

## Title

# Understanding the economic value of the exit strategies for ex-combatants in South Sudan

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## Abstract

The essence of the article was to explore the defense economy of the security sector in South Sudan by examining the trends, dynamics and lesson learnt to gauge how ex-combatants should be made productive in the community. The study employed a thematic data analysis in the interpretation of the major concepts in the defense economy, which was based on an interpretative philosophy. The rationale of the study was to unearth strategies for empowering ex-combatant in the countries emerging from war as an avenue for successful security sector reform. The strategies highlighted herein could be vital in helping the policy makers in the sector on the best practices in reforming the army, police, national security and wildlife. The study has found out that there were no appropriate exit strategies employed by the security sector institutions in South Sudan to empower ex-combatant soldiers to resettle back into their communities. The paper identified some exit strategies essential for empowering ex-combatants' soldiers and the process involved in making reinsertion and reintegration programs fruitful. As the way forward, the paper highlighted various principles to be applied when designing the program for empowering ex-combatants' in the fragile state.

## Key words

Africa, military, economy, combatants, defense, disarmament, demobilization, integration, reform, reinsertion, security, strategy, South Sudan

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## Introduction

The study was mindful of the previous strategic reviews done in transforming the security sector in South Sudan. These reviews were performed to provide a framework for security sector reform based on the best practices promoted by other friendly nations. Since 2013, South Sudan security sector (army, national security services, police and prison services) broke down. With the revitalized agreement on the resolution of the conflict in South (RARCSS), it is a high time to reorganize the country's security sector. The purpose of this study was to articulate the desired end state of understanding the economic value of the exit strategies for ex-combatants by looking at the lessons learnt and way forward to serve as a platform for discussions at the highest level of decision-making and to provide a guide for further detailed planning in achieving a people-oriented security sector within South Sudan.

In consideration of researcher's experience in understanding the complexity of security sector reform in South Sudan in accordance to realities and changes in conflict affect countries. This study employed desk review methods by examining the available reports, concept papers, policy briefs, books, journals to solicit essential data on Military Economy of Security Sector Reform, the exit strategies for ex-combatants' soldiers in South Sudan as explored herein.

## The conceptual framework of military economy

In understanding the process of military economy of ex-combatants, it is vital for readers and policy makers to comprehend some basic concepts to inform their decision on exit strategies of ex-combatants as indicated below.

### Reinsertion

It is the assistance offered to ex-combatants during demobilization but prior to the longer-term process of reintegration. Therefore, it is a form of transitional assistance to help cover the basic needs of ex-combatants and their families which include transitional safety allowances, food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term education, training, employment and tools. While reintegration is a long-term, continuous social and economic process of development, reinsertion is a short-term material and financial assistance to meet immediate needs of the ex-combatants that could last up to one year (Nicole Ball :2006), p.2). In the context of South Sudan, the international non-governmental organizations and friends of South Sudan as well as well-wishers should mobilize funding for settling

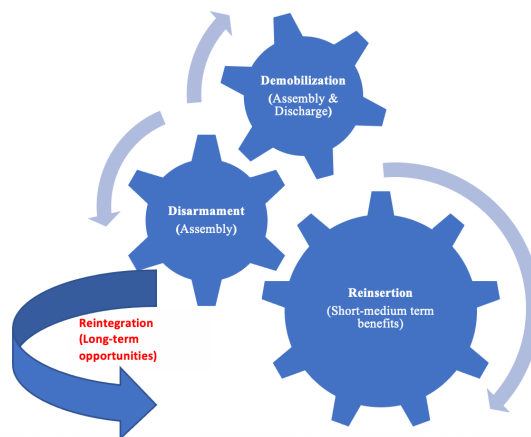
ex-combatant with their families. The reinsertion package should be acting as a motivation factor for ex-combatants' soldiers to rethink their lifestyles of living through barrel of gun to earning live through economic empowerment provided through reinsertion programs.

### Reintegration

It is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open timeframe, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility because it necessitates long-term external assistance (Ibid, Pp.2-3). In the context of South Sudan, reintegration programs should not only look at ex-combatants' soldiers with their families but communities in which integration should be done too. During DDR processes, some communities are suspicious in welcoming ex-combatants due to challenges posed by the conflict and any programing which segregate the community could be a source of another conflict. Therefore, the reintegration program should not only benefit the ex-combatants alone but entire community that is welcoming those to be integrated.

Below is the conceptual framework illustrating how economic empowerment of ex-combatants could be done to exit the military voluntarily:

*The wheels for economic empowerment of ex-combatants*



In the above illustration, any successful DDR-R program should undergo four phases as shown in the above embedded wheels. The wheels of Disarmament and Demobilization trigger the process while reinsertion and reintegration determine the success of DDR programming. It is important to understand that these phases may not occur in a linear fashion, depending on the requirements of each peace process. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> phases of disarmament and Demobilization (DD)

deal with government policy and priority while 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> phases of Reinsertion and Reintegration (RR) deal with international community and well-wishers who are working for improving livelihood of the general population, but the government could provide some funding too where appropriate.

In most DDR-R programs, the dividing line between reinsertion and reintegration has not been clear which could derail the process if the distinction has not been done well in the strategy. In this paper, “Reintegration” refers to all activities after demobilization when ex-combatants have typically received primarily reinsertion benefits, while reinsertion refers to the bridge between demobilization and longer-term reintegration. Therefore, according to conceptual framework illustrated above, it is essential to identify ways in which longer-term reintegration assistance can be used to support the reintegration of former combatants and their dependents into civilian life without overly privileging them compared to other war-affected populations by proving assistance to communities to facilitate their ability to receive ex-combatants. Lastly, the conceptual framework stipulates that reinsertion packages should be given to ex-combatant soldiers only while reintegration packages should benefit both the communities receiving the ex-combatants as well as ex-combatants with their families which linking support for reinsertion and reintegration to a broader security sector reform process entirely.

## Measuring the effectiveness of military economic empowerment

This section relates to the study objective to devise performance indicators to be used in ex-combatant soldiers’ economic empowerment projects. The central goal of reintegration programs should be support to ex-combatants for social and economic integration into civilian live after war. The emphasis in this study was to explain the performance indicators which could be used to assess a community-based economic empowerment of ex-combatants’ projects with respect to the social and economic aspects. The study focuses on three aspects of reintegration such as social re-integration, political re-integration and economic re-integration as explored herein:

### Political dimensions of reintegration

Most institutions and military economic empowerment organizations do not consider the dimensions of political reintegration by deliberately leaving it out during implementation of reintegration programs. There exist beyond a commitment to demobilization to end the use of violent means in the

resolution of disputes, a deeper commitment by all political parties to conflict if post-conflict communities were to sustain the peace. This assumes that the peaceful and active participation of ex-combatants in the political process of their communities should be regarded as a crucial component of peace-building and successful reintegration depends on both social acceptance, economic self-reliance and political participation. This concept was echoed by Kingma (2013), Porto, Parsons and Alden (2011), that in the longer term the reintegration depends on the process of democratization containing the recovery of a weak or collapsed state as well as the maturing of an independent civil society. In South Sudan, the willingness by the SPLM-IG, SPLM-IO and other armed signatories to the R-ARCSS is crucial in the Success of the DDR program. These parties should be ready to except an overhaul of their armies by giving chance to those who are willing to be reintegrated into civilian life. Therefore, the political will of the principal signatories to R-ARCSS especially President Salva Kiir and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Designated Dr. Riek Machar could derail or promote the effectiveness of the economic empowerment of ex-combatant soldiers in South Sudan.

### Social dimensions of reintegration

This section presents various social dimensions of socio-economic reintegration programs among the ex-combatants. Social reintegration implies community acceptance of an ex-combatant and their family as well as their ability to participate in local events and decision-making to the same extent as other community members. The assistance provided would seek to build trust as well as fostering reconciliation between ex-combatants and civilians in their communities of settlement. According to Gleichmann *et al.*, (2004), successful socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants requires a total restitution, penance and forgiveness (Gleichmann *et al.* :2004, p. 86). In the same note Leff (2008) reiterated that, the degree of participation of ex-combatants in community groups and associations might reduce the level of violence crime which has significant indicators in frequency and intensity of stability in the community (Leff :2008, p.16).

The economic empowerment programs should aim at understanding the extent the target ex-combatant soldiers should be help differently without creating conflict with other vulnerable groups in the community. The programs might be reinforcing the sense of difference experienced by ex-combatants together with cleavages that might separate them from the communities that received them. A successful social reintegration is assumed to provide positive transformation of modalities of behaviour

and most importantly identities formed under conditions of conflict. This involves focusing on special treatment aimed at ex-combatant soldiers inhibit or delay reintegration. Other areas of concentration can involve whether ex-combatants were received in the community and what the community does to receive or welcome them. In South Sudan, social fabrics have been eroded during the context and reintegration of ex-combatant soldiers should be done carefully by involving local communities' concern. This could reduce the level of stereotype and animosity associated with atrocities committed during the conflict by pointing fingers to others (ex-combatants) as perpetrators.

### **Economic re-integration**

This provides a contribution to self-reliance and financial independence that should be viewed as essential for achieving objectives of reintegration at the political and social levels. Economic reintegration should help ex-combatants to play a constructive economic role in the communities to which they return or settled. The presence of ex-combatant soldiers tends to be seen in a more positive light by these communities. In this context, economic reintegration can contribute to the complex long-term process of social reintegration. Ink and Watson, (2010) stresses that, prior to economic reintegration, sustained conflict tends to destroy pre-conflict economies, infrastructure and markets break down. The public sector breaks down too leaving land uncultivable due to unexploded ordinance and landmines that undermine the social relations often at the heart of trading, meaning that livelihood opportunities are scarce (Ink and Watson, 2010). Moreover, ex-combatants may have limited levels of education, skills and work experience, hampering their ability to gain employment. Therefore, in South Sudan context, economic reintegration as exit strategy for ex-combatant soldiers should provide a self-reliance and financial independence which should be viewed as essential for achieving objectives of economic empowerment at the political and social levels (Body, T :2005, p.12). Thus, economic empowerment of ex-combatant soldiers should be the basis for successful reintegration program.

## **Principles for Ex-combatants economic Empowerment**

This section outlines the guiding principles that should be followed when dealing with programs of empowering ex-combatant soldiers economically. The following played an essential role in designing exit strategy for ex-combatant soldiers as explored below.

### **Clarification of objectives to all parties**

The objectives and expected results of the reintegration program shall be clearly defined from the start, particularly with regard to the number of beneficiaries, their composition e.g., men, women, youth and the criteria for their selection. All parties to the conflict shall commit themselves to accepting an agreed framework together with a timetable for carrying out activities. In context of South Sudan, the signatories to the R-ARCSS should adhere to article 2.4.9 and 2.4.10. These articles are vague and should be operationalized by the DDR commission by developing a strategy. The DDR commission should request the signatories to R-ARCSS to commit to the reintegration strategy in letter and spirit. This could enable the parties to the agreement to support it by promoting the strategy among their combatants who are potential ex-combatant soldiers.

### **Ensure national ownership**

The local ownership of the program is essential for the success and sustainability of economic empowerment programs for ex-combatants' soldiers. The primary responsibility for the outcome of economic empowerment programs rests with the national and local actors who are ultimately responsible for the peace, security and development of their own communities. National ownership includes more than just central government leadership because it requires the active participation of a range of state and non-state actors at national, state, county, Payam and Boma levels. It is important to ensure the participation of groups traditionally marginalized in DDR and post-conflict reconstruction processes such as women's groups, youth representatives, children's advocates, people living with disability and chronic illness as well as minorities. This could be the best alternative for successful implementation of reintegration program for economic empowerment of ex-combatants in context of South Sudan.

### **Ensure community participation**

The success of reintegration programs depends on the combined efforts of individuals, families and community at large. For successful program in South Sudan, it should be designed through a participatory process that involves ex-combatant soldiers, communities, local and national authorities, and non-government actors in planning as well as decision-making from the earliest stages. Therefore, the success of reintegration programs depends on the combined efforts of individuals, families and communities.

### **Develop national capacity**

Implementing partners should try to develop the capacities of receiving communities, as well as local and national authorities. In South Sudan contexts where national capacity to implement economic



empowerment is weak, it is important to ensure that the International organizations does not act as a substitute for national authorities in the management and implementation of economic empowerment, but instead temporarily fills the capacity gap, under strong national policy oversight, while also working to improve and strengthen national capacities. The capacity of the national staffs should be developed through capacity building or on-job training. The local experts have an advantage of understanding contextual issues pertaining ex-combatant soldiers which could leverage the international experts in making the reintegration program successful.

### **Engagement of donors**

The lack of timely and adequate resources mobilization has in the past hampered the ability of the agencies to implement sustainable economic empowerment programs. Economic empowerment stakeholders shall engage donors in discussions on the scope and focus of the reintegration program as early as possible. With the current economic breakdown in South Sudan, the government should lobby the international community to provide a seed fund or trust fund for kick-starting the process of reinsertion and later change to reintegration.

### **Engage potential spoilers**

Management of the interests and expectations of key warlords and military leaders is often essential for the establishment of sustainable peace processes and agreements. However, a certain number of military warlords especially mid-level commanders, might end up being left out of the incentive structure agreed to in the peace agreement. Therefore, buying-in to the process by these key participants shall be one of the first priorities of economic empowerment planning and program design. Either the national government, supported by the national commission on DDR, should deal with their concerns directly, which is by far the preferable option, or the DDR program should include a two-tier system of reintegration support, one for these commanders, whose expectations are usually quite high, and another for the rest of the combatants. Failure to deal with this issue may lead to these key stakeholders acting as spoilers which could jeopardize the entire economic empowerment program and undermine wider peace and security in South Sudan.

### **Balance equity with security**

Non-discrimination and equitable treatment are core principles in the design of economic empowerment programs. The principle of equity shall be applied when establishing eligibility criteria for entry into economic empowerment programs. However, this principle should also be applied to all conflict-affected populations. In most conflicts, IDPs and refugees far outnumber ex-combatants. All three

groups face similar reintegration problems, and, in principle, they should be given equal access to reintegration opportunities. Offering special treatment to ex-combatants may cause resentment among other groups who may view special or unique benefits to ex-combatants as an unjustified reward to the perpetrators of conflict. However, although applying the principle of equity will increase the chances of reconciliation and sustainable reintegration the security situation often demands that in the short term at least a specific focus on ex-combatants is required to increase security. In the context of South Sudan, the important thing is to ensure that the receiving communities are adequately consulted, and that they understand and accept that designed support given to ex-combatants will increase their own security. Thus, in this sense, reintegration support for ex-combatants is not to be regarded as special treatment for ex-combatants, but rather as an investment in security for the population as a whole.

### **Design and planning of economic empowerment**

It is very essential for the key stakeholders to design and plan the economic empowerment program well. This could enable them to understand the challenges and possibilities of success based on SWOT analysis. The following are key issues to be considered during design and planning phase.

### **Participatory planning**

One of the reasons why economic empowerment have failed in the post conflict countries has been lack of local ownership resulting in the perception that program was imposed from outside. All stakeholders working on economic empowerment programs should encourage effective dialogue among national, local authorities, community leaders, and former combatants to define a role for all parties in the decision-making process. These actors should be fully involved in planning and decision-making from the earliest stages. The DDR commission should adopt a participatory approach that would significantly improve the economic empowerment program by providing a forum for testing ideas that could improve program design; enabling the development of strategies that respond to local realities and needs and ensuring local ownership. On other hand, the international community should help in ensuring the sustainability of reintegration by developing community capacity to provide services by establishing community monitoring, management, oversight structures and systems.

### **Engaging ex-combatants in reintegration planning**

During planning process, the DDR commission and the donors should ensure that participatory planning

includes representation of ex-combatants to understand the process involved as well as benefits. This will help to ensure that their expectations are met in the program design or managed from an early stage. The creation of veterans' associations is often encouraged as a way of ensuring adequate representation of ex-combatants in an economic empowerment process. These associations are also considered to be an early warning and response system for identifying dissatisfaction among ex-combatants and confidence-building between discontented groups and the rest of the community. However, experience shows that such associations will usually be respected by communities' members if they emerge naturally and spontaneously from other reintegration activities but not set up as national or hierarchical organizations, since formal veterans' associations can delay or prevent the effective reintegration of ex-combatants.

### **Involving communities in reintegration planning**

Communities play a central role in the reintegration of ex-combatants. Therefore, it is communities who will, or will not, reintegrate ex-combatants and it is communities who will, or will not, benefit from a successful DDR program. It is important to ensure that communities are at the centre of reintegration planning when it comes to identifying opportunities for individuals, potential stress points and priorities for community development projects. International organizations should strengthen the capacities of local and provincial actors and service providers to play a central role in the reintegration process. It is good practice to involve families, traditional and religious leaders, women's and youth groups, and other local associations in planning the return of ex-combatants. These groups should receive support and training to assist the process. Women often bear the burden of reintegration of ex-combatants in families and communities and will require assistance to deal with the reintegration of sick, traumatized, violent ex-combatants, and child soldiers. Community women's groups should be sensitized to support and protect women and girls returning from armed groups and forces, who may struggle to reintegrate. Reintegration programs should be designed to support receiving communities to the fullest extent possible.

### **Developing national and local capacities**

A primary role of international community is to support the development of national and local capacities to implement economic empowerment. This capacity will encourage ownership, commitment and the successful delivery of services, as well as the long-term sustainability of the DDR process. The economic empowerment should be focused on developing the capacity of national and local training institutions as well as service

providers through education, training, technical and material assistance. Support should also be given to communities to set up local forums and consultative committees.

### **Ensuring coordination and partnership**

Effective coordination assures the success of economic empowerment program. It should be the guiding principle from the earliest pre-mission assessment phase and continue throughout all stages of strategy development, program planning and implementation. Economic empowerment program stakeholders will need to ensure close coordination in the field where coordination mechanisms within national counterparts with implementing partners and with receiving communities as well as donors established at the earliest stages of mission planning. All programs should be well coordinated, coherent and given consistent direction and support to provided field support from Headquarters to ensure that lessons learned and policy development. In order to ensure the sustainability of economic empowerment program, stakeholders should also focus on building strong local, national and international partnerships from the start. Partnerships are essential, both in direct, short-term program implementation and in forming links to longer-term recovery, peacebuilding and governance programs.

### **Resource mobilization**

Many people and large amounts of funds are required at the start of an economic empowerment program. Given the need for early planning and implementation of key reintegration activities, such as pre-registration surveys and the development of the capacity of service providers. Adequate funds should be made available at the start in order to prevent delays that could undermine program credibility. Transitional assistance to help cover reinsertion needs of ex-combatants and their families such as transitional safety allowances, food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term education, training, employment and tools. While reintegration is a long-term, continuous social and economic process of development, reinsertion is a short-term material and financial assistance to meet immediate needs and can last up to one year. This decision should greatly assist economic empowerment stakeholders in planning their programs. The DDR program in South Sudan need resources for reinsertion and reintegration programs.

## **Defense economy of ex-combatants**

This strategy should focus on activities that are relevant to aspects of socio-economic recovery and development of ex-combatant soldiers in South

Sudan. Ideally, economic empowerment should be a one-time intervention, done correctly the first time and never to be repeated again. Otherwise, no matter what safeguards are put in place the rewarded people would think they have received the economic empowerment incentive for participating in current or future conflicts.

At the end of a conflict there is often an abrupt release into the labour market of thousands of ex-combatants who compete with ordinary civilians for extremely scarce jobs and livelihood opportunities. This support can have an immediate positive effect on security and contribute to the improvement of overall economic conditions. Economic reintegration will be successful only if the reintegration support provides or encourages viable forms of economic activity and is socially productive. All interventions must be sustainable to ensure that ex-combatants do not turn to violence to earn a living as explored through exit strategies explored herein.

### **Labour market analyses**

Early assessment of the opportunities and services open to combatants is vital in the design and planning of an economic empowerment program of ex-combatant soldiers. However, this analysis of the labour market needs to be regularly updated during the implementation of the reintegration program and should include analysis of culturally appropriate professions for men and women of varying age groups, recognizing how conflict may have changed cultural norms about gender-appropriate work. The capacity of the ministry of labour and DDR commission should be strengthened to perform this task at the national and provincial level, while providers of vocational training and employment services should be equipped to carry out assessments regularly at the local level. This labour market analysis should be shared with national authorities, UN agencies, local and international non-governmental organizations involved in supporting economic empowerment and should serve as the basis for training activities. Therefore, the ministry of labour and DDR commission in partnership with international organizations should join hands to conduct market analysis to identify available opportunities for economic empowerment of ex-combatant soldiers in South Sudan.

### **Education, training and skills development**

Many ex-combatants have missed opportunities for basic and further education, and as a result are disadvantaged in the competition for jobs and opportunities. Provision of adult literacy classes, adult education, technical and vocational training is important both to improve the skill sets of adult and young ex-combatants and provide opportunities for reorientation and demilitarization. Education and

training for ex-combatants and those associated with armed forces and groups should be supplied as part of the wider provision of educational services to the general population, and not in schools or colleges exclusively for them. Another problem has been that ex-combatants have been provided with a range of training courses and asked to make their choices with limited advice and no opportunity to consult their families or peers, or to understand their options as part of the broader reintegration process. These choices may have no relation to the state of the economy or an individual's capacity to benefit from the training provided. Training should generally be regarded as a tool for reintegration and not as reintegration itself. Thus, the DDR commission in Partnership with donors should provide practical training tailored toward skills development to respond to the requirements of the formal and informal sector for ex-combatant soldiers in South Sudan.

### **Education and scholarships**

Young ex-combatants, especially those aged under 15, should be reintegrated into formal education, which may mean extra support for teachers and trainers to manage the special needs of such learners. Some ex-combatants can be offered scholarships to finish their studies. Youth should have priority in these cases, and particular attention must be paid to assisting girls to return to school which may mean making available nursery facilities for children in their care. In some countries such as South Sudan where the conflict has lasted a long time and combatants have received little or no schooling, emphasis should be placed on 'catch-up' education to ensure that this group does not stay trapped in life-long poverty. If allowances or school fees are to be funded by the reintegration program, economic empowerment program stakeholders should ensure that resources are available for full duration of ex-combatants' education, which could be longer than the reintegration program. If resources are not available, there should be a clearly communicated plan for phasing out support with ex-combatant soldiers. This exit strategy works for child soldiers who might have enough time to go through formal education system. Scholarship should be the motivating factor for ex-combatant child soldiers to desert the army for education.

### **Vocational training**

Ex-combatants often need to learn new skills in order to make a living in the civilian economy. Vocational education plays a vital role in successful reintegration, by increasing ex-combatants' chances to effectively join the labour market. Training can also help break down military attitudes and behaviour, and develop values and norms based on peace and democracy. Vocational training activities

need to be linked with studies of the local labour market and identification of the economic potential of an area and its business opportunities. Attention should be paid to existing economic cultures, including whether women and men will have equal access to all types of work and how this can be addressed. Training should also be regularly adapted to the changing demands of the labour market. Certification of training has proved important in ensuring that the quality of training given by the different providers is similar, to increase the confidence of ex-combatants when applying for work, and to gain recognition by employers. In South Sudan context, ex-combatant soldiers need to learn new skills in order to make a living in the community as they adjust civilian lifestyle.

### **Apprenticeships and on-the-job training**

DDR commission should create a placement opportunity for the demobilized ex-combatant soldiers. After completing a vocational training course, the demobilized soldiers should use his/her newly acquired skills through apprenticeships or on-the-job training in existing workshops or businesses premises. Alternatively, apprenticeships and on-the-job training can be a particularly effective form of training, since they might result in more sustainable employment. A reintegration program can subsidize these learning and training opportunities by paying the trainee an allowance. Apprenticeship and on-the-job training should be carried out according to the local tradition of apprenticeships in order to ensure sustainability. An apprenticeship can also be an excellent means of social reintegration and reconciliation, as it also offers insertion, through an association with a mentor/trainer, into an already existing socio-economic network consisting of groups and communities of people who are not ex-combatants.

### **Life skills**

Economic empowerment program stakeholders should regard the provision of life skills as a necessity but not a luxury in reintegration programs. Life skills include non-violent ways of resolving conflict, civilian social behaviour, and career planning, but also understanding what kinds of behaviour, employers expect. This type of training should complement the various other forms of educational and training services provided. Education on political rights and responsibilities especially in countries undergoing major governance reform has been an essential in encouraging the participation of ex-combatants in democratic structures. DDR commission should create a self-esteem raising programs among ex-combatant soldiers. This would empower them to believe in their skill set and embarked on marketing their own skills.

### **Employment creation**

Labour-based public works programs and public sector job creation are often important features of reintegration programs. It is essential that the inclusion of these activities in reintegration programs is based on a clear understanding that they are a temporary measure only. Public sector job creation is often a political expedient forced on governments when reintegration programs fail to provide sustainable job opportunities for ex-combatants. While taking ex-combatants into public service may be an important part of overall reconciliation and political integration strategies, especially as part of SSR, it can be sustain. Only when economic circumstances allow for the expansion of public services, and therefore should be managed as a part of overall economic development strategies.

### **Livelihood and income generation**

These are essential ingredients for successful DDR program in any country because the deals with reintegration. The DDR commission with donors should observe the following livelihood and income generation activities as exit strategy for ex-combatant soldiers in South Sudan.

### **Developing the private sector and business development services**

Providing business development services (BDS) can help overcome the difficulties faced by ex-combatants, such as lack of education, inadequate technical skills, poor access to markets, lack of information and unreliable infrastructure. Government agencies should be encouraged to develop the appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks to encourage private sector growth and to play a role in monitoring and coordinating this growth. However, in many post-conflict societies, government agencies lack the capacity to support and deliver services to micro- and small enterprises. In South Sudan context, international actors including investors, local NGOs with experience in economic projects, non-governmental institutions and community groups can be encouraged to provide business development services for ex-combatants. They could be enrolled in a business challenge or plan competition after training so that those with viable business plan could be funded to operationalize their business ideals.

### **Employment in existing businesses**

Reintegration programs ideally should try to place qualified ex-combatants in existing jobs, as the risk of failure is lower than if they try to start a new microenterprise themselves. In reality, there are very few employment opportunities in post-conflict environments, and, where these opportunities do



exist, business owners are often not willing to employ ex-combatants. Reintegration programs should help to increase the opportunities available to ex-combatants by offering wage, training and equipment subsidies. Governments through DDR commission should be also supported by international donors in the creation of a legal framework to ensure that labour rights are respected, and that demobilized or other vulnerable groups do not become 'slaves' of the private sector.

### Microenterprise and small business start-ups

Once opportunities for employment in existing businesses have been exhausted, the DDR program should therefore help ex-combatants to develop their own microenterprise start-up business plans. Economic empowerment program stakeholders should provide support that is specifically designed to meet the needs of each individual ex-combatant, wherever possible, to prevent commanders from extorting part of their reintegration assistance from previous group members. Although it is more expensive and more time-consuming, this kind of support also equips ex-combatants to decide for themselves, what they will do, and to act alone, which helps to break their dependence on the group structure. Reintegration programs should also ensure that many different kinds of small businesses are started, to avoid distorting the balance of supply and demand in local markets.

### The provision of micro-grants

The main way of funding the creation of microenterprises should be micro-grants, which, as recent experience shows, should be provided to the ex-combatants only after they have drawn up a clear start-up business plan, and should be paid in instalments. The instalments should, as far as possible, be given in kind (equipment, supplies, training, etc.), avoiding large cash payments, which are difficult to monitor effectively and can be misused. Training and technical assistance services are essential to the success of start-ups, together with direct, on-the-ground supervision and monitoring by the economic empowerment program stakeholders.

## Conclusion

Providing ex-combatant with economic empowering opportunities should be given the highest priority by the government of South Sudan for peaceful reinsertion and integration into the community. This should be done by conducting labour market analysis to map out available opportunities to understand the areas with the most employment absorption capacity and areas where capacity building would be required. This would give the ministry of Defence and DDR commission the opportunity for preparing capacity building

resources that are context specific based on capacity needs assessment for empowerment of ex-combatants soldiers combatants so that they can have a competitive chance in the market. Involving all development agencies in South Sudan such as embassies, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations to ensure they are part of the longer-term planning and implementation process. Mapping out the available source of the funding mechanisms that to support economic empowerment of ex-combatants. This is where the government should provide some funding known as oil for economic empowerment of ex-combatants' soldiers. Develop effective tools for engaging communities and, in this context, communication strategies to facilitate local-level awareness and understanding of economic empowerment of ex-combatants.

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