupled with insufficient SC-UK staff to supervise and support the twenty local partners and seventeen RECOPEs.

218. **Girls:** This evaluation finds that the strategies used to reach girls and to adapt existing programming options to their particular needs are generally appropriate. The problem lies at the other end of the equation: obstacles to accessing girls are cultural, meaning they are erected by the girls themselves, for whom the CAFF label is not only undesirable but also, in their eyes, inaccurate. Given the significant energy and resources invested in studying the problem, the child DDR community should now focus on determining which recommended strategies are most effective in a short, two-day workshop. In line with the general shift of focus onto reintegration activities and their immediate acceleration, the need for appropriate reintegration programming for girls should not be lost.

219. **National trainings:** The purpose of the national training program is fourfold. It aims to train staff to verify that CAFF in CT Os conform to current eligibility criteria. It trains transit care workers for CT Os and FATs. It trains agents to support the reunification process and reintegration activities, including follow-up procedures and documentation standards. In this way, SC-UK supports and facilitates the setting-up and implementation of the NDDRP at national and provincial levels.

220. SC-UK has conducted 22 trainings since November 2004—‘trainees’ are then instructed to train relevant persons in their home communities or within their respective institutions (local partners to implementing agencies). It has also trained a ‘Quick Intervention Team’ to service urgent demobilization needs as they spring up around the country. This team worked in all provinces both to harmonize various approaches and to help launch CONADER.

221. The reintegration module, with its focus on community and sustainability, has only recently been developed through a collaborative process involving all child DDR actors. It will be taught to trainees from all relevant agencies.

222. While this initiative is fundamental to the implementation of the NDDRP and the initiation of CONADER as lead agency, it is also key to the transition toward national
ownership of the entire child DDR process. SC-UK’s central role in the development and execution of these nationwide trainings is evident, particularly in its three Eastern provinces of operation. The activity appears successful and the evaluation team was impressed by those in charge of the program. Our sole concern is with the relative tardiness of the development and training of the reintegration module. This is related to an overall lack of preparedness for the practical complexity of the reintegration component generally, common to many agencies and SC-UK is no exception.

Other conclusions include:

223. Development of a ‘Guidelines Manual’ for transit care: While not foreseen in the program design, the recent development of a detailed tool to assist planning and implementation of child DDR programs, with particular focus on transit care, is a useful resource for future activities and should be shared by other agencies. It can also act as a support to the less experienced (DDR) agencies, whose staff—as highlighted elsewhere—have not benefited from the necessary refresher training.

224. OVC: The evaluation team did not see clear evidence of active inclusion of OVC into ongoing reintegration activities; education, vocational or otherwise. Our visits to rural reintegration activities were hindered by insecurity; urban visits to various training centers revealed small numbers of OVC but nothing on the order of 3,500. Insecurity led to an urban bias in much of our findings, this may have affected our sense that OVC were not being addressed with the numbers claimed in the project proposal. The opposite may of course be true, but one can only verify what is visible.

225. Recruitment and re-recruitment continues in all three provinces of operation due to the reluctance of armed groups to demobilize. As of February 2006, SC-UK had registered 13 re-recruited children in Ituri (subsequently released), although it emphasizes that these figures are in no way representative of the actual situation. No re-recruitment figures exist for North Kivu. In South Kivu four instances of re-recruitment are registered on average a month. Those re-recruited are subsequently liberated after lobbying by the network local protection committees supervised by SC-UK.

226. Next steps: SC-UK is preparing a project proposal for submission to CONADER to complete its reintegration activities currently underway. It also anticipates the child soldier problem to continue in the Kivus and Ituri as long as irregular armed groups resist demobilization and the integrated national army persists as a weak, unsupported institution, unable to restore security or the order of the state. SC-UK firmly believes that if reintegration programming is not supported by donors then the accomplishments of the demobilization phase will be lost to the pressures of re-recruitment. The success of the reintegration phase lies in its capacity to offer viable alternatives to military life. The battle is ongoing between agencies implementing reintegration activities for CAFF and the military groups seeking to re-recruit them.
APPENDIX III:

LIST OF CONTACTS BY ORGANIZATION

Belgian Red Cross
Donata Schneider, Kinshasa, Mbandaka
Yvette Kiala, Kinshasa, Mbandaka

CARE
James Olior, local staff in Kindu
Brian Larson by telephone
Mark Dripchak, Kinshasa

CONADER
Pili Pili Tolowo, Kinshasa
Flory Kitoko, Bunia
Colonel Duku, Bunia
JEF KYAMPAMBA, Goma
Mme Francoise Mulawa, Goma
Deo Mirindi, Bukavu
Willy Kikungu, Bukavu
Mme Monique AKUPENDAE
Mr. Dieudonne IDUMBA
Tierry Mayele, Kalemie
Eric Shariya, Mbandaka

DFID
Simon Arthy, Kinshasa

IFESH
Steven Sharp, Kinshasa
Hudson Lugano and staff in Kalemie

IRC
Gianluca Galli, local staff in Bunia
Alyosha D’Onofrio, Kinshasa (by telephone)

MDRP Secretariat
Elisabeth Maier, Washington
Abderrahim Fraiji, Kinshasa
Roishin de Burca, Kinshasa
Eva Faye, Kinshasa
Catherine Sarrade, Kinshasa

MINBUZA
Frank van Pelt, Kinshasa

MONUC
Bernadette Sene, Bunia
Sandra Beidas, Kinshasa

SC-UK
Stephen Blight, Kinshasa
Marion Turmine, local staff in Goma
Maiga Aliou, local staff in Bunia
Emmanuel Sebujangwe, local staff in Bukavu

UNICEF (Protection Section)
Stephane Pichette, Kinshasa
Andre Moussa, Kinshasa
Desire Muhindo, Kinshasa
Eloge Olengabo, Kinshasa
Jean-Francois Basse, Goma
Johannes Wedering, Goma
Bernard Kitambala, Goma
Roger Djohu, Bunia
Bienvenu Mpanda, Bunia
Franck Kashando, Bukavu

Local Partners, Special Projects
Bukavu: MESEP, FSH
Goma: PAMI, AGC, SOS Grands Lacs, CAJED, DIVAS
Kindu: DFF, FPH (Fondation PINGANAYI), CEFADEM, MALI
Bunia: COOPI, APEI
Mbandaka: Congolese Red Cross
APPENDIX IV

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background Information

The Multi Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program for the greater Great Lakes region launched in 2003 and 2004 a series of specialized activities for the support of the demobilization, family tracing, reintegration and prevention of recruitment of child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Through its special project window, it has provided financing for four sub-projects executed by international NGOs in support of the national Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration Program. One of these sub-projects, executed by UNICEF, has only recently begun. The other three have started their second year of activities or are well underway in their first year. These include:

- “Support to the Demobilization and Reintegration of Former Child Soldiers”, executed by Save the Children Fund—United Kingdom (Initial funding of $2,456,178, with additional funding of $2,190,000 being processed);
- “Demobilization & Community-based Reintegration of Former Child Soldiers in Maniema, Orientale, and North Katanga Provinces”, executed by a consortium composed of CARE International, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and the International Foundation for Education and Self Help (total funding $9,157,463);
- “Capacity Building & Support to the Demobilization, Prevention of Recruitment and Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces”, executed by the Belgian Red Cross (total funding of $2,157,754)

The MDRP Secretariat intends to commission an independent consultant (specialized firm or group of individuals) to critically assess the performance and results achieved by Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) financed components of the Special Projects at the national and individual beneficiary levels. Additionally, the activity will establish lessons learned and derive recommendations for use in the second phase of the activities, as well as to document the experience of program implementation and sub-project level outcomes. The focus of the evaluation will include, but will not be necessarily limited to:
• Document the design, operational arrangements and outputs of project activities, including the mechanism for selection and supervision of local contractors;
• Assess the outcomes of program interventions, immediate impact in the target group and external factors affecting project performance;
• Evaluate complementary efforts that may have contributed to the achievement of project goals, including parallel financing or complementary programming;
• Describe and assess the relationship between interventions targeting child soldiers and programming for other vulnerable children;
• Assess the level of support provided by the component to the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Program, including transitional arrangements and exit strategy;
• Establish lessons learned and derive recommendations from the project experience that can inform future programming.

Approach and Methodology

A combination of structured and semi-structured methodologies, within a phased approach, is expected for the implementation of the independent evaluation of the Special Projects in DRC. Total level of effort is not expected to reach more than 8 months/person, distributed as a maximum of 8 week period for a team of up to 4 professionals. The expected phases of the evaluation should include:

**Phase 1:** The consultants will develop and secure approval for a revised scope of work and will devise a detailed work plan for fulfilling their mandate.

**Phase 2:** The consultants will collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data from project documentation, key informants, child soldiers (and their families), project staff, service providers and other key stakeholders. If adequate, a small survey and/or focus group discussions should be conducted with program beneficiaries to assess levels of satisfaction with program delivery.

**Phase 3:** The team will analyze preliminary findings and derive further qualitative data to supplement the quantitative analysis and/or opinion polls. Preliminary findings would be discussed with the MDRP team and selected partners.

**Phase 4:** The team will finalize and present findings, lessons learned and recommendations to the MDRP management, program partners and other interested parties. The team will incorporate the feedback obtained to finalize the evaluation report.
Team Tasks

Carrying out the following activities, but not limited to them, the evaluation team will develop a good understanding of what the situation was at the time of the design of the Special Projects, the evolution of the context during implementation and the current scenarios.

Task 1: Review all relevant existing project documents;

Task 2: Hold meetings and discussions with all partners and stakeholders i.e., service providers, government counterparts, MDRP Secretariat staff, MDRP partners, etc;

Task 3: Develop and secure a work plan and schedule for an approximate five week research part of the evaluation;

Task 4: Visit representative areas for activities and discuss programs with regional personnel, local authorities, partners, and beneficiaries;

Task 5: Assess whether all the necessary activities have been carried out and the performance to date is consistent with the work plans and expectations of the target population;

Task 6: Assess any external and internal influences which may have caused the results to be what they are;

Task 7: Analyze the above findings to extrapolate conclusions and formulate lessons learned about the role of the Special Projects in the support of the child soldiers in DRC.

Expected Outputs

The activity should produce (at a minimum) the following outputs:

A report detailing:

- Detailed background, outputs and outcomes of the Special Projects;
- Critical assessment of the adequacy of the implementation modality and delivery mechanisms;
- Full documentation of the project experience, impacts on the ground, contribution to the National DDR program and exit strategy;
- Recommendations for future actions;
A briefing and discussion workshop to MDRP, CONADER and selected partners, and,

An overhead presentation package including Special Projects outline, evaluation findings, lessons learned and recommendations.

Team composition and Level of Effort

The MDRP Secretariat expects the prospective consultants to propose their final team composition and expected level of effort. However, as an indicative guideline, the Secretariat currently assess that a team of 3 to 4 professionals, over a period of 6 to 8 weeks, should be able to perform the requested tasks.
APPENDIX V

DOCUMENTS CONSULTED AND/OR CITED FOR INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF MDRP SPECIAL PROJECTS

*Cadre Opérationnel Pour Enfants Associés aux Forces et Groupes Armés*
CONADER/UNICEF, 2004

« Cartographie Générale de Réunification des Ex-Eafgas par les APE par Province »
(UNICEF/CONADER 2006)

*The Call for Tougher Arms Controls: Voices from the Democratic Republic of Congo*,
International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA, 2006)

*Demobilization and Reintegration of Combatants: Some Lessons from Global Experience*
(UNDP, 2002)

*Fighting Back: Child and community-led strategies to avoid children’s recruitment into armed forces and groups in West Africa* (SC-UK, 2005)

*Going Home: Demobilizing and Reintegrating Child Soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, Save The Children UK (Kinshasa, 2006)

*Guide Pratique en faveur des enfants associés aux forces et groupes armées en RDC*
(NGO Group, 2005)

*Katanga: The Congo’s Forgotten Crisis* (ICC, 2006)

*Manuel d’Execution, PNDDR* (CONADER/UNICEF, 2005)

MDRP Special Project Guidelines

MDRP Project Proposal, “Support for the development and implementation of the NDDRP of children involved with armed groups in the DRC (UNICEF, 2003)


« Programme national de demobilisation, reinsertion et reinsertion » (DRC government, 2004)

Quarterly Reports/Rapports trimestriels to MDRP (all), Save The Children UK, 2003-2006

Quarterly Reports to MDRP, “Demobilisation and Community-based Reintegration of Former Child Soldiers in Maniema, Orientale and Northern Katanga Provinces” (International Rescue Committee, 2003-2006)


Rapports statistiques et narratifs du programme de réinsertion familiale et communautaire en faveur des enfants sortis des forces et groupes armés, Croix-Rouge de la République Démocratique du Congo en partenariat avec la Croix-Rouge de Belgique (CRB, 2004-2006).


Reaching the Girls: Study on Girls Associated with Armed Forces and Groups in the DR Congo (Save the Children UK and the NGO Group, 2004)

Security Sector Reform in the Congo (ICC, 2006)


The World Bank in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Environmental Defense Fund, 2005)
APPENDIX VI

MAP OF MDRP IMPLEMENTERS IN THE DRC