Changing Attitudes:
Weapons Collection and Destruction

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Introduction

The largest public destruction of small arms to date took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 24 June 2001. One hundred thousand pistols, revolvers, machine guns, and other firearms were piled up on the street and destroyed by a bulldozer. The event attracted 20,000 spectators in support of the campaign against gun violence, which is the leading cause of death among Brazilian youth (Viva Rio, 2001; Sullivan, 2001). This was one of several similar weapons collection and destruction ceremonies that took place in connection with the 2001 UN Small Arms Conference.

The event in Rio was also part of a larger process that has been gaining momentum since the mid-1990s. The collection and destruction of small arms, which grew from small-scale and intermittent efforts to address gun violence by removing weapons from local communities, have grown into an established component of conflict prevention and community building. All over the world in different settings, similar programmes have been carried out. Importantly, the *Programme of Action* of the 2001 UN Small Arms Conference (CONFERENCE) firmly supports the disarmament of civilians and former combatants through weapons collection and destruction programmes. These provisions are likely to encourage the further expansion of such efforts.

This chapter examines the issue of weapons collection and destruction efforts, both in the context of crime prevention and peace-building. Based on the information reviewed in this chapter, it is clear that such undertakings enjoy mixed success. In some cases, programmes have not collected large numbers of weapons, although they have contributed significantly to reconciliation and confidence building between parties in conflict. Others have collected significant numbers of weapons, but ensuing confusion and disagreement over their disposal has detracted from the programme's success. Consequently, even though the number and scope of programmes have been expanding, their effectiveness is still debatable. If weapons collection and destruction is to be used as a tool to prevent conflict and crime, it is imperative that we explore the circumstances in which it is successful. Key issues identified in this chapter include:

The collection and destruction of small arms are now an established component of conflict prevention and community-building efforts.

- Small arms collection and destruction is usually intended to support crime prevention or peace-building.
- Disarming paramilitary groups is a decisive factor in advancing and sustaining peace settlements.
- There are still insufficient evaluations of past endeavours.
- There is a continued need for reliable ways to assess weapons collection and destruction programmes.
- Weapons collection is unlikely to have a long-term impact unless it is part of a broader effort addressing the root causes of violence.
- Programmes that link collection of weapons to development strategies are increasingly incorporated into conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building strategies.
- The total number of weapons collected may often be less important than other objectives, such as building confidence, raising awareness, and forging collaborative relationships between different sectors of society.

Public destruction of weapons, Rio de Janeiro. (© Associated Press/Renzo Gostoli)

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This chapter does not attempt to provide definitive answers to the questions arising from weapons collection and destruction. Instead, it explores the potential of such programmes by considering some key questions:

- **What are some of the key elements of weapons collection and destruction programmes?**
- **How have these programmes developed over time?**
- **How can their effectiveness be improved in the future?**

The chapter begins with a review of several important examples of weapons collection and destruction programmes, outlining their aims, key features, accomplishments, and limitations. It emphasizes their potential role within two major frameworks: crime prevention/reduction and peace-building. The selected examples show the particularly strong tradition in North and Latin America of undertaking weapons collection as part of crime prevention strategies. The bulk of weapons collections implemented as part of peace-building exercises have been carried out in Africa and in the Balkans. Examples ranging from purely voluntary initiatives to mandatory hand-ins required by changing firearms laws are included. This chapter does not focus on seizures by law enforcement agencies. Programmes that destroy government stocks of surplus weapons are dealt with in other chapters (especially STOCKPILES and MEASURES).

There is growing awareness of the mutually reinforcing relationship between security and development. This has led to the realization that both are necessary for conflict prevention. Efforts to remove the tools of violence without addressing the underlying causes of conflict are unlikely to have a durable impact on peace and security. The second section provides an in-depth analysis of recent attempts to link disarmament and development strategies through weapons collection, or 'weapons for development'. Two case studies—from Albania and the Republic of Congo—are presented here as illustrations.

The third section outlines tentative lessons to guide future weapons collection and destruction efforts, focusing on programme objectives, incentives for participation, public awareness-raising, and the disposal of weapons. The broad variety of features that different weapons collection programmes display demonstrates that organizers are still trying out different solutions in order to improve results. Failures and shortcomings of earlier undertakings are currently being analysed by a variety of actors and institutions to determine best practices and avoid problems encountered in the past.[1]

Since weapons reduction may be futile unless demand is addressed simultaneously, programmes are generally expanding their objectives and adopting a more comprehensive approach. This is reflected also in the changing role of compensation, where there is a trend away from individual rewards and towards collective incentive schemes, most notably through the weapons for development concept. Another crucial component is their function in shaping public opinion. An analysis of the weapons collection programme in 2001 in the Argentinian province of Mendoza illustrates this point. This section also charts different ways in which collected weapons have been disposed of, reaffirming that destruction is the only method that ensures weapons are permanently removed from circulation.

The final section highlights the need for the development and application of more reliable criteria to evaluate the outcome of weapons collection. The relative absence of well-documented results has resulted in a major gap in the debate about success and failure. The section therefore points to newly developed approaches to improve programme assessment. To gauge the social impact of these initiatives, field agencies and the research community have started to explore participatory methods. The chapter ends with a new approach to assess operational success in terms of the weapons collected and destroyed.

> **BOX 7.1   2001 UN Small Arms Conference supports weapons collection and destruction: Something everyone could agree on**
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> Weapons collection and destruction schemes received widespread support during the 2001 UN Small Arms Conference. The *Programme of Action* adopted contained several references to such initiatives. Among other things, states undertake to implement 'where appropriate, the public destruction of surplus weapons and the voluntary surrender of small arms and light weapons' (sec. II, art. 20), as well as 'effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, including the effective collection, control, storage, and destruction of small arms and light weapons, particularly in post-conflict situations' (sec. II, art. 21). Most governments also expressed their support for such measures in many of the official statements made during the Conference and the Preparatory Committee meetings leading up to it.[2]
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> On the initiative of Brazil, Mali, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, the Conference's Preparatory Committee had proclaimed the opening day of the Conference a global 'Small Arms Destruction Day'. Countries were encouraged to organize symbolic arms destruction events to mark the opening of the Conference in order to attract the media's attention and raise public awareness about the small arms issue. This initiative was inspired by the 1996 'Flame of Peace' in Mali, a weapons destruction event that became known all over the world and served as inspiration for several other countries. On the Conference's first day, 9 July 2001, diplomats, non-governmental organizations, and media gathered outside the UN for a video presentation produced by the Dutch government, showing the impact of small arms as well as their collection and destruction in different parts of the world. Appeals were also held by victims of war and by government representatives.
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> A number of countries responded to the call for action by conducting public destruction ceremonies, including Brazil, Cambodia, the Republic of Congo, and several west African states. A proposal was later adopted by the conference to make Destruction Day an annual event. The United Nations, with the assistance of the Netherlands, published a handbook on the subject to aid those undertaking small arms destruction.[3] In addition to a general commitment in the *Programme of Action* to support collection and destruction efforts, some governments also made pledges for financial assistance before the conclusion of the conference. Belgium announced that it would contribute USD 1.5 million to a three-year small arms project in the Great Lakes region in Africa. The British government pledged GBP 19.5 million (over USD 28 million) to combat the small arms problem globally, encouraging other donor governments to do the same. A substantial part of these funds will go to establish a long-term Weapons Collection, Management, and Destruction Programme under the aegis of the United Nations Development Programme (United Kingdom, 2001). In his statement to the Conference, UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown outlined the three-pronged approach of this programme, which will consist of activities in the areas of collection and destruction, demand reduction, and control (UNDP, 2001a).

Building on the past

This section reviews formal programmes designed to take small arms and light weapons out of circulation by collecting them and disposing of them safely, often through destruction. It will not attempt to provide a comprehensive account of all programmes that have been undertaken or are currently ongoing, as this would comprise hundreds of programmes. Additionally, there is much more information available regarding some programmes than others. While some programmes are large-scale, widely publicized efforts carried out with the support of the international community, others are small and locally organized, with little recognition outside the area where they take place.

The section will present only a selection of programmes, which have been well-documented and span a variety of settings. This approach will serve to illustrate the central themes and concepts relevant in this field, while also demonstrating the diversity of weapons collection practices.[4] Although weapons collection programmes share many features regardless of the context in which they are carried out, for organization and clarity, they are divided into the two broad categories of programmes supporting either crime prevention or peace-building.

> **BOX 7.2   From micro-disarmament to practical disarmament**
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> 'Micro-disarmament' and 'practical disarmament' are two terms commonly used to refer to programmes that aim to remove small arms from a society through collection and destruction. Then-UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali raised the issue of micro-disarmament in his *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace*, referring to the light weapons typically used in conflicts that the UN was dealing with (UNSG, 1995, paras 60–65). Today the term 'micro-disarmament' has to a large extent been replaced by 'practical disarmament' which as defined by the UN General Assembly includes a broader range of measures 'such as, *inter alia*, arms control, particularly with regard to small arms and light weapons, confidence-building measures, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, demining and conversion' (UNGA, 1996, preamble). In the same resolution, the General Assembly stresses the importance of certain practical disarmament measures, including 'the collection, control and disposal of arms, especially small arms and light weapons, coupled with restraint over the production and procurement as well as transfers of such arms, the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, demining and conversion, for the maintenance and consolidation of peace and security in areas that have suffered from conflict' (para. 1). Generally, however, 'practical disarmament' is primarily used to refer to the collection, control, and disposal of small arms and light weapons.

Weapons collection as crime prevention

Weapons collections have been undertaken in many communities that experience problems with violent crime. The aim of these programmes is to improve public security directly—through removing weapons from circulation—and/or indirectly by raising awareness about the potential dangers of weapons possession.

Usually, they encourage individuals to voluntarily turn in weapons in exchange for some type of compensation. It is common to also include legal inducements. For instance, while an amnesty is usually offered to encourage people to turn in illegal weapons to the programme, this policy is sometimes even more effective if law enforcement authorities declare that they will simultaneously, or after a brief amnesty period, increase their efforts to confiscate illegal weapons.

In order to alert people to the programme's existence, as well as raise awareness about the message that the organizers are intending to convey, the organizers need to reach out to potential participants and the public at large. Therefore, they generally try to attract publicity through available media outlets—print, television, radio, and Internet. In some cases, programmes have been accompanied by a larger-scale public awareness campaign.

The idea of using weapons collection as a crime prevention measure emerged in the United States, with the first significant attempts taking place in Philadelphia in 1968 and in Baltimore six years later.[5] Since then, a large number of communities have carried out gun 'buy-backs' in which citizens turn in weapons they no longer need or want in exchange for monetary compensation. Apart from cash, a wide range of other inducements have been offered, such as vouchers for consumer goods, educational grants, tickets to sporting or cultural events, or even psychotherapy sessions (Paddock, 1994). The collections have generally been privately funded. They have been organized and supported by a variety of actors, including private businesses, religious groups, civic organizations, law enforcement agencies, and media.

The Clinton Administration launched the first US federal weapons collection programme in the autumn of 1999 through the allocation of USD 15,000,000 to buy back firearms in and around public housing projects. Run through a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) drug-fighting grant, this provided up to USD 500,000 to local police departments, with the aim of collecting and destroying as many as 300,000 weapons (Schmitt, 1999).

According to HUD, 20,000 weapons were collected in 80 different cities during the programme's first year. As of July 2001, the Bush Administration decided to discontinue the programme because it was stated that it did not fit with the core mission of the HUD. Gun control activists criticized the decision, maintaining that it formed part of the new administration's strategy to erode gun control as a result of its close links with the National Rifle Association and the pro-gun lobby (Nakashima, 2001).

The many buy-back programmes undertaken in the United States have had varying degrees of success, and have fuelled an ongoing domestic debate regarding the effectiveness of voluntary weapons collections as a means of preventing and reducing crime as well as accidental deaths from firearms. While local programmes may have a significant impact in their target communities, the number of guns collected through these efforts has not led to a general reduction in the vast stocks of weapons in the United States.[6]

Although the immediate goal of the gun buy-backs carried out in the United States has been to collect weapons in order to ultimately contribute to a reduction in crime, objectives beyond this include developing norms against weapons possession and misuse, improving community collaboration, and supporting broader community programmes. Other times, some weapons collection programmes have been more narrowly focused, intended to prevent violent crime by removing a specific type of weapon from a community. The introduction of tighter legal controls on gun ownership has, in other countries, stimulated some major efforts of this kind. Firearms owners have been offered compensation to turn in their weapons during an amnesty period after which the new legislation will be fully enforced. Such changes in legislation have sometimes come about in response to highly publicized and tragic events involving firearms.

Inducements offered include cash, consumer goods, educational grants, tickets to sporting and cultural events, and psychotherapy sessions.

This was the experience of both the United Kingdom and Australia. On 13 March 1996, 16 primary school children and their teacher were shot dead in the Scottish town of Dunblane. Only six weeks later, a man killed 35 people and wounded 19 at a tourist site in Port Arthur, Tasmania. After these incidents, the governments quickly introduced stricter legislation on weapons possession.

In direct response to the Dunblane shooting, the UK government first carried out an amnesty programme to collect illegally held firearms under the old law, retrieving 23,000 firearms during the month of June that year. A prohibition on high-calibre handguns—that is, with a calibre of more than .22—was then established in July 1997 and expanded in February 1998 to include small-calibre handguns (UK, Home Office, 2000). In Australia, the federal, State, and territorial governments harmonized their previously disparate policies through the banning of all semi-automatic firearms and pump-action shotguns, the establishment of a uniform registration and licensing system, and the imposition of minimum standards for firearm security and storage (MEASURES). In both countries, buy-back programmes were conducted to retrieve weapons that became illegal under the new laws. A total of 643,726 firearms were collected in Australia, according to figures issued at the end of August 1998. The compensations amounted to AUD 319,833,727 (USD 168,725,084). In the UK, 162,000 handguns had been surrendered to the police by the end of February 1998. The compensations paid out totalled just under GBP 90,200,000 (USD 129,896,118) (UK, Home Office, 2000; UK, House of Commons, 1999; Australia, 2000; Meek, 1998).

BOX 7.3   Rio de Janeiro hosts world's largest weapons destruction ceremony

RIO DE JANEIRO: On 24 June 2001, nearly 20,000 people gathered along a bayside walkway in Rio de Janeiro to partici-pate in the largest-ever public destruction of firearms. About 100,000 small arms, from police stocks of confiscated weapons, were laid down on sheets of metal and repeatedly run over by a bulldozer before a cheering crowd. As the weapons were crushed, a shower of rose petals fluttered down over the crowd from helicopters that circled above. These guns will be melted down and transformed into a sculpture symbolizing hopes for peace in Rio.

The gun destruction ceremony, organized by the Rio de Janeiro State government, the Brazilian Army and the anti-violence NGO Viva Rio, underscored Brazilian support for a law prohibiting the sale of firearms to civilians (MEASURES). The collaboration of the Brazilian military with Viva Rio in order to educate the public about gun violence was as remarkable as the unprecedented quantity of arms destroyed. This partnership between the military and the NGO community served to reinforce the notion that the state should actively seek the participation of civil society in order to best address public safety concerns. The destruction event emphasized public education and participation, and included contributions by grassroots associations from Rio's *favelas* (shanty towns) students, artists, and musicians.

As part of the gun destruction ceremony, musicians from the *Grupo Cultural Afro Reggae* performed. Afro Reggae empowers children from Rio de Janeiro's *favelas* through workshops in music and dance and uses music as a way to com-municate the reality of the favelas to the rest of society. The band's music combines traditional Afro-Brazilian percussion with capoeira, rap, and hip-hop. Its director, Junior, notes how music is 'the key to getting the kids' attention and convincing them that they can create their own future'.

Afro Reggae and Viva Rio were both born in response to the horror of the 1993 police massacre when Rio de Janeiro police killed 21 residents at Vigário Geral, a *favela* infamous for its rampant drug trade. Armed violence is a daily presence in Rio's 500 *favelas* and the leading cause of death for young Brazilians.

The direct victims of gun violence are predominantly male. In Brazil, young men aged 15–29 are 24 times more likely to die by firearms than women in the same age group.[7] Behind each victim of gun violence is the pain of a mother, wife, girl-friend, sister, daughter, or grandmother who has been left behind. These women also bear the brunt of the financial and familial hardships. Among the other legacies of gun violence are the fear, insecurity, and resentment among the affected families and communities.

One of Viva Rio's latest initiatives is therefore to encourage women to play a key role in the prevention of the use of firearms in Brazil by launching a women's campaign. The idea behind the campaign is that if gun violence is a male dis-ease, women can provide the cure. By equipping women with information and convincing arguments, the movement aims to help them disarm their husbands, sons, and communities. The goal of the campaign during 2001, the International Year of the Woman, is to mobilize the female population to actively say 'no!' to guns and to increase their participation in pro-disarmament events, including school educational programmes, publicity campaigns, and the establishment of gun-free zones. During the 24 June gun destruction ceremony, women from the campaign gathered holding banners with their slogan, 'Choose gun free: Your weapon or me!'

While the number of firearms destroyed in Rio is impressive in itself, the holistic approach to solving the problem of urban violence demonstrated at the gun destruction event provides real hope for addressing the complex threat of urban violence. Destroying guns is a powerful symbol, but the reality of so many different sectors of the community coming together against violence provides a true vision of a more peaceful future for Rio.

I had plans for the future; I wanted to travel the world, take a modelling course and continue training in gymnastics for the Olympics. Suddenly, my dreams were shattered. And worse: this happened because of the irresponsibility of supposedly civilized men, who only felt brave when there's a gun in their hand.

Camilla Maglhāes Lima, 14, paraplegic since 1998
when a stray bullet hit her while she was on her way home from school.

I speak out to serve as an example to other mothers... Don't people see that Rio is a time bomb about to explode?
Euristéia Santa Ana, mother of William, a 24-year-old army corporal who,
along with his girlfriend, was gunned down after an argument, leaving a two-year-old daughter.

Source: Sullivan (2001)

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Musicians and other popular local artists participate in events in Rio de Janeiro to raise awareness about gun violence, the leading cause of death amongst Brazilian youth.

Weapons collection as peace-building

Weapons collections undertaken in the context of peace-building share many features of more traditional community programmes aimed at reducing gun violence. Still, there are important differences dictated by the different environments in which they operate.

Since the conclusion of several armed conflicts in the late 1990s, there has been a growing concern about the negative impact of widespread small arms availability in societies that have recently experienced an armed conflict. It has become increasingly apparent that the presence of small arms and light weapons in post-conflict societies can undermine fragile peace agreements, hinder peace-building and reconstruction, and generally increase the likelihood of a return to violence. If peace is to be sustained, it is vital to remove the tools of war in both an effective and a responsible fashion. The utility of practical disarmament is, however, not limited to mopping up weapons after a conflict has occurred, but may also be used as one component of conflict prevention.

The importance of adopting a comprehensive and integrated approach to peace-building that includes practical disarmament measures is becoming widely acknowledged (see for example United Nations Department for Peacekeeping Operations, Lessons Learned Unit, n.d.; UNSC, 1999; UNSG, 1998, paras 63–66; 2000b). In practice, this usually implies incorporating procedures into peace operations for the decommissioning, collection, storage and destruction of weapons, as well as the cantonment, demobilization, and reintegration of ex-combatants.

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BOX 7.4   Removal of small arms and light weapons in the context of peace missions

A broad range of international expertise gathered in Stockholm for a seminar devoted to this issue in March 1999. The seminar not only produced substantive input to peace-building initiatives through its findings but also provided the topic with increased legitimacy. A draft of the study *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration in a Peace-keeping Environment*, undertaken by the UN Department of Peace-Keeping Operations, was used as a basis for the discussions. The seminar report includes guidelines for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of combatants, collection of weapons from civil society, safe storage and destruction of arms, and the design of peace agreements and mandates of peace missions to promote the effective removal of small arms and light weapons (Sweden, 1999).

The collection, safe storage and destruction of small arms and light weapons in the context of peace settlements is vital for the consolidation of peace, for restoring citizen security and as a foundation to rebuild war-torn countries under the rule of law... they have to be dealt with both in the context of conflict prevention, and conflict resolution.

Opening statement by Anders Bjurner, Swedish Deputy
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

As conflict subsides: Two phases of weapons collection

The collection of weapons often follows immediately after the end of an armed conflict and the conclusion of a peace agreement. In fact, it is increasingly common to incorporate practical disarmament measures in the mandate of peace missions in the form of a formal disarmament component. This was done in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Macedonia. Weapons collection programmes are also sometimes implemented after the formal disarmament process has ended, in an effort to reduce the large quantities of weapons that are often left in civilian hands and fuel continued instability. To distinguish between weapons collection schemes implemented as part of a peace agreement and those implemented later but still in a post-conflict environment, they have been referred to as 'Phase I' and 'Phase II' programmes, or as 'disarmament by command' as opposed to 'voluntary weapons collection' (Laurance and Godnick, 2001; Faltas, 2001a). Their main distinguishing features are outlined in Table 7.1. In practice though, the distinction between these two types of programmes is not always clear-cut.

TABLE 7.1   Practical disarmament for peace-building

	Phase I: Disarmament by command	Phase II: Voluntary weapons collection
Timing	Soon after a peace settlement	Later
Objective	Establish political stability	Maintain political stability, enhance public safety
Inducements	Command, penalties, rewards	Penalties, rewards
Scale	Collective	Individual
Visibility	Public	Public or private
Policy framework	Demobilization	Demobilization, crime prevention
Responsible actors	Governmental and political organizations	Governmental, political, or private organizations

Source: Faltas (2001a)

Disarmament by command (Phase I) tends to be conducted in public, often organized and monitored by peace-keeping forces or other international observers. It is regularly undertaken in conjunction with demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, commonly referred to as DD&R. This makes possible the use of wartime organizations and military chains of command, and it usually targets a collective, such as a militia group. In addition, there is often a combination of rewards and penalties, for instance by establishing a deadline for the turning in of weapons after which holders will be disarmed by force. Many peace operations are authorized and conducted under the aegis of the UN, but other inter-governmental or non-governmental organizations have also been involved, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Mali or NATO in Macedonia.

The objective of disarmament in this phase is to establish political stability and impede a return to violence. In addition to a volatile security situation, the population usually faces a host of other challenges, such as a lack of basic necessities, unemployment, and the collapse of local social and economic structures. These factors are likely to influence the population's desire to hold weapons, and must therefore be taken into account when designing such programmes.

However, even well-designed collection programmes implemented during a formal peace process sometimes fail. Among other obstacles, ex-combatants and other weapons holders might have valid personal reasons to hold on to their weapons. For example, they might not be convinced about the durability of the peace, the authorities' intentions, or the ability of peacekeeping forces to protect them. Furthermore, they might decide to keep them as insurance in case they are unable to find other means to sustain themselves and feel compelled to turn to pillaging or other unlawful activities (Demetriou, Muggah, and Biddle, 2001).

Burning weapons in Congo-Brazzaville: Public weapons-destruction ceremonies are a powerful symbol of peace and reconciliation.

© UNDP, Republic of Congo

Therefore, after the peacekeeping force has moved out and the ex-combatants are demobilized, the tools of war often remain in society. The goal of disarmament at this stage is generally twofold: on the one hand to maintain political stability and avoid the return to violent conflict, and on the other hand to enhance public safety. At this point, however, collecting weapons is usually more difficult since it can no longer be carried out collectively and be influenced by command, group discipline, or pressure. Besides, the immediate momentum inspired by the peace settlement will often have dissipated. In short, a favourable opportunity will have passed. Instead, at this stage the organizers need to reach out to individual weapons holders, convincing them that they will in fact be better off turning in their weapons than keeping them. Voluntary weapons collection carried out in what is still considered a post-conflict environment, but after the formal disarmament process is over (Phase II), will often closely resemble weapons collection as crime prevention in 'peaceful' societies.

After the peacekeeping force moves out and ex-combatants are demobilized, the tools of war often remain in society.

Phase I weapons collection: Successes and failures in Africa

The African continent has been the most prevalent site for internal armed conflicts in the 1990s, and collection and destruction of weapons by command (Phase I) have been undertaken in connection with peace operations following some of these conflicts. The mixed record of these attempts illustrates that there are many obstacles to such endeavours. Above all, however, these undertakings illustrate the importance of efficient disarmament measures to ensure their success.

In 1992, the Government of Mali signed a peace agreement with a coalition of Tuareg rebels fighting for autonomy, which incorporated provisions for the collection and destruction of weapons. Faced with a breakdown of the peace process and the possible renewal of the conflict in 1993, President Alpha Oumar Konaré requested the UN Secretary-General to assist with the reduction of small arms and light weapons within the country. Subsequently, two UN fact-finding missions visited Mali and other countries in the region. They identified the need for 'a proportional and integrated approach to security and development' in Mali, which came to be known as the 'security first' approach (Eketi-Mboumoua, 1996). Unless confidence in the public security forces could be increased, efforts to reduce the problem of arms would be ineffective.

The UN missions proposed several specific measures, including strengthening legislation and judicial processes related to the civilian use of weapons, reform of the internal security services, reinforcing regional co-operation and confidence building, development of information campaigns supporting weapons collection, and the establishment of a national commission for the control of small arms. Economic and social development had become impossible because of the precarious security situation, and it was therefore suggested that some of the available development funds should be allocated to improving civilian security. The missions also encouraged donors to support the security first approach through the provision of financial, legal, and technical assistance to improve the security sector. Mali was the first country to deliberately adopt an integrated approach to development and security by linking weapons collection to the provision of development assistance, directly targeted at measures that would enhance community security.

Between October 1995 and January 1996, around 3,000 weapons were collected during the demobilization process in Mali, which involved approximately 11,000 ex-combatants. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) co-ordinated the programme and established a trust fund to finance it, to which several governments, including Mali, contributed. The weapons were subsequently burned in a public ceremony called the Flame of Peace. Unsurprisingly, the collection and destruction of 3,000 weapons has not solved the problem of illegal circulation of weapons in Mali, where, in addition to a traditional arms-bearing culture among certain groups, weapons leak into the country from other conflict areas in the region. However, the Flame of Peace became a powerful symbol of national reconciliation and peace and has since then inspired similar events in other countries. Finally, it stimulated disarmament initiatives for the whole west African subregion, including the ECOWAS Moratorium on small arms and light weapons (see MEASURES; Poulton and ag Youssof, 1998; van der Graaf and Poulton, 2001).

The Abuja II Agreement of 17 August 1996 was the final step in a long and convoluted peace process that put an end to seven years of civil war in Liberia involving a number of armed factions. The Economic Community of West African States' Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) was to supervise the disarmament, monitored and verified by a UN Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). They carried out a disarmament and demobilization programme between 22 November 1996 and 9 February 1997 in order to create the stability necessary to hold elections.

The turning in of weapons was the first step in the demobilization process. The combatants received demobilization identification cards, which entitled them to a one-month food ration and a promissory note for longer-term benefits such as extended medical care, an agricultural kit, or participation in a food-for-work programme. Weapons collected both through the voluntary collection programme and through confiscation are indicated in Table 7.2.

TABLE 7.2   Estimated number of weapons and ammunition retrieved by ECOMOG, 22 November 1996–13 June 1997

Weapons collected	Serviceable weapons	Unserviceable weapons	Ammunition (rounds)
Formal programme 22 November 1996– 9 February 1997	7,797	1,782	1,218,300
After programme 9 February–13 June 1997	458 *	–	25,000
Weapons surrendered outside official demobilization sites	3,750 *	–	–
ECOMOG cordon and search operations	3,500 *	–	150,000
Total	15,505	1,782	1,393,300

*No data on serviceability of weapons

Sources: UNSG (1997); Fraser (2001)

The immediate goal of the programme was achieved when elections were carried out as planned. Yet little attention was paid to the post-election period, for example with regard to general weapons legislation and management. A lack of funding further undermined the programme result, as the ex-combatants never received the long-term benefits they had been promised. Another major weakness was that no provisions had been made for the final disposition of the weapons, causing this to become a point of contention between the Liberian government and the UN and ECOMOG. Not until June 1999 did President Taylor agree to destroy all the collected weaponry, and the process was completed that October (UN, Department of Public Information, 1997a; Fraser, 2001).

From November 1999 to May 2000, an attempt at disarming rebel factions was made by the Government of Sierra Leone with the assistance of ECOMOG and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). According to the UN, 12,695 weapons and 253,535 rounds of ammunition were retrieved before the collection programme collapsed together with the entire peace process in May 2000, after the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels captured 500 UN peacekeepers, nine of whom were killed (Berman, 2000, p. 25). The quality of the weapons handed in was generally poor, indicating that the warring groups lacked the necessary confidence and will to make a serious attempt to disband and disarm. In addition, most of the collected weapons were not immediately destroyed but simply disabled, facilitating their subsequent recapture by rebels after the peace process had broken down.

As reported in a study carried out by Eric Berman for the Small Arms Survey, the programme was largely ineffective. Although this was partly due to the reluctance of the parties to engage in the disarmament process, weak management also contributed to the poor outcome. This included accepting inoperable weapons, not making sure that people handing in weapons were genuine ex-combatants, and failing to adequately disable or destroy weapons.

The quality of the weapons handed in was generally poor, indicating a lack of confidence and will to make a serious attempt to disband and disarm.

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In addition, the USD 300 cash payment that was offered to those surrendering weapons at the disarmament sites fuelled new demand, attracting additional weapons to the area. More broadly, the programme was undermined by the intensive rearmament efforts undertaken by the rebels over the 1999–2000 period, who continued to obtain weapons despite international arms embargoes and the ECOWAS Moratorium (Berman, 2000; TRANSFERS).

Still, efforts to achieve peace in Sierra Leone continued, and disarmament resumed on 18 May 2001 after a new agreement had been reached between the government, the RUF, and UNAMSIL. When the programme ended in January 2002, 45,449 former combatants had turned in their weapons, about 20,000 more than had been expected (UN-IRIN, 2002a; 2002b). In addition, during May and June 2001 close to 10,000 weapons already recovered were destroyed and converted into productive tools to be distributed to participants in the reintegration schemes (UNAMSIL, 2001). A community arms collection (CAC) programme was also set up to mop up weapons not covered by the demobilization process (UN-IRIN, 2002a).

Building peace in the Balkans

Weapons collection and destruction has also been an important element in the recent peace-building processes in the Balkans. The United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) conducted a weapons buy-back programme between October 1996 and August 1997. This was part of its mandate to demilitarize the formerly Serb-controlled region and oversee its peaceful reintegration into Croatia, in accordance with an agreement signed between the two parties.

After completing the demilitarization of Serb paramilitaries, UNTAES estimated that there was still a large quantity of weapons left among the civilian population. The objective of the buy-back was to recover as much unauthorized weaponry, ammunition, and explosives as possible. The Croatian government financed the programme, which rewarded the participants with on-the-spot cash payments. Although UNTAES indicated that the programme was voluntary, it also made it clear that it would confiscate any unauthorized or unregistered weaponry it discovered. Table 7.3 charts the numbers of weapons collected.

Only the weapons that were old or in poor condition were destroyed, while the remainder were stored and monitored by UNTAES until the end of its mandate and then transferred to the Croatian authorities. The number of weapons turned in was much higher than had been expected, though significant quantities probably remain in the area. The programme also served to build confidence between the local Serb and Croatian populations (Boothby, 2001; UN, Department of Public Information, 1997b).

In Kosovo, the disarming of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) was of key importance in order to re-establish public order. The KLA had an estimated 8,000–10,000 members before the conflict ended in June 1999, and the group had acquired huge quantities of weapons—mostly small arms and light weapons—during its war against the Serb authorities (BICC, 2001). In an agreement between the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the KLA of June 1999, the rebels agreed to hand over all weapons, except hunting rifles and pistols, within 90 days.

Complete disarmament was problematic, particularly since the KLA did not have clear-cut command structures or strong political leaders. Nevertheless, by the end of September KFOR had received more than 10,000 small arms, 1,200 mines, 27,000 grenades, 1,000kg of explosives, and over five million rounds of ammunition (BICC, 2001). Still, much of the KLA's arsenal—including the majority of the weapons acquired during the war—was believed to be stockpiled across the border in northern Albania. Additionally, tens of thousands of weapons almost certainly

TABLE 7.3   Weapons collected by the UNTAES buy-back programme in Croatia

Time period	Rifles	Anti-tank rocket launchers	Grenades	Ammunition
Formal programme 2 October 1996– 31 August 1997	8,152	742 (reusable) 5,330 (non-reusable)	13,335	1,700,000
After programme 1 September– 22 September 1997	204	11 (rockets)	238	55,000
Total	8,356	6,083	13,573	1,755,000

Source: UN, Department of Public Information (1997b)

remained in the hands of individual ex-combatants (*Jane's Intelligence Review*, 2000). The large stocks of weapons under ethnic Albanian control subsequently went on to fuel the conflict in Macedonia (STOCKPILES).

Since the settlement in Kosovo, violence against non-Albanians has persisted, as has organized crime. In response, KFOR has continued to uncover hidden weapons caches, actively seeking out weapons by searching people, vehicles, and houses. Starting in April 2000, KFOR launched a programme to destroy confiscated arms by melting them down and recycling. By August 2001, 5,295 rifles, 976 pistols, 78 support weapons, 31 mortars, 147 anti-tank weapons, and six anti-aircraft weapons had been destroyed (Walla, 2001). To encourage civilians to hand in additional weapons, KFOR declared an amnesty period from 1 May to 4 June 2001. Even with the threat of severe penalties facing illegal weapons holders after the deadline, the results of this effort were modest. In all, 400 rifles, 65 pistols, 75 support weapons, 21 anti-tank weapons, 16 rockets, over 200 hand grenades and anti-personnel mines, and some 31,000 rounds of ammunition were collected (KFOR, 2001).

BOX 7.5   Cattle rustlers give up their guns

In December 2001, the Ugandan government launched a programme to disarm the Karamajong—a pastoralist community in the north-eastern region of the country. This initiative, actively supported and promoted by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, followed several other smaller-scale attempts at disarmament by local authorities. Equipped with large quantities of firearms, the Karamajong had for many years been carrying out armed cattle raids against neighbouring districts, causing widespread fear, food insecurity, and displacement. The injection of modern arms into pastoralist communities along the borders between Uganda, Sudan, and Kenya has dramatically changed the dynamics of the traditional cross-border cattle rustling in this area.

During the month of December 2001, some 7,000 firearms were surrendered under the programme. President Museveni had promised oxen and ox-ploughs, as well as building material, in return for the voluntary handing-in of weapons during the established amnesty period. This period was initially planned to end on 2 January 2002, but at this time the participants had not yet received any of the promised benefits. The President therefore announced its extension to the middle of February 2002, after which a more coercive approach was planned. The programme aims to collect about 40,000 illegal weapons, many of which were originally given to the Karamajong by the government for their protection against cross-border raids by Kenyan pastoralist groups. The 18-year civil war in southern Sudan has also contributed to the influx of weapons into the region. In conjunction with the disarmament programme, security forces are being deployed along the border with Kenya and Sudan in order to protect the Karamajong from armed cattle rustlers from the neighbouring communities.

Source: UN-IRIN (2002c)

> **BOX 7.6   The role of paramilitary weapons stocks in peace settlements: Disarming politics**
>
> When the Irish Republican Army (IRA) announced its decision to decommission its weapons on 23 October 2001, it was hailed as a historic breakthrough in the Northern Ireland peace process, hopefully leading to fulfilment of the Good Friday Agreement of April 1998 and finally ending over 30 years of sectarian violence.
>
> The provisions of the Good Friday agreement included the establishment of a local assembly in which the Protestant majority and the Catholic minority would share power. It also affirmed that paramilitary weapons should be put 'completely and verifiably beyond use'. But the arms issue soon brought progress towards peace to a halt. One of the main sticking points was the IRA's reluctance to comply with the decommissioning schemes set up by the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD), the organization responsible for monitoring, verifying, and reporting on the progress of paramilitary disarmament (STOCKPILES).
>
> The dispute over the issue of disarmament repeatedly threatened the survival of the new Northern Ireland government and intensified sectarian tension, resulting in a number of violent episodes and culminating in the resignation of the head of the power-sharing executive, David Trimble, in July 2001. Apart from allowing occasional international inspections of some of its arms dumps, the IRA was dragging its feet on the weapons issue, refusing to scrap any weapons. It demanded that Britain accelerate military withdrawal and the process to create a new police force in Northern Ireland. Radical forces on both sides were gaining ground, while paramilitary factions were suspected of rearming.
>
> The political process was at the point of collapse when the IRA made its move, believed to have been influenced by the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September and the exposure of links between the IRA and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The British government promptly responded by resuming the dismantling of military installations. As the first occasion on which an Irish republican group has disposed of its weapons in this way, it gives real hope for a durable peace in Northern Ireland. Among other things, this will undoubtedly depend on whether the loyalist paramilitaries respond by putting down their guns.

The confidence-building impact of weapons collection has the potential to make or break a peace settlement.

Cleaning up the remnants of war through voluntary weapons collection (Phase II)

During armed conflicts, weapons are often widely distributed, not only among those actively participating in the hostilities but also among the civilian population (HUMANITARIAN). Re-establishing security thus depends largely on the successful implementation of measures during the peace process to disarm ex-combatants, recover weapons hidden in arms caches, and collect weapons from civilians. Still, when peace operations end, excessive quantities of weapons and ammunition frequently remain in the hands of ex-combatants or other civilians. Thus, high levels of armed violence conducted with easily available small arms characterize many post-conflict environments.

In Central America, for example, the formal disarmament processes failed to recover large parts of the weapons stocks, which were left in civilian hands when its wars ended. The region is still awash with weapons, associated with the drug trade, other types of crime, and a high level of civilian insecurity. In an effort to deal with this problem, several voluntary weapons collection initiatives (Phase II) have been carried out (Laurance and Godnick, 2001).

Nicaragua was the first country in the region to embark upon a post-conflict disarmament process when the guerrilla forces were disarmed in 1990. Nevertheless, by early 1991 weapons that had remained hidden in caches around the country were fuelling rearmament. The Nicaraguan government created the Special Disarmament Brigades (BED) to collect as many of these arms as possible. With the support of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Italian government, they initiated a buy-back programme in late 1991, offering ex-combatants cash, food, construction materials, and micro-credit in exchange for their weapons.

The Nicaraguan programme went on for two years, and approximately 142,000 weapons were bought back or confiscated. The weapons were later destroyed in public, burnt in an open pit fire. As pointed out by the analyst

BOX 7.6   The role of paramilitary weapons stocks in peace settlements: Disarming politics (continued)

Meanwhile, a similar process has taken place in Macedonia. On 13 August 2001, a European/US-brokered peace accord was signed, which aims to put an end to the insurgency by the ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army (NLA). Since the conflict broke out in February 2001, it had caused many casualties and displaced more than 100,000 people (*International Herald Tribune*, 2001a). However, despite having achieved an agreement, the peace process was still extremely fragile. In NATO's Operation Essential Harvest, more than 3,800 troops were deployed to the area beginning in late August 2001. Their mission was to collect and destroy 3,300 weapons that the ethnic Albanian rebels had promised to turn over in a 30-day period. Their mandate was limited to the voluntary collection of weapons only, and did not provide for any peace-keeping role. The rebels had agreed to disarm and disband in return for parliamentary approval of a number of constitutional and political reforms expanding the rights of ethnic Albanians. In the end, the results of the collection exceeded expectations. They are indicated in Table 7.4.

TABLE 7.4   Weapons surrendered by the National Liberation Army in Operation Essential Harvest

Weapons collected	Assault rifles	Machine guns	Support weapon systems (mortar/anti-tank)	Total weapons	Mines, explosives, and ammunition
27 August– 26 September	3,210	483	161	3,875*	397,625 items

*Includes 4 tanks/armoured personnel carriers and 17 air defence weapon systems
Source: NATO (2001)

Disagreement over the NLA's weapons holdings repeatedly threatened to undermine the programme. This illustrates the importance of trust between the parties, and good accounting in lieu of trust. Stockpile estimates varied greatly, ranging from the NLA's original claim that it held 2,500 weapons to estimates from the Macedonian government as high as 85,000 (Sennott, 2001; MIA, 2001). NATO set the number to be collected at 3,300, based on an official estimate of what would be a sufficiently high number to signal the good intentions of the NLA (STOCKPILES). Many Macedonians were sceptical of the undertaking, claiming that the rebels were not likely to turn in their best weapons and that they could easily rearm. NATO officials acknowledged this risk, but the success of the operation, they maintained, should be measured by its ability to build confidence between the Macedonian government and the rebels to support the negotiated solution to the conflict. At the same time, they were discreetly monitoring how much weaponry the rebels were transporting out of the country for secret storage (*The Economist*, 2001a).

The ongoing efforts to create a stable peace in Northern Ireland and Macedonia have in both cases been jeopardized by the uncertainty surrounding weapons held by paramilitary groups. But as the breakthrough on IRA disarmament shows, giving up weapons also has the potential to bolster and in some cases even save a political process from collapsing. Both cases illustrate that the confidence-building impact of weapons collection has the potential to make or break a peace settlement.

Critics are often correct in claiming that the numbers of weapons retrieved from armed opposition groups is merely symbolic and that rearmament is easy, whether with new supplies from outside sources or from secret arsenals that have not been surrendered. Nevertheless, giving up weapons as a signal of formally ending a war has a significant psychological impact. It can send a signal to combatants that fighting is over, inspire the authorities' confidence, and raise hopes of peace among the civilian population. This makes it an essential building-block in the restoration of a peaceful society.

The Irish Republican Army's announced intent to decommission its weapons may be a step towards peace in Northern Ireland.

Sarah Meek (1998), the programme did not remove all unauthorized weapons, but the initiative demonstrated the government's will to tackle the weapons problem while at the same time attempting to improve participants' living conditions in a sustainable manner (Laurance and Meek, 1996, p. 161; O'Connor, 1996).

During the immediate post-conflict disarmament process in El Salvador, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) surrendered about 10,200 small arms and light weapons and 9,200 grenades. This left an estimated 360,000 military-style weapons in civilian hands (Laurance and Godnick, 2001). In an effort to reduce violent crime, a coalition of citizens, businesses, non-governmental organizations, and churches called the Patriotic Movement against Crime (MPCD) established a programme named Goods for Guns.

In El Salvador the emphasis was on persuading civilians to hand over military-style weapons as a contribution to a more peaceful society. In return they received compensation consisting of vouchers for consumer goods. The government supported the effort, and representatives from the police and Ministry of Defence provided logistical and technical support. While the police destroys the explosives, the Ministry of Defence is responsible for rendering weapons unusable and storing them for later incorporation into a peace monument (Laurance and Godnick, 2001). Table 7.5 lists the weapons collected.

Although the total number of weapons in El Salvador did not decline during this period, the programme did remove thousands of military weapons from society and raised awareness of the problems associated with their proliferation. Domestically, the collaboration with the national police helped establish a dialogue regarding public security and enabled the MPCD to lobby effectively in favour of a new arms and munitions law passed in June 1999. It also set a precedent for collaboration between civil society and the government in other areas. On a regional and international level, it has served as a model for subsequent collection programmes (Laurance and Godnick, 2001).

In Africa, the most extensive Phase II collection effort has taken place in Mozambique. After 16 years of civil war between the government and the Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (RENAMO) rebel forces ended in 1992, UN peacekeepers collected approximately 190,000 weapons. Most of the weapons were handed over to the new Mozambican Defence Force (FADM), but due to a poorly executed storage plan they were quickly back in circulation. In an effort to address the problem, the Christian Council of Mozambique initiated a campaign called Swords for Ploughshares in October 1995, which was later developed into the Tools for Arms Project (TAE).

The Project targets former combatants and illegal arms holders in particular, encouraging them to turn in weapons in exchange for agricultural tools and other equipment. By August 2001, the TAE project had collected and destroyed approximately 200,000 different weapons and related items (Lusa News Agency, 2001). Local artists have turned some of the destroyed weapons into pieces of art, which have been exhibited and sold to raise money for the continuation and expansion of the project.

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Mozambican artists put some of the weapons collected by the Tools for Arms Project to creative and practical use.

TABLE 7.5   Weapons collected by the Goods for Guns Programme in El Salvador, 1 January 1996–20 June 1999

Type	Number
Short arms (pistols, revolvers, etc.)	1,354
Long arms (incl. assault rifles)	3,043
Grenades	3,180
Grenade launchers	44
LAW 80 rockets	290
Mines	55
Mortars	4
RPG-7	6
Total weapons*	9,527
Ammunition	129,696

*Includes explosives and other items
Source: Laurance and Godnick (2001)

Conflict and crime: Severing the link

It is often difficult to draw the line between political violence and crime in modern conflicts. Besides, the end of an armed conflict is often followed by an upsurge in crime. Reasons for this include that large numbers of ex-combatants might find themselves without a lawful livelihood in societies already struggling with massive unemployment, that institutions safeguarding law and order have broken down or lack credibility, and that tensions between social groups remain high. This increase in violent crime is exacerbated by the easy availability of firearms in many post-conflict environments. Additionally, the illicit trade and use of arms is associated with other illegal activities, including drug-trafficking, the smuggling of other illegal commodities, and terrorism.

Some weapons collection programmes are specifically tailored to address the increasingly blurred line between the use of arms for political purposes and their use for criminal purposes. One example is the joint weapons retrieval and destruction programme Operation Rachel, launched in 1995 by the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the police of the Republic of Mozambique. Under this programme, the police have destroyed arms caches left in Mozambique following its civil war. The caches are located on the basis of information supplied by local informants rewarded according to the information they provide. South African and Mozambican experts then destroy the weapons on-site. Both countries gain from this co-operation, since weapons from Mozambique are believed to be supplying the illegal arms market in South Africa, contributing to the sharp rise in violent crime rates the country has witnessed during the post-apartheid period (Hennop, 2000).[8] On the other hand, the non-punitive approach is intended to encourage people to reveal weapons caches and to generate support among the local population, thereby contributing to the peace-building process in Mozambique.

South Africa supplies most of the financial and material resources as well as technical expertise. The Mozambicans facilitate contacts with local communities, gather intelligence, and provide the necessary permission for the South African police to operate in Mozambican territory. The programme has helped build confidence between the two countries and their police forces. Between 1995 and 2001, it recovered over 18,000 weapons from more than 500 arms caches hidden throughout the country (Chachiua, 2000; Chachiua and Hennop, 2001; *Maputo TVM Television*, 2001).

BOX 7.7   Cambodia: Steps forward, steps back

Three decades of internal armed conflict have left Cambodia with a huge number of small arms and light weapons: anywhere from 500,000 to one million, according to most estimates, with a very large proportion in civilian hands (STOCKPILES). Although the armed conflict ended in early 1999, the proliferation of small arms throughout the country has contributed to insecurity across Cambodia.

The spread of weapons in Cambodia hinders socio-economic development, affecting families and communities. According to recent research findings by the Working Group for Weapons Reduction in Cambodia (WGWR), women and children are often the indirect victims of weapons misuse and abuse (Yem and Catalla, 2001). They lose loved ones, main income earners, and property. The more intangible consequences can include loss of face, social status, and social support. Children of affected families often drop out of school to help support their family financially or care for younger siblings.

During October 1998 the city of Phnom Penh initiated a weapons confiscation programme. This began with a buy-back strategy. The strategy then changed to roadside confiscation and voluntary turn-in with no cash incentives. The programme was subsequently extended by the Ministry of the Interior to the rest of the country and backed up by a sub-decree (No. 38) limiting legal gun ownership to a thin stratum of upper-level government and military officials.

As of February 2002, this programme had resulted in the collection of 112,562 weapons. Of these, 79,411 weapons were destroyed in a series of 16 public ceremonies in Phnom Penh and across the country up to February 2002. 36,505 weapons were crushed and another 42,906 burned. WGWR has monitored the implementation of the government programme, reporting strong public support for weapons reduction efforts, coupled with a widely-held belief that it has, in fact, contributed towards improving security in the country.

Yet there are serious problems that limit the effectiveness of the programme. First, only a portion of the collected weapons have been destroyed, while remaining weapons are stored in poorly secured and unsafe state depots. Diversion and re-circulation of stored weapons continue to supply a local black market for weapons in Phnom Penh, according to Deputy Prime Minister HE Sar Kheng. Second, current weapons legislation is inadequate and poorly implemented. Finally, the government collection programme has focused more on civilian weapons than the undisciplined use of weapons by Cambodian security forces—police, gendarmerie, and army—a root cause of insecurity and the desire of civilians to remain armed. In response to these problems, the Government of Cambodia has taken several encouraging steps. In co-operation with the European Union Assistance on Curbing Small Arms and Light Weapons in Cambodia (EU-ASAC) created in 1999, it has initiated a weapons storage and registration pilot project and a weapons-for-development pilot project, and drafted a more comprehensive arms law that is currently being reviewed. A National Commission for Weapons Reform and Management was also created in July 2000. The Commission has a policy outlining clear objectives for arms reduction and management, although it has yet to become active and lacks a concrete action plan.

Most people, while broadly supportive of the weapons collection process, remain reluctant to participate in it themselves so long as the rule of law is not fully established in the country and there is a lack of public trust in the security forces. In other words, so long as the state—and its claim to the monopoly of the instruments of violence—does not address root issues and provide security for all people and communities regardless of political affiliation, status, and wealth, Cambodians are likely to continue to arm themselves.

Source: WGWR (2001)

In Pakistan, the government has initiated a large arms control campaign to address its considerable small arms problem. The country has a large domestic illegal arms industry, a strong tribal tradition of carrying and firing guns, several heavily armed religious militant groups, and it suffers from its proximity to conflict-ridden Afghanistan. Because of the extensive spread of illegal small arms and insufficient national controls, it has become a major source of small arms for the whole of South Asia (STOCKPILES; TRANSFERS; Small Arms Survey, 2001, p. 181).

Starting in 2000, the military government in Islamabad set out to crack down on this problem through a multi-phased programme, combining various policy measures. These include undertaking search and confiscation operations, asking people to voluntarily surrender their weapons under an amnesty scheme, regularizing the unauthorized

arms manufacturing industry, as well as banning the issuance of new arms licences, arms displays, and the ceremonial firing of weapons at festive occasions. In order to bolster public support for the programme, advertising is raising public awareness and officials are encouraged to hold public meetings to inform and inspire confidence, particularly among people in rural areas not easily reached by other means of communication (Butt, 2000; Cohn, 2001).

The weapons collection component consists of two phases. First, the government announced a general amnesty from 5 June to 20 June 2001 for the voluntary surrender of illicit weapons that would be followed by a countrywide crack-down by law enforcement agencies for the recovery of illicit weapons. According to official figures, in the course of two weeks the authorities acquired a total of 86,757 weapons of various types. Second, the authorities plan to cancel automatic weapons licences that have been issued by previous governments in large numbers, and reassess them using stricter criteria (Pakistan, 2001). Still, the pace of the voluntary arms surrender has fallen short of expectations so far, although the government has stated that it intends to speed up the process (Khan, 2001). Meanwhile, one independent analyst has criticized the campaign for failing to achieve its objectives, pointing to a lack of transparency and political will as some of the main impediments (Siddiqa-Agha, 2001). In certain tribal areas like Baluchistan, public rallies and strikes have been organized in protest against the initiative (*Balochistan Post*, 2001a, 2001b). At the same time, instead of the planned reduction it is believed that there has been an increase in the illegal production of weapons in these areas in connection with the war in Afghanistan.[9]

BOX 7.8   Crack-down on illegal guns in China

Although official data is scarce, the available figures indicate that there has been an explosion in the number of gun-related crimes over recent years in China. This problem is partly associated with a concurrent upsurge in organized crime. Japanese, Taiwanese, and American triads are operating in the country, involved in, among other things, the smuggling of drugs and arms. In response to this, the police are engaged in a tough campaign to confiscate illegal weapons. *The Economist* has reported that between March and June 2001 alone, the police confiscated 600,000 guns, of which 8,800 were military weapons. Over the past five years, 2.4 million weapons have been confiscated countrywide (STOCKPILES).

Source: The Economist (2001b)

Linking disarmament and development

Post-conflict societies face many serious challenges. Disarmament and demobilization of combatants, as well as the removal of weapons, landmines, and other remnants of war from the communities affected, are crucial for the transition to a peaceful society. Yet the affected communities are also confronted with a number of other tasks. In times of war, public and civil institutions are eroded, social services deteriorate, infrastructure and other public assets are damaged or destroyed, socio-economic development and foreign aid are interrupted, and investment and non war-related production slump (Collier, 1999; Colletta, Mendelson, Forman, and Vanheukelom, 1999).

In addition, a great deal of psychological healing is necessary to rebuild trust within and between wounded communities and individuals (HUMANITARIAN). Confidence and trust between previous adversaries must be created and peaceful means of conflict resolution promoted. Researchers have strongly emphasized that collecting weapons is essential but not alone sufficient to sustainably promote peace and security, unless the demand for weapons is simultaneously addressed. This entails addressing the 'root causes of violence' through such methods as promoting development and responsible law enforcement (BICC and SAND, 2000; Faltas, 2001a, 2001b; Lodgaard, 2001).

Different avenues have been explored for tackling small arms disarmament in the broader context of conflict prevention and peace-building. One of the most recent strategies to emerge is 'weapons for development'. This concept refers to programmes that link the removal of weapons from society to development incentives. The approach is based on the assumption that there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between human security and human development. While socio-economic conditions and social inequality may have a detrimental effect on communal relations, thereby raising the likelihood of violent conflict, the insecurity ensuing from conflict will only further impede development. Supporting economic and social development is therefore a crucial factor in preventing conflict as well as in the consolidation of peace in the aftermath of war (UNDP, 1994; 2001b; UNSG, 1998, paras 2, 62). Consequently, efforts to reduce the risk of armed violence by removing weapons from society are increasingly considered within a development framework (Muggah and Batchelor, 2002).

Although this idea emerged during the disarmament process in Mali in 1996 described earlier, the first programme to comprehensively implement this approach was the Gramsh Weapons in Exchange for Development Pilot Programme (GPP) undertaken in Albania in 1999. The situation in the district of Gramsh did not constitute a traditional post-conflict scenario, but it was nonetheless a community flooded with weapons while also facing serious political, social, and economic problems. The UNDP is currently implementing and developing several other projects within this framework in countries or regions where small arms may threaten stability, including in other parts of Albania, El Salvador, the Solomon Islands, and west and east Africa. These programmes are supported by the UNDP's Trust Fund for the Reduction of Small Arms Proliferation, to which several countries have contributed, including Belgium, Norway, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and South Korea (UNDP, 2001a).

In order to examine this new approach linking disarmament and development, the following analysis written by Spyros Demetriou considers two programmes that have served as path-breakers.[10]

Case 1. The Gramsh Pilot Programme: Exchanging weapons for development

After decades of economic mismanagement under the rule of Enver Hoxha, the population of Albania emerged from behind the Iron Curtain only to fall prey to numerous financial 'pyramid schemes'. Their collapse in 1997 triggered a

A new approach to weapons collection was tested in Albania, after 650,000 weapons looted from government stocks ended up in the hands of civilians.

© Reuters/Arben Celi

wave of political and social unrest. As people took the law into their own hands, approximately 650,000 small arms and 1.5 billion rounds of small arms ammunition were looted from army depots. Although a semblance of order was restored by a change in government and the intervention of the Western European Union's Multinational Protection Force, the large number of military weapons still circulating continued to fuel widespread criminality and economic paralysis (Smith and Sagramoso, 1999).

The GPP was designed, following a request by the Albanian government to the UN, to remedy the problems aggravated by widespread weapons availability. It was run by the UNDP in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Project Services and the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs. Recognizing that a simple cash buy-back programme might

generate inflationary pressures and fuel additional demand for weapons, it was decided to adopt an approach that would rely on collective inducements to maximize weapons collection possibilities. Accordingly, a fivefold strategy was developed (UNDP and the Government of Albania, 1998). Each component will be examined in turn.

TABLE 7.6   Weapons looted from Albanian government armouries in 1997*

Types	Number taken	Number recovered by government	Percentage recovered
Pistols	38,000	170	0.4
AK-47 assault rifles	226,000	17,522	7.7
Ordinary rifles	351,000	66,995	19.0
Machine guns	25,000	11,643	46.0
Grenade launchers	2,450	792	32.3
Mortars	770	242	31.4
7.62mm ammunition	1,560,000,000		
12.7mm ammunition	24,000,000		

*Estimates of the actual numbers of looted weapons vary. According to the Ministry of Public Order, in an internal document provided by the UNDP, Tirana, the numbers looted were 549,775 weapons, 839,310,038 pieces of ammunition, 31,460 hand grenades, and 16,000,000 pieces of explosives. Of these, 176,864 weapons, 107,967,498 pieces of ammunition, and 1,221,429 pieces of explosives had been recovered up to 30 September, 2001.

Source: Office of the National Security Advisor to the Albanian Prime Minister, quoted in van der Graaf and Faltas (2001, p. 165)

Community participation. At the core of the GPP was a participatory process that involved local communities and authorities in setting the targets for weapons collection, the identification and prioritization of development needs, and a public awareness campaign. The establishment of national, district, and village level co-ordination committees and councils, with representatives from all sectors of society, served to empower communities by giving them a stake in the project. This approach provided communities with a critical discussion and decision-making forum, and a framework for mobilizing society around the objective of improving local security conditions. Most importantly, however, broad participation ensured that programme strategies reflected local realities and needs

Public awareness. The GPP conducted a public awareness campaign on small arms, active at both local and national levels. At the local level, the campaign fostered awareness of the programme itself, educated communities about the dangers posed by small arms and light weapons, and provided a forum for mobilization. It was also a critical confidence-building mechanism, mitigating initial suspicion about the motives of the UNDP. At the national level, a radio and television campaign together with a series of large-scale public events, put the small arms issue on the public agenda, prompting local initiatives in other regions of Albania.

Development intervention. In contrast to other voluntary weapons exchange programmes offering cash, food, tools, or other individual benefits, the GPP provided development projects that benefited the entire community. These development projects were intended to complement the collection of weapons as a means to decrease public insecurity. Whereas the collection of weapons would reduce their supply by physically removing them from society, development projects would reduce demand for weapons by offering alternative occupations and improving social and economic welfare.

Capacity building for police. To restore public confidence and trust in local authorities and reduce the sense of insecurity, the police were accorded additional resources to increase their capacity to respond to crimes and accidents. The GPP provided them with vehicles, radio equipment, and training in the democratic application of the law.

The collection of weapons would reduce the supply of weapons, while development projects would reduce the demand.

Weapons collection. The awareness-raising campaign and the identification and selection of development projects preceded the actual collection of weapons. This sequencing ensured that weapons collection was undertaken in a favourable environment, where the public understood that it was tightly integrated with a larger strategy for improving local conditions. Initially, the scope of development intervention was to be rigidly conditional on the quantities of weapons surrendered per community, but this was later relaxed to accommodate a more equitable approach and forestall unnecessary tensions. When the development projects were launched after the collection, they were perceived not only as collective 'rewards' for the weapons surrendered but also as the next step in a broader strategy to improve community security.

TABLE 7.7   Results of the Gramsh Pilot Programme

Weapons recovered	Ammunition recovered	Target population
5,980	137 metric tons	Approximately 55,000
Source: UNDP (2000a)		

Case 2. Consolidating security in the Republic of Congo

In the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), a series of conflicts during 1993–99 resulted in tens of thousands of casualties and the displacement of more than a third of its population (Pourtier, 1998). Thousands of disaffected youth joined militia groups that, in the absence of centralized control and effective military planning, obtained massive quantities of personal weapons and engaged in widespread pillaging, destruction, and killing of unarmed civilians (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1996).

The signing of cease-fire accords in late 1999 established a peace process aimed at political reconciliation, institutional reform, and the disarming and disbanding of militia groups. A multi-party body, the Comité de Suivi, was established to oversee the implementation of the cease-fire accords. Despite these efforts, widespread insecurity and social disorder continues to prevail throughout the country. One of the main obstacles to the consolidation of peace is the tens of thousands of ex-combatants who, in the post-conflict period, have found themselves socially marginalized, stigmatized by their communities, and without the skills necessary to play a productive role in social and economic life. In this context, the estimated 40,000 small arms still in possession of ex-combatants constitute both an instrument for criminal activities and a factor sustaining political and social insecurity (Demetriou, Muggah, and Biddle, 2001). In the broader society, this has manifested itself in widespread fear, perpetuating dislocation and impeding a return to normal life. Politically, the easy access to weapons maintains tension and suspicion between the former belligerents, forestalling the reconstruction of trust and confidence.

With these considerations in mind, the International Organization of Migration (IOM) and the UNDP launched a joint Project for the Reintegration of Ex-Combatants and Collection of Weapons in 2000. As opposed to disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DD&R) programmes that treat disarmament and reintegration separately, it *links* the provision of reintegration assistance to weapons collection so as to simultaneously tackle both dimensions of the problem. This makes it easier to directly target the social threats that armed ex-combatants pose. In contrast to more rigid DD&R programmes conducted in the formal framework of military operations, it highlights the improvement of social conditions for all as an indispensable component of sustainable peace.

Linking reintegration and weapons collection. In Congo, a formal DD&R process was impossible due to the primarily social, as opposed to military, nature of the militia phenomenon. The lack of organization within the militias

meant that, following the end of conflict, a highly armed and socially marginalized group of citizens was left behind. Under such conditions, a formal programme would have been difficult—if not impossible—to implement due to the absence of centralized control over ex-combatants and their weapons.

Although the programme offers reintegration assistance to all ex-combatants, those who turn in a weapon receive priority treatment. In practice, this system has surpassed expectations since the vast majority of beneficiaries have handed in weapons. Although there is no established 'exchange ratio' for the number of weapons needed to be handed in to obtain priority treatment, linking the two still increases the possibility of retrieving large quantities of weapons from former combatants in a short period of time.

Reintegration assistance—in the form of either employment within existing enterprises or the creation of micro-enterprises—directly reduces the ex-combatants' dependence on criminal livelihoods, and consequently their need for weapons. Instead, together with training and technical skills, it provides them with the means to become productive members of society. In this manner, reintegration assistance serves both to 'demilitarize' the minds of ex-combatants and to restore a lost generation of youth to their communities.

Weapons collection. The collection of weapons from ex-combatants is an indispensable and integral component for successful reintegration. First of all, the reduction in supply reduces the possibility of resorting to violence with weapons. In addition, the surrender of a weapon is a particularly significant act which reinforces the process where-by ex-combatants are reintegrated into society. Just as the possession of weapons means something different from one culture to the next, the relinquishing of weapons will have different connotations.

In the case of Congo, it symbolizes a reorientation from a warrior's life to a civilian life. At the political level, surrendering weapons mitigates the threat to local authorities, bolstering their will to engage in non-violent dialogue and reconciliation. The collection of weapons from ex-combatants not only serves to reduce supply but, if impartial and transparent, may also contribute to rebuilding trust and confidence among ex-combatants and the rest of society.

Reintegration assistance reduces ex-combatants' dependence on criminal livelihoods, and consequently their need for weapons.

TABLE 7.8   Results of the IOM/UNDP project in the Republic of Congo as of 31 August 2001

Small arms and light weapons collected	2,800
Grenades and other explosives collected	8,000
Number of ex-combatants receiving reintegration assistance	7,000
Number of micro-projects financed	2,190
Estimated number of ex-combatants not yet receiving assistance	8,000

Source: IOM/UNDP (2001)

Broadening the scope of weapons collection: Implications from Albania and the Republic of Congo

The approaches used in Albania and Congo highlight the merits of linking disarmament and development, and provide important 'roadmaps' for translating these principles into practice. On the one hand, the weapons collection component of both projects fulfilled a core objective of any collection effort: weapons were collected from a target population, thus reducing opportunities for armed violence. In other words, removing the tools of violence from society counts.

At the same time, beyond the physical collection and destruction of weapons, these programmes aimed to embed weapons collection within a broader framework intended to mitigate long-term social and economic threats by merging development and disarmament strategies. Furthermore, they were designed to reinforce collective processes and

TABLE 7.9   Examples of major small arms collection and destruction programmes, 1989–2001

Location	Time period	Framework	Organizer	Weapons collected	Sources
Panama	1989–90	Peace-building	US Army	10,000 weapons	US, GAO (2000)
Nicaragua	1991–93	Peace-building	BED/OAS/ Italy	142,000 weapons	Meek (1998)
El Salvador	1992–93	Peace-building	ONUSAL	10,200 weapons 9,200 grenades 4,000,000 rounds of ammunition	Laurance and Godnick (2001)
Haiti	1994–95	Peace-building	US Army	3,389 weapons	US, GAO (2000)
Mali	1995–96	Peace-building	UNDP	3,000 weapons	van der Graaf and Poulton (2001)
Mozambique	1995–August 2001 crime prevention	Peace-building	TAE	200,000 weapons and related items	Lusa News Agency (2001)
Croatia	1996–97	Peace-building	UNTAES	8,356 rifles 6,083 anti-tank rocket launchers 13,573 grenades 1,755,000 rounds of ammunition	Boothby (2001); UN, Department of Public Information (1997b)
Liberia	1996–97	Peace-building	ECOMOG/ UNOMIL	17,287 weapons 1,393,300 rounds of ammunition	UNSG (1997); Fraser (2001)
United Kingdom	1996–97	Legal reform	Government	23,000 firearms (amnesty programme) 162,000 firearms (buy-back)	UK, House of Commons (1999); UK, Home Office (2000)
Australia	1996–98	Legal reform	Government	643,726 firearms	Meek (1998); Australia (2000)
El Salvador	1996–99	Peace-building/ Crime prevention	MPCD	9,527 weapons 129,696 rounds of ammunition	Laurance and Godnick (2001)
Cambodia	1998–June 2001	Peace-building/ Crime prevention	Government	112,562 weapons	WGWR (2001)
Kosovo	June–September 1999	Peace-building	KFOR	10,000 weapons, 27,000 grenades 1,200 mines 5,000,000 rounds of ammunition	BICC (2001)
Gramsh, Albania	1999	Crime prevention/ Conflict prevention	UNDP/ UNDDA/ UNOPS	5,981 weapons 137 metric tons of ammunition	UNDP (2000)
Sierra Leone	1999–2000	Peace-building	UNAMSIL	12,695 weapons 253,535 rounds of ammunition	UN, quoted in Berman (2000)
The Republic of Congo	2000–August 2001	Peace-building	IOM/UNDP	2,800 weapons 8,000 grenades and other explosives	IOM/UNDP (2001)
Bosnia-Herzegovina	1999–November 2001	Peace-building	SFOR	15,169 small arms 57,492 grenades 5,385,130 rounds of ammunition	SFOR (2001)
Macedonia	August–September 2001	Peace-building	NATO	3,875 weapons 397,625 mines, explosives and ammunition	NATO (2001)
Mendoza, Argentina	2000–01	Crime prevention	Government/ NGOs	2,566 weapons	Appiolaza (2001)
Brazil	2001	Crime prevention	Government/ NGOs	100,000 weapons	Viva Rio (2001)

influence attitudes concerning the role of weapons in society. In both cases, the benefits provided (development and reintegration assistance) served not only as an exchange mechanism but also as a road to alternative livelihoods, which in its turn would reduce the demand for weapons. This was an important step towards a 'demilitarization of the mind', a process that was further reinforced by the Gramsh Programme's participatory approach and public awareness campaign.

Both the Albania and Congo programmes attempted to address the extreme social and political fragmentation resulting from deep insecurity. In Gramsh, the collective decision-making process generated co-operation within communities and between citizens and the local authorities. Likewise, in Congo the disarmament of ex-combatants was a critical first step in building confidence between them and the government, increasing possibilities for genuine reconciliation. In both cases, the effects of combining weapons collection and development assistance appear to be similar: the restoration of trust between the general population and the authorities, the improvement of community security, and a reduction in the local demand for weapons. As 'experiments', however, it should be remembered that these projects represent first attempts at operationalizing these principles. Inevitably, they also reveal important lessons learned and additional challenges to be overcome.

Lessons learned

As experience in the field of weapons collection and destruction continues to accumulate, we can learn from this growing body of knowledge in order to improve the effectiveness of future programmes. Although this is still a relatively new activity, which as we have seen includes a broad range of programmes, in some respects practices seem to already be converging.

From the earliest community buy-back programmes in the United States to the most recent and ambitious collection efforts such as the Gramsh Programme in Albania, there have been tangible—though not consistent—changes to the design, implementation, and assessment of collection programmes worldwide. While programmes undertaken in the context of crime prevention and peace-building must differ in some respects (see Table 7.1) so as to be tailored to the need of each situation, their main elements remain the same. They have informed and influenced each other and still continue to do so.

Some of the general trends identified in this chapter include: a broadening of programme objectives; an expansion of the types of incentives used for collecting weapons; and the incorporation of weapons collection as part of a broader strategy to improve human security. It is important to note that observing a general trend does not imply that all programmes contain these features or that the programmes that do are necessarily better. Instead, it means that so far, despite the continued debate about their effectiveness, we are not seeing a scaling back of the number or scope of weapons collections. On the contrary, the number of programmes is increasing and their parameters are generally expanding. Their legitimacy has been further elevated as a result of the support they received at the 2001 UN Small Arms Conference, including in its final document and through pledges of increased funding from donor countries. It therefore seems likely that this trend will continue in the foreseeable future.

It is pertinent to consider the development of some key programme elements in more detail and assess their significance for the implementation and outcome of weapons collection and destruction schemes. What is the potential of such programmes in terms of what they can and should achieve? And what are some of the lessons we have learnt regarding how to best accomplish this potential? Experience allows for tentative conclusions regarding some central components of best practice in this area. These are partly drawn from research already

conducted by UN agencies, governments, and NGOs active in this field, but they also incorporate new analysis and research undertaken by the Small Arms Survey which explore some of these issues further.

Establishing appropriate and realistic objectives

Weapons collection and destruction programmes have been carried out in a variety of environments. These include programmes in peace operations to disarm combatants, paramilitary groups, or civilian supporters holding arms, in post-conflict societies to mop up weapons that were not removed during the formal disarmament process, and in other weapons-abundant communities experiencing high incidences of violence and crime. The programme objectives will naturally differ according to the setting. While some programmes limit their goals to collecting a certain type and number of weapons, other programmes aim to improve human security in a more comprehensive manner. We find examples of ongoing programmes that are narrow while others are broader in scope, and as such there is no consistent pattern. This is likely to continue to be the case because organizers will chose the most appropriate objectives according to the specific circumstances. Still, it seems safe to conclude that the current trend is moving towards a broadening of programme objectives rather than the opposite.

There is a growing awareness that efforts to reduce the presence and use of weapons are futile unless the causes of violence and the reasons why people wish to acquire and use weapons in the first place are addressed. Individuals who hold weapons because they feel insecure and seek protection are not likely to be persuaded to give up their means of self-defence before their security is enhanced through other means. Likewise, those who have political or private grievances that they attempt to advance by violent means are not likely to permanently give up their weapons unless some of these underlying factors are addressed. Thus, it is increasingly acknowledged

Individuals are not likely to give up their means of self-defence before their security is enhanced through other means.

BOX 7.9   Confidence is the key

To put an end to the proliferation and misuse of deadly weapons, it is necessary to tackle both supply and demand. This means throttling the supply of such arms and addressing the reasons why people feel a need for them. However, for such practical disarmament measures to be successful, a third ingredient is needed, namely, public confidence.

Take private gun ownership: if weapon laws are tightened, if opportunities to make a living are improved, if more satisfactory channels for the settlement of disputes become available, and if the police do a better job of maintaining law and order, this may or may not have an effect on people's desire to be armed. The outcome will depend on how the public perceive these changes, and how confident they generally feel about themselves, their community, their government, and their future. People will be more inclined to give up their guns if they believe:

- they can provide for their needs without resorting to violence;
- they will be treated with dignity and respect;
- they are safe from robbery, attack, and extortion;
- they can rely on the support of those around them;
- the authorities will protect them;
- the authorities will respect their rights and liberties; and
- the authorities will enforce the law.

Building confidence is a key factor in the pursuit of practical disarmament, just as it is in the quest for international peace and security. Of course, it is not easy. Depending on local conditions, it may require major advances in social and economic development, judicial and police reform, good government, and the growth of strong and independent civil organizations.

Source: Faltas (2001c)

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that changing the basic conditions that fuel crime and conflict is an objective that must go hand-in-hand with the collection of weapons (UNDP, 2001b; Faltas, 2001a).

The relationship between what a weapons collection programme is intended to accomplish and what it may realistically achieve is far from straightforward. Generally speaking, there is an assumption that the main purpose of these programmes is to collect weapons and thereby reduce violence. Still, the assumption that one will lead to the other is problematic. Critics object to the claim that weapons collection programmes have an impact on crime rates, and they also question whether they actually reduce the stock of civilian weapons (Kleck, 1996). There is also little evidence to date to suggest that the simple collection of weapons actually leads automatically to the reduction of inter-group conflict if it is not accompanied by sufficient political will and the re-establishment of confidence between the parties. Nevertheless, communities are likely to feel more secure when criminals or belligerents have been disarmed, and this perception might in turn contribute positively to confidence building and the long-term prospect of security and peace. This illustrates the complex link between the purpose of a programme and its actual function. While a programme's stated intent might be to collect guns, even if it does not collect a large number of weapons, it may nevertheless function to reduce public fears of crime and violence or provide hope for peace in an embattled community.

A collection programme might therefore choose to invert its purpose and function whereby the number of arms collected does not become the purpose or the measure of its success, but instead only a functional side-effect of other objectives. Such objectives could include:

Building confidence is a key factor in the pursuit of practical disarmament.

- reducing public perceptions of insecurity with regard to crime or conflict;
- educating citizens about the potential dangers of possessing firearms;
- promoting peaceful means of conflict resolution;
- inspiring confidence in the prospects of a peace agreement and position non-state groups and the government as partners in the process; and
- increasing community cohesion by forging collaboration between different segments of society: government institutions, media, religious organizations, businesses, and others.

Regardless of what the programme objectives are, in order to avoid confusion, misunderstandings, and false expectations, it is essential to clearly convey the intention to everybody taking part: the organizers, the donors, and the participants, as well as the public at large. It is particularly important that the donor community has a realistic appreciation of what the programme attempts to achieve. Enabling donors to easily follow progress towards this goal is essential to ensure their continued support.

Choosing suitable incentives

Offering some form of compensation or reward is helpful in inducing people to disarm, and choosing the most suitable incentive is of crucial importance to the programme outcome. While some incentives can potentially contribute to achieving the programme's goals and bolster its performance, other incentives may undermine programme goals or create additional problems.

It is unlikely that people are going to be willing to hand in their weapons without getting anything in return. Yet this happens occasionally when individuals for some reason see it as a detriment to their safety to hold weapons or when they possess weapons without having a deliberate motivation to be armed. This was the case for many

Albanians after the looting of the government armories, where large numbers of civilians suddenly found themselves in possession of military weapons for which they had no use (Faltas, 2001b, p. 28). These individuals are a much easier target group for a weapons collection effort than those that feel they have legitimate reasons to hold on to their weapons.

There are various reasons why people desire to hold weaponry. A weapons collection programme must attempt to address these in order to be successful. One way of doing this is through the incentives themselves.

Although many of the first buy-back programmes offered participants monetary rewards, and some programmes still do, it has become increasingly apparent that this can backfire. Participants can use the opportunity to turn in old or non-functional weapons, sometimes to use the cash compensation to buy newer ones. Another risk is that the programme will fuel demand for weapons and create a market for illegal trafficking of weapons into the area. One way of counteracting this last possibility is by setting the exchange value below black-market value, so that participants will not make a profit by turning in their weapons (BICC and SAND, 2000, p. 8).

Programmes that target ex-combatants usually offer them some type of reintegration assistance, providing them with the opportunity to create an alternative livelihood. However, rewarding ex-combatants may, in some cases, cause resentment in the target community and present a moral dilemma for the institutions and individuals involved in the collection. The individuals receiving these benefits may have committed abuses and even war crimes during the conflict, and, instead of receiving punishment, they are being rewarded. It is very hard to make a judgement confronted with such a scenario. While, as a principle, perpetrators should be prosecuted for their crimes, and providing victims with a sense of justice is important to the healing of society, pragmatism is sometimes the only option during a period of transition. If prosecution and punishment are not politically viable, the only way to ensure the survival of peace and consequently the long-term well-being of the population may be through compromise and reconciliation.

Partly in response to some of the problems associated with individual compensation schemes, the current trend is to make increasing use of collective incentives as rewards. The merits of collective incentives are best exemplified by the concept of weapons for development outlined earlier. An additional advantage of collective as opposed to individual incentives is the fact that they run a lower risk of commercializing weapons. Observations from the earlier mentioned programme in the Republic of Congo reveal that in some situations owners of weapons may not be aware that their weapons have an economic value. This is partly due to the absence of market structures and significant demand, but also because the arms were acquired through a non-monetary transaction, for example, when arms are looted or issued. Under such conditions, the value of weapons is a function more of their utility in terms of self-defence and the preservation of a warrior identity than of their economic worth. In this context, individual incentives, by establishing a demand for weapons, may spur their commercialization and the creation of a market (Demetriou, 2001).

Still, possible negative repercussions of offering collective incentives must also be considered. In fact, collective incentive schemes may potentially generate community strife, as not all reward systems will be perceived to equitably benefit all community members. This implies a need for analysis of the local impact of the programme, keeping in mind that what is true in one community may have little to do with the reality in another.

Raising public awareness

An ingredient that is increasingly incorporated into weapons collection programmes is public education. In fact, changing attitudes towards the role of weapons in society has been the main objective of some collection and destruction efforts. Supported by these experiences, one might contend that sensitization is a core function of weapons collection programmes and perhaps one of the ways in which they may contribute most effectively to peace, security, and crime prevention. In addition, raising awareness is essential to achieve other key objectives, most importantly to motivate people to turn in their weapons at all. It therefore seems that public education is an element of particular importance to optimizing the outcome of these efforts. The following analysis of a recent initiative undertaken in Argentina, provided by Martín Appiolaza[11] illustrates the potential weapons collection programmes have in this regard, and shows how its organizers went about achieving this goal.

Case 3. Transforming attitudes towards the tools of violence in Mendoza, Argentina

The Arms Exchange Programme for Better Living Conditions took place in two phases—during the Christmas week of 2000 and in April and May 2001—in the Argentine province of Mendoza. The weapons collection programme was organized by the province's Ministry of Justice and Security in collaboration with non-governmental organizations. After a series of violent incidents involving firearms created growing insecurity in Mendoza, the Arms Exchange Programme was devised as one part of a larger strategy to improve public security in the region. The

A technical expert shows a government official of Mendoza, Argentina, weapons slated for destruction during the Arms Exchange Programme.

upsurge in crime in this province mirrored an exponential increase in armed violence in the country at large. Statistics revealed that the presence of arms in the community had measurable human costs, including:[12]

- firearms were used in 80 per cent of the homicides in Mendoza;
- approximately 900 people were killed with firearms between 1990 and 2000;
- 90 per cent of homicide victims were male; and
- ten per cent of firearms deaths were homicides committed in connection with robberies and rapes, while the rest resulted from fights, suicides, and accidents.

The idea of addressing these problems by removing weapons from society—through voluntary collection rather than more traditional, coercive measures—sparked a heated public debate between those who advocated the active intervention of public security forces as the only way to control crime and those who perceived weapons collection programmes as an additional useful tool to prevent crime as well as accidents. At the outset, the idea

was generally not well received. Although there was little opposition to its objectives—weapons reduction, crime prevention, peaceful resolution of conflicts—the criticism was directed at the method.

The collection of 285 weapons and 1,715 rounds of ammunition during the programme's first phase may seem modest, but was actually triple the expectations of the organizers. The second phase, which was extended from the projected two-week period to six weeks in response to popular demand, collected another 2,281 weapons and 6,547 rounds of ammunition. In terms of the weapons collected, the programme therefore far exceeded its goals. Still, the most important achievement was the change in the initially critical attitudes towards the initiative, which gradually turned into strong support, among the general public as well as the media and policy-makers.[13]

Impediments to success. The success of any weapons collection programme depends on raising awareness among the public in order to prompt them to turn in their arms. Their decision, however, is influenced by the information and opinions received through the media. In turn, the media are influenced by the stance of political leaders and other public figures, as well as relevant 'experts'. With regard to the Arms Exchange Programme, the factors that contributed to the initially negative public reactions can be divided into three broad categories:

- **Cultural factors.** Argentina has a strong tradition of civilian arms possession, and legislation has in the past been lax. The common attitude is that weapons are dangerous only in the hands of criminals, and the best way to disarm them is by coercive methods. There is also a growing belief that weapons are necessary for self-protection, partly sustained by a lack of confidence in public institutions and perceptions of personal insecurity, exacerbated by economic and structural developments and the increase in crime.
- **Institutional factors.** There is widespread distrust of public institutions and those in charge of them. Proposals emanating from the authorities are therefore received with scepticism.
- **Communication factors.** The conflicting messages conveyed through the media regarding the Arms Exchange programme generated confusion, uneasiness and fear, all of which reinforced pre-existing distrust due to the above-mentioned factors.

In response to these detrimental factors, the programme organizers needed to come up with a strategy for counteracting them. Their strategy consisted of the following elements:

Demonstrate that weapons collections can be effective. A document was prepared outlining the background, objectives and guidelines for implementation of the programme, describing similar projects around the world (Appiolaza, 2000). The document was widely distributed, and served as the basis for subsequent public debate.

Provide information to defuse apprehension and create confidence. A toll-free phone number was established for information about the programme. These inquiries also served to identify people's concerns and thus provided the organizers with information that they could use to tailor the programme accordingly and adapt their approach to local conditions.

The organizers systematically visited local radio stations all over the province, providing detailed information about their objectives, where and how the collections would be conducted, and what would happen to the collected weapons. To reinforce confidence in the initiative, the organizers declared that the collected weapons would be used to construct a peace monument. Police, public security officers, and social workers aided in spreading the word and providing information about the initiative. Local 'security councils', a forum for community debate where alternative solutions to public security issues were discussed, also played an important role.

To further publicize the programme, sensitize people to its implications, and reach out to potential participants, the public education campaign included a turn-in of violent toys conducted in local elementary schools about a month before the actual weapons collection. About 6,800 pupils turned in toys and games and participated in other activities with an anti-violence theme. These events received a lot of media attention.

Diffuse the idea of weapons collection as a preventive measure. The organizers' ambition to create awareness in the community is underscored in an evaluation by the analyst, William Godnick: 'The organizers admitted from an early stage that the weapons collection was unlikely to bring in the guns in the hands of criminals. The real goal was to influence a change in culture and attitudes towards the role of guns in society. In that context the public education component became equally as important as the proposed weapons turn-in programme.' (Godnick, 2001)

The public education campaign advocated the need for a broader vision concerning the potential problems related to weapons. It emphasized that, in addition to coercive actions undertaken by law enforcement agencies, preventive action is the best protective measure against crime. While disarming communities can positively affect crime rates in the long term, it can have an immediate positive effect on accidents and domestic violence in the short term.

Furthermore, the programme also served to underline that this was an opportunity to disarm, after which the laws would be fully enforced and illegal holders of firearms penalized. It became apparent that many people were actually not aware that by holding unregistered weapons they were breaking the law and could even be considered accomplices to crimes.

Generate publicity through use of the media. The programme received constant coverage by local newspapers, and even some in national media.[14] The general attitude was critical at first, but because the idea was considered original and controversial, the media were never indifferent to the programme. As the organizers disseminated more information about their objectives and achievements, the scepticism subsided. Moreover, this growing support from the media served to mitigate political resistance.

In addition, the organizers advertised the programme on television, focusing on accidents involving firearms and the potential risks they posed to children. A web site was also created with details about the project.[15] This multi-media publicity campaign continued throughout the collection periods.

Evaluation. The total cost of the programme was USD 300,000, of which around 60 per cent was oriented towards public education and publicity. The programme collected a total of 2,566 weapons, which was more than the organizers had anticipated. This constitutes 2.7 per cent of the legal and illegal weapons in the province, or 15 per cent of the estimated illegal weapons—80,000 legally registered weapons and an estimated 15,000 illegal weapons (Zentil, 2000). Regardless of the significance of the quantity of weapons collected, it is equally important to consider the change of attitudes that it aimed to achieve.

Although it is so far difficult to demonstrate what social impact the programme has had, assessments carried out indicate that it did create a public debate about issues related to firearms possession and its potential negative effects, such as accidents and gun violence. It defeated the general apprehension towards using a preventive rather than a coercive strategy to improve public security, and it sensitized the public to the idea of firearms as a risk factor in the community. Surveys carried out in November 2000 and again in March 2001—after the first collection phase was over and the public education campaign had been going on for some time—showed a ten per cent reduction in the number of respondents who thought owning weapons lowered the risk of becoming a crime victim (Appiolaza, 2001). In addition to the public education campaign, the secondary media coverage provided the programme with additional free publicity, which further contributed to raise public awareness.

From an institutional perspective, the programme contributed to increased institutional participation and collaboration between different actors, in addition to providing support for other related endeavours (Appiolaza, 2001; Godnick, 2001). A third phase of the Arms Exchange Programme planned for August 2001 was cancelled due to cutbacks in government expenditures prompted by the economic crisis in Argentina. Still, the project will continue, organized by local NGOs and funded by churches and the private sector (Godnick, 2001). In November 2001, the legislature of Buenos Aires decided to use the same strategy to carry out a weapons collection project in the capital (Ministerio de Justicia y Seguridad de Mendoza, 2001).

Weapons collected by the Arms Exchange Programme in Mendoza, Argentina, are crushed in this press.
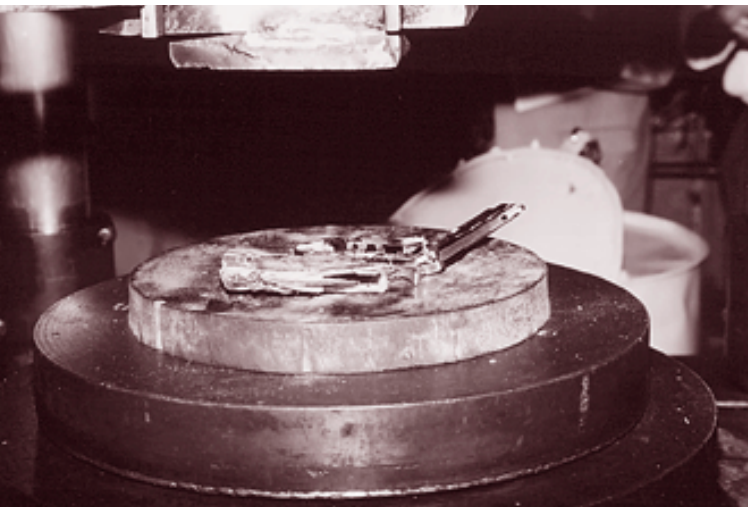
© Argentinian Ministry of Justice and Security/Eduardo Antonelli

Disposal of weapons

All programmes need to consider the disposal of weapons collected. Clarity with regard to their disposal is a key factor to ensure a successful outcome. In some of the collection programmes described above, confusion concerning the disposal of weapons detracted from the overall outcome of the programme, undermined confidence in the process, or even added to the political tension after a conflict. Provisions for weapons disposal should therefore be established before initiating the collection of weapons.

Table 7.10 lists different options for the disposal of weapons recovered through collection or confiscation and examples of programmes where these methods have been employed. It also mentions some potential problems or benefits that may follow from each approach.

Destroying or rendering weapons unusable is the only way of ensuring they are permanently taken out of circulation. A number of practical methods have been identified for small arms destruction, and technical guidelines developed by various organizations and experts. On 15 November 2000, the UN Secretary-General issued a report on methods of destruction of small arms, light weapons, ammunition, and explosives (UNSG, 2000a).

The appropriate method must be decided on a case-by-case basis, taking into account, among other things, safety, environmental, infrastructural, and financial considerations. Although it might seem self-evident, practice shows that it is imperative to ensure that personnel with the necessary technical ability and expertise are responsible for the destruction process. Similarly, enhanced cautionary measures are necessary for the destruction of ammunition and explosives.

The act of publicly destroying weapons can have a significant psychological effect. It is therefore increasingly common to conduct destruction ceremonies in public and sometimes also to construct peace monuments or other objects of art using the destroyed weaponry. By demonstrating publicly that the weapons have been destroyed, participants are reassured about the fate of the weapons they have surrendered. In the case of an ongoing effort, this can also encourage more people to participate. Moreover, such events attract publicity, which can further increase participation as well as bolster other programme objectives like public awareness. Finally, it sends a message to the public about the importance of removing the tools of violence and enhancing human security in the target community.

TABLE 7.10   Options for the disposal of collected weapons

Disposal method	Example	Outcome
Hand-over to the government for use by security forces	Haiti, 1994–95 Panama, 1989–90	May undermine confidence and create reluctance to turn in weapons
Hand-over to the government for transfer abroad	Eastern Slavonia, Croatia, 1996–97 Deactivated firearms sold to Austria and Germany to be used for 'decorative purposes'.	Selling deactivated weapons for exhibition can offset programme costs If sold in operable condition, weapons re-enter circulation
Sale on open market to finance expenses of collection agency	Firearms confiscated by police in certain US states.	Weapons re-enter circulation
Storage	Mozambique, 1992 Sierra Leone, 1999–2000	Risk of weapons leaking out if the storage plan is poorly executed Encourages corruption
Weapons verifiably rendered unusable and stored	El Salvador, 1996–99 Northern Ireland, 2001	Signalling good intention of non-state actor (Northern Ireland) Risk of weapons leaking out if the storage plan is poorly executed Risk of weapons re-entering circulation if re-activated
Destruction	Mali, 1995–96 Australia, 1997–98 Brazil, 2001 Macedonia, 2001	Weapons permanently removed Signalling peace and reconciliation

Programme assessment

Proponents of weapons collection programmes argue that, by removing weapons from society, one reduces the potential number of accidents, criminal incidents, and violent acts that could otherwise be caused by the use of these weapons. Other supporters emphasize how they raise awareness about these potential dangers, promote peaceful means of conflict resolution, and forge collaborative relationships and confidence between different segments of society (Laurance, 1996; Rosenfeld, 1996). Nevertheless, weapons collection programmes have been criticized for being ineffective or even counterproductive. Since the earliest community collection programmes in the United States, opponents have argued that these programmes do not significantly reduce crime and, by disarming law-abiding citizens, even help make the job easier for criminals (Kleck, 1996). In fact, even after the implementation of hundreds of US buy-back programmes, there is still no conclusive evidence of their impact on violent crime (Godnick, 2001, p. 19). Since weapons collections are expensive and their merits uncertain, it has been asserted that they are a waste of valuable resources.

Critics of more recent collection efforts carried out as part of peace-building exercises have pointed out that both the number and the condition of the weapons collected during such missions tend to be unsatisfactory (US, GAO, 2000, pp. 21–22). After the end of a civil conflict, attempts to disarm factions through weapons collection programmes have sometimes been of limited utility in ensuring future peace and security. The reasons for such failures differ. In Sierra Leone, for example, collected weapons were not destroyed and later re-entered circulation. A persistent and more difficult problem is the temptation among armed groups to keep their best weapons in secret arms caches or to rearm soon after, as in Liberia and in the Balkans. This problem is often exacerbated by a lack of effective controls (Berman, 2000, pp. 24–27; Boothby, 2001, pp. 120–28). Finally, instead of reducing the number of weapons in circulation, programmes may actually increase demand, particularly when they offer cash as compensation (BICC and SAND, 2000, pp. 8–9; Faltas, 2001a, pp. 221–22).

Weapons collection programmes have been criticized for being ineffective or even counter-productive.

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BOX 7.10   Minimizing risks

Many of the activities involved in weapons collection programmes, such as safe handling, transport, storage and destruc-
tion of weapons, pose potential risks, to participants as well as organizers. Establishing adequate safety procedures is
therefore a major concern.

   As a leading implementing agency in this area, the UNDP published the report *Safe and Efficient Small Arms Collection
and Destruction Programmes: A Proposal for Practical Technical Measures* in July 2001 (Hughes-Wilson and Wilkinson,
2001). While acknowledging that absolute safety is unattainable, the report stresses the achievement of tolerable risk
through risk assessment and the implementation of protective measures. In addition to examining specific recommenda-
tions for safe procedures, the report recommends that international technical standards should be adopted to guarantee
that weapons collection and destruction programmes are conducted in a safe manner.

   The study also points to the contradiction that exists in some cases between different field activities. In areas where land-
mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO), as well as small arms and light weapons, present a danger, the message conveyed
to the population will be confusing. While mine awareness campaigns are intended to educate people about the dangers
these artefacts pose, urging the population to avoid contact with them, practical disarmament programmes may simul-
taneously be urging people to bring in their weapons. Experience shows that people will typically surrender ammunition
and explosives in addition to weapons. The responsible organizations must carefully consider the implications of this
dichotomy and co-operate to establish a safe environment.

Source: Hughes-Wilson and Wilkinson (2001)

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One
explanation
for the
disagreement
regarding the
effectiveness of
weapons collection
programmes is
the disparate
criteria used to
assess them.

The divergence of views regarding the effectiveness of weapons collection reflects the fact that the record of such
initiatives is indeed mixed. On the other hand, the arguments presented also illustrate that one explanation for dis-
agreement is the disparate criteria used to assess these programmes. A further reason for this problem is the lack of
measurable indicators of success.

It is essential for all weapons collection programmes to incorporate an evaluation component. The assessment must
include a *process evaluation*, describing and appraising the execution of all programme components, including funds
received and expended (BICC and SAND, 2000). The use of performance indicators has been proposed as a way of
judging success in financial terms, for example by estimating the cost of each weapon recovered as measured by the
total cost of the programme divided by the number of weapons collected (Hughes-Wilson and Wilkinson, 2001).

An *outcome* or *impact evaluation* examines to what extent the programme has achieved what it was intended to
do and what its short- and long-term effects were. Goals range from collecting a certain number of weapons to
demobilizing and disarming ex-combatants, from reducing the incidence of violent crime to changing perceptions
regarding firearms use. In addition, an impact evaluation must consider unexpected or intangible effects that might
have come about as a result of the programme. Programmes have sometimes been defined as failures based on too
narrow or wrong criteria. If, for example, a programme was intended to raise awareness and promote community
co-operation, the fact that it did not collect weapons from criminals is less relevant. Success should be determined
in light of the original objectives, but multiple, imprecise, and shifting programme objectives may present a serious
challenge to this in practice (Rosenfeld, 1996). This is another reason why it is so important to identify appropriate
and realistic goals and to affirm them openly as a way of pre-empting unwarranted or misplaced criticism.

Because social impact studies are generally not conducted in a systematic way, in most cases it is presently not pos-
sible to determine the effect these programmes have had in different communities. With this in mind, more attention
should be paid to developing measurable indicators of longer-term success, for example in the form of crime and health

statistics. Changes in such indicators must then be interpreted taking into account the various factors influencing them. Other key indicators to consider are the attitudes and perceptions among the target population. This is even more important as an increasing number of programmes include awareness-raising as a key objective. This type of evaluation could easily be incorporated by conducting surveys before and after implementation of a programme. For example, the organizers might gauge perceptions regarding insecurity among a representative sample of the target population before the weapons collection programme is announced. When the collection has been carried out, identical surveys should be conducted in order to compare pre- and post-collection results. Nonetheless, there are many caveats to this approach, such as discomfort in the community with being asked certain questions, the complexity of choosing appropriate indicators, and the general difficulty of data collection in environments where such programmes are typically carried out. Another challenge to evaluators is that most programmes operate on principles of anonymity and confidentiality, which precludes them from obtaining the information needed to conduct a reliable assessment (Rosenfeld, 1996).

BOX 7.11   Community involvement: Defining insecurity

Participatory approaches to assessing the impacts of small arms represent an innovative if under-utilized set of tools to evaluate human security. While still insufficiently tested, participatory planning, implementation and evaluation of weapons collection programmes also provide a novel means of strengthening community involvement and the likelihood of programme success. Drawn from development theory and practice, the strength of participatory methods—including participatory rural or urban appraisal (PRA/PUA) and participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E)—lie in their recognition that people themselves understand their own risks and have rich insights into their own lives. By providing a voice to vulnerable groups facing violence, participatory research yields locally appropriate intervention strategies. Where properly introduced and facilitated, such approaches can give communities a sense of ownership over programmes undertaken.

Participatory assessments of 'insecurity' and the wide-ranging impacts of small arms have been administered among communities in the Caribbean and Latin America, South Asia, and the Horn of Africa (Ahmed, 2001; Dasgupta, 2001; SALIGAD, 2001). A number of these studies have sought to elaborate relevant criteria and indicators of the effects of small arms on individuals, communities, and regions. As demonstrated by Moser and Holland (1997), who administered a participatory survey of violence in Jamaica, this research can help prioritize small arms-related interventions, identify the unfulfilled needs of arms-related victims, and provide information vital for the effective socio-economic rehabilitation of affected communities.

Recently pioneered by the UNDP in Albania and Kosovo (UNDP, 2001c; Demetriou, 2001), participatory approaches to weapons collection and violence reduction involve beneficiaries in choices about their own priorities and human security needs. This indicates a growing commitment among field agencies to expand donor concerns from a narrow focus on quantitative measurement, results-based management, and cost-effectiveness, to a focus that accommodates qualitative assessments and a recipient-centred perspective.

Ultimately, experiences from the development sector, in which participatory methods are routinely used by multilateral donor agencies and NGOs alike, show that they can improve the quality, effectiveness, and sustainability of a programme. Applying PM&E techniques to verification and monitoring functions—as has been demonstrated in the case of landmines—enables local people to do their own monitoring, data collection evaluation, analysis, and reporting on small arms; to feel they have a stake in the outcome; and to teach donors and implementing agencies by sharing their knowledge (Willet, 2001). By putting local people rather than donors or agencies at the centre of the monitoring and evaluation process, local communities are empowered, ownership is encouraged, and democratic accountability nurtured.

Source: Muggah (2001)

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Father and sons transforming weapons into agricultural tools in Afghanistan.

It has been argued that the social impact of a programme might be as important as—and in some cases even more important than—the number of weapons collected. However, this does not imply that the quantity of weapons collected and destroyed is irrelevant. Under certain circumstances, like the efforts to establish a durable peace in Northern Ireland and Macedonia, the actual weapons collected can play a crucial role to the outcome of the process.

A key problem in assessing results in terms of weapons recovered is the general lack of baseline data on small arms possession (Small Arms Survey, 2001, pp. 61–63) This has caused some difficulties and confusion regarding the evaluation of certain collection programmes, like the Gramsh Programme. As long as the initial number of weapons in the community is unknown, it is impossible to determine whether the weapons recovered by a programme is significant. Before initiating a programme, unless reliable information is already available, attempts ought to be made to assemble data on weapons stocks in the target area and ideally produce an estimate of total holdings. This was done for example in connection with the earlier-mentioned project in the Republic of Congo (Demetriou, Muggah, and Biddle, 2001).

Box 7.12 outlines one proposed approach to assessing the weapons retrieved by collection programmes.

The assessment of weapons collected depends not only on their quantity, but also on their quality.

BOX 7.12   Operational assessment: A key to transparency

There are two general approaches to evaluating the outcome of small arms collection and destruction programmes. The first is concerned with the social impact a programme makes on a community. How, for example, does it affect levels of crime or perceptions of safety (Faltas and Di Chiaro III, 2001; Hughes-Wilson and Wilkinson, 2001; Waszink, 2001; BICC and SAND, 2000). The second form of evaluation focuses on *operational success in terms of the weapons collected and destroyed*: did the programme collect a representative sample of the weapons in the target community? In other words, it assesses the number and quality of weapons collected or destroyed, compared to what was anticipated.

This *operational assessment* is important for several reasons. For example, if a programme aims to collect combat weapons from an insurgency group as part of a peace agreement, certain numbers and types of weapons are usually expected. Unless weapons collection is strictly symbolic, it is expected that the weapons turned in, even if they are just a part of the total stock, will be representative of that stock. If a rebel group is in the possession of new and sophisticated weaponry but submits only obsolescent and broken items, its opponents will almost certainly argue that the rebels are not carrying out their end of the bargain or are acting in bad faith. This may even lead to the collapse of a peace agreement. Furthermore, operational assessment is also important when collecting weapons from civilians in order to determine whether project results complied with project aims.

In either case, an assessment of the weapons actually collected is vital to determine success. Such evaluations seldom occur, and when they do it is usually in a subjective and impressionistic manner. In order to undertake this operational assessment, it is necessary to develop an explicit method of appraisal that could be carried out by independent observers or mutually agreed-upon authorities. The remainder of this box focuses on programmes that collect weapons from non-state armed groups as part of a peace settlement. It is proposed that an assessment process work through four basic steps.

Stage 1: Evaluating stockpile liquidity. Stockpiles by non-state actors are liquid, meaning that they are subject to changes in volume due to import—or receipt—loss, breakage, and export. While loss and breakage may be practically impossible to assess, the transfer of weapons to insurgents, paramilitary groups, or other non-state actors (NSA) can in some circumstances be evaluated and quantified. Usually, the objective of a weapons collection programme in this context is the *actual reduction in the volume of NSA weaponry* in order to diminish the group's ability to undertake violent action against the state. Still, in cases where stockpiles can be easily replenished, this objective cannot be achieved through weapons collection alone, since the weapons turned in may easily be replaced. This problem can be alleviated only by taking action to stem the supply of weapons to the NSA before, during, and after the collection programme.

BOX 7.12   Operational assessment: A key to transparency (continued)

Stage 2: Evaluating stockpile lethality. The assessment of weapons collected depends not only on their quantity but also on their quality. A high-calibre machine gun is capable of projecting far greater firepower than a pistol. But in a social context a small pistol may inflict far greater damage if wielded by an individual bent on mayhem, while the machine gun is safely in the hands of responsible authorities. Still, a pile of machine guns, if used to maximum design specifications, can project more firepower than a pile of pistols. This can be quantified and used to provide a verifiable means of comparing stockpiles. A *stockpile lethality measure* can be used to evaluate weapons collection and destruction programmes, as the weapons submitted to the programme should have the same lethality level as the arsenal from which they are taken. Stockpile lethality would be a composite, weighted measure of a sample of weapons, indicating the *average firepower a given set of weapons is able to project as a function of its use to maximum design specification.* Major criteria that can be included are: (1) cyclic rate of fire, (2) ammunition storage capacity, (3) ammunition type, (4) weapon configuration—that is, fully automatic, semi-automatic, single-shot—and (5) condition (i.e. level of functionality).

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A British soldier inspects weapons turned in by the ethnic Albanian rebels in Macedonia during Operation Essential Harvest.

An obvious difficulty with this approach is that, when measuring the lethality of a stockpile or cache of weapons in the field, inspectors may be presented with an unrepresentative sample of weapons. By establishing lethality ratings lower than their actual levels, a group can avoid having to turn in much of its best equipment. Solutions to alleviating this problem must be developed in every situation. Factors that can be considered in the overall inspection process include a military assessment of weapons observed in use during a conflict in addition to those claimed by an NSA during peace negotiations, thereby reducing the likelihood of deception.

Stage 3: Evaluating collected stockpile lethality. The lethality rating of weapons collected should be the same as or higher than the known weapons in the NSA's stock. Mechanisms must be established to identify and correct any disparities. During the disarmament of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador, for example, the poor quality of the weapons turned in during the first round of demobilization raised doubts about the group's intentions. Only after the monitors from the United Nations Observer Mission (ONUSAL) raised the issue and increased pressure, did they start to receive weapons in acceptable condition (Laurance and Godnick, 2001, p. 20). A lethality scale would enable practitioners to undertake such evaluations in a more routine and systematic fashion, thereby facilitating verification in peace processes like those ongoing in Macedonia and Northern Ireland.

Stage 4: Evaluating stockpile lethality of weapons slated for destruction. The lethality of weapons slated for destruction should be the same rating as those collected. The reason this measurement is necessary is that weapons can be diverted—through looting, robbery, or corruption—between the time they are collected and stored and the time they are moved for destruction. The use of a representative measurement system, combined with publicizing that such an evaluation will take place, will greatly increase the costs of deception or diversion and increase confidence in the programme.

Together, the application of an operational assessment that makes use of a stockpile lethality index to evaluate weapons available for collection, collected, and destroyed, offers the following benefits:

- increased transparency in collection;
- improved confidence in the process and the likelihood of fair results;
- higher costs for deception; and
- lower risk of an agreement crumbling due to contradicting claims over the weapons collected or destroyed.

Source: Miller (2001)

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed weapons collection and destruction efforts implemented in a variety of settings world-wide. The objectives and features of these efforts differ from place to place, but the core elements are essentially the same. The debate still continues about what purpose these programmes should serve and how effective they actually are. Such debate often arises from misconceptions about the intended goals of the programmes. In some cases, goals are not effectively selected or communicated. Further causes for debate are the insufficient evaluation and analysis of past initiatives and the continued need to develop more reliable methods to assess initiatives. The paucity of baseline data against which results can be measured and the difficulty in obtaining this data make it difficult to evaluate programmes meaningfully. As long as these problems persist, the effectiveness of these measures cannot be ascertained.

Despite this continued disagreement, however, one conclusion can be drawn. Weapons collection programmes continue to receive widespread support from policy-makers, operational agencies, donors, and the general public. The number of programmes seems to be increasing and their parameters expanding. This is even more apparent since the 2001 UN Small Arms Conference, where practical disarmament was one of the few measures that received support from almost all participating states (CONFERENCE).

Given the limitations of such initiatives and their mixed successes, why do they remain so popular? The first reason is probably their intuitive appeal. Removing the tools of violence from a community affected by conflict or crime makes sense. Most people perceive it as a positive initiative, or at the very least, not a negative one. Even individuals opposed to more coercive weapons control might, while not actively supporting such programmes, agree that they do no harm. This applies particularly to programmes that are purely voluntary, allowing individuals to decide for themselves whether or not to hand over their weapons. Programmes that include elements of coercion are inevitably more controversial.

Other appealing aspects of weapons collections are their visibility and concrete nature, given that they produce tangible and easily quantifiable results. As we have seen, however, the relationship between the stated objectives of weapons collection programmes and their actual outcomes is not straightforward. While the results of such programmes, in terms of the total numbers of weapons retrieved may be disappointing, certain valuable, indirect effects are often achieved. Some proponents of such initiatives maintain that the removal of every single weapon is nevertheless significant, as it represents a potentially violent incident avoided.

The popularity of the programmes with policy-makers might be the easiest to explain, as most are not considered politically controversial or sensitive. In the area of small arms control, practical disarmament is one of the easier and most visible policy options. Launching a weapons collection may, for example, function as a response to a public outcry for action following a gun-related traumatic event. One exception is disarmament undertaken in the context of certain peace operations, which may present both political and practical risks, particularly when weapons are recovered from paramilitary groups.

The emerging concept of weapons for development shows how weapons collection and destruction programmes are broadening their objectives, integrating new methods and approaches, and lengthening their time-lines. Such programmes increasingly form part of more comprehensive and longer-term strategies which, by promoting development and human security, address the root causes of violence and thus the demand for weapons.

Increasingly, weapons collection programmes form part of a longer-term strategy, addressing the root causes of violence.

There is a growing realization that, in order to achieve long-term stability and safety, we need to do more than simply remove weapons from a community. Collecting weapons can be crucial in the shorter term. Not only is a tool and symbol of violence removed, but such efforts can also contribute to other security-enhancing outcomes, such as social mobilization and confidence building. However, unless underlying sources of insecurity and violence are addressed, other tools of violence will prevail. This is why the current movement towards addressing the demand for weapons within the framework of practical disarmament holds particular promise.

7. List of Abbreviations

BED	Special Disarmament Brigades
CAC	Community arms collection
DD&R	Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States' Cease-fire Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU-ASAC	European Union Assistance on Curbing Small Arms and Light Weapons in Cambodia
FADM	Mozambican Defence Force
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FMLN	Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front
GPP	Gramsh Weapons in Exchange for Development Pilot Programme
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
IICD	Independent International Commission on Decommissioning
IOM	International Organization of Migration
IRA	Irish Republican Army
ISER	Instituto de Estudos da Religião
KFOR	Kosovo Force
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
MPCD	Patriotic Movement against Crime
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NLA	Albanian National Liberation Army
NSA	Non-state actor
OAS	Organization of American States
ONUSAL	United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador
PM&E	Participatory monitoring and evaluation
PRA	Participatory rural appraisal
PUA	Participatory urban appraisal
RENAMO	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SAPS	South African Police Service
SFOR	Stabilisation Force
TAE	Tools for Arms Project
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDDA	United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOMIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNTAES	United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Sirmium
UXO	Unexploded ordnance
WGWR	Working Group for Weapons Reduction in Cambodia

7. Endnotes

1 Key publications on this issue include Sweden (1999); BICC and SAND (2000); Faltas and Di Chiaro III (2001); Faltas, McDonald, and Waszink (2001); and Lodgaard (2001). See also the Help Desk for Practical Disarmament at the Bonn International Center for Conversion, <http://www.disarmament.de>.

2 A full record of all statements can be found at the Small Arms Survey's <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/Database.html>

3 This handbook can be downloaded in PDF format from <http://www.un.org/Depts/dda/update/jun2001/jun2001.htm>

4 Parts of this section are based on Faltas, McDonald, and Waszink (2001).

5 Kleck (1996) points out that the idea can be traced as far back as the Spanish-American War of 1898, when the US government, in an attempt to disarm guerillas and bandits, offered Cubans a bounty in gold for each firearm they surrendered.

6 For evaluations of US buy-back programmes, see for example Rosenfeld (1996); Callahan, Rivara, and Koepsell (1996); and Romero, Wintemute, *et al.* (1998).

7 Data provided to Viva Rio's disarmament campaign by the Instituto de Estudos da Religião (ISER).

8 This sudden increase can in part be attributed to increased reporting and compilation of data on crime in black neighbourhoods after the end of apartheid.

9 Correspondence from Dr Ayesha Siddiqa-Agha, 4 December 2001.

10 The material used for this section was compiled by Spyros Demetriou during consultancies with UNOPS and IOM on behalf of the Small Arms Survey.

11 This case study summarizes a background paper written by Martín Appiolaza, co-ordinator of the Arms Exchange Programme. Translated from Spanish by main chapter author. For the full document in Spanish, see <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org>

12 These statistics have been developed based on information from public hospitals, law enforcement agencies, opinion polls, and reports from the US Department of Justice.

13 For an evaluation of the programme, see Godnick (2001).

14 The co-ordinator of the programme, Martín Appiolaza, was himself a former journalist, whose contacts ensured that the programme would be covered by the media.

15 This web site can be found at <http://www.seguridad.mendoza.gov.ar/canje/canarm.htm>

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