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This thesis study is embedded in a multi-country comparative participatory action research (PAR) study conducted with 658 war-affected young mothers at 20 field sites in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Northern Uganda. The larger study was designed to investigate approaches for meaningful reintegration of marginalized young women who were left out of internationally sponsored disarmament, demilitarization, and reintegration (DDR) programs. My qualitative study took place in Sierra Leone at three PAR field sites and consisted of 46 in-depth interviews with a total of 82 randomly sampled study participants and key stakeholders. The framework for this study was social capital theory, defined as “the norms and networks that facilitate collective action.” The thesis sought to answer two questions: 1) What factors help or hinder psychosocial and economic reintegration of PAR participants? and 2) Are there differences in perception between participants and their communities about the reintegration efforts made by participants? I used constant comparative analysis common in grounded theory to analyze data derived from categorically coded interview transcripts. Key findings were that activities undertaken in peer groups helped study participants reintegrate by repairing social ties and expanding access to community social networks. This happened through engagement in activities exhibiting reciprocity and cooperation, and through demonstrations of normative social behaviors, which reduced stigma and earned them respect – thereby improving their status within families and communities. Pursuing a variety of economic and psychosocial activities seemed to create more sustainable changes. This thesis contributes to knowledge in the growing field of post-conflict reintegration of youth, but unlike extant literature, it also highlights the voices of families and communities.

**AN ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY-BASED PSYCHOSOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
REINTEGRATION EFFORTS BY YOUNG MOTHERS FORMERLY
ASSOCIATED WITH ARMED GROUPS IN SIERRA LEONE**

By

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Fatmata: Story of a girl soldier

Almost eight years after the end of Sierra Leone's war, Fatmata does not know her exact age or whether her older brothers are alive or dead. But she remembers the day that rebels with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) attacked her village, and she escaped into the bush with her parents. She recalls later being captured by the RUF, her father digging diamonds for the rebels, and a rebel commando threatening to kill her parents if she refused his offer of 'marriage.' She tells her story in a measured, monotone voice, even as she relates the next fact: "I refused him but was threatened that if I didn't accept, I and my parents would be killed. [I refused again and my] parents were both killed because of my refusal. So I finally fell in love with the boy who killed my parents."

Fatmata briefly describes how she was trained to carry a weapon and was forced to cook and clean in the rebel camp, and to fight and loot villages. She goes on to explain that she twice became pregnant in the bush and, at the end of the war while pregnant with the second child, escaped the rebels and her "bush husband." She returned home directly to look for surviving relatives, bypassing internationally funded demobilization programs designed to assist members of armed groups in their return to civilian life. When she arrived home she found her aunt and uncle, but they refused to take her in or help her because she had been with the rebels and had

“rebel children,” making her feared and socially shunned. She found a friend who allowed her to stay and soon gave birth to the second child. Because she had no income and no education or skills, her friend said she should “go stand where men could see” – and that was how she became a prostitute to feed her children. She felt ashamed about her life with the rebels, was lonely, and had a “bellyache” much of the time. She could not send her children to school and could not afford clinic visits when they were sick. She lived this way for several years.

Today, despite her history and hardships, Fatmata’s life is much different. She is no longer a prostitute; instead, she has a business selling dried fish in the local market. She has opened an account at the local bank and pays for school fees and health care for her children. She meets regularly with a group of supportive friends who went through similar experiences during the war, and she has received treatment for her bellyache, which turned out to be a sexually transmitted disease she contracted from her bush husband. She helps clean the community water well, is a member of a local women’s group, and sometimes is asked to help resolve disputes in her community. She and her children live with her boyfriend, and her aunt takes care of her children when they are not in school. She can now read a little, knows how to write her name, and has learned enough basic arithmetic to keep track of her business income and expenses. She says “I am grateful for the positive change.” But how did Fatmata go about making these changes in her life? How did she become economically and socially reintegrated, accepted within her family and community?

Fatmata’s story is actually a composite narrative of multiple young mothers’ responses recorded during a series of semi-structured ethnographic interviews conducted in Sierra Leone in

October and November of 2009. These interviews were designed to evaluate the outcomes of a study that the young mothers had participated in over an approximately two year period. The study, *Girl Mothers in Armed Groups and their Children in Northern Uganda and Sierra Leone/Liberia: Participatory Approaches to Reintegration*¹ (referred to as PAR throughout this paper), was designed using a participatory action research model, described in detail below. The larger PAR study and my targeted analysis of the PAR in Sierra Leone (referred to as ‘the thesis’ throughout this paper) are described in depth in Chapters Three and Four, respectively, but a short description is provided in this chapter to place the discussion of community-based reintegration and the PAR study in context.

While Fatmata’s story is representative of the experiences of many of the study participants, the entire collection of interview responses makes it clear that not all of the young women fared as well in their community reintegration as ‘Fatmata.’ Though the majority reported experiencing positive outcomes, some participants seemed to make gains, only to slip backwards as a consequence of facing new challenges. Additionally, Fatmata’s narrative does not fully explain the community’s point of view, an omission common in the literature on many community-based reintegration programs. Why is Fatmata’s business successful, and why do her neighbors seek her advice to resolve conflicts? Are the answers to these two questions related?

Community-based reintegration

Viewing the reintegration of children formerly associated with armed groups as a community-based process has gained favor with international child protection actors in recent

¹ For more information about the details and background of the PAR, see “About Girl Mothers PAR” under the PAR Girl Mothers Web Site: <http://www.uwyo.edu/girlmotherspar/info.asp?p=993>

years. Community-based reintegration incorporates social and economic aspects of children's lives, two interconnected categories often used in discussions of reintegration (Body, 2008). Further, reintegration programs for youth usually employ a human rights framework, based on international post-conflict recovery norms that have been formalized by the United Nations (UN) (United Nations Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards [UN-IDDRS], 2006). Programs often also further frame the assistance in terms of gender or age-based rights.

Under the community-based paradigm, reintegration is thought to hinge on several factors, including psychosocial support and care; community acceptance; and education, training, and livelihoods (Stark, Boothby and Ager, 2009; IDDRS, 2006). Programs designed to help children reintegrate in post-war settings usually address one or more of these three factors, with varying levels of success. Fatmata's experience suggests that she has achieved a successful reintegration incorporating all three community-based factors, and that she and her children are respected in their community; yet it will become clear in the following sections and chapters that this level of success is not the norm for most young mothers.

The PAR girl mothers study

The origins of this PAR study are found in research published in 2004 by Susan McKay and Dyan Mazurana, *Where are the girls? Girls in fighting forces in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Mozambique: Their lives during and after war*. A central finding from their research was that girls who had been abducted or otherwise conscripted into armed groups and gave birth to children of rebels are among the most marginalized and vulnerable groups in post-conflict

communities. They found evidence of extreme gender bias against females in post-conflict political and social processes around the world, leading to the marginalization of women and girls – and especially young mothers – in the post-conflict communities where they lived. At the heart of the research recommendations was a call to learn more about the reintegration needs of young mothers and create programs to help them address their needs. To that end, the PAR study was designed to address both recommendations at once.

The central research purpose of the PAR has two parts: first, to learn from young mothers formerly associated with armed groups how they define ‘reintegration’ for themselves, and second, how they choose to pursue social and economic activities to improve their situations when empowered through a participatory process. Early field work for the PAR began in November of 2006, and active field site support ended in May of 2009. When the PAR began, 22 sites in Uganda, Liberia and Sierra Leone were identified by research partners at nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in those countries. At each site approximately 30 young mothers were recruited through various methods to join the study. These young mothers were either formerly associated with armed groups, or were vulnerable young mothers in the community who had not been associated with an armed group.² For approximately two years, NGO-sponsored facilitators supported the young mothers at each site as they worked through the process of identifying their own problems, collecting information on the issues contributing to their problems, collectively prioritizing and choosing a plan of action to address the problems,

² Including young mothers who had not been formerly associated with armed groups but were identified by their communities as being vulnerable for other reasons was a strategy aimed at reducing stigmatization of the formerly associated mothers; in development circles this is often referred to as ‘inclusive programming.’

and then implementing the action. After implementation of their chosen action, they reassessed the situation and, when necessary, adjusted their approach and implemented new actions. This cyclical process is the core of participatory action research methods, described in detail below.

The thesis study

A detailed explanation of the methods of analysis for this thesis is found in Chapter Four. However, it is necessary to give a short description here to outline the purpose and scope of the thesis. The central analysis of this paper is based on an examination of the differences in participants' experiences of social and economic reintegration efforts during the PAR, and how their communities view participants and their activities. Using data from the PAR study, I aim to answer two research questions:

1) What factors help or hinder the social and economic reintegration of young mothers formerly associated with armed groups when they become empowered to make their own decisions?

2) Are there differences between the PAR participants' perceptions and the communities' perceptions of the actions the young mothers took toward reintegration, and if so, what are those differences?

To answer these questions, I accompanied Susan McKay to Sierra Leone in the fall of 2009 and assisted in conducting follow-up ethnographic interviews six months after the end of PAR field site support. The purpose of the trip was to evaluate the impact and sustainability of the PAR. Of the eight PAR sites in Sierra Leone, we visited three sites for three to four days each. At each site, semi-structured interviews were conducted with randomly selected PAR participants and members of their families and communities. These interview responses form the primary data set used in this thesis.

I took a grounded theory approach to the data, using a constant comparative analysis of systematically coded content from the ethnographic interview transcripts. As Padgett (2008) explains,

“What grounded theorists refer to as *constant comparative analysis* describes a systematic search for similarities and differences across interviews, incidents, and contexts. A constant comparative analysis stays close to the data, but its ultimate value comes from an ability to think abstractly and make sense of myriad comparisons, winnowing through them to note what is meaningful” (pp. 155-156).

This method of qualitative analysis was used because it lends itself to eliciting deeper understandings of commonalities and differences in the experiences of PAR participants, and also their families and community members. Further, this type of analysis allows the voices of the family and community to be compared with the voices of PAR participants. The comparison of perspectives is particularly important, as it allows for representation of the families’ and communities’ voices in the assessment of community-based reintegration. This line of inquiry is different from much of the existing literature on reintegration programs, which places reporting of community voices as peripheral to those of program participants.

I further expected to make comparisons between the perceptions of the impacts of the PAR study and international reintegration norms, and therefore used a priori codes for the analysis. The eleven codes primarily focused on two central categories of reintegration interventions, economic and psychosocial, with a third category for PAR study impacts. This kind of less inductive approach to coding and constant comparative analysis is most often used in evaluative analyses (Padgett, 2008), and seemed well-suited to both the data set and the types of comparisons desired. My hope is that by analyzing the experiences and perspectives of PAR

participants and the communities to which they have returned, particularly under the rubric of the reintegration norms established by the international community, this thesis can contribute to an increased understanding of where and how international support might be more effectively invested in community-based reintegration programs.

Participatory Action Research

Definition and origins of PAR

Participatory action research is often referred to as a method, an approach, a model, or a set of principles (Lykes and Coquillon, 2007; Minkler and Wallerstein, 2003; Padgett, 2008). Regardless of the terminology used, the key components included in descriptions of PAR generally vary little and differ markedly from traditional empirical research processes.

The definition of PAR that has been used throughout this study of young mothers is:

an approach to research that aims at promoting change; that occurs through a cyclic process of planning, data collection, and analysis and in which members of the group being studied participate as partners in all phases of the research, including design, data collection, analysis, and dissemination (Brown et al. 2008).

Important aspects of the definition include the explicit promotion of social change, participation, and partnership between ‘outsiders’ and ‘insiders,’ all of which are non-traditional for research methods (Lykes and Coquillon, 2007). Further, PAR is subjective, focuses on local knowledge and priorities, incorporates capacity building for communities, and aims to empower participants through the processes of participation and collective action (Minkler and Wallerstein, 2003).

Participatory action research originates in the philosophy and methods of Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator during the 1960s and 1970s. Freire advocated for social change through the development of critical consciousness of one's situation and community action based on "participatory processes that tap into and engage local knowledge systems toward emancipatory practices" (Lykes and Coquillon, 2007, p. 298). His central argument was that knowledge of one's situation was "liberating" – a precursor of today's language of empowerment – and that "people are the subjects of their own learning, not empty vessels filled by the knowledge of experts" (Wallerstein and Duran, 2003, p. 42). Beyond educational contexts, his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* has heavily influenced numerous areas of inquiry such as public health and social work, and his philosophy plays an important role in feminist theory (Lykes and Coquillon, 2007). His ideas have also been adopted in some international development circles. In recent decades, international community development and aid projects have increasingly used the Freirean concepts of participation and community action in their programs, as agencies recognize a need to incorporate the voices and knowledge of their program beneficiaries in order to increase the effectiveness of programs.

Participation

Although community participation is central to its model, PAR should not be equated with more generalized and common approaches referred to as 'participatory methods' because they differ in several ways. First, as the name implies, PAR explicitly incorporates a research element to the process of social change through local action. Some participatory projects incorporate an element of research, notably projects in participatory assessment; however,

research is not central to most participatory development projects. Second, despite the explosion of ‘participatory’ projects in international development, not all projects encourage similar levels of participation, and few incorporate it at the level that PAR requires. When applied according to its central philosophy, the PAR model demands extensive participatory involvement by an entire group of participants.

The difference in approaches to participation can be more fully understood by comparing Brown’s definition above – “members of the group being studied participate as partners in all phases of the research, including design, data collection, analysis, and dissemination” – with the following explanation taken from a participatory methods ‘toolkit.’

In ... the three-step cycle of planning, implementation and evaluation... a participatory approach may be used in some or all of these steps. ...The level of participation is a continuum and methods vary in the degree to which they engage participants in framing the questions and issues and in designing the procedures.

Distinctions have been made between levels of participation, depending upon whether one’s objective is:

- transmitting information (unidirectional)
- consultation (bi-directional, but the consulted party frames the issue)
- active participation: based on a partnership in which citizens, stakeholders, experts and/or politicians actively engage in debate. All parties involved can frame the issue to a greater or lesser extent (Elliot et al., 2005, p. 9).

Published in 2005 by a Belgian international philanthropic organization, the King Baudouin Foundation, the booklet was distributed globally to community development practitioners and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). This example shows clearly how the intent of participatory programs for development can be variable, and therefore the level of participation varies dramatically as well. Conversely, the goals of extensive participation and social change

form the core of the PAR, setting PAR apart from common participatory methods popular in current community development.

Importantly, the principle of full participation to which PAR aspires can be difficult to implement in some settings. Levels of participation in PAR processes may also sometimes vary, though the intent of the model is to encourage high levels of participation by all members of the group. Varying levels of participation can occur when a group, or some members of a group, has limited resources, capacities, or time. As Lykes and Coquillon (2007) point out, “the duration of a participatory action project... its location at a distance from the duties of participants... and the participant’s lack of skills to contribute to report writing and analyses required of some participatory action research are all obstacles that may have a negative impact on the ability of community members to participate” (p. 320). In some cultural or political settings, or with a more mixed group of participants, these hurdles can disproportionately impact already marginalized groups such as women, the poor and other minorities (Lykes and Coquillon, 2007).

Empowerment

The process of empowerment, like participation, has been increasingly emphasized in development programs over the past decade (UNDP, 2008). Central to the PAR method is the creation of an empowering environment through participation, knowledge sharing and capacity building. Mendez and Wolf (2007) note, “Researchers place emphasis on the *process* of collective endeavors as empowering and more than simply a means to an end” (p. 654). Collective empowerment throughout the PAR process assists the ultimate goal of social change as, ideally, participants engage “in action that wins victories and builds self-sufficiency”

(Stoecker, 2003, p. 98). Thus, PAR approaches facilitate and support the process of empowerment of participants within the context of their communities. Similar to Freire's concept of the process of 'liberation,' empowerment of PAR participants occurs as they work through the processes of dialogue, knowledge sharing or creation, reflection, and action; through these processes they discover and develop their own agency (Hesse-Biber and Piatelli, 2007).

Conclusion

The PAR study at the center of this thesis is, in many ways, a groundbreaking approach to reintegration programs. Most development and aid programs implemented by international actors today, both in and out of post-war settings, employ a range of participatory approaches. But this PAR is thought to be the first reintegration program designed to utilize highly participatory methods that go beyond basic consultation with communities and other common participatory methods (such as agency-led focus groups) that are used in reintegration and development programs. This study was designed to incorporate and encourage high levels of participation by the young mothers, and in doing so, supported their collective and individual empowerment as they identified and addressed their own reintegration challenges within their communities.

Chapter outline

In this chapter I have introduced the key themes that carry through this thesis: girls' experiences of war and the challenges to community-based social and economic reintegration of young mothers formerly associated with armed groups; the PAR study designed to research the needs of these young women and assist them in addressing their own issues; the key concepts

and goals of PAR; and my own targeted analysis of the PAR study in Sierra Leone. In Chapter Two, I outline the context of the PAR using current literature on the war in Sierra Leone, post-war reintegration programs, and the normative and legal human rights instruments used in most development and aid programs today. Additionally, I introduce the theory of social capital, which provides the analytic framework for the examination of the experiences of the PAR participants and their families and communities in this thesis. Chapter Three gives a detailed overview of the PAR, including the basic study design and the guiding principles followed throughout the research. Chapter Four describes the primary and secondary data sets used for this thesis and explains the analytic methods used. In Chapter Five, I present the findings of my analysis, and in Chapter Six I offer concluding comments regarding the implications of the findings and make recommendations for future areas of research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Civil war in Sierra Leone

The war in Sierra Leone began in March of 1991 and ended in January of 2002. Like most wars, the period of conflict was chaotic and destructive. But unlike most wars, this war is widely recognized as superlative on at least one level – it is characterized as one of the most brutal conflicts of modern times. With an estimated 50,000 dead over eleven years, Sierra Leone’s death toll is significantly lower than other regional conflicts, such as Liberia’s civil war (Coulter, 2009). However, the relatively low death toll masks the wider impact of the conflict on the country and its population.

The literature on Sierra Leone’s war is rife with stories of rebels severing hands, arms, feet, breasts, ears, tongues, and lips of civilians in an attempt to spread fear through the population. As Chris Coulter (2009) relates in her book *Bush Wives and Girl Soldiers: Women’s lives through war and peace in Sierra Leone*, “The RUF [Revolutionary United Front] rebels have been accused of committing widespread atrocities such as cutting off people’s limbs, rape, and creating mass destruction, but all fighting factions targeted civilians” (p. 6). Family members were forced to rape and kill one another, and gang raping females of any age was not uncommon. In a single attack on Freetown, the capital, 2,000 women and girls were reportedly raped (Coulter, 2009). The rural countryside was devastated, as village after village was looted

and burned, and the fear of crossing paths with the rebels sent people fleeing to Guinea or other areas of Sierra Leone for refuge. Agricultural production stopped in many areas, as did other normal economic activity. While definitive statistics are not available, estimates place the number of amputations at approximately 200,000. Additionally, 50,000 to 257,000 women and girls were raped, and two to four million people were displaced – between one third and three quarters of the population (Abdalla, Hussein and Shepler, 2002, as cited in Shepler, 2004; Coulter, 2009; Human Rights Watch [HRW], 2003). Largely as a result of the war, Sierra Leone was at the bottom of the Human Development Report's index (HDI) for many years, and has moved up from 182nd to 180th only in the last few years (UNDP, 2009).

In addition to the RUF, other fighting factions included the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) and the Civil Defense Forces (CDF), which were aligned with the government. The CDF had many local names but were often generally known as Kamajohs or Kamajors, local militias formed throughout the country as villages and towns tried to protect themselves from the RUF and other hostile attacks (Shepler, 2004). Later in the war, members who had split from the RUF and SLA joined together to form the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), further complicating the political landscape.

Women are estimated to have made up 10 to 30 percent of each armed group, except the SLA which had a smaller proportion of women (McKay and Mazurana, 2004). All parties to the war used child soldiers, and most sources estimate that children made up half of the RUF and AFRC forces, with girls accounting for between one third and one half of all associated children (Coulter, Persson and Utas, 2008; McKay and Mazurana, 2004). The majority of these women

and girls were abducted into the armed groups with which they were affiliated, as were many boys and men. Most were abducted from their homes, from the bush where they were in hiding, or from other armed groups during battle (Coulter et al., 2008; McKay and Mazurana, 2004).³ Girls and boys served numerous roles in armed groups, and neither gender was relegated exclusively to fighting. Women had a similarly wide range of roles and experiences.

As a series of peace accords gradually brought the war to an end, members of armed groups were demobilized through the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), a process aimed at establishing a lasting peace. Rebels who had committed atrocities and/or had been abducted returned to civilian life, and communities attempted to regain a sense of normalcy as they absorbed these people into their precarious post-conflict economic and social environments.

Human rights and international instruments

A discussion of international human rights concepts and their supporting documents is necessary to imbed the analysis in this thesis within the predominant international discourse on the topics of child soldiers and girl soldiers. After defining and discussing the concepts of ‘child’ and ‘child soldier,’ this section focuses on the application of a human rights paradigm to issues relating to gender and girlhood in armed conflict settings, with particular focus on documents disseminated by the UN.

³ It is important to note that much of the current literature on women and children in war emphasizes the fact that a focus on abduction ignores (and negates the agency of) women and children who joined armed groups for various reasons, sometimes voluntarily and sometimes due to coercion (see for example Coulter, 2009; Coulter et al., 2008; Denov, 2010; Machel, 1996; McKay, 2005; McKay and Mazurana, 2004; and Shepler, 2004).

Children and child soldiers: Background, definitions and contestations

The use of child soldiers by armed forces and groups engaged in conflicts around the world is a practice that has drawn increasing attention and condemnation from the international community, particularly over the past decade. A 2008 report by the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (CSUCS) estimates that, as of 2007, child soldiers were actively involved in combat in 19 countries and had been recruited, voluntarily or forcefully, to fighting forces or armed groups in many more countries. Girls were recruited, often by force, in at least nine countries and performed a variety of duties which often included combat (CSUCS, 2008). Historically, the numbers have been shown to be much higher. The first global survey of child soldiers, published in 2002 by CSUCS, estimated that over the prior ten-year period approximately 500,000 children in 87 countries served as child soldiers. Another study indicated that between 1990 and 2003 girls participated in fighting forces or armed groups in 55 countries and actively participated in combat in 38 countries (McKay and Mazurana, 2004). Other often-cited estimates claim 300,000 to 500,000 child soldiers are active worldwide in any given year, with girls making up anywhere from 10 percent to 40 percent (UN Security Council Resolution [S/RES] 1460 [2003] for instance). However, many scholars and practitioners agree that a true estimate for any given point in time is not possible and refer instead to “tens of thousands” of child soldiers active in most years (CSUCS, 2008; UNICEF, 2003).

Definitions of two key concepts – ‘child’ and ‘child soldier’ – help contextualize the discussion in this thesis of girls formerly associated with armed forces (also known as girl soldiers) and their experiences during and after war. The most widely accepted international

definition of ‘child’ is any individual under the age of 18 (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [CRC], 1990). The definition of ‘child soldier’ used by most international organizations is taken from the Cape Town Principles and Best Practices (1997), described in detail later in this section. Briefly, the document is a set of guidelines for working with children associated with fighting forces or armed groups. The Cape Town Principles (1997) defines a child soldier as:

Any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers and anyone accompanying such groups, other than family members. The definition includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and for forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms (p. 8).

This designation of child soldier is often denied during conflict, particularly by armed opposition groups and government forces that practice under-18 recruitment. Though the lack of adherence to international norms against the use of child soldiers often stems from a need for additional fighters and other support personnel, cultural reasons are also cited by many groups. In many cultures, for instance, passage through traditional puberty rites confers socially recognized adulthood on individuals well below 18 years old (Shepler, 2004, 2005).

In the past several years, the international community has started using the phrase ‘children associated with armed groups’ in place of ‘child soldiers,’ which has been gradually losing favor. This change has occurred because “soldier” fails to represent the numerous roles children are given in armed groups. Therefore, in this thesis variations on the phrases ‘girls formerly associated with armed groups’ or ‘girls formerly associated’ are used in lieu of ‘female child soldier’ or ‘girl soldier.’ As Myriam Denov (2010) argues in her book *Child Soldiers*:

Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front, “the stereotypical conceptualization of “soldier” conceals the realities of women’s and girls’ participation in war, as well as the many supporting roles that children take on during conflict” (p. 13).⁴

Furthermore, as Denov explains, “‘childhood’ is a contested concept and a social construction that varies in form and content across cultures [and] social groups” (p. 12). She points out that “defining a childhood based solely upon age not only reflects a bias towards western notions of childhood ... but also may overlook other salient cultural, social, economic, gendered, class and other status determinants that extend well beyond the notion of age” (Denov, 2010, p. 12). This “western bias” toward age as the defining feature of international definitions of childhood becomes challenging when faced with realities often found in developing countries. Saliently in post-conflict settings, many young people do not know their age in terms of years and may not be able to confirm that they are below, or above, 18. This situation can be due to unattended births, lack of birth certificates, or loss of such documents. Just as importantly, some cultures may not calculate age on the western model but instead use other means of measuring, such as significant family or community events relative to the birth. Susan Shepler (2004) sums up the complexities of the cultural divide this way: “We think we know what “child” means and we think we know what “soldier” means, but these words mean something different than our [western] expectations in the context of various conflicts around the world” (p. 2).

⁴ In this thesis I use the word “solider” to describe children only when referencing other reports, studies, or documents that use the term, and when the discussion is set in international contexts where use of “soldier” is most prevalent.

Legal human rights documents related to children and gender

Though various humanitarian rights-based documents and agreements originate with the initial Geneva Convention of 1864, the first international document outlining specific human rights thought to be applicable to all humans was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the UN General Assembly in December of 1948. The UDHR was in part an international response to the horrific experiences of World War II, and carried politically democratic overtones. The document calls for a global application of political, civil, economic and social rights commonly held or already recognized at that time in many democratic states. However, it goes far beyond basic aspects of these rights to include the right to health and well-being and to medical care (UDHR, Art. 22), calls on the entire international community to put mechanisms in place that “allow for the full realization of human rights” (UDHR, Art. 28), and outlines the responsibility that all people have to their community (UDHR, Art. 30). Especially significant for this thesis research, the UDHR singles out mothers and children for special protection, and explicitly calls for protection of children whether born in or out of wedlock (UDHR, Art. 25). From this point of reference, the UN and other international organizations have established numerous conventions, protocols, laws and regulations addressing both the rights of women and the rights of children.

Building on the UDHR, one of the foundational international legal instruments addressing children’s rights is the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The CRC is the most universally accepted human rights document in the world, ratified by every country except two – the United States (U.S.), and Somalia. The CRC initially set the minimum age for

recruitment or use of an individual in armed conflict at 15. Several other international legal instruments related to child protection issues also use 15 as the minimum age of recruitment based on the precedent of the CRC, including the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court (1998) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (C182, 1999) (Mazurana and Carlson, 2006; IDDRS, 2006). However, in 2000, an Additional Protocol to the CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict increased the minimum age for recruitment to 18 to match its definition of a child, updating the Convention to reflect the new international standard definition for recruitment age.⁵ The CRC and its Additional Protocol are international conventions adopted by the UN General Assembly, making them legal instruments subject to enforcement.

In 1990 the African Union established the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), modeled after the CRC. From its inception it set 18 as the minimum age for recruitment by linking recruitment age directly to its definition of a child (ACRWC, Arts. 2, 22). Like the CRC, the ACRWC is a legally binding document.

Some critics of conflict-related human rights instruments like the CRC and ACRWC point out that very few wars today are actually fought between nation states, and armed opposition groups typically claim immunity from agreements signed by their states' governments.⁶ However, both the CRC and ACRWC include sections mandating that states

⁵ Due to a special provision, the U.S. and Somalia were eligible to ratify the Protocol without having ratified the Convention; the U.S. signed and ratified the Protocol, but Somalia only signed the Protocol and never ratified it.

⁶ This debate is usually part of a larger complex debate regarding the value of UN and international legal instruments; while "legally binding and enforceable," there is no international mechanism established for

enforce adherence to the documents within their own boundaries. The ARCWC's clause states that: "States Parties to the present Charter shall take all necessary measures to ensure that no child shall take a direct part in hostilities and refrain, in particular, from recruiting any child" (Art. 22). Both of these documents also require states to protect civilians (significant proportions of whom are children) from harm during conflict.⁷ Both of these mandates are very difficult to enforce.

Over a period of approximately ten years, a long list of UN Security Council Resolutions has passed that bring attention to child rights during armed conflict. These resolutions address a number of specific issues. Protection from sexual abuse and inclusion in DDR programs (S/RES 1261, 1999) and addition of child protection to UN peacekeeping missions were two of the earliest resolutions passed (S/RES 1314, 2000) (Mazurana and Carlson, 2006). Additional resolutions directed the Secretary-General to publicly name all countries known to have children within its borders who have been forcefully recruited; requested that monitoring and reporting mechanisms be established or enhanced; called for better enforcement of international norms and laws against the use of child soldiers; and established a High Level Working Group on children and armed conflict (S/RES 1379, 1460, 1539, and 1612) (DDR-RC, 2008; Mazurana and Carlson, 2006). Most recently, S/RES 1882 raised the issues of killing and maiming of children, and rape and sexual abuse of children, to the level of "critical priorities," calling for increased

enforcement of these Conventions and Protocols and the Security Council's focus on states' sovereignty effectively keeps mechanisms from being established. Critics use this fact to support their belief that international law is ineffectual.

⁷ Notably, the ARCWC only mentions girls once, when defining 18 as the minimum age for marriage (Art. 21). It does include "sex" in its non-discrimination clauses and also includes an Article on Sexual Exploitation (Art. 27). The lack of explicit clauses relating to girls seems to indicate a lack of interest in, or understanding of, the special needs of girls, a common oversight at the time that it was established.

coordination between the Working Group and other UN committees to improve adherence to international norms (UN S/RES 1882, 2009).

In addition to the instruments related to rights of girls in armed conflict, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Congress on Women (1995), the UN Security Council's Resolution (S/RES) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000), and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1980) form the basis for the gendered discussion of human rights used in this thesis. The Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action (PFA) were the culmination of several years of regional meetings, with finalization of the international consensus occurring over a two week period during the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995). During the regional meetings, participants debated the notion of 'universal' human rights and the differences between 'equal' and 'equitable,' and established a list of 12 "critical areas of concern" representing the core challenges to attaining gender equality (UNESCAP, Beijing +15, para. 2). Two of these 12 areas of concern most critical to this thesis are women and armed conflict and the girl child. Notably, government representatives from all 189 countries present at the conference adopted the Declaration and PFA (UNESCAP, Beijing +15, para. 1). The conference and its resulting PFA are widely seen as a turning point in solidifying a broad consensus on women's and girls' rights and gender equality around the world and have influenced policy-making at all levels since the congress was held (UN Division for the Advancement of Women [UNDAW], 2008).

S/RES 1325 addresses a number of women's and girls' issues in relation to armed conflict. It calls attention to the special needs of women and girls during conflict, makes gender

perspectives central to UN peace efforts, and directs international actors to take steps to protect women and girls, calling specific attention to rape and other gender-based violence (S/RES 1325, 2000). The core rights included in both the Beijing Declaration and PFA and S/RES 1325 originated in CEDAW, which addressed a wide range of gender issues. As UNDAW explains, CEDAW “provides the basis for realizing equality between women and men through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life ... [including] education, health and employment. States parties agree to take all appropriate measures ... so that women can enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms” (UNDAW, 2008).

Specific to the context of this thesis analysis, the government of Sierra Leone has passed a number of gender and child-related rights-based laws since the war ended. Information about these newly afforded rights for women and children has been disseminated throughout the country via workshops and in schools, although if they ever become entrenched in Sierra Leonean culture, it will be far in the future. These laws include the Domestic Violence Act (2007) which establishes formal punishments for domestic violence and provides protections for victims, and the Devolution of Estates Act (2007) which codifies property rights for women and children in various inheritance situations (Sierra Leone Web, n.d.). The Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act (2009) addresses the lack of women’s rights in traditional marriages, and the Child Rights Act (2007) codified the promotion of the CRC and the ACRWC and amended several other acts that had previously included discriminatory language relating to children (Sierra Leone Web, n.d.). There is also some evidence that various customary or traditional laws have been established that address similar issues.

In 1997 a symposium hosted by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the NGO Working Group on the Convention of the Rights of the Child produced the previously mentioned Cape Town Principles and Best Practices, widely referred to as the Cape Town Principles. The symposium aimed specifically to establish 18 as the minimum age of recruitment into armed groups or forces and more generally to recommend “strategies for preventing recruitment of children ... and for demobilizing child soldiers and helping them reintegrate into society” (Cape Town Principles, 1997, p. 1). Over time, the Cape Town Principles “obtained recognition well beyond this original working group to become a key instrument to inform the development of international norms as well as shifts in policy at the national, regional, and international levels” (Paris Principles, 2007, p. 4).

In 2007, ten years after the Cape Town Principles, the UN’s Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict produced the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups, commonly known as the Paris Principles. The Paris Principles were based on a reevaluation of the earlier Cape Town document and the incorporation of new lessons learned during a decade of applying the Cape Town Principles to child protection practices in armed conflict settings. Clearly reflecting the human rights and child protection framework on which it is based, the problem the Paris Principles aims to address is stated succinctly: “[the] recruitment and use of children violates their rights and causes them physical, developmental, emotional, mental, and spiritual harm” (Paris Principles, 2007, p. 4).

The Paris Principles is the most current rights-based document addressing the topic of children associated with armed groups. It is also considered highly relevant to child protection practice due to its incorporation of lessons learned over more than ten years in areas of armed conflict and its consideration of international and humanitarian laws. Additionally, new programmatic priorities of community-based and participatory focus adopted by the broader humanitarian aid community are incorporated into the guidelines and recommendations of the Paris Principles. While these concepts are mentioned in the Cape Town Principles, they take on a more central role in the Paris Principles and are referenced repeatedly throughout the document. The critical role of participatory community-based action is clearly reflected in a statement from Section 3.14:

All stages of programme assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation activities to prevent the association of children with armed forces or armed groups and secure their release, provide protection and reintegrate them into civilian life should include the active participation of those communities concerned, including children. The views of children in particular, as well as the families and the communities to which children return, should always be sought (Paris Principles, 2007, pp. 10-11).

The Paris Principles also replaces the term ‘child soldier,’ which had been used in the Cape Town Principles, with the now-common ‘children associated with an armed force or armed group’ (p. 7).

Many of the recommendations for addressing the participation of children in armed conflict and their reintegration into communities both implicitly and explicitly address girls. The central inclusion of gender in the Paris Principles stands in stark contrast to the Cape Town Principles, which mentions girls just three times and offers only the vague recommendation that

“particular attention should be paid to the special needs of girls, and appropriate responses should be developed to this end” (Cape Town Principles, 1997, p. 6). The dramatic shift in attention toward inclusion of specific recommendations for girls, and acknowledgement of male entitlement and gendered experiences in armed conflict, demobilization, and reintegration, stem from a wave of research and field work on girls’ experiences that occurred in the ten year interim between the two documents. That research is discussed later in this chapter.

It is important to note that, as guidelines and recommendations, the Cape Town Principles and the Paris Principles are normative, but not legal documents. Nevertheless, the expectation is that these principles will be used and recommendations implemented by child protection practitioners. Further, there is also a hope “to increase their endorsement beyond actors who specialize in children’s rights,” an expansion that implicitly aims to include actors involved in DDR programs (Paris Principles, 2007, p. 4). However, the next section describes DDR and discusses ways in which children, and especially girls, are regularly left out of DDR processes despite these norms and guidelines.

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)

Formal assistance for reintegration of former combatants of all ages generally falls within DDR programming. To understand the challenges around reintegration of young mothers formerly associated with armed groups, it is important to understand the context of reintegration as one part of the larger DDR process. This section explains DDR and examines some of the ongoing issues with the process as a whole, particularly related to gender and children.

DDR definitions

DDR typically begins upon the signing of a negotiated peace accord and in many conflicts, such as Sierra Leone and Liberia, DDR may occur multiple times because accords often do not hold (DDR-RC, 2008). The primary purpose of DDR is to establish a lasting peace through multiple interventions with armed groups and combatants, a goal that results in an inherently security-based focus. Formal DDR is often managed by the UN, and their web-based DDR Resource Center (DDR-RC) is the primary clearinghouse for current information on the components of DDR, case studies and DDR-related research and references.⁸ The DDR-RC maintains a document called the Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS), which compiles DDR best practices and implementation recommendations. The DDR-RC (2008) defines the stages of DDR as:

Disarmament is the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. Disarmament also includes the development of responsible arms management programmes.

Demobilization is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups. The first stage of demobilization may extend from the processing of individual combatants in temporary centres to the massing of troops in camps designated for this purpose (cantonment sites, encampments, assembly areas or barracks). The second stage of demobilization encompasses the support package provided to the demobilized, which is called reinsertion.

Reintegration 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 time-frame, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility, and often necessitates long-term external assistance.

⁸ Other formal DDR programs include the Stockholm Initiative on DDR (SIDDR) and the Multi-donor Reintegration Programme (MDRP) (Leff, 2008).

As a focus of this thesis, the reintegration stage deserves additional explanation. Local and international NGOs manage most reintegration programs, often with funding and direction from UN agencies, World Bank or International Monetary Fund (IMF), western governments, and independent foundations (IDDRS, 2006). Most programs have similar components, and as DDR has evolved, a focus on community-based reintegration has become normative.⁹

Programs often focus on more than one of the following aspects of reintegration, but rarely take a holistic approach and provide assistance with all aspects: reunification of children and families; reduction of stigma; psychosocial support; formal or informal educational opportunities; skills training for economic opportunity and other income generation or livelihood training; and cash payments or allowances. Each of these factors is widely believed to increase the ability of former combatants to reintegrate into communities (IDDRS, 2006; Wessells, 2006a, 2006b), and most research suggests reintegration proves very difficult or impossible for those without some forms of assistance. Many studies have been conducted regarding how each of these components of reintegration programs independently influence community and family acceptance and how psychosocial and economic factors are often interconnected (Annan, Blattman, Carlson and Mazurana, 2008a, 2008b; Betancourt et al., 2008; Betancourt et al., 2010; Body, 2006; Wessells, 2006a, 2006b).¹⁰

⁹ See World Bank and USAID-funded programs, for instance.

¹⁰ For an alternate view, see Weinstein and Humphries who argue that their research findings indicate that DDR participation does not correlate to higher acceptance by families and communities, and acceptance is tied more directly to the “abusiveness of the unit in which he or she fought” (2005, p. 4).

Challenges to DDR

Assessments of the DDR process have drawn attention to aspects of DDR programming that have failed or resulted in unexpected outcomes. Highlighting several issues, Pietz (2007) notes that some DDR programs have been so poorly designed, funded and/or implemented that a gap of as much as two years separates the disarmament and reintegration phases of the program. This situation can create confusion, animosity, and a lack of trust in the DDR system, which may lead to long-term implications for peace (Jennings, 2008; Pietz, 2007; Peters, 2007). Moreover, the initial stage of DDR programming centers on weapons, which is reflective of its focus on rapid establishment of security in a post-conflict environment. Several studies, such as “The R-Phase of DDR Processes” by the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, examine how this security focus impacts other areas of participation in DDR and the subsequent reintegration process:

The debate is mainly centred around the question of whether DDR processes should ideally take a short-term, security-focused perspective, or else a more developmental approach. The preferred perspective influences the choice of target group as well as whether the [reintegration phase] should primarily provide short-term support, or instead be integrated into longer-term economic reconstruction programmes (Specker, 2008, p. v).

The debate over short-term versus long-term programming related to DDR is ongoing and complex. Many researchers and practitioners of DDR agree the entire process of DDR must be viewed as long-term (CSUCS, 2008, 2009; Pietz, 2007; Specker, 2008). Presently, long-term assistance is commonly seen as necessary only in the reintegration phase of DDR (DDR-RC, 2008). The DDR-RC’s definition of reintegration specifically notes that it often requires “long-term external assistance” (2008). Despite this official definition, reintegration support – where

available and when utilized – usually only provides support for a year or less, arguably not long enough for reintegration in post-conflict situations where resources and economic opportunities are scarce. Subsequently, several groups and authors, including CSUCS (2009), the Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children (WCRWC, 2002) and Blattman and Annan (2008) have drawn attention to the need for longer-term reintegration programs for all formerly associated members of armed groups. In the absence of long-term reintegration funding or agency support, they each argue for stronger linkages between development programs and reintegration programs. A longer-term need for assistance was also identified by McKay and Mazurana (2004) as being explicitly necessary for the most vulnerable returnees, including girls with children, a finding that is also supported by a longitudinal study of girls in Northern Uganda (Annan et al., 2008a, 2008b).

Successful implementation of all phases of DDR is widely believed to be key in establishing a long term peace in post-conflict settings (Body, 2008; Fusato, 2003). Yet, even the first step of identifying those individuals qualified for DDR assistance is complex and inevitably leaves out at least some of the most vulnerable participants in armed groups – women and children. This exclusion often makes their economic and social reintegration all the more difficult.

Gender and childhood in disarmament and demobilization

The UN has been operating DDR programs around the world for over 20 years (DDR-RC, 2008); for at least the first ten years the category of ex-combatant was generally taken as a uniformly male group. When sub-categories of DDR participants were considered, they

typically included a differentiation between adult males and male children, and/or a breakdown of combatants based on their affiliation with different fighting forces (DDR-RC, 2008). Women and girls associated with armed groups, and recognition of their needs for targeted DDR support, went largely unrecognized until approximately ten years ago. This oversight was primarily because few females went through DDR due to its structure and the fact that reports and studies that informed DDR excluded women and girls from consideration by characterizing them as voluntary camp followers.

As noted earlier in this chapter, S/RES 1325, adopted in 2000, made explicit the importance of the consideration of women's and girls' needs in DDR programming. The details of that resolution were based on ongoing research by several scholars and practitioners. Some of the early reports and articles from that research drew attention to the presence of women and girls associated with armed groups, and explored the roles females performed and their experiences (Brett, 2002; Keairns, 2002; Machel, 1996; Mazurana and McKay, 2001; Mazurana et al., 2002; McKay, 1998). These early studies exploded the widely accepted myth that females were only "camp wives" or sexual slaves, and drew attention to their active roles and also the dearth of assistance available to them in post-conflict situations. Moreover, they outlined the ways that DDR programs often exclude, or are avoided by, the most vulnerable members of armed groups, including children (especially girls) and women.

These researchers found that, despite the benefits of going through DDR processing centers, such as cash allowances, health services, and education or skills training, a number of reasons exist for avoidance of DDR by females. Some of the reasons include a lack of gender-

specific support for women and girls in DDR centers and/or a wish to remain anonymous (McKay and Mazurana, 2004). Many girls and women are unwilling to participate in DDR or leave their demobilization centers early out of fear of further rape and abuse (Denov, 2010; McKay and Mazurana, 2004). Many more fear stigma and possible rejection associated with being seen as a rebel or combatant, and try to keep their past a secret (Coulter, 2009; Coulter et al., 2008; Denov, 2010; Kilroy, 2008; McKay and Mazurana, 2004; McKay, Robinson, Gonsalves, and Worthen, 2006). In Sierra Leone, Coulter (2009) found that fear around the possible consequences of having a photo taken for the DDR identification card was a primary reason that girls and women avoided DDR.

In addition to avoidance, outright exclusion of women and girls from DDR occurs regularly. One of the primary reasons given is that they are not identified as ‘combatants,’ either by their commanding officers, or by the UN personnel at the disarmament checkpoints (Coulter et al., 2008; McKay and Mazurana, 2004). This non-identification originates primarily from a common DDR requirement that combatants must turn in a weapon (Denov, 2010; McKay and Mazurana, 2004). In many cases, women and children who fight do not have their own weapons, but share them with other fighters. In other cases, weapons held by women and children are reportedly taken away and given to others favored by commanders, including males and non-combatant family members of rebel leaders who ultimately benefit from DDR (Coulter, 2009; Denov, 2005, 2010; McKay and Mazurana, 2004). Moreover, the weapons requirement for combatants often overshadows the parallel rule that children affiliated with armed groups are eligible for DDR regardless of weapon presentation (IDDRS, 2006). As a result of avoidance

and exclusion, far fewer women and children associated with armed groups go through the DDR process than are actually present in armed groups.

The result for those who do not go through DDR is typically *spontaneous reintegration*, as children and women return to their home (or other) communities on their own, looking for families and other support systems (McKay and Mazurana, 2004). These communities are often ill-prepared to respond to the needs of returnees due to poverty-related challenges, fear of ex-combatants, and other physical and psychosocial effects of war.

Gender and childhood in reintegration: program challenges

Since the initial push to address the experiences and needs of girls and women formerly associated with armed groups, researchers have come to the general consensus that reintegration should inherently be situated in the context of family and community, and therefore must incorporate community norms, community institutions, and community well-being (Denov, 2005, 2007; Kilroy, 2008; Farwell and Cole, 2002; McKay and Mazurana, 2004; Wessells, 2006a). Further, situating reintegration into a larger vision of long-term community well-being, including economic and social development, reduces the impression that former combatants are being “rewarded” for their roles in the conflict (Body, 2005; Jennings, 2008; Leff, 2008).

For women and girls, a number of challenges persist. Social stigma is a primary hurdle for many returnees in attaining community acceptance, especially girls and young women who have had children in the bush (McKay and Mazurana, 2004). Many reintegration programs include, or even focus on, what is often referred to as ‘sensitization’ of communities to prepare them for the return of formerly associated children and youth. Sensitization activities are often at

the community level, rather than an individual or family level, and center around the process of educating communities about international human rights norms and peace and reconciliation processes (McKay and Mazurana, 2004; UNIFEM, 2004; Stark, et al., 2009). Sensitization often occurs through radio or other public media, and highlights the returnees' roles as victims (UNIFEM, 2004). Much of the literature on child reintegration calls out the inadequacy of sensitization alone to address stigma, and recommends approaches that include a wider range of interventions such as mediation and conflict resolution (McKay and Mazurana, 2004).

Several studies focus on post-conflict educational opportunities and argue that formal and informal education is critical to reintegration of children, though significantly lacking, particularly for girls and girl mothers (Betancourt et al., 2008; McKay and Mazurana, 2004; WCRWC, 2002, 2008). The hurdles to education for girls make it difficult or impossible for them to benefit from the proven links between education and economic opportunities, psychosocial support, and improved community perception (Betancourt et al., 2008; Wessells, 2006b). Though some reintegration programs address these concerns, cultural stigmas against the education of girls, and particularly against continued education of pregnant or lactating girls, are compounded by financial constraints of programs. Some reintegration programs provide accelerated formal schooling designed specifically for the needs of older girls and women who missed multiple years of their education, while others focus on basic literacy (Betancourt et al., 2008; Coulter, 2009).

Livelihoods and economic opportunities within post-conflict contexts are consistently identified as a concern for women and children as they attempt to reintegrate into their families

and communities (Annan et al., 2008b; Boothby et al., 2006; Wessells, 2006b). As Boothby points out, "When they go home, their struggles are going to be largely economic — as much, if not more so, than mental health or some other concerns" (as cited in Felton, 2008). Some rather controversial approaches to improving the economic status of all former combatants incorporate variations on cash payments. Lump sum cash payments have been frequently used in disarmament and demobilization processes, as governments and international DDR sponsors incentivize combatants to turn in weapons and leave their armed groups. This approach has increasingly come under scrutiny due to unintended consequences such as increased regional small arms trade, and a community perception that combatants are being rewarded despite crimes and atrocities they committed (IDDRS, 2006; Isima, 2004; Swarbrick, 2007). Additionally, cash payments to children have been discouraged after it became clear that children often become targets of older fighters or commanders who take the cash, and that they often do not have training or capacity to spend the money in ways that benefitted them in the long term (Molloy, 2004; Wessells, 2006b; Willibald, 2006). Further, cash payments are often given to male fighters and their 'dependent wives' are bypassed, leaving many women and girls to fend for themselves or otherwise unable to benefit from these programs (McKay and Mazurana, 2004; UNIFEM, 2004). Many researchers now encourage concentration of cash benefits for children and women in the reintegration phase, and point to a need for conditionality agreements, "strict supervision" (Willibald, 2006) or monitoring of spending (Boothby et al., 2006; Felton, 2008). To emphasize this shift, the IDDRS (2006) explicitly states that "no monetary payments should be given to children during the demobilization phase" (sect. 8.5).

Marginal economic status prevails for returning women and children, particularly when education or skills are lacking or limited (WCRWC, 2002). Exacerbating their dismal personal economic status, depressed economic conditions in post-conflict countries provide a further challenge to reintegrating youth, and scarcity of resources can negatively impact a family's or community's level of acceptance (Annan et al., 2008a, 2008b; Denov, 2007; WCRWC, 2002). As one study of girls formerly associated with armed groups makes clear, positive economic opportunities can indirectly impact a number of challenges tied to reintegration:

For these girls, having an income conferred not only purchasing power but also prestige and a powerful boost in self-esteem. ... having cash gave them status and a positive place in their villages. Some girls even reported being sought after as marriage partners due to their business success (Wessells, 2006b).

The diverse benefits of a focus on livelihoods have been increasingly highlighted in reintegration literature and programs, but not many programs are designed for success (Blattman and Annan, 2008). Microenterprise and business training efforts have proven to be successful in many cases, particularly where loans are available to entire communities (Body, 2005; Wessells, 2006b). However, parallel programs providing skills training rarely include market assessments, long-term training, or options for non-traditional skills, leaving thousands of participants minimally trained and competing for the same types of jobs in a stagnant post-conflict economy (Annan et al., 2008a, 2008b; Body, 2005; Coulter, 2009; Peters, 2007; Specker, 2008).

Finally, health concerns and access to health care register high on the list of issues facing reintegrating women and children and, therefore, some reintegration programs include health care. In some cases, family planning and other health-related life skills are incorporated into educational support programs. Many reports identify poor access to health care services as a

significant challenge to reintegration of children, and girls with children in particular (Annan et al., 2008b; Blattman and Annan, 2008; McKay and Mazurana 2004; UNIFEM, 2004). Two of the most prevalent health issues faced by girls formerly associated with armed groups are sexually transmitted diseases and serious physical injuries caused by forced sex and/or unattended childbirth (McKay and Mazurana, 2004).

Very few girls have access to all, or any, of the needed support outlined above. Most programs have limited funding and therefore relatively few beneficiaries or initiatives they can support. For instance, while some programs offer educational support or livelihoods support, they do not always offer both. In some cases girls are referred to other programs or agencies if one program lacks support in a certain area. Ultimately, insufficient funding of reintegration initiatives is considered one of the most difficult challenges to overcome, given the high levels of need and long-term development necessary for sustainable reintegration (Felton, 2008; Specker, 2008).

Gender and DDR in Sierra Leone

Disarmament and demobilization

By the end of Sierra Leone's DDR, approximately 72,500 combatants had gone through demobilization, including only 4,751 women and 6,787 children; of the children, only 506 girls were demobilized (DDR-RC, 2008; McKay and Mazurana, 2004). Compared to the estimated percentages of females (10 to 30 percent) and children (50 percent) affiliated with each armed group, the number of demobilized women and children is dramatically lower than would be expected. Moreover, girls were estimated at approximately one third to one half of total children

affiliated with most armed groups and fighting forces, and the number of girls demobilized reflects an even greater bias against them in the DDR process than boy children (McKay and Mazurana, 2004). These discrepancies between women's and girls' presence in armed groups versus participation in DDR occurred (and continue to occur) despite the explicit earlier call by the UN in S/RES 1325 to draw women and children into the DDR process (Coulter, 2009). Ironically, the DDR process in Sierra Leone is noted as a success by the UN, despite the lack of adherence to S/RES 1325 and the relatively low levels of participation by women and children. Yet the UN and many researchers cite DDR in Sierra Leone as a best practices model, particularly the disarmament and demobilization stages. Leff (2008), for instance, argues that in Sierra Leone the "large number of weapons collected along with the high percentage of demobilized combatants is indicative of a well-implemented DDR programme" (p. 27).

However, examples of the program's failures to include and address the needs of women and children appear even in the DDR-RC description of the program (2008). For instance, early in the DDR process children were required to present a weapon; yet in later phases they could enter without one. By the later phases, most children held the incorrect belief that they were still required to present a weapon to enter DDR. More disturbingly, child DDR participants in Sierra Leone almost universally report being required to both present a weapon and perform a weapons test to prove they were familiar with use of the weapon (McKay and Mazurana, 2004), indicating that personnel at disarmament centers improperly applied the DDR eligibility criteria during later phases. For those who made it through disarmament, problems persisted. For instance, Denov (2010) reported that one girl said, "The [demobilization] centre became chaotic and disorganized.... [The boys were] harassing us for sex. I didn't feel safe and my friend and I

decided to leave and go to Freetown because of that” (p. 250). Some challenges to DDR participation, however, were not directly related to the DDR program itself. For instance, many women and girls reported being told by their commanders that if they went through DDR they would be prosecuted as war criminals and, therefore, they avoided the program (Coulter, 2009; Coulter et al., 2008; Denov, 2010).

Reintegration

Whether arriving on their own or after participating in DDR, once girls settled in a community and began the process of reintegrating into civilian life they faced enormous challenges related to culture and community perceptions of them. Importantly, the status of young Sierra Leonean women who returned home after they had been associated with armed groups was “ambiguous” because “they were neither girls nor fully women according to cultural convention” (Coulter, 2009, p. 57). Complicating their reintegration, many girls returned with behaviors and attitudes that assisted their survival in the bush, but appeared ‘wild’ or disruptive to their communities (Coulter, 2009; Coulter et al., 2008; Denov, 2010; McKay and Mazurana, 2004).

Often communities found women and girls formerly associated with armed groups even more difficult to accept due to their break from normal social roles (Coulter, 2009; Coulter et al, 2008; McKay, 2008). For instance, most of these women and children witnessed atrocities, and many participated in them. Even those who did not perform atrocities were often perceived to have taken part in them by civilians (Coulter, 2009). Much literature focuses on their status as both victims and perpetrators of violence and the ways in which those differing roles impact

them psychologically and also affect family and community acceptance (Betancourt et al., 2010; Blattman and Annan, 2008; Denov, 2005, 2007; McKay, 2008; McKay and Mazurana, 2004; Wessells, 2006a). However, while the western world focused on the victimization of these women and children, many communities stigmatized all former members of rebel groups as being “wicked” (Coulter, 2009, p. 51). Coulter (2009) sums up the complexity of the dual roles this way:

On the one hand we have the children, considered by most Westerners as innocent victims, and on the other we have the “evil” rebels whose brutality has been condemned by all. ... This argument can also be related to the presence of female fighters among the rebel forces. ... There is no doubt that the rebels committed brutal atrocities, but the rebels also consisted mostly of girls, boys, young women, and [young] men (p. 54).

Moreover, Shepler’s research indicates that gender played a significant role in the level of stigmatization experienced after the war in Sierra Leone. She found “that in many cases it is easier for a boy to be accepted after amputating the hands of villagers than it is for a girl to be accepted after being the victim of rape” (as cited in McKay and Mazurana, 2004, p. 37). While community stigmas impact women and girls disproportionately to men and boys, girls and women who return with children born during captivity are faced with even further challenges (McKay and Mazurana, 2004). For women and girls with stigmatized “rebel children,” cultural attitudes about rape and single motherhood often exacerbate other common tensions between females formerly associated with armed groups and their communities or families. Some of those tensions include economic stress and limited resources, or perceived violations of social gender and behavior norms. These and other multilayered challenges inherent in their roles as both mothers and females create a more complicated set of needs and expectations than for boys

and men, and cause them to be identified in international circles as “extremely vulnerable” (McKay and Mazurana, 2004; Paris Principles, 2007).

Social capital

Over the past decade, the concept of social capital has been heavily used in development circles as an organizing construct. The World Bank, Save the Children, USAID, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), for example, all employ the concept of social capital in programs with diverse goals such as livelihood development, food security, environmental sustainability and women’s empowerment (Narayan, 1999; Save the Children, n.d.; UNFPA, 2009; WB, 2010). Social capital has been given several different but related definitions by various researchers and organizations, but the one used in this analysis is adapted from Woolcock (2001) who argues that a general consensus on the definition is “the norms and networks that facilitate collective action” (p. 10). The outcomes or results of social capital are relational factors such as trust. Fukuyama (2001) stresses that the informal norms that social capital is founded on

must lead to cooperation in groups and therefore are related to ... honesty, the keeping of commitments, reliable performance of duties, reciprocity, and the like (p. 1-2).

Social capital is typically differentiated into three types: bonding, bridging, and linking capital. Bonding refers to the relationships between “family members, close friends, and neighbors” while bridging refers to “more distant friends, associates and colleagues” (Lehtonen, 2004). Bonding and bridging capital occur along horizontal dimensions, while linking capital

occurs vertically, creating connections between networks that may have access to different types of power (Lehtonen, 2004; Woolcock, 2001).

It is commonly agreed in current literature that social capital has both positive and negative aspects (Lehtonen, 2004). The negative dimensions are often manifest in exclusionary networks, power differentials within and between networks, and even the norms themselves, as can be seen in socially normative discriminatory treatment of women, for example (Wilson, 1997). These negatives pose particular challenges when examining social capital through a lens of gender and human rights. In response to critiques over these problems, many development actors argue that horizontal and vertical strengthening of social capital, combined with expansion of the crosscutting ties between networks, can significantly increase the success of development programs by purposely connecting networks with differing capacities, resources, and power structures (Leff, 2008). Further, inclusive programs taking into account all stakeholders, participatory approaches, and a focus on empowerment are all ways to attempt to mitigate the negative side of social capital.

The idea of social capital has gained a foothold in the World Bank as an organizing tool for much of its development work. They argue that social capital is “critical for poverty alleviation and sustainable human and economic development” (World Bank, 2010, para. 1). UNFPA (2009) further argues that focusing on social capital allows development programs to place “not just the human being at the center but above all the relations among human beings. [Relationships] are important because they constitute the basis on which moral communities are built” (p. 80). Through improved relationships and increased social capital, it is argued, women,

the poor, and other marginalized groups can become empowered and negative, exclusionary social norms such as sexism and discrimination can be broken down.

War and Social Capital

Wars have an enormous impact on traditional (peacetime) social capital through disruption of trust, social networks, civil society, and reciprocity (Leff, 2008). The brutal nature of Sierra Leone's civil war is often described as having seriously damaged the very fabric of society by turning social norms upside down and pitting families and neighbors against one another. As Leff (2008) notes, "violence contributes to social fragmentation by polarising communities and forcing individuals to take sides during the conflict. Citizens are likely to withdraw from institutions with crosscutting ties, retreating to formal groups based on greater alliances, such as race and religion" (p. 13).

Further, the use of violence and rape, and specifically the perpetration of violent acts by women and children in Sierra Leone – often against their own communities and families - shattered nearly every conceivable social and cultural norm in Sierra Leone. Leff (2008) argues that "Post-conflict societies that have been involved in human rights abuses and mass killings are often left with low levels of trust and social capital" (p. 13). Post-war Sierra Leone provides a prime example of this situation.

During the war survival required that communities and combatants alike establish new social networks and modes of cooperation. But once the fighting ended they were faced with the prospect of establishing new networks within a context of peace, or in some cases rebuilding old

pre-war networks. As communities began the process of recovery, some of the first reparations they attended to helped to reestablish social capital through cooperative civic and economic activities. Markets were recreated, roads and schools rebuilt, agricultural lands replanted, and traditional groups and ceremonies reconstituted. Thus, the social capital necessary to recreate social order and increase economic development was rebuilt within communities. Notably, the DDR process in Sierra Leone included former combatants in many of these activities, and some researchers argue that participation in the rebuilding processes contributed to the overall success of Sierra Leone's DDR program, and specifically to successful reintegration of former combatants (IDDRS, 2006; Leff, 2008).

However, as described earlier in this chapter, Sierra Leone's DDR was not the overwhelming success for all participants in the conflict that the UN and others might argue. Just one example of the problems with Sierra Leone's DDR is that very few women and girls who were associated with armed groups went through the DDR process. Critically, this also means that very few women and girls benefited from the newly formed cooperative ties and building of social capital within the communities to which they moved or returned. Girls, and particularly girls with children of rape and forced marriage, were the most likely group to be left out of the process and therefore faced disproportionate hardships in gaining access to social capital and its outcomes such as trust and cooperation.

Social capital and the PAR

Social capital is well-suited as an analytical framework for the PAR study, and for community-based reintegration more broadly, for a number of reasons. First, reintegration, at its

most basic level, is the attempt to establish positive social and economic relationships between ex-combatants and their communities. Second, community-based reintegration focuses more attention on relationships and less on individuals. Third, one of the more powerful aspects of social capital is its ability to address social and economic issues simultaneously, a feature that proves beneficial in assessing the needs of ex-combatants. Fourth, a social capital framework is consistent with PAR methods and principles in that it “provides a ‘lens’ for finding solutions to problems that build on local knowledge and local institutions,” (UNFPA, 2009, p. 81). And finally, when addressing the problems of severely marginalized groups such as young mothers formerly associated with armed groups, a central theme is their social exclusion due to stigma and their lack of economic or psychosocial support, which are directly related to their lack of access to social capital.

Conclusion

As a critical component to any long-term cessation of hostilities, and a widely recognized key to successful community development in post-conflict settings, the challenge of reintegrating formerly associated children will continue to be a widely debated and analyzed process. Given that notions of human rights and gender equality are deeply embedded in the philosophies of the international humanitarian community, reintegration efforts will likely continue to be driven by actors operating under those international norms and protocols. As I have shown throughout this chapter, these norms and protocols have been developed using case studies and best practices developed by experts in their respective fields. These norms are iterative, not static, and therefore they can and do change over the course of time. The application of these normative

and legal instruments is not only intended for policy-level impact. Improved treatment of women and children is, after all, something that must also happen at the community level to make a difference in the lives of individuals. For international human rights and gender norms to take hold, community-level relationships must be changed, and the concept of social capital is an effective organizing tool for developing ways to influence those relationship changes. The next chapter describes how, in the spirit of moving human rights and gender norms and best practices forward at the community level, the PAR was designed to help young mothers formerly associated with armed groups find ways to improve their own situations in their communities as they attempt to reintegrate in complex post-conflict settings.

CHAPTER 3

THE PAR GIRL MOTHERS STUDY

Introduction

Though ‘participation’ is a stated best practice component of many post-conflict programs, participatory action research methods have been rarely used in these settings.¹¹ This PAR study is thought to be the first to implement participatory action research as a means to facilitate community-based reintegration of girl mothers formerly associated with armed groups. It is also thought to be the first effort to use highly participatory methods to promote empowerment within this marginalized target group.

The impetus for the study came from a set of policy and program recommendations developed by Susan McKay and Dyan Mazurana in their book *Where are the girls? Girls in fighting forces in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Mozambique: Their lives during and after war* (2004). In the first in-depth comparative analysis of its kind, the study combined historic documentary data and several hundred interviews with girls, young women and NGO representatives to provide a comprehensive picture of what the lives of girls associated with armed groups entail, both during and after conflict. Their findings have been used by

¹¹ There are very few examples of PAR methods used in post-conflict settings, and those projects vary drastically in scope, intent, and level of participation by study subjects. See for example the “War-torn Societies Project” (Johannsen, 2001) and the 2002 study by the WCRWC “Participatory Research Study with Adolescents and Youth in Sierra Leone” which notably does not incorporate “action” into its title though the intent is clearly to instigate social changes and economic opportunities for youth.

international aid communities and field researchers dealing with child soldiers including the UN, child protection organizations, and DDR implementing agencies; the findings also form the basis of the gender-based discussion on DDR and reintegration in Chapter Two.

The preliminary exploration of participatory research with representative samples of girl mothers began with initial field work in Sierra Leone in 2003, conducted by Susan McKay and Mary Burman of the University of Wyoming. In 2005 and 2006 two conferences were held with child protection and psychosocial experts in Bellagio, Italy at the Rockefeller Study and Conference Center. The PAR study was then developed by three psychologists: McKay, Angela Veale of University College Cork, Ireland, and Michael Wessells of Columbia University. Miranda Worthen, a PhD student in epidemiology at University of California Berkeley later became the fourth co-investigator (these four individuals are hereafter referred to as “the co-investigators”). The home academic institution of the project is the University of Wyoming, which oversees the internal review board (IRB) approval process for research with human subjects.

The PAR obtained a significant amount of funding from a variety of sources over the course of development and implementation of the study. During the initial exploratory stages start-up funding was provided by a University of Wyoming basic research grant, and the Rockefeller Foundation funded the two conferences in Bellagio, Italy. Subsequent conference funding was provided by the Compton Foundation, and longer-term funding for the study and conferences came from Oak Foundation and Pro Victimis Foundation.

The PAR partnership

True to the spirit of participatory action research, the PAR study design initially established partnerships between the organizers, eleven NGOs in three countries, and the PAR girl mother participants at 22 field sites.¹² All told, there were dozens of NGO workers and affiliated partners and 655 PAR participants who had over 1200 children who were also impacted by the PAR.

The NGO partner organizations chose two field sites in areas where they worked based on their prior knowledge of populations of girl mothers formerly associated with armed groups and other vulnerable community girl mothers. A representative from each NGO attended extensive training on participatory action research and the study design. To facilitate the research aspect of the PAR and build capacity at each site, academics from local universities were enlisted for the study after the PAR was well established in the field sites. They provided support and guidance to the participants in documenting their activities and defining evaluation indicators that were meaningful to the participants themselves. The partner NGOs and in-country academics within each country formed three “country teams,” which held meetings periodically throughout the course of the study. Additionally, Western and African academics met in Dakar, Senegal in February of 2009 to discuss demographic and survey instruments.

¹² The PAR began with 11 NGO partners and 22 field sites, but one agency withdrew from the project, making the final project count ten NGOs and 20 field sites. The partner NGOs are: Christian Brothers (CB; Sierra Leone), Christian Children's Fund (CCF; Sierra Leone), Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL), National Network for Psychosocial Care (NNePCA; Sierra Leone), Save the Children Liberia, Touching Humanity in Need of Kindness (THINK; Liberia), Caritas (Northern Uganda), Concerned Parents Association (CPA; Northern Uganda), Save the Children Uganda (withdrew from the PAR), Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO; Northern Uganda), and World Vision (WV; Uganda). (See Appendix A for a list of all 20 sites.)

Throughout the study, all partners developed new capacities and skills sets. Importantly, new capacities also were developed by the NGO partners and the in-country academics who rarely work together on projects. Also, the western academics learned a great deal through the process as well. The academic-NGO partnership in this research was one of the many aspects of the PAR that set it apart from traditional academic or development projects.

Each of the field sites had on-site facilitators assigned by the partner NGO and trained in the PAR model. Their primary responsibilities were to provide guidance and advice to the PAR participants, facilitate meetings and develop community-level relationships, and help identify areas where capacity building was needed. The majority of the groups had few or minimally literate members; at these sites the facilitators also assisted in recording meeting notes, writing monthly site reports and documenting the groups' activities. While the level of involvement of facilitators varied from site to site, the advisory and support roles they played proved essential to the functioning of PAR groups, a topic explored further in Chapter Five.

Once the study was underway, three annual meetings were held in Kampala, Uganda, to review the progress of the PAR, reflect on challenges and lessons learned, and jointly assess the need for macro or micro changes to the project. Girl mother representatives from at least two PAR sites in each country attended the 2007 and 2008 meetings and participated in joint meetings with the organizers, NGO partners, funders, and academics. The organizers facilitated meetings, and the country teams and girl mothers all shared ideas, experiences, stories and core learning with one another. Meetings were held in English, and language barriers were addressed through translation of all meetings the girl mothers attended. A final meeting in 2009 focused on

exploring ways to scale up the project; linking PAR participants and partner NGOs with national and international agencies and other organizations; planning field work for assessment of the PAR's impact; and the process of creating reports and disseminating findings.

As the study moves through its final phase, evaluation of PAR outcomes is finishing. Evaluation has taken, or is taking place on several levels, reflecting the different types of data gathering performed for the study. Often with the assistance of the facilitators or the country academics, the girl mothers at the field sites performed a number of data collection tasks and subsequent analyses, which varied by site. Most sites compiled monthly meeting reports, and some groups documented their activities through photos, videos, and written descriptions. Most groups also identified indicators of changes that held meaning for them. At some sites, participants interviewed one another and community members. Over the course of the PAR, most groups gathered their materials into a collection of communally owned documentation of their processes and activities during the PAR. Toward the end of the study, when financial support at the field sites ended, the groups met to assess how they had benefitted from the PAR, identify areas where they still needed improvement in their lives, and planned ways to try to address ongoing needs. The research and evaluation of the PAR by the girls themselves would not be considered academically rigorous, yet it holds significant value to them and their communities, and additionally provides qualitative data for further academically oriented analyses.

Another level of data gathering and evaluation builds on the activities of the girl mothers at the field sites and incorporates more traditionally academic research data. Field workers and

facilitators periodically submitted reports to the NGO partners and co-investigators. After the PAR was well-established at the field sites, demographic data for each girl mother was collected, compiled, and analyzed. Additionally, toward the end of the field site financial support the academics in each country performed a survey of participants at each site, developed in partnership with the co-investigators using indicators originally established by girl mother participants. Field site visits were conducted during the study, and field notes and interviews were collected. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation took place through country team reports and the annual Kampala meetings, and final evaluative ethnographic interviews were conducted at several sites in each of the three countries.

All of these materials have been, and continue to be, compared across the three countries by the co-investigators, who authored a report and obtained feedback from NGO partners and girls themselves before disseminating the findings internationally to child protection and other development agencies and organizations. Country teams also developed plans for dissemination of both local findings and the wider project findings. As a critical element of the PAR's philosophy, community ownership of all information gained from the research is established by providing the organizers' report and country team reports to the PAR groups and their communities. Moreover, the PAR girl mothers' groups retain ownership of all their documentation materials.

Guiding principles of PAR – “Do no harm”

Early in the development of the project, the organizers established a set of guiding principles for the PAR study, broadly referred to as “Do No Harm” (McKay, personal

communication, October 8, 2009). At the heart of the principles is the explicit delineation between the PAR as community-based research for social change and more traditional programs that predefine the needs of beneficiaries, dictate the process and implementation of projects, and expect quantifiable outcomes. The organizational difference between the two models can be described as horizontal (PAR) versus top-down (traditional programs). The PAR philosophy focuses on egalitarian methods that the participant girl mothers can tailor to their own situations in the communities to which they returned. The principles are broad and generalizable enough to apply to local conditions and the significantly different contexts of each country and field site. For instance, the population of Northern Uganda has been living in camps for internally displaced people (IDPs) for many years, and much of the population is only recently starting to move back to their home communities. Conversely, in Sierra Leone and Liberia most people left IDP camps and settled into communities soon after the war's end, six or more years ago. Differences like these significantly impact the environments and needs of PAR participants in these countries, making flexibility in the program design necessary.

The guiding principles identify three central definitions critical to the study:

- Girl Mother: any female formerly associated with an armed force or group who was impregnated and/or gave birth before the age of 18 years.
- Child of a girl mother: any person under the age of 18 years born of a girl mother.
- Participatory Action Research: cooperative research that engages community people as participants in generating and using knowledge for positive social change. (McKay, personal communication, October 8, 2009).

Taken as a whole, the principles reflect the thoughtful intentionality which is central to the PAR. The stated goal is to facilitate the empowerment of “the targeted group (girl mothers) within the community in order to inspire communities to engage in social change, which can impact

authoritative bodies to positively influence the targeted population and, ultimately, the community.” As the goal implies, the purpose of the research is “to stimulate social change,” with a desired result of “movement toward improved lives of girl mothers and their children and other vulnerable groups” (McKay, personal communication, October 8, 2009).

The principles aim to ensure that the PAR process follows international human rights standards, the foundation of international participatory humanitarian work. Some of the human rights-based protocols include protection of confidentiality, informed consent, a Code of Conduct for all PAR workers, not making promises, and not raising expectations. Additional components of this mandate, “respect for cultural values” and suspension of judgment, create more complex challenges in relation to the human rights framework. While remaining sensitive to cultural values and practices and recognizing that they are “more than face value,” the PAR principles also require that “no cultural values that would be oppressive to women and children should be protected” and that the PAR should aim to strengthen “healthy and supportive cultural values” (McKay, personal communication, October 8, 2009).

The difficulty of maintaining respect for cultural values while simultaneously mandating that the PAR stimulate social change poses potentially thorny, yet manageable, conflicts. One example from the PAR was the adoption by one Sierra Leone PAR group of a social norm regarding pregnancy. Because tradition in Sierra Leone mandates that pregnant girls drop out of school, the group created a by-law that any member who chose to go to school would be expelled not only from school, but also from the PAR funding support if she became pregnant. This by-law clearly harmed the girls who were no longer funded by the group, as they were denied not

only the continuation of their education but also potentially the other benefits of belonging to the PAR group. This situation raises the question of when facilitators could or should intervene if a group, while making its own decisions, selects actions that contradict the human rights framework. In essence the answer is yes; facilitators should encourage reflection on and assessment of such decisions, yet not dictate what the group decides.

Other challenges to the “Do No Harm” principles included community jealousies over the improved status of some of the participants, raised expectations of some participants who may not be able to sustain the benefits of PAR, and increased tensions over money or activities in some personal relationships (Kampala PAR Meeting Proceedings, 2007). These types of apparent contradictions between the intentions and impacts of the PAR are further explored in the analysis in Chapter Five.

The PAR “Do No Harm” principles also state that there should be “no research without intended action.” As mentioned in the previous section, a core element of this principle is community ownership of the research outcomes. Within the PAR framework, research cannot be an end in itself, unlike traditional academic-based research projects that often produce “knowledge for knowledge’s sake” and result in no improvement of the lives of study participants. Instead, in PAR, action is a component of each step in the ongoing process. Participants gather information about their problems, decide how to address the problems and act on their decisions; they then assess the results of the action, and, if necessary, revisit the problem and take new actions – all for the purpose of creating social change for themselves and on a wider scale in their communities.

The final aspect of the PAR's guiding principles is a mantra that was repeated by all of the participants over the course of the two year study: "If it doesn't come from the girls, it isn't PAR." As a touchstone of sorts, the PAR facilitators, NGO representatives, and organizers repeatedly asked themselves "Does it come from the girls?" when questions arose about how to address an issue or tackle a challenge. This question helped them remain on target with the PAR methodology, maintain the highly participatory aspect of the PAR, and encourage the process of empowerment.

Most NGO partners cited this hands-off approach to managing the project as being difficult to adopt. The majority of the programs they run are not highly participatory or research based, and their agencies' philosophies toward beneficiaries differ dramatically from that of the PAR model. As one NGO partner put it:

Some [agencies] don't think the community they work with has the capacity; they think that if they listen to the community they will not do what you want them to. [They] also think [they] can do *for* people.

...

Giving [the girls] that freedom is really unique. Usually we design the projects and bring them [to the beneficiaries]. Reporting, management, planning, we have different projects that are designed for different things. For PAR we wait; we wait for them to tell us what THEY have designed. [With PAR] we see a different level of participation; we just provide the education, the knowledge they need to do it. We guide them. The fact [is] that it is their own ... It is so important for them to have gained [this knowledge and confidence], and they will not lose that. ... Imagine! The funding has stopped and they are still together! (Massam, Int. 53).

As these observations indicate, the NGO partner found the PAR model very different from normative NGO agency approaches, and specifically from his agency's other programs. Yet he

clearly found the model valuable and expressed surprise that girl mother participants appeared to be sustaining not only their new capacities, but also their group participation.

Site implementation of PAR

Because no two sites implemented the PAR in exactly the same way, it would be difficult to describe all of the many approaches used at each of the 20 sites in this thesis. However, understanding some of the similarities and differences in the set-up and functioning of the sites helps contextualize the analysis in this paper. This section will therefore describe the PAR study for all three countries, but I only cite examples or stories from Sierra Leone since that country is the focus of the analysis.

Due to prior programs at their field sites, most partner NGOs had existing relationships with community leaders which helped to smooth the way for the PAR study. At most sites, the first stages of the PAR included outreach to community leaders, establishment of community-based advisory committees, recruitment of girl mothers, and community meetings for consultation about the PAR. Community leaders were sought for support of the project, and at many sites obtaining their approval was critical before the rest of the process could begin. In small villages in Sierra Leone, for instance, the paramount chief must be informed of and approve of activities in the chiefdom; skipping this step could jeopardize the future of any project.

The basic criteria for participants at each site were developed as part of the study design: each group should consist of 30 participants with the group evenly split inasmuch as possible between 1) young mothers who had become pregnant or had a child prior to age 18 when they

were formerly associated with armed groups, and 2) other vulnerable young mothers in the community who had also become pregnant or had a child before age 18.¹³ Recruitment of girl mothers followed several different methods, often driven by the community makeup or the level of prior knowledge of the presence of formerly associated girl mothers at the site. The field site facilitator might ask one or two people from the community to name girl mothers they knew who had been associated with armed groups. These collaborators were community leaders, teachers, or female heads of women's groups or traditional societies. After collecting several names, the facilitator spoke with the identified girl mothers individually or as a group, explained the PAR, and asked these participants to recruit other girl mothers who fit the target description. This method had overall positive outcomes, though in some cases the final group was skewed toward formerly associated girl mothers. Skewing in either direction sometimes happened due to the makeup of the community at the field site, which may have been a center of armed conflict, or conversely, not directly impacted by fighting and therefore with fewer formerly associated girls.

A second method of recruitment was a short series of door-to-door interviews. In this case the PAR facilitator moved from home to home explaining the PAR study and asked for any young women who fit the description of the target group. The interviewees would then direct the facilitator to homes where they knew of young mothers who might have been associated or were otherwise vulnerable in the community, and the facilitator followed up at these homes. In several instances there were girl mothers in a community who denied their former association

¹³ Though the project was designed to be split between formerly associated girl mothers and other 'community' girl mothers to avoid further stigmatizing the target group, the criteria were differently interpreted/applied in several sites; some sites were made up almost entirely of *either* girl mothers formerly associated, or 'community' girl mothers, and some sites have one or more participants who are not mothers but are formerly associated or otherwise vulnerable.

with an armed group, or otherwise declined to participate, and later asked to join the PAR when they saw how the participants of the study benefited. Also, some girls self-recruited to the PAR by presenting themselves to the site facilitator and telling their personal stories after hearing about the project.

Community meetings were held during the establishment of the PAR, sometimes multiple times. In some smaller communities the meetings included an entire village. In larger communities, the meeting attendees were usually present based on connection to or interest in the girl mothers, or their status as community leaders. These community meetings were integral to the PAR goal of situating the model in the context of the community and integrating community needs and interests into the study. One of the most important strategies to facilitate a direct community relationship to the PAR was the establishment of community advisory committees, where membership in the committee was typically negotiated by the facilitator and PAR participants. Committees were made up of community leaders such as paramount chiefs and leaders of women's groups, teachers, religious leaders, and sometimes the parents of girl mothers. This approach was imperative given the goal of community-based reintegration of the participants.

During the first year of the PAR most sites initially focused on meetings where girls discussed their problems, shared their stories and gradually began the process of identifying the challenges that they wanted to address in their lives. For them, the first step of the participatory action research cycle – the investigation of their problems and how to address those problems – incorporated “organizing [their] activities, defining the issues, gathering information, engaging

with [each other], learning from [others'] perspectives, [and] facilitating the establishment of priorities through participatory dialogue and collective decision making” (McKay et al., PAR Girl Mothers, ‘Year 1 of the PAR’ section, para. 3, 2008). The action portion of the cycle began as the group worked on “enabling new behaviors that support[ed] their empowerment and ability to act on their own behalf” (McKay et al., PAR Girl Mothers, ‘Year 1 of the PAR’ section, para. 3, 2008). Some of the first evidence of feelings of empowerment came out in the girls’ descriptions of the meetings, where they realized that they were not alone in their experiences and challenges, and that the community supported their efforts (McKay et al., PAR Girl Mothers, ‘Year 1 of the PAR’ section, para. 3, 2008).

Once they decided which challenges they wanted to prioritize, PAR groups took actions. These activities often started rather slowly in the first year, but were usually in full swing by the second year of the PAR as the groups developed capacity and confidence. As the organizers note on the PAR Girl Mothers’ web site, “social transformation of young mothers’ lives” includes not only their empowerment, but also requires “tackling deep-seated cultural attitudes that stigmatize them” (McKay et al., PAR Girl Mothers, ‘Year 1 of the PAR’ section, para. 2, 2008). To address community stigmatization, girl mothers developed various strategies, which they usually referred to as sensitization. These activities included writing and performing songs and dramas in the community to draw attention to their experiences in armed groups and the poor treatment they received, and enlisting community leaders to speak on their behalf in various situations. At some sites, members of the group went to the parents of girls who had been rejected by their families to encourage them to accept the girls and their children back. To strengthen relationships with the community, many groups – especially in West Africa –

performed tasks such as cleaning around wells or “brushing” their neighborhoods (removal of trash and weeds), and one group hosted a community dance that drew people from all over the chiefdom.

All groups addressed economic hardship by developing livelihood projects such as small individual businesses, usually based on selling goods at market. In several cases some or all of the participants at a site established group enterprises such as planting agricultural plots, animal husbandry of pigs or goats, weaving, and gara tie-dying; at least one group started a restaurant. Groups often sought informal assistance from community or family members to support their efforts. There are many reports of community leaders donating land to PAR groups for planting crops, teaching participants how to grow crops or process harvests, or teaching them marketing skills. A significant number of participants chose to pursue formal skills training in diverse areas such as tailoring, catering, hair dressing, or welding in the hopes of building a long-term marketable business. Some groups encouraged each participant to pursue more than one activity, such as a small business and schooling, while in other groups participants focused on a single activity.

Most groups identified health problems as a significant challenge for them and their children and actively sought health education and life skills training to address the issue. Some groups hosted HIV/AIDS workshops, brought in speakers to teach them about basic preventive measures such as sanitation, or worked to establish reduced cost health care services by negotiating with other organizations. Family planning workshops and education about sexually transmitted diseases were common activities taken on by groups. Other types of life skills

training were pursued at some sites, such as parenting skills, business management, accounting, and money handling.

Finally, most sites also incorporated some type of literacy and numeracy program for the girl mothers, and at several sites participants chose to pursue formal education. Even at sites where literacy was not prioritized by the group, participants agreed that the education of their children was crucial. In addition to literacy and formal education, many groups further educated themselves on critical social challenges by holding or attending workshops on gender based violence and women's and children's rights, where they learned about international human rights norms and national and local laws that impacted them.

All girl mothers were expected to attend regular meetings and contribute to the group functioning, and all sites either formally or informally established group leaders. Some sites established by-laws or other rules that the participants were required to follow and, in some cases, fines were levied for infractions such as missing a meeting or being late. The support system provided by the group usually developed into a strong presence in the lives of the participants and the community. If a girl mother was sick or missed meetings, a delegation from the group often visited her at home; if a community member or PAR participant was bereaved, the group often took up a collection for the person; if a girl mother suffered domestic or sexual abuse the group might confront the perpetrator or collectively take the issue to the local authorities. While most PAR sites functioned well as a whole, the groups were not without some significant challenges. The most common problems faced by groups were low meeting

attendance during the rainy season, inability to pay back small loans due to poor harvests or inflation, and community jealousies over the perceived benefits the participants gained.

The groups were supported in their activities by small grants provided as part of the PAR study design. Each group decided to handle the grants somewhat differently: some sites divided the funds evenly between the girl mothers as a grant, while other sites treated the funds like a loan and expected each participant to pay the group back. Funds were often handed out to the girl mothers individually, which allowed them to handle their money as they deemed appropriate. Remarkably, the activities pursued by girl mothers in all three countries were quite similar, as were many of the challenges they faced in their groups and their communities over the course of the PAR.

The thesis study

My interest in the PAR study, and more broadly in girls formerly associated with armed groups, began in the fall of 2008 when I became a graduate research assistant for Susan McKay at the University of Wyoming, a position I held for two semesters. During my first semester as a research assistant, I performed literature reviews on participation and empowerment, reviewed annual meeting notes from the 2007 PAR Kampala meeting, and completed a series of small qualitative coding projects as part of the preparation for the 2008 Kampala meeting. I also attended the 2008 Kampala meeting where I shared transcription duties with another graduate student during the three-day event. After the meeting, I managed the editing and compilation of transcriptions and daily discussion outlines. In the spring of 2009 I compiled demographic data

and performed in-depth data coding on dozens of site reports from all 20 project sites, and physically and electronically organized the data sets.

In the fall of 2009 I again attended the annual Kampala meeting and transcribed the three days of discussions. Due to my familiarity with the PAR study, experience transcribing meetings for the project, and prior experience in West Africa on a different project, I was invited to accompany Dr. McKay to Sierra Leone for 17 days to conduct evaluative ethnographic interviews in October and November of 2009. Those interviews form the basis of this thesis, and are described in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

DATA AND METHODS

Overview

This thesis focuses on a qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews with PAR participants and other individuals knowledgeable about the PAR and girl mother participants at three of the eight study field sites in Sierra Leone. In this chapter I describe the three sites, the primary and secondary data sets, the data collection methods, and the comparative analytic methods used in the analysis. The qualitative methods and coding system are described in detail, and the process of data analysis is explained. Secondary data sources were used primarily for background, and included PAR demographics and survey responses, monthly site reports submitted from each of the three field sites, and the transcripts of the three annual meetings held in Kampala, Uganda. The methods used in collecting these secondary data sets are briefly described, and the survey instrument is explained and its basic results are outlined.

Field sites

For interview field sites, agency partners in Sierra Leone chose Massam, Makeni, and Goderich, which represent the categories of small, mid, and large population areas, respectively. Each of the field sites was managed by a different agency, one of the four NGO partner agencies in Sierra Leone. Thus, these sites represent a range of community settings and agency management of the PAR.



Figure 1: Map of Sierra Leone, red arrows indicating interview sites (CIA, 2005)

Massam

The small rural town of Massam, also called Massam Kpaka, was the most remote site we visited. It is the administrative center of Kpaka Chiefdom, which consists of about 100 villages located in the Southern Province, Pujehun District (Massam, Int. 32). The 2004 census

recorded almost 13,000 residents in Kpaka Chiefdom; however, we were told by the Paramount Chief that the number is now closer to 15,000, with about 1,500 in Massam (GeoHive, n.d.; Massam, Int. 32). The town is located approximately two hours from Bo, the second largest city in Sierra Leone. The last 17 miles of the road from Bo are unpaved, making the area difficult to access during the rainy season. Nevertheless, several PAR participants reported traveling to Bo somewhat regularly to obtain goods to sell in the village and at weekly markets.

Massam is only a few kilometers from the larger town of Pujehun, which was a Southern Province demobilization site at the end of the war. As part of the DDR process, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) set up a separate children's demobilization program in Pujehun (Williamson and Cripe, 2002). Massam is also close to Bandajuma, the former site of a large Liberian refugee and Sierra Leonean IDP camp which was established during that country's war, at the same time that Sierra Leone's conflict was happening (Stephen Borbo, personal communication, October, 2009).

Makeni

Makeni, the capital of Bombali District in Sierra Leone's Northern Province, is the fifth largest city in Sierra Leone, with a population of approximately 106,000 (GeoHive, n.d.). The current population estimate reflects an increase of around 25,000 people since the 2004 census, partly due to the central role the town played during and after the war (GeoHive, n.d.). The city is approximately three hours from Freetown, the country's capital.

Makeni served as RUF headquarters for the last few years of the war, and the area was heavily impacted by the RUF throughout the conflict (WCRWC, 2002). As a RUF stronghold,

Makeni was targeted to be a central disarmament and demobilization center in the country. The influence of the RUF and the aftermath of demobilization have had lasting effects on the area. WCRWC's 2002 study on adolescents and youth in post-conflict Sierra Leone reported that in Makeni, "Hundreds of youth formerly associated with the RUF who originate from other towns in Sierra Leone feel they are unable to return home" (pp. 7-8). As a result many RUF, adolescents and adults alike, remained in Makeni. Moreover, many of those who left Makeni after going through demobilization eventually returned there. These two factors result in the city having one of the highest concentrations of former combatants in the country. Our first interview brought this fact to the fore, as the director of a vocational skills training center told us that approximately 80% of their students were associated with armed groups during the war. He also said that "almost all are either directly or indirectly ex-combatants" (Makeni, Int. 1).

Goderich

Goderich is a small, densely populated community on the southern edge of Freetown, with a population of over 19,000 people according to the 2004 census (City Population, 2009). The community has what they call a 'head man' or chief who functions similarly to a Paramount Chief in rural chiefdoms (Goderich, Int. 68). The community has section chiefs, positions also found in rural chiefdoms, a further indication that the Goderich community leadership was at least partly modeled on the traditional chiefdom system (Goderich, Int. 69).

Freetown was not a central conflict zone during the war, though on one occasion armed groups pushed into the eastern part of the capital and briefly held control of some parts of the city. According to one description they burned and looted the areas they controlled, and this

attack impacted civilians dramatically: “Five thousand people were killed and approximately two thousand women and girls were raped” (Coulter, 2009, p. 49). However, a more lasting impact of the war on Freetown is the population increase the city has undergone. A significant portion of the displaced people who sought refuge in Freetown during the war stayed, and many demobilized combatants moved to Freetown for various reasons including access to DDR training and education, or rejection by other communities. Census data show that the population increased from about 470,000 in 1984 to 773,000 in 2004, nearly a 64% increase (GeoHive, n.d.). However, current estimates of Freetown’s population range as high as 1.5 million, and the population explosion is causing significant hardship to inhabitants, including a water crisis (Marke, 2009).

Primary data set

Ethnographic interviews

At the three PAR field sites, Susan McKay conducted the ethnographic interviews, while I managed the audio and transcript process. During a number of the interviews I acted as a secondary interviewer and asked additional questions of the interviewees. The set of interview questions we drew from was designed by the PAR co-investigators to elicit comparable information that cut across all three countries and all 20 field sites.¹⁴ The questions varied depending on the type of interviewee, so PAR participants were asked different questions from those asked of community members, for instance. Not all questions were asked in each

¹⁴ The list of interview questions is located in Appendix B.

interview, and new questions were often asked based on the flow of conversation and prior comments of interviewees.

We interviewed a total of 82 individuals and interviews have been disaggregated in several ways for organization and analysis.¹⁵ Of the total 266 PAR girl mothers in Sierra Leone, we interviewed 33, or 12.4% of participants in the country. We interviewed the facilitator at each of the three sites (n=3), two of four NGO partners, and three other NGO representatives (n=3), two of whom were not affiliated with the PAR but were familiar with the study. The remaining 42 interviewees were family members (mothers, fathers, husbands, boyfriends, brothers, aunts, uncles, or guardians); advisory council members; teachers; and community members and leaders. The 82 interviewees are assigned to one of four additional categories: individual (n=16), paired (n=8), family (n=14), and focus group (n=8), totaling 46 interview sessions (N=46). The category of ‘paired interviews’ includes any interview conducted with two community members at once. ‘Family interviews’ included one or more parents, guardians, or boyfriends/husbands, with the PAR participant present in every case. Focus groups were made up of between three and eight participants. One community meeting was conducted at the request of the Paramount Chief in Massam, and though it was not officially an interview or a focus group, it has been assigned to the focus group category for purposes of data organization.

Sampling

At each site PAR interviewees were chosen through random sampling to participate in focus group discussions. The random sample was generated by the in-country academic partner

¹⁵ The list of interviews is located in Appendix C.

who began with non-alphabetized lists of participants at each of the three interview sites. He asked a colleague to choose any number between one and twenty, and then counted down the list to the 18th name (18 was the number chosen). From there he chose every third or fourth name on the list, depending on the number of participants at the site, until he had a list of ten focus group participants and two alternates. Random sampling was used in order to ensure, as much as possible, that our interviewees are representative of the entire group of enrolled PAR participants at the three sites.

Excluding the NGO representatives (n=7) and on-site facilitators (n=3) who were interviewed due to their involvement with the PAR and its participants, all remaining interviews were obtained through convenience sampling. At the end of focus group discussions PAR interviewees were asked to recruit their family members, husbands or boyfriends for interviews. Additionally, the on-site facilitators recruited volunteers from the community and advisory committee. This method was necessary due to our time constraints and time conflicts for interviewees; many family and community members in Massam, for instance, were engaged in agricultural activities away from the community since our visit coincided with the planting season.

Informed consent

Prior to each interview, the nature of our visit was explained to interviewees and their verbal consent to participate was obtained.¹⁶ We explained that their participation was voluntary and their responses would remain anonymous in our reports, and that they could decline to

¹⁶ The Institutional Review Board of the University of Wyoming evaluated and approved the PAR study based on normative ethical research design for research on human subjects.

answer any question or end the interview whenever they wished. Each interview was recorded by both digital recorder and on-site transcription via a laptop computer, after verbal permission to do so was obtained from the interviewee. Photo documentation of interview sites, interviewees, and community settings was made at each site, although not every interviewee was photographed.

To ensure anonymity, after each interview the interviewees were assigned code numbers, and the transcripts and audio files were then coded by number to ensure their privacy. The transcripts were also edited to replace any names referencing other interviewees with that person's code number. The interviews were conducted in public meeting spaces, classrooms, homes, and offices of NGOs.

Translation process

Seventy-three interviews were translated into local languages by an interpreter known to the interviewee, and the remaining nine interviews were conducted in English.¹⁷ Languages spoken during the non-English interviews were Krio, Mende, and Temne. At all three sites the PAR facilitators who had been employed by the NGO partner agencies served as the interpreter. This arrangement had some possible draw-backs, most importantly that the interviewees might not have expressed negative feelings about the project for fear of offending the facilitator, or they might have had criticisms of the facilitator's efforts that went unreported. However, it was decided that using an interpreter unknown to the interviewees could introduce even more significant problems if the interviewees did not trust them or did not feel comfortable speaking

¹⁷ Interviews that were partially in English are counted in the translated interview total of 73.

about sensitive issues in front of a stranger. Having the facilitators interpret the interviews also had the added benefit of allowing them to explain the context of responses when it was unclear or clarify certain aspects of PAR group functioning or activities when we did not immediately understand. For instance, when we were confused by a partial description of an agricultural project described by one PAR participant, the facilitator explained the project to us in detail.

Secondary data sets

Survey data

The PAR co-investigators created a survey that was applied at every project site by the country academic or a research assistant. Surveyors usually made more than one attempt to reach every PAR participant. The survey data were compiled and disaggregated according to field site and NGO by Miranda Worthen, one of the PAR co-investigators. Of 658 total PAR participants in the three countries, 434 responded to the survey. Sierra Leone’s response rate was 77%, while Liberia and Uganda each had a 58% response rate.¹⁸

Table 1: Sierra Leone PAR interview sites’ basic survey data

Site	PAR Group Size	Survey Respondents	Number of Respondents Originally from Outside this Community	Number of Respondents Formerly Associated with Armed Group
Makeni	27	19	11	15
Massam	42	19	8	17
Goderich	34	30	13	24

¹⁸ Follow-up may be conducted in Liberia and Uganda due to lower initial response rates.

Table 1 (above) shows basic demographics of each interview site and survey responses to two questions regarding the background of participants. The 17 questions asked in the survey are listed in Table 2 (below). In addition to quantitative responses, each survey also yielded qualitative data from probing follow-up questions. While not central to the thesis, the survey responses provided interesting comparative data for the analysis of the interviews with PAR participants. In my analysis I do not directly compare every question in the survey to the interviews.

Table 2: List of survey questions and response options

	Question/Statement	Response Options
1.	Are you originally from this community?	N/Y
2.	Were you associated with the fighting forces?	N/Y
3.	I feel involved with what the group is doing.	N/S/Y
4.	Involvement in the project has made me and my children more liked or loved by my family.	N/S/Y
5.	My boyfriend/husband is supportive of my children.	N/S/Y
6.	Community members think worse of me now than before I joined the project.	N/S/Y
7.	Through participating in the group, I can now speak in public more easily.	N/S/Y
8.	I am able to be supportive to my family by buying basic necessities.	N/S/Y
9.	Through the group, I help other people in the community.	N/S/Y
10.	I can take better care of my child than I could before I joined the group.	N/S/Y
11.	Many girls in Sierra Leone/Liberia/Uganda have sex partners to earn money. Is this true of the girls in the PAR project?	N/S/Y
12.	I feel more supported and respected by community members now than I did before the project.	N/S/Y
13.	Has your health changed since you joined the project?	W/S/B
14.	How has the health of your child or children changed since you joined the project?	W/S/B
15.	I get pregnant even when I don't want to.	N/S/Y
16.	If someone wants to go to bed with me by force, I know how to report it and get help.	N/S/Y
17.	I have learned new skills from the PAR project.	N/S/Y
N/S/Y = no, sometimes, or yes		
W/S/B = worse, same, or better		

Monthly site reports

Monthly site reports from each of the three field sites were used as further background information for the analysis. The reports varied in multiple ways. First, at most PAR sites the site facilitators wrote and submitted the reports. However, at a few sites with a high number of literate participants, one or more of the participants wrote the reports. Reports were typed or handwritten; those completed by participants were all handwritten due to lack of computer access and/or training. Most sites neglected to submit reports for one or more months during the course of the study, and in some cases two or more months are combined into one report. The monthly reports therefore resulted in relatively uneven data of variable quality.

The co-investigators hoped to collect similar qualitative information from every site, so the reports were set up in a uniform format. They were written as responses to a series of questions regarding the month's activities, challenges, and accomplishments. Because each group chose their own activities, and the questions were somewhat open-ended, the responses varied considerably from site to site. One site might focus a month's entire report on a loan disbursement, while another site focused on a dance or a health workshop they had organized. Some months the reports from two or more sites focused on the same topic, especially geographically-close sites that were supported by the same facilitator.

Reports also varied in the level of detail given, and some reports had one or more questions that were not answered. Some of the most rich and detailed information was given in narrative answers to the final part of the report, where sites were asked to related an important story or event that happened in the group or to one of the participants that month. These

narratives often included health issues, sexual or domestic violence, and family or community conflicts. However, many reports also told positive stories about girl mothers learning and applying important life skills, being able to pay for their children to go to school, or improved relations in the community or family.

Annual Kampala PAR meetings

Transcripts of the three Kampala meetings (2007, 2008, and 2009) were also used as support documents for this thesis. The verbatim transcripts covered three days of meetings for each year, and annual meeting outlines condensed the main points of each meeting into shorter content-driven documents. The two types of records resulted in several hundred pages of text. The transcripts focus primarily on the main meetings, though numerous breakout sessions were recorded each year. Notably, of all data sets used in this analysis, the annual meeting transcripts hold significantly more data from NGO partners than from PAR participants.

Analytic methods for primary data

As described in Chapter One, for the analysis of the primary data set, I used constant comparative analysis of systematically coded content from the ethnographic interview transcripts. I began by developing operational definitions of several categories that are widely thought to be related to the successful reintegration of former combatants, and then used these definitions to code the transcripts of 46 interview sessions with a total of 82 interviewees (see Table 3 below for a list of the original coding categories and their operationalized definitions).

For all three field sites I read each of the interview transcripts multiple times, and the site reports and annual Kampala meeting transcripts between two and three times. The first reading allowed for a general reintroduction to the content, all of which I either participated in gathering and typed myself (the interview transcripts and the last two Kampala meeting transcripts) or had previously read for other projects I conducted as a research assistant (the monthly site reports and the first Kampala meeting transcript). The second and third readings of the interviews entailed a close reading and coding for content using the operational definitions that I developed for each code. In some cases I listened to portions of backup audio files when the transcript had a gap at an important point. Throughout the coding process I coded to err on the side of inclusion when data were related to, but not explicitly part of the operational definition. In this way, I avoided excluding any data that may have informed the analysis. During subsequent readings, I categorized every instance of each code by the voice or perspective being expressed: either PAR participants or non-PAR participants (i.e. community and family members).

After coding was complete, I separated the results by code into new documents, one for each of the 11 codes. This process allowed me to determine which codes resulted in more or less robust content, and delineated the text for analytic comparisons. I analyzed the resulting coded content within each category in several ways. First, I examined the coded content to identify factors that positively or negatively influenced the process of reintegration for the young mothers. Next, I compared the coded content from each topic between two interviewee designations: a) the PAR participants and b) family and community members in order to identify differences in how they answered questions related to the reintegration topics. Finally, I also

compared interview responses to commonly held beliefs about ‘successful’ reintegration in post-war contexts, as outlined in Chapter Two.

Notes were kept throughout the coding and analysis process as I identified patterns in the data, converging or diverging codes, and potentially important issues not covered by the codes as I had defined them. I also noted questions that arose, and marked areas for follow up with secondary data sets or further literature review. During the final analysis, I also reviewed the survey data to make general comparisons between the survey responses and the content of my analysis.¹⁹

Operational definitions

As noted above, in order to establish a method of consistent coding for content in the interviews, I created operational definitions for each coding category prior to beginning the coding process. The codes generally fall under two broad categories of reintegration described in Chapter One: psychosocial and economic. Considerable overlap occurs between the two larger categories, which is expected since they are often combined by other researchers into a broader description of socio-economic issues. I chose to focus on the two categories individually because I hoped to deepen my understanding of specific areas of overlap. I also intended to compare each of the social and economic codes in relation to the viewpoints expressed by PAR participants versus the family and community. I hoped that this comparison would elicit a clearer understanding of the ways these categories are connected within the context of

¹⁹ Because I transcribed every interview on-site I did not have a set of separate field notes for reference, but referred several times to the photographs taken at each site to refresh my memory of the site context and interviewees.

community-based reintegration. I also included a third code category to analyze the impacts of the PAR and prospects for sustaining any positive changes that had been identified. This code incorporated both economic and social outcomes and drew out differences and similarities in the impacts and outcomes of the two categories.

Table 3: The codes and operationalized definitions used in the analysis

Economic	
IGA: <i>Livelihood/income generation</i>	Any activity undertaken to earn an income for an individual or a group, including but not limited to market sales, agricultural activity, weaving, gara tie-dyeing, tailoring, and sex work. Also includes any discussion regarding these activities or financial prospects, economic status, or income in relation to PAR girls, including the small grants or loans provided under PAR.
SK: Skills training	Formal or informal training of livelihood or income generation skills, including but not limited to tailoring, weaving, gara tie-dyeing, agriculture/farming, soap making, catering, welding, numeracy/ accounting for business purposes.
ED: Education	Formal/informal, adult literacy, children’s education, etc. Also includes life skills such as parenting, disease prevention, and human rights.
Psychosocial	
STIG: Stigmatization	Any instance of an individual or group being socially marginalized, discriminated against, called names, or otherwise labeled in a negative way.
H: Health	Any reference to a physical or mental condition experienced by an individual participant or her child, including contraception and pregnancy, and expenses

	related to health care. Also includes psychosocial aspects of health such as feelings of isolation or loneliness, shame, or the alleviation of these feelings.
J: Jealousy	Any instance of an individual or group expressing jealousy toward another individual or group, including but not limited to jealousy of one individual or group toward another based on economic status or opportunity.
GBV: Gender based violence/rape/sexual exploitation	Any instance of rape, violence between family members, or sexual exploitation which includes but is not limited to sex work and transactional sexual activity for financial or material gain.
RC: Relationship building, conflict resolution and problem solving	Includes any activity undertaken by PAR participants with the intent or outcome of fostering good will between them and their communities or families, or to reduce stigmatization. Activities may include, but are not limited to the cleaning of community areas, performance of dramas, organization of health/wellness or other trainings, outreach to others in the community, and financial contribution to the family home. Also includes any instance of conflict or challenge experienced by a PAR individual or group or any step taken to address a conflict or challenge; including but not limited to relationships with family or community, economic challenges, cultural expectations, stigmatization, or health. Also includes relationship building within the PAR group, with the facilitators, and any instance of cooperation between individuals or groups.
CUL: Culture	Includes socio-cultural norms regarding behavior or gender and/or how those norms influence family and community relationships, opportunities for girls and women, etc.
EMP: Empowerment	Instances where PAR participants, individually or as a group, experience positive economic, social or psychological

	shifts including increases in self-esteem or dignity, removal of negative cultural norms or stigmas, instances of individual or group decision-making, or increased respect from others; may include the <i>process</i> of seeking these changes through participation in activities, particularly if the goal is personal or group status change.
Outcomes	
I/S: Impacts/Sustainability	Any discussion of either positive or negative changes the PAR participants, their children, their families, or the community experienced during the course of the study; also includes the sustainability of any changes, or of the PAR group activities, and comments regarding the future prospects of the PAR participants or their children.

Coding results

During any coding process, lines of text can be assigned just one code, or multiple codes that may overlap each other. Overlapping codes were extremely common throughout this data set. Therefore, assessing frequency of codes in the data also included analyzing the relationships between each code and others with which it overlapped. This assessment process resulted in some changes to the a priori code set as I had initially defined it, a situation common in research based on coding. For instance, I determined after reviewing the content under each code that some codes diverged, and others should be collapsed. As Padgett (2008) notes, the coding “process is organic and iterative [and] ensures flexibility and openness to change” (p. 155).

At the end of coding, after separating each code into a new document, my next step was to determine which codes were generally robust – having significant coded text results – and which were not. The least robust code of the eleven codes was *Jealousy* (J), followed by *Stigma* (STIG). Because *Jealousy* was also entirely included under the *Relationship Building, Conflict Resolution, and Problem Solving* (RC) code, I dropped *Jealousy* as a separate code for analysis. Despite somewhat thin results for explicit *Stigma* content, I retained it as a separate code due to its importance in the issue of reintegration, and specifically girl mother reintegration. I did, however, analyze it both separately, and also within the larger RC code because it overlapped entirely with RC. *Gender Based Violence and Exploitation* (GBV) also had limited results except where transactional sex (and exploitation) was involved. That issue had been purposely cross-coded with *Income Generation Activities* (IGA), so the bulk of the analysis on GBV fell under the IGA code. The most robust code was *Relationship Building, Conflict Resolution, and Problem Solving* (RC). RC encompassed the widest definition of all the codes, and it also resulted in substantially more content than any other code. *Impacts and Sustainability* (I/S) had the next highest frequency, which was somewhat expected given the evaluative nature of the interviews and the questions asked. Finally, IGA (*Income Generation Activities*), SK (*Skills Training*), and ED (*Education*) were relatively evenly represented; the only change made to these codes was to pull the *Life Skills* content from ED and consider it separately since it became clear that it logically belonged as a separate code under the larger *Psychosocial* category.

While analyzing the coding it became clear that psychosocial and economic factors were even more interconnected than I had expected. Some text fell within as many as four different codes and commonly included both economic and psychosocial categories. For example,

comments under the *Health* (H) code often also included references to *Income Generation Activities* (IGA), *Stigma* (STIG) and/or the *Relationship Building/Conflict Resolution/Problem Solving* (RC) code.

Further, the comparative analytic approach I used in examining the differences between perceptions of PAR participants and community/family proved to be less straight-forward than I had originally anticipated. Community and family perceptions, for instance, sometimes diverged so that analyzing their responses independently was more appropriate than combining them in a unified perspective, which had been the original approach. For instance, when analyzing content under the *Education* (ED) code, community comments focused heavily on psychosocial benefits of education such as keeping girls off the street and generally giving them something to do, while many of the girls and families (specifically those in Makeni) emphasized their very high expectations of education for improved economic well-being. As a result of the multiple ways that the coding and subsequent analysis emphasized the interconnectedness of the codes, the findings in Chapter Five are cross-cutting rather than focused on individual codes.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Using social capital as an analytic framework, this chapter focuses on the specific findings from my analysis of the coded data. As noted in Chapter Four, each finding includes cross-cutting content, as well as implications for the sustainability of the PAR participants' social and economic reintegration, and therefore the findings are not separated by coding category.

Findings

1. *Successful reintegration hinges on respect, and respect is primarily gained by girls through income, education, and adherence to social norms. Without respect, 'tolerance' by family and community is likely the best status a girl mother can attain.*

At all three interview sites, the recurring themes of income, education, and behavior change of girl mothers arose repeatedly. This pattern was not unexpected, as these topics all have been heavily discussed throughout the PAR study and are also central in much of the literature on reintegration. Yet in analyzing the interviews, a theme arose that clearly linked these topics – that of respect garnered through each of these three modes. Through these three inroads, girl mothers experienced increased respect, and their social status rose within the family and the community. Girls said they were now both respected and 'admired' by others – their families, community, and friends.

Respect relates directly to the notion of social capital, as increased respect and social status allows admittance into social networks that may have previously been closed, and

increases trust and the expectations of reciprocity. Arguably, without admittance to social networks and access to social capital more generally, respect is unlikely. For the PAR participants, increased respect, social status, and social capital were mutually reinforcing. Importantly, increased respect and access to social capital also increases the self respect and perceived self-worth of the girl mothers. The interconnectedness of these factors can be seen in the analysis of income generation, education, and adherence to social norms.

Income

Having an income was a significant factor in raising the status of girls in the household, whether with parents, guardians, or husbands/boyfriends. This increased status raised their confidence and self respect. Relatively few specific comments from family and community arose regarding how they felt the girls were faring with managing the business. Instead, most family comments generally referenced the fact that the businesses were allowing the girls to contribute financially to family household expenses and care for themselves and their children.

Being able to take care of themselves and their children was often reported by all interviewees. The money they earned went to their own and their children's needs, such as food, new clean clothes, health expenses, transportation, children's school fees, and growing their businesses. In Goderich, for instance, several community members commented that the girls were no longer a 'burden' on the community because they no longer asked for assistance. Conversely, even those who still relied significantly on their parents noted that contributing to household expenses brought them respect. The analysis suggests that the act of contributing to the home, of 'giving back' some of the support they had been given, strengthened the sense of

reciprocity and cooperation between the girls and their families and therefore they gained access to household social capital from which they had previously been mostly excluded. Arguably, before PAR the girls had little capacity to financially reciprocate the support of their families, and therefore the families' support of the girls was seen as unreturned prior to the PAR.

Notably, two business arrangements were mentioned in Makeni that increased the girls' household social capital even further than basic contribution to the household. In one case a girl's mother ran the business while the PAR participant was in school, and in another a brother did the same. Similarly, in Massam some girls used their PAR funds to start working with guardians who had existing petty trade businesses, and they were able to learn how to conduct petty trading this way. These approaches were practical and had a clear second benefit that was noted by one participant, "This makes our relationship stronger" (Makeni, Int. 6). The reciprocity and cooperation involved with these arrangements increased the girls' bonding capital and therefore had psychosocial outcomes that went beyond basic economic contributions to the family.

Skills training in Massam mostly revolved around community members or guardians teaching the PAR participants skills they knew. Agricultural processes for planting, harvesting, and processing their harvest were passed on, which benefited most of the girl mothers. Additionally, many participants learned other skills such as soap making or weaving, and some girls reported also learning marketing skills from community members or guardians. As one community member noted, she taught the girls "gara [tie dying] and soap making, so I trained many of them. I personally spoke to them about being serious with their money and their

business” (Massam, Int. 31). Comments like these suggest that both bonding and bridging capital was strengthened through the skills and business training, as girls deepened existing relationships in the community and developed new ones.

In addition to traditional skills, two girls in Massam were pursuing formal skills training at a near-by skills center. One had obtained her hair plaiting training and another was in the process of learning weaving. Learning and performing both formal and informal skills was named by community members as the most important thing the girls had done to reintegrate. When asked why this was most important, one woman responded “because they are not idle” (Massam, Int. 31). She further explained that “they got no respect when they were idle.” This comment points to the connections between income and behavior change, and highlights the increased respect and social status the girls earned through their activities.

Education

In addition to income, education raised the social status of the PAR participants, and in a society where education is difficult to attain, especially for girls, it also earned them respect. Interestingly, the different settings at the three PAR sites made variable the level of education that was needed to raise status. In Makeni, the majority of the 30 participants enrolled in formal education, most at the secondary level. During the Makeni interviews, the value they placed on formal education and that they felt others placed on education was clear, as were the very high expectations they held for it. The expectations of girls and family were usually generalized; for instance one participant stated “I want to pursue my education. Once I get my education, I can rely on myself” (Makeni, Int. 6). Most family members had high expectations of the long-term

financial benefits of formal education and hoped their daughters could go beyond senior secondary. One mother noted that “It is my prayer for her to go through tertiary education” (Makeni, Int. 12).

The predominant reason their status increased in their families seemed to be that education, and particularly the prospect of college, carried enormous expectations of financial benefits for their families. One community member in Goderich stated the reality bluntly: “Coming out of war, most of these children come from very poor families and most of them will become the breadwinner of the family if they get [skills and education]” (Goderich, Int. 70). The mother of one participant made clear the anticipated impact on the family if her daughter could continue: “If she is educated she can help herself and help us too. We are very poor” (Makeni, Int. 18). The realities of these expectations and the sustainability of formal education pursuits are explored later in this chapter, but nevertheless, attendance in formal schooling brought respect and increased the status of these girl mothers.

However, not all perceived benefits of education were financial in Makeni. Attendance at school helped forge connections to others outside their families and the base PAR network. Further, school was seen as providing a supportive environment for those attending, with some girls mentioning the attention and advice from teachers as being meaningful. The same mother who hoped her daughter’s education could help alleviate the family’s poverty went on to note the impacts in her daughter that she attributed to schooling: “She is listening to us and her education has made changes. She is now serious and determined to do well” (Makeni, Int. 18). School was also noted as being one key to being respected by family and community. One girl noted that the

combination of having a small business and attending school impacted the way others saw her: “...my teachers and friends started seeing me as a different person” (Makeni, Int. 10).

Importantly, in Makeni and Goderich, where formal schooling was pursued, community members interviewed were vocal about formal education as a means to keep girls off the streets and as a way to stop their ‘idle’ behavior. Moreover, education set PAR participants apart from other young mothers, as one community member noted “the others [non-PAR girls] are mostly dropped out from school now” (Makeni, Int. 21). One advisory committee member who worked on gender based violence issues in the district pointed out the connection between education, income, and sexual exploitation: “I tell her to concentrate on her education... Men will continue to take advantage if she doesn’t finish her education and earn an income” (Makeni, Int. 17).

In a very different way, basic literacy classes had similar impacts on respect for the PAR girls in Massam. There, the community and families regularly pointed to the ability to write their names as a central impact of the PAR. None of the Massam PAR participants were fully literate at the beginning of the study, and during interviews none indicated that they had wanted or expected to pursue formal education. However, the literacy program they arranged through the site facilitator had a significant impact according to family and community members. It was repeatedly referred to as one of the most important impacts of PAR by family and community in Massam. Notably, at least half of these interviewees commented on literacy, including the Paramount Chief. For instance, when asked what changes she saw after PAR, one community member said “There are changes in them now, so many. Those not in PAR are still illiterate, some PAR girls can now spell their names and some read books” (Massam, Int. 30). One mother

also highlighted literacy as significant “...before they just did thumb in the ink; now they can write their names. This is a big change for them” (Massam, Int. 31). In a rural community that likely has relatively few literate members, being able to read significantly increased the level of respect for a girl mother.

Interestingly, in Massam, community and family responses differed from those of the PAR interviewees, who did not highlight literacy. Only one girl noted literacy as a significant change, and her comment directly related to the impact it had on her business: “I am not being cheated [in my business], I can read letters. I used to have to rely on others to do this for me.” She added that “My boyfriend can’t read and write, so I can do this for him too” indicating that the skill benefited others as well herself, and suggesting another way that PAR girls are expressing cooperation and normative behaviors in their communities (Massam, Int. 44). Thus, while literacy registered high on the list of changes perceived by those around them, PAR participants in Massam seemed to place less emphasis on it.

Education, both formal and informal, is noted by many organizations as a centerpiece of reintegration efforts for young women (see for example Paris Principles, 2007 and UNIFEM, 2004). In the three PAR sites, the weight placed on education varied dramatically by site, as did the perception of that education by the participants, family, and community. Most participants in Makeni started out at least partially literate, and almost all chose to pursue formal education as one of their primary activities. In contrast, no participants in Massam indicated that they had pursued formal education, but the group arranged to receive basic literacy training from the site facilitator. Only six of 40 participants in Goderich chose formal education. Ultimately, the

longer term outcomes of education at each site appeared to have more to do with increasing respect for the girls from their families and communities, improving their social capital and status, and increasing their self confidence. It remains to be seen what financial impact education will have for them and their families, particularly for those girls that did not also have small businesses or skills training.

Adherence to Social Norms

Adherence to social norms may be the most significant way that girls increased their access to social capital. In the interviews, PAR girls were described by their families and communities as ‘serious,’ and disciplined, and families often described being able to ‘control’ the girls and that they listened to advice. Girls also described their new behavior with this language. In all cases, the change was described as a positive one, and the agreement on that point is significant. Because social capital is built on the notion of collective norms and values, the cooperation, trust, and reciprocity at the heart of social networks would likely be impossible without the understanding of mutual expectations of behavior.

According to Coulter’s findings (2009), ideal Sierra Leonean female behavior includes “subservience to elders, being humble, refraining from shouting or using foul language, and showing restraint in the display of emotion” (p. 215). In all three sites, and also in most literature on Sierra Leone, breaking social norms tends to be referred to with similar language. Being ‘idle,’ aggressive, moody, hot tempered, argumentative, and uncontrollable are all ways that families and communities described the girls prior to the PAR. However, after PAR began, the attitudes and behaviors changed as the girls gained confidence. Arguably, the more respect

they garnered, the more normative their behaviors became, as their socially normative behaviors were rewarded with increased social status and access to social capital.

Coulter (2009) argues that young women who might otherwise be ostracized due to the specific stigma associated with war rapes could reverse this stigma by behaving “in a culturally appropriate manner” (p. 216). Further, she interpreted the loss of virginity and its cultural taboo as being “matters that could be negotiated, suppressed, or “socially forgotten”” (p. 216). In the PAR interviews, this appeared to be the case as long as the girl did not ‘go out’ or engage in ‘loose relationships,’ something most reported having stopped after the beginning of PAR, as seen in the following quote:

I am sure it was PAR that has helped me so much. Before now, it was difficult for my parents to control my behavior, I did what I wanted. But through PAR I learned in workshops about teenage pregnancy and I am now happy and know how to relate to my parents (Makeni, Int. 8).

Further, earning an income, being ‘productive’ or ‘serious’ rather than ‘idle,’ and behaving respectfully to family and community often made the PAR participants attractive to males. This was seen alternately as very positive, or a cause to be wary of men. In Massam, one mother of a PAR participant explained that “In this community as long as you have a husband or fiancé you are respected. Before PAR they all had boyfriends, loose relationships that were not serious; now they are highly respected for their businesses and the men come to them” (Massam, Int. 31). The importance of this change is reflected by the Paramount Chief of Massam who lamented how, without parental advice, many girl mothers had been inclined to “marry people who are not rich, some are not even working [are unemployed]” (Massam, Int. 32). Further, in Makeni the notion that unmarried women or girls were not trusted was problematic for the PAR participants. Several participants referred to this lack of trust as being ‘misunderstood’ by the

community, alluding to the assumption that unmarried girls were assumed to be engaged in prostitution or ‘boyfriend business.’ According to one young mother, the way to address this was through ‘serious’ behavior: “When men see you with one or two children men will hardly come closer to you or support you. But if you are strong and have your business and go to school they will respect you. We are more serious” (Makeni, Int. 5). Arguably, becoming perceived as ‘marriageable’ within their communities may be one of the most long-term changes from the PAR for many of the girls. The analysis suggests that particularly in Massam and Makeni, where there were many comments about marriage making a girl more respected and trusted, the new status of being marriageable is an overall positive outcome of the PAR, as it increased trust and social capital in their social networks.

Questions around the sustainability of the behavior changes were brought up rarely. However, one of the most negative comments by a parent came from the father of one participant who had lost her business due to a child’s health expenses. His daughter could no longer pay for her own school fees so she was also no longer in school. He said “I have no problems with the [PAR] or with her, but it is difficult now to support her to go to the nursing program...I will likely find it hard to control her behavior” (Makeni, Int. 15). This comment is striking in its direct link between the anticipated change in behavior of a participant and lack of sustainability of the PAR activities she had been engaged in. Just as striking is the agreement of this assessment by a woman on the Makeni advisory committee who, when asked about this father’s comment said, “It is true, quite true. He doesn’t have money to give the child, the project has ended, so what is he going to do? ...she will go out with men because she has no money. If she had money, it would be different” (Makeni, Int. 21). Some research points to the possibility that

some parents will still accept or tolerate a girl's 'loving for money' as long as she contributes to the household (Coulter, 2009), yet during the interview this father seemed quite disturbed by the idea that she would return to her prior behavior.

Other than the two comments above, there were very few instances where interviewees indicated that they thought a lost business or discontinued schooling would cause girls to go back to the streets or revert to non-normative behaviors. Rather, they seemed adamant that this would not happen. Additionally, most interviewees reported that other non-PAR girls were still 'loving for money,' but that PAR girls no longer did. One girl mother stated that:

Our parents are very happy about what we are doing now; we were wayward, [but now] we are concentrating on the business. The prostitution stopped because we focus on the business. ...none of the PAR girls have continued with that prostitution.

Notably, two female advisory council members also discussed the impact that the PAR had on prostitution and 'boyfriend business.' One said the PAR "helped them stop from going out with men. The girls in [PAR] are not doing that. They do their businesses. The girls outside the [PAR] do go in search of men" (Makeni, Int. 21). Again, the mutually reinforcing nature of adherence to behavior norms, increase in social capital, and respect can be seen here.

However, once attained, respect and increased social status is not static and may be lost or reduced. Many girls reported fearing the loss of respect, usually due to loss of income or inability to perform the skills they learned. One girl expressed the fears this way:

It is true that we have been accepted by our communities, but the biggest challenge is how will this be sustained? For example, after I have been trained in a skill, I come back to the community without the startup kit [or] tools to do the skill. The community will ask, what is the point of the training, what can you do for yourself? Will the community continue to respect us? (Makeni, Int. 6)

In Massam, the girls were adamant that they would work hard and not lose the respect that had been gained. When the focus group was asked if any of the PAR girls had lost their businesses, so many responded at once that the interpreter consolidated the answer: “They are ALL continuing their businesses because they don’t want to be laughed at. They want to be considered serious women. They don’t want to be laughed at for losing what had been given to them. They are all able to keep some of their money” (Massam, Focus Group 2).

Conversely, one participant’s experience suggested that even after losing her income and stopping her education, the respect she had earned was being maintained. With no ongoing business and no schooling, she was volunteering at a clinic to gain work experience and expected to eventually earn a small stipend, but had no current income. She was once again dependent upon her family. Despite these difficulties, she stated “...even so, I know I have more respect from my family and community now” (Makeni, Int. 4). She also indicated that she could, if she wanted, go back to her business making and selling soap (presumably using a loan from her family) and would have been able to live on the profit. However, she was determined to pursue nursing and apparently had enough support from home to do so. This situation suggests that her previous activities with her soap business, brief attendance in nursing school, volunteer work and promise of an eventual income from the clinic all allowed her to first gain and then maintain respect.

2. *Sensitization and mediation activities to address community and family stigma are more successful if done by girls themselves with the support of facilitators and done in conjunction with activities exhibiting social norms.*

Almost all participants reported feeling more accepted by, and reconciled with, their communities and families six months after the end of the PAR study, compared to the beginning of PAR. Interview responses included many similar stories of parents having rejected girls, but accepting them back into the household after the girl began PAR. Most interesting were the cases where other PAR members made multiple trips to girls' homes to explain PAR and ask that the family accept the daughter back. Interview responses with parents indicated that this approach was very successful. One father, for instance, noted that “[A PAR girl from our community] came here and spoke to me; I was reluctant to take my daughter back, but [the PAR girl] kept talking to me and I thought I might try to accept [my daughter] back home. So I invited her back... and she is now staying with me at home” (Makeni, Int. 15).

In other instances, girls successfully mediated between a PAR member and her boyfriend or husband during disputes. In cases of family and boyfriend conflicts, the site facilitators often either mediated or helped PAR participants in their own attempts to mediate, and in several cases it was the support of the facilitator that ultimately resolved the conflict. In Goderich, for example, the site facilitator intervened when a PAR girl and her boyfriend had fought and the girl left the house. The boyfriend said that “The misunderstanding was jealousy [of another man in the next compound]. After [the facilitator] intervened in one of our conflicts, things became better” (Goderich, Int. 60). The site facilitator added that “I spoke to him to help him understand [her] condition... that she needs to socialize with other people. Her relationship with other people will improve, and the project is helping her learn to be self reliant” (Goderich, Int. 77). The facilitators also assisted the girls in developing relationships with community leaders and

connecting them with other organizations in the area, thereby enhancing the PAR groups' bridging and linking capital.

In addition to site facilitators, the advisory committees and community leaders assisted the process of reducing stigma and increasing social status of the girls. In Massam, for instance, the Paramount Chief created a local law against using derogatory names like 'rebel child' against the girls' children. Further, in Makeni, a member of the advisory committee explained that "[The girls] had been facing a lot of problems from the community and had been ignored by their parents. We went to their homes with them... and counseled [the families]. Some have now been accepted back by their parents" (Makeni, Int. 21). With the support of local leaders and site facilitators, girls could strengthen their social capital, reduce marginalization, and ultimately increase the level of reconciliation with their families and communities.

Importantly, these face-to-face mediation efforts by the girls and their various mentors were very different from previous 'sensitization' projects in these communities. Despite attempts by the international community and Sierra Leonean government, DDR 'sensitization' programs often failed to foster real reintegration, partly due to a lack of focus on community and family needs, the approach of using impersonal public announcements, and the heavy focus on human rights and the victimization of women and children (McKay and Mazurana, 2004). Particularly salient in the context of this research is the international community's singular view of framing girl mothers as victims only. This narrowly applied human rights approach results in a serious oversimplification of the cultural context of reconciliation and reintegration, and has

the effect of negating the perceptions and fears of communities and families, and arguably of ignoring their rights. Coulter (2009) points out the difficulty in reconciling the two viewpoints:

Whereas humanitarians saw the abducted women as innocent victims, their families perceived them as potentially dangerous. The notion of the “the innocent victim,” then, in many ways challenged local idioms of shameful behavior (p. 216).

I argue that not acknowledging their needs and fears made the communities and families feel that the reconciliation was one-sided – that they were expected to accept the girls back and even financially support them (under extremely difficult financial situations), despite the fact that the girls had broken many social norms during the war, and perhaps more importantly, often continued with what was considered to be disruptive behavior and were unable to contribute anything to the support of the family. Thus, when socially unacceptable behavior was exhibited by the girls, families and communities continued to respond by marginalizing the offenders. During interviews, when continuing stigma was noted it was typically linked to the behavior of the girls: “If we are hot tempered [our families] may not allow our children [from the bush] to eat the food” (Goderich, Int. 56).

Many interviewees noted that the stigma ended when the girls behaved according to social norms. This outcome is consistent with current research on stigma. Schneider (2009), for example, argues that stigma is reduced as individuals or groups access social capital by behaving cooperatively or reciprocally: “It is difficult, if not impossible, to sustain stigma and social exclusion when people are meeting mutual needs, building trust and helping each other.” Similarly, I argue that the reduction in stigma experienced by the PAR participants was heavily influenced by their normative behaviors that exhibited cooperation and reciprocity. A teacher in

Makeni noted that “They are respected because they are living the life society expects them to live. They are no longer discriminated [against]” (Makeni, Int. 1). His comment is especially interesting because he notes that socially appropriate behaviors also bring respect, not only reduction in discrimination.

Notably, one participant in Makeni explained how much more beneficial the PAR was than previous sensitization campaigns aimed at reconciliation:

My own experience is that PAR is the only program that brought reconciliation with my family – it is the only program that brought me closer to the community and my family. I realize that the members of this program, we had the opportunity to share our experiences, tell each other what we want to do... most other programs, they will talk it over on the radio, they say you can give your views that way. The PAR brought me very closer to my family (Makeni, Int. 8).

In her view, and in similar comments from other girls, the importance of the PAR group as a means to facilitate discussion is tied to their ability to gain family and community acceptance. The interviews and other PAR study data make clear that the psychosocial space created in the PAR meetings allowed them to explore the reasons behind their stigma and marginalization and make decisions about how to address the problem. They identified many ways that behaving differently could reduce stigma and help them better integrate with their families and communities. The Goderich site facilitator noted this in one of her monthly reports:

On the issue of integration, they spoke about healthy family relationships which could lead to a sustainable integration into families/community. Some of the area which [they] feel will bring about integration is respect for adults and community leaders, change of attitude, participation into community activities, etc. (Goderich, monthly report, Spetember, 2008).

She went on to describe changes that had occurred since the beginning of PAR: “There is less stigma now in the community compared to the initial phase of the project... Psychologically their emotions, body image and temperament have improved. They now respect the culture norms and values of the community they are living in” (Goderich, monthly report, September, 2008). Overall, the analysis suggests that behaving according to social norms led directly to a reduction in stigma and marginalization, and that participation in the PAR facilitated this shift.

3. *Actions that are perceived by the girls and/or family and community as conducive to reintegration may not be individually empowering or adhere to international human rights principles.*

In several instances the choices made by PAR groups or individuals seemed to contradict the intent of PAR, specifically its core principles of empowerment and social change. Additionally, higher level human rights gains such as increased legal protections and representation were in many cases shunned or bypassed. One example of this was seen in Massam, where a PAR participant reported domestic abuse to the local town chief who handled it internally, rather than taking the report to the district police who would have treated the matter as a criminal case. The reasons behind their choices appeared to be quite complex, as girls attempt to negotiate their relationships in both the family and the community. In most cases, it seems that the social norms in place would require that girls act in this way, and not report abuse to the district authorities. As Coulter’s (2009) findings suggest, the local belief was that one only reported enemies to the district police, not loved ones. If that is indeed the social norm, the girls may not have been willing to risk creating new sources of stigma against them, or weakening important ties to their social networks. This situation highlights the ways that social capital can have negative consequences. However, the girls did not remain silent about the abuse in these

instances and chose to pursue the issue through channels that addressed the abuse in a locally acceptable way. Despite the avoidance of official legal channels, the girls were able to negotiate the maintenance of important social relationships, while still claiming their individual rights not to be abused.

One significant example of a PAR group making a choice that explicitly disempowered its members occurred in Goderich. Pregnancy as a barrier to education is common in Sierra Leone, as reflected in a comment made by the head man of Goderich: "...most times the girls have to stop school if they get pregnant. I heard that in Makeni there is a school where even if you are pregnant you can still go to classes" (Goderich, Int. 68). The fact that he had only heard of one school in the entire country that allowed pregnant girls to attend signals the breadth of the challenges facing young mothers who want to pursue education. Importantly, this cultural attitude of discriminatory treatment toward pregnant girls and education was mirrored in the PAR group treatment of the two who had to leave school. The two girls who dropped out of school received no further financial resources from the PAR group. Moreover, the other PAR members showed little empathy for them and the girls themselves had internalized the negative perceptions of others. One girl who had attended one year of junior secondary school before getting pregnant said "I thank the [PAR because] it put me in school; but I don't know how I'll continue. It is through my fault that I have stopped going, but I am still grateful" (Goderich, Int. 57). Ideally, this is the type of institutional or structural gender discrimination that could be targeted through PAR approaches that encourage higher level social change. However, in this instance, the group followed social norms and treated the pregnant school girls in a traditional way, one that adhered to social norms. As noted in Chapter Three, it would have been

appropriate for the site facilitator to encourage discussion around this topic, perhaps ask questions and, to some degree, coach the girls through a discussion about hurdles they face in obtaining education or other life improvements.

The two girls who dropped out of school were faced with significant hurdles. They tried to start businesses and had to solicit financial support from family members or boyfriends to do so. One of them lost her small business due to health expenses related to the pregnancy, and the other girl was newly engaged in selling fish with her aunt. One reported that she continued to attend PAR meetings after dropping from school, though it was unclear whether the second girl did.

4. *Lack of access to affordable (or free) healthcare is one of the most serious challenges to sustainability of economic gains made by PAR participants. With increased access, economic stability is more achievable.*

Interview responses at the three sites indicated that several girls had sold their business assets to pay for health expenses for their children, and health expenses were noted multiple times as the reason that a PAR participant lost her business. Indeed, the only other reason participants gave for no longer having their business was voluntarily selling the assets to pursue skills training or education. In several cases, business assets or profits had shrunk due to inflation or increased personal expenses such as school fees, but in each case where a girl reported that her business was lost involuntarily, it was due to health expenses.

In Makeni, where all participants engaged in more than one activity, two participants we interviewed had lost their businesses due to high health expenses for their children. The group had never arranged a support mechanism to deal with medical expenses, and these two

participants were not able to get funding elsewhere, though they both wanted to restart their businesses. One girl in Goderich also reported losing her business due to health related expenses:

Initially I got support from PAR to do business but the baby got sick for 3 months and the business came to a stop. I used my money from the business to care for the baby. I took him to the hospital here [in Goderich], called Emergency, and I was referred to [Freetown]. No money left in the business. I have a new boyfriend who helps me a small amount, but he also has a child (Goderich, Int. 55).

Given the expectation that rural areas have less access to healthcare in post-war settings and developing countries, we were surprised to find that there was a very well-functioning clinic in Massam, the interview site with the smallest population. Moreover, none of the girls in Massam reported losing businesses to health expenses, despite several reporting that their children had been sick at some point during the PAR. When asked, girls responded that they were able to keep their businesses even when children got sick. As one girl explained:

[Medicine] is expensive at times, but sometimes if you don't have enough money they will take less. I take the funds from the business to pay, but never take too much from the business so it remains and I don't lose it (Massam, Int. 40).

The site facilitator explained that the nurse who ran the clinic was known to provide medicines and treatment at reduced rates when a client was unable to pay full price. In an informal discussion, the nurse told us that she often paid the difference out of her own wages. The situation in Massam is very unique, as most government health care workers in Sierra Leone are paid very low wages, when they are paid at all. Additionally, most health workers who go

unpaid or underpaid by the government must make ends meet for their own families by charging under the table for health services and medicines.

In some interviews from the other sites, girls reported that the only means of paying for health expenses other than selling their business was through assistance from family members or boyfriends. It is possible that if the girls have sufficient social capital in the household the request for assistance would be met positively, whereas without social capital, it would be seen only as an additional economic burden on the family or boyfriend. The situation in Massam suggests that when health services are free or very low cost, economically vulnerable young women can better manage unexpected health emergencies and are less susceptible to economic crisis.

It is reasonable to assume that participants with more children have a higher likelihood of experiencing medical expenditures than those with few or no children. Moreover, findings from a 2008 evaluative study on a Save the Children UK reintegration program in Cote d'Ivoire showed that formerly associated girls with children had lower scores on health indices, even when controlling for other variables such as age, further suggesting that girl mothers were themselves more likely to suffer poorer health (Hamakawa and Randall, 2008).

In April of 2010 the government of Sierra Leone instituted a new program throughout the country to provide free health services to women and children (IRIN, 2010). This program has the potential to positively impact health statistics all over the country. However, the health infrastructure in Sierra Leone is extremely inadequate, and there are far too few health workers in the country to support the 1.5 million women and children who could benefit from the

program (IRIN, 2010). Success of this initiative will ultimately rely on appropriate funding for infrastructure and an ability to train and deploy health workers around the country. If the government is even moderately successful in increasing the capacity of the health system, the downstream effect could be that tens of thousands of women and children may be more economically secure, if not all 1.5 million the program is targeting.

5. *Economic gains appear to be more sustainable when girls engage in more than one activity, i.e. a combination of individual business, group business, education /skills training; this combination appears to be more attainable in a more rural setting.*

The analysis of the interviews supports the idea that the fewer economic activities a PAR participant had engaged in, the more likely she was to be struggling after the end of the PAR. Moreover, girls engaged in group businesses seemed significantly more stable economically (and socially) than girls who were not part of a group business. These findings support the idea that economic reintegration is aided when more links to more networks of social capital and psychosocial support are established.

In Makeni, all 30 girls had a small business, including those who had engaged in formal schooling and five who were attending a formal skills training center. Additionally, 12 of the 30 participants had joined together to form a group business doing gara tie dying. In Massam, girls were engaged in a number of activities, including individual petty trading, informal skills training from community members, group agricultural work, and literacy classes. A few had also pursued formal skills training at a nearby center. In Goderich, each girl had initially been engaged in one activity, though by the end of the program some girls had switched to a different activity on their own and without further PAR support. No group businesses were ever

established. Overall, Goderich outcomes appeared to be the least positive of the three sites, and girls reported the most significant sustainability problems there.

One of the most significant differences between the three sites was the handling of funding support for the girls' activities and the level to which participants themselves identified the economic-related activities they wanted to pursue. The economic activities in Goderich were arranged by the NGO partner on a more traditional reintegration program model, where the girls were given the option to choose one of three activities: education, skills training, or income generation through individual market businesses. If a participant could not sustain the activity she chose, she did not receive more funding support for a new activity, whereas 'second chances' were available to girls in other PAR groups if their initial activity failed. The impact of these differences in Goderich was particularly visible in the area of education, as noted earlier in this chapter, and in skills training. According to Goderich interviewees, only three of the six participants who initially enrolled in formal education were still attending school. Two of the participants had been forced out of school due to pregnancy, and one had moved to another town with her mother. Further, none of the girls who had begun skills training had completed the training and was engaged in that activity at the end of the PAR, and were instead struggling to get by on family support or through small petty trading ventures begun with family loans.

Conversely, by the end of the PAR, the facilitator in Makeni said that most participants retained their businesses, and the group business was being well-managed. Two girls had lost their businesses to children's health expenses, as previously mentioned, and a third participant had voluntarily shifted her business assets to a non-accredited nursing program for which she

was unable to continue paying fees. Further, in Massam all participants had retained their businesses, and many were also engaged in group agricultural activities that brought in an additional small income. The few girls who had pursued formal skills training seemed to be least economically independent. For instance one participant had completed hair dressing training but without startup supplies she was only intermittently performing the skill and appeared to be living primarily on funds from her boyfriend.

Analysis of the differing outcomes suggests that the belief that economic reintegration is more difficult in urban areas has some support in this study. This common belief seems to be directly connected to the thesis finding, since the analysis suggests that in rural areas girls can gain access to land for planting crops, group businesses are easier to start and maintain due to proximity to other group members, and their activities are more visible to the community, which typically increases their social standing and the respect they gain when they are seen to be engaging in normative and productive behaviors. I further argue that in the smaller community of Massam, social networks were more interconnected and gaining access to one network eased access to others. This was the case in the other sites as well, but to a lesser degree. For instance, in Massam the social ties created when learning soap making skills might create inroads to the social networks needed to gain entry to a women's group that grew rice at the edge of town. In this way, girls in more rural areas might more easily access a wider range of bridging and linking capital.²⁰

²⁰ The deeper social connections in rural areas might have both positive and negative effects, however. An inability to gain access to social capital in rural areas may also explain why many rejected girls chose to move to urban areas after the war, where they could be more anonymous and their livelihoods were not as dependent upon social capital.

6. *Pursuit of formal education or skills training is unsustainable without continued outside financial assistance.*

Despite high expectations and noted determination, once the PAR ended the ability to pursue formal schooling and skills training was seriously constrained by financial limitations. The inability to continue formal schooling received more negative comments from Makeni participants and family members than any other issue during the interviews, reflecting the disappointment they experienced at not being able to meet their high expectations. One girl who had lost her business was particularly challenged: “Last year [PAR] paid my [school] fees for me and this year I don’t have funds for fees, and my father can’t pay for it” (Makeni, Int. 9). Another girl stated that “I am still happy ... [but] I am not sure of how to pay for fees [next] year” (Makeni, Int. 4). One girl’s brother stated that “The future is bleak because she has no funds for nursing school” (Makeni, Int. 13).

At the end of PAR, those who had remained in school had trouble continuing their enrollment. Similarly, skills training was continuing only for the participants who had received scholarships through the negotiation of the site facilitator in Makeni, or were continuing to attend classes through the personal intervention of an instructor in Goderich. Only one participant reported being able to continue paying her own school fees or skills training expenses after the end of the PAR.

The girls attending school or skills training in Goderich were particularly challenged because they had no business profits to fall back on for school fees, because none of them had been engaged in businesses. One girl reported writing letters to community members to ask for assistance in continuing her education. She said “I’m in SS3. I wrote a letter to some elders; I

was given some funds to pay my fees and they helped me with small money” (Goderich, Int. 74). Despite her successful petition for support, a more general reliance on community members for assistance was highlighted as a problem by the community head man “Before PAR they used to ask us for assistance... ..we felt attacked because they were always coming to us asking for something” (Goderich, Int. 68). His comment reflects the connection between community perception of these young mothers and their ability, or inability, to be financially self-reliant. However, it is likely that community members may feel less ‘attacked’ when being asked for school fees rather than general assistance, since community interviews indicate that they associate schooling with better behavior and less ‘idleness’ as noted in Finding 1. The girls could be perceived as reciprocating the good will of the community members’ financial support by adhering to cultural norms if they continue positive behaviors. In this way some girls were able to continue their education.

Even school-going participants with highly successful businesses stated that they would be unable to save enough to pay for their continuing education, especially at the tertiary level. They cited numerous other expenses as holding them back, including school fees for their children, contributions to the family, and health expenses. Notably, these were expenses they had been unable to pay prior to PAR but many girls indicated they could afford now. An advisory committee member also suggested that if participants tried to pay for school fees with their business profits, the businesses would eventually be lost because the additional PAR financial support would no longer be coming in to supplement the businesses, further suggesting that the continuance of education was unlikely even with a personal income. Nevertheless, the

girls' and families' concerns about their inability to continue school show the high value that girls and families placed on education, particularly as it impacted their future income prospects.

Conversely, community members in Makeni suggested that these expectations of attaining tertiary education were unrealistic and one PAR advisory committee member noted that the PAR participants who were able to finish senior secondary are already significantly better off than the vast majority of other Sierra Leonean girls. She placed the educational challenges for PAR girls in perspective against the backdrop of a poverty-ridden country with a high birth rate:

“Many girls are enrolled in school, but the problems is retaining. By [the time they reach] senior secondary school many girls drop due to financial problems, or getting pregnant. You have to pay for books, uniforms.... The little money is what most people find difficult” (Makeni, Int. 17).

These community perceptions are supported by Sierra Leone's education statistics that show, as of the 2004 census, only 28% of girls nationally were enrolled in senior secondary school (SSS), a number that is heavily skewed by higher enrollment in urban Freetown. In Makeni, enrollment of girls in SSS was in the 5% range (Dupigny, Kargbo and Yallancy, 2006). Further, only 1% of all Sierra Leone's female population attends tertiary level education (UNESCO, 2002), suggesting that the expectations of the participants and families in Makeni are quite unrealistic.

Notably, the Goderich PAR group leader had completed secondary school and was attending college, studying social work. Her success was a clear exception to the pattern of educational pursuits by other PAR girls in Goderich and Makeni, yet it was not clear how she was paying for college. In Makeni, several girls were in a teaching college and at least one was in a nursing program; again, it was unclear how they were paying the fees, though in all cases it is possible that family or other outside funding, such as scholarships, was the source.

As noted in Finding 1 above, the contrast between community expectations of formal education and those of families and participants highlights the differences in priorities of the groups: controlling unwelcome behavior versus contribution to the family and personal efforts to overcome extreme poverty. In either case, an inability to continue with their education or skills training could have negative impacts on the status of the girls in both the family and the community in general, particularly if there is a change in other activities or behaviors. The PAR girls in Makeni in particular face an enormous set of expectations from their families, and I believe that a failure to meet those expectations could eventually negatively impact their family relationships – specifically, that lessening respect could lower their status in the household and therefore lower their access to social capital and its benefits. Conversely, the fact that many girls in Makeni had already completed senior secondary or were engaged in ongoing skills training by the end of PAR, and that most were still engaged in individual and/or group businesses may have raised their status and levels of respect enough that they can rebound from any problems created by losing access to further education.

Conclusion

Many of the findings in this analysis are consistent with discussions in Chris Coulter's ethnography *Bush Wives and Girl Soldiers: Women's Lives through War and Peace in Sierra Leone*. Her informants for her study were not all girl mothers, but many were, and her in-depth study of their lives brought many important reintegration challenges to the fore. My focus on the concept of social capital in structuring these findings stems from patterns that arose during my analysis of the data that I was able to link to Coulter's description of 'severed social reciprocity'

as a central driver in the post-war experiences of girls formerly associated with armed groups (p. 206).

This analysis suggests that participation in the PAR study helped the young mothers more fully reintegrate with their communities by repairing their social capital. They accomplished this by engaging in activities that exhibited normative social behaviors, cooperation, and reciprocity, which earned them respect and improved their status in both their families and communities. Further, these two conditions are usually mutually-reinforcing – as their access to social capital improved so too did their status, and vice versa.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The primary goal of this thesis was to identify factors helping or hindering reintegration of girl mothers at three PAR sites in Sierra Leone, and secondly, to compare the perceptions of these PAR participants with those of their communities and families regarding the reintegration activities undertaken by the girls. In this chapter I review what was learned through this analysis and place the results in the context of other literature on the reintegration of girl mothers. Finally, I make recommendations for improving outcomes of reintegration programs and for areas of future research regarding reintegration of young mothers formerly associated with armed groups.

Accessing social capital: Successes and challenges

For the young women in the PAR study, their exclusion from the support and benefits of the DDR process after the war, combined with community perceptions that girl mothers have more severely broken social norms than other participants in the conflict, placed them at the very margins of their communities. Echoing findings from other studies by reintegration scholars and practitioners such as Coulter (2009), Denov (2010) and McKay and Mazurana (2004), the stigma these young women faced was worse than that for males due to discriminatory societal norms about gender, behavior, marriage and sex. Stigmatization, as a societal “mechanism for enforcing social norms” (Blume, 2003), is directly related to social capital, which is defined in this thesis as “the [social] norms and networks that facilitate social action” (Woolcock, 2001).

In a post-conflict context of generally low levels of social capital and fractured trust, stigmatized groups such as girl mothers suffered disproportionately. This stigma, and the accompanying marginalization over their perceived antisocial behavior and broken norms, resulted in the girls having little or no access to the networks of social capital that were needed for them to achieve reintegration and supportive relationships in their communities. Critically, during the process of rebuilding post-war communities and reestablishing the social capital and networks needed for social functioning, girl mothers had been excluded from the information, discussions, and cooperative activities that could have helped them gain access to social capital.

Despite several years of post-war human rights improvements and focused attention on gender issues and economic recovery in the country, the conditions faced by these young mothers had improved relatively little since the end of the war. Their situations as unsupported mothers, their marginalized status, and a lack of even family-level social capital precluded them from attaining education or skills training and from establishing livelihoods. The analysis in this thesis suggests that, overall, participation in the PAR study helped young mothers build and repair their social capital, reduce stigma, and therefore improve both their social and economic status within their families and communities. The extent to which this occurred varied, but the ways in which they achieved an improvement are outlined in the next section.

Accessing social capital through networks and normative behaviors

I argued throughout Chapter Five that the young mothers had gained access to social capital through participation in the PAR, which significantly improved reintegration into their families and communities, and that in turn increased their access to more social capital. They

gained access to social capital by exhibiting behaviors that showed their ability and willingness to engage in the informal social norms that make up social capital and that, Fukuyama (2001) argues, must lead to cooperation – such as reciprocity, and personal reliability. Importantly, they themselves identified these factors as being ways to increase acceptance by their communities and families.

Attendance in school or skills training created new or wider social networks, therefore increasing bridging capital for the girls who participated in those activities. More broadly, participation in the PAR itself established a strong psychosocial network for the girls, and was a significant early source of strengthened bonding capital for the participants, creating a base network from which they could negotiate cross-cutting relationships with other networks. This kind of group participation by marginalized individuals can have significant impacts where social capital is reduced (Coletta, 1997). As Leff (2008) notes, “Informal networks among ex-combatants, such as discussion groups, veterans’ associations, and business ventures are key elements for successful economic and social reintegration” (p. 14). This PAR study supports Leff’s assertion and, importantly, specifically illustrates how those ‘associations’ can be successfully used by all types of former combatants, can incorporate inclusive programming practices, and can address a wide range of reintegration challenges.

Further, as Narayan (1999) argues, equitable access to information through cross-cutting ties is a central factor in ensuring that the negative aspects of social capital do not out-compete the benefits. Through PAR group participation, girl mothers made new horizontal and vertical connections to their communities and strengthened existing horizontal bridging and bonding

capital. They were invited to community meetings, joined women's groups, and attended workshops on diverse topics such as human rights, gender based violence, and HIV/AIDS prevention. Increasing cross-cutting ties allowed the young mothers to gain access to other social networks and the information available there. In other words, strengthening positive social capital by connecting with other social networks could not be accomplished by the PAR groups without establishing cross-cutting ties – horizontal bonds and bridges, or vertical links. Often in the PAR, the site facilitators assisted the girls in establishing and negotiating these cross-cutting ties, an important aspect of their mediation and mentoring functions.

The range of activities that the PAR girl mothers engaged in that exhibited normative behavior and improved access to social capital was extensive. For instance, in Massam the PAR group organized and hosted a community dance, which supported cooperation and strengthened bridging capital between the girls and the community. The Massam group also pooled their money to pay for repairs to the community well during the dry season, an economic investment in the community that fostered both social and economic reciprocity and helped the girls feel that they were making important contributions to community well-being. Other examples of cooperative and reciprocal actions included the PAR groups' reaching out to other marginalized girls in their communities and providing economic and/or psychosocial support to them. Further, there were several instances of PAR girls pooling their money to donate to bereaved or ill community members, which is a normative social behavior in Sierra Leonean society. When the girls did this, they were seen by others and themselves as contributing to the strengthening of social norms of cooperation and coping during hardship.

Many actions they engaged in showed other normative behaviors like commitment and personal responsibility. Some of these actions included paying their children's school fees or contributing to household expenses, often referred to as contributing to 'family feeding.' Other aspects of personal responsibility consisted of everything from maintaining a clean appearance, to refraining from disruptive behaviors such as fighting and swearing, to not going out 'on the street' at night. Further, they attended PAR meetings and classes regularly. In all of these ways, the girls exhibited behaviors that reflected local social norms. These behaviors reduced stigma that had been levied against them, improved relationships and encouraged family and community members to reciprocate and cooperate with the girls. Thus, behavior consistent with social norms allowed access to social networks, and actions related to reciprocity strengthened loose ties and supported the notion of shared goals and values. To state it succinctly, gaining access to social capital required exhibiting normative, cooperative behaviors.

Earning and showing respect: Strengthening relationships and social capital

Gaining respect from family and community members was instrumental in improving reintegration for the PAR participants. The respect they gained typically stemmed from three sources: income generation, education, or exhibiting socially normative behavior. This finding is related to the livelihood studies by Wessells (2006b), and the education studies by Betancourt et al. (2008) that emphasize the psychosocial benefits of these respective activities. It also ties into Coulter's (2009) arguments about normative behaviors as aiding acceptance. I argue that this thesis analysis adds an additional dimension in relating each of the three factors to the important unifying theme – the respect that arises from these activities and behaviors, and a

resulting increase in social status and access to social capital. I further suggest that, by exhibiting normative behavior and fulfilling expectations of society, most of these young women have made the transition in their communities' eyes from girls to women – they no longer have “ambiguous” status, as Coulter (2009) described it (p. 57). This shift can be seen in the many comments from all interviewees about girls no longer being ‘idle’ and now being ‘serious’ and ‘productive.’ The change is a result of new, normative social behaviors that meet the expectations of their communities and families and allow them access to social capital.

Moreover, in the context of the PAR, expressions of respect by family and community can also be seen as representative of the process of empowerment the girls have gone through. They actively participate in their own reintegration, exhibit the ability to develop their own agency and have begun to respect themselves and each other. Further, they behave in ways that show respect to family and community members, a change brought up repeatedly by community and family interviewees. Finally, the efforts they made on behalf of themselves and each other to gain acceptance by family members, mediate family and other relationship conflicts, and strengthen personal and group ties all showed that they considered themselves and each other worthy of acceptance, and importantly, worthy of being heard in their families and communities. In broader reintegration literature there are innumerable examples of ex-combatants simply receiving ‘handouts’ or having reintegration activities dictated to them; the PAR processes are the antithesis of standard reintegration programs, and this analysis suggests that the positive outcomes of participants directing their own reintegration efforts are respect, improved social status, lowered levels of stigma, and increased access to social capital.

The dark side of social capital: Detrimental norms

Notably, some activities or decisions made by the PAR groups reflect ways that a perceived need to adhere to social norms in order to gain acceptance may be harmful to the participants. These situations reflect how social norms can be harmful, a significant down side of social capital. In some cases, such as domestic violence, the young mothers often used unofficial channels (i.e. outside the human rights or higher level legal circles) to gain restitution. Some outsiders may find this choice problematic. Yet arguably, the PAR girl mothers would have faced significant new challenges in the community if they had taken boyfriends or husbands to the regional police.

In other cases, such as expulsion of pregnant girls from school and therefore from financial benefits of the PAR, they chose to perpetuate damaging discriminatory treatment of their peers. This situation suggests that highly participatory methods where participants make their own decisions can lead to unintended outcomes. Pairing rights-based and gender-sensitive training with active mentoring in these circumstances appears to be necessary to avoid such negative outcomes. This type of intervention is similar to what Fukuyama (2001) refers to as “an external shock that breaks apart dysfunctional traditions” (p. 13). Through such approaches, participants in PAR are less likely to be harmed by group decisions. Yet, groups and individuals must still be encouraged to find their own solutions to these apparently conflicting options. It is their right to decide how best to solve their own problems – and as the PAR principles espouse, the girls are the experts on their own situations.

Sustaining and expanding the gains: Possibilities and challenges

My analysis of the interviews suggests that the girls' psychosocial and economic reintegration was enhanced through the PAR, but that for most participants, the most enduring outcomes of the study are likely to be psychosocial rather than economic.

The benefits of a holistic approach

Economic gains are more likely to be sustainable when the girls engage in more than one activity. The Makeni and Massam groups, in particular, showed how successful multiple activities can be. This outcome suggests that, through the addition of participatory group psychosocial support, small loans or grants, group savings, and a strong mentor, the best practices model put forth by the Paris Principles is attainable. Some of the many things holding back most agencies or NGOs from providing holistic reintegration programming like the PAR may include restricted funding directives by donors, and insufficient understanding of and belief in the PAR model.

Economic vulnerability

Importantly, participants in the PAR experienced the most severe economic shocks when faced with children's health expenses, and in some cases they sold their businesses to pay those expenses. The analysis also showed that in these three sites ongoing skills training and formal education pursued by the girls was in most cases unsustainable after the PAR ended, unless they had outside assistance. The longer-term impact of these economic strains was uncertain, yet the psychosocial benefits of having been in school and obtaining skills training appear to be more

sustainable. Many girls who were struggling economically reported continued positive psychosocial status, likely due to the new capacities they had gained through the PAR, and their continuing normative behaviors.

However, some interviewees suggested that economic stress could eventually cause some of the young mothers to revert to non-normative behaviors. The result would likely be that even their psychosocial gains would dissipate, with a negative impact on their social status and possibly renewed marginalization. One of the most significant negative scenarios is the possibility of young mothers falling back on prostitution or the ‘boyfriend business’ in search of financial stability. This step could undo many or most of the gains the girls made during the study.

Education: An outlier?

Attaining higher education was one of the central ways for participants at all three sites to earn respect in families and the community. Yet in Makeni, both girls and their families expressed long-term goals of tertiary education and professional degrees that were seemingly unattainable for most of them. While some girls exhibited the capacity to make their educational dreams come true, many clearly did not – typically for financial reasons or the inability to pass the national exam to gain admittance. Strikingly, the parents of these girls believed strongly that they could gain a tertiary education and make the lives of the entire family better. Community members, on the other hand, expressed serious doubts. It is possible that, if unable to meet these high expectations, girls may lose their improved status in the household.

Interestingly, the study by Betancourt et al. (2008) on education of formerly associated children in Sierra Leone indicated that the children themselves were the only interviewees who expressed such high expectations and that family members and guardians felt vocational training was more practical. In Makeni, only community members responded this way. The reasons for such differing perceptions at this site are unclear. One factor may be the presence in Makeni of a school that allows pregnant and lactating girls to attend, despite the national norm of exclusion of pregnant girls from further education. Further, many of the Makeni PAR participants had previously attended school – before and/or after the war – and their initial level of literacy at the beginning of the PAR was higher than at any other PAR site. Almost all girls in Makeni prioritized education, and overall the group attained the highest grade levels of all PAR sites. For these reasons, I suggest that Makeni may be an outlier regarding expectations and perceptions of education.

Sustaining the shift from 'idle girls' to 'serious women'

Because the sustainability of economic improvements may be difficult, the continuation of socially-oriented actions based on norms of reciprocity and cooperation will be especially important if the PAR participants are to maintain their access to social capital and their increased status and respect. One of the most important actions the young mothers can take now that the PAR study has ended is to continue meeting as a group. Whether they call it PAR or create a new name like the group in Goderich has done ('Girl Mothers Without Borders' is their chosen name), maintaining participation in a base network will likely better position them to continue making ties with other networks. Using the group to expand cross-cutting network ties will

likely result in broader benefits than what they could achieve individually. Membership in other women's groups or agricultural cooperative-type arrangements would serve a similar purpose, but may not provide the same level of psychosocial support that the PAR group does, especially if they do not employ highly participatory methods of decision making. Ultimately, I believe their ability to maintain and extend the benefits of the PAR will depend on the maintenance and expansion of access to social networks through normative behaviors and continued participation in cooperative and reciprocal relationships.

Most of the participants are adamant that they will carry their successes beyond the end of the PAR. However, many girls expressed concern that the gains they have made may not be enough to move them beyond their current status, particularly in light of the expectations they have for themselves and their futures. Two Makeni participants wrapped up their focus group discussion with the following comments:

If we are to make reflections, some of us would not be what we are today if not for this program. We also want to cry aloud so people can hear us. Yes, we have come this far, but there is much to be done if we are to be sure of our future. We are proud to be here, but we want to go beyond. We want to reach a better point (Makeni, Int. 4).

Maybe the message to take home is that we have started well, and we are crawling, but we want to stand on our own feet (Makeni, Int. 5).

These comments reflect a strong desire to continue changing their lives for the better – improving their livelihoods, reducing dependency on others, gaining knowledge and skills, strengthening their relationships, and increasing personal capacity. In essence, they represent the shift the young mothers in PAR have made from what the community refers to as 'idle girls' who

break social norms and are seen as disruptive in their society, to ‘serious women’ who have earned respect and status in their families and communities. It is the hope of everyone involved with the PAR, the families, and the communities, that this shift proves sustainable over time.

Recommendations for further research

1. Further study of community and family reintegration needs should be undertaken, both in and out of the PAR context. What are the best ways to support families and communities for sustainable reintegration? For example, what impact would livelihood assistance for parents and guardians have on sustainable reintegration?
2. Would programs focused on building social capital in communities succeed in all settings and at all stages of reintegration?
3. A follow-up assessment of the status of PAR participants a year or more after the end of the study would allow for more substantive evaluation of the sustainability of the psychosocial and economic impacts of the PAR. Salient issues could be the extent of group membership (in PAR or other community groups); reciprocal or cooperative interactions with community and family; continuation of education; perceived levels of respect or stigma; and follow-up application of the survey and/or use of the indicators the young mothers themselves had identified and employed during the PAR.
4. Reintegration efforts (especially for women, children, and girl mothers) could benefit from a study about how stigmatization changes over time in a post-war setting. One specific question to ask might be: Are formerly associated girls and women more stigmatized in later years due to prostitution and other non-normative behavior than to their rebel past or their children born in the bush?
5. What are the best ways to include boys and men in a study like this PAR, especially in the context of a hierarchical society such as Sierra Leone?
6. Further research is needed on how cash benefits support young mothers. I suggest a comparative assessment between reintegration of young mothers who have received psychosocial support, business training, education and skills training opportunities compared with young mothers who receive all of those types of support and additionally get cash loans or grants.
7. A comparative study of livelihoods and well-being between Makeni and another PAR site could help to uncover how senior secondary school-level education impacts long-term prospects for formerly associated girl mothers.
8. More in-depth research is needed to identify and explain differences in reintegration processes in urban versus rural settings.

Recommendations for policy and program changes

Programmatic recommendations

- Use highly participatory approaches for reintegrating women and girls into post-conflict communities. This will require training agency and organization personnel and ensuring appropriate funding levels for a long-term, development-oriented reintegration focus.
- Expand the use of existing groups of formerly associated children and women and create new groups for psychosocial support and exchange of information and ideas about addressing stigma, becoming part of their communities, improving livelihoods, etc. Provide a facilitator to advise participants.
- Utilize the concept of social capital in reintegration programs by incorporating activities specifically aimed at strengthening social bonds, network building and establishing reciprocal relationships to encourage trust and cooperation.
- From the start of any reintegration program, linkages should be made between program participants and other organizations, programs, and social networks, particularly those programs that provide services the participant's program does not.
- Create training opportunities for young women for jobs that are in need in the post-war context – community health workers and mediators are good examples.
- Incorporate active and holistic mentoring into all reintegration programs, preferably to be done by community-based mediators with a broad range of basic training in areas such as business management, conflict resolution, and health education. Monitoring of progress should be part of mentoring.
- Increase the length of community-based reintegration programs, especially for young mothers, to help stabilize their situations and increase their ability to weather financial or psychosocial stresses.

Policy recommendations

- End the exclusion of pregnant or lactating girls from school. Establishing schools where older students could attend with their peer group, rather than much younger students, would help to encourage young mothers to continue their education. Childcare must be provided to address the common household reason that girl mothers cannot continue school.

- Increase access to programs designed to allow young mothers to ‘catch up’ in their education, while simultaneously earning a small income.
- Create reintegration programs that allow young mothers to go to school and their parents/guardians or other family members to have access to income generation activities.
- Incorporate face-to-face mediation and conflict resolution into all post-conflict sensitization programs, and ensure that all stakeholders, including formerly associated returnees and their families, are included in planning and dialogue.
- Ensure that S/RES 1325, the Paris Principles and other international instruments are fully applied when designing DDR programs and ensure that areas of anticipated difficulty in application of the principles are called out in planning documents.
- Establish coordination and communication mechanisms for child protection actors, gender-oriented actors and DDR/reintegration actors to improve application of international norms during DDR and reintegration planning.
- Ensure single-themed reintegration programs link beneficiaries with other programs to fill gaps in services.
- Create a reintegration and development advisory council with local committees to ensure that local contexts and capacities are understood. This committee should include representatives of all stakeholder groups, including girl mothers, community and family of returnees, in addition to community leaders and office-holders. The committee could be responsible for performing market assessments; educational and skills training capacities assessments (both formal and non-formal); a census of religious, youth, gender-based, and all other civil society-level organizations, plus all NGOs and INGOs active in the community; and any other important post-conflict social and economic assessments that could be used to inform community reintegration planning at all levels.
- In post-conflict settings, establish long-term funding mechanisms and living wages for teachers and health care workers; this will improve quality of care and education, plus encourage more and higher quality candidates. Additionally, it may lower the incidence of under-the-table charges by these professionals, allowing better access for young mothers and their children.

Final comments

Through this thesis, I have examined the ways that young mothers at three specific sites in the PAR study have succeeded in some ways, and continued to struggle in others, with the process of furthering their reintegration into their communities. I argue that community-based

reintegration is, at its heart, about strengthening relationships between formerly associated girl mothers and the families and communities to which they returned. These girls were able to create inroads to better relationships by changing their behavior, and they began exhibiting social norms such as reciprocity and personal responsibility, which increased their social capital. This process, combined with income generation and educational pursuits, allowed them to improve their status within the family and community, and gained the respect of those who had previously stigmatized them. In essence, they transitioned from ‘idle girls’ to ‘serious women’ in the eyes of their families and communities, and importantly, in their own eyes. Additionally, by forming new relationships (initially in the PAR group) and strengthening existing weak social bonds, they took advantage of their increased social capital and gained access to social networks and opportunities that had previously been closed to them.

The changes in their lives were seen as significant by the girls, their families, and communities alike. Even those girls who still struggled – had lost their businesses or were no longer able to attend school or skills training – said their lives were better than at the beginning of the PAR. And while a few girls at one site still reported periodic stigma by family members, every participant at all three sites reported feeling reintegrated in their communities.

Importantly, through the PAR, participants obtained the capacities needed to identify and take steps to resolve their own problems. This knowledge will be critical in their attempts to continue negotiating the ongoing challenges that Sierra Leone’s entire population faces in a still-struggling post-war economy with few employment or education opportunities. But critically, these young women will now be facing these challenges from within community-based

networks, and with the support and respect of their peers, families, and communities. This new status as an active part of the community is the central benefit of their new access to social capital. Through normative behavior and access to social capital, they are no longer on the margins of their society, and can draw on their new status and new capacities to continue claiming their right to be part of society, to be respected.

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APPENDIX A

PAR Girl Mothers Study: Field Sites

* Indicates Sierra Leone sites where interviews were performed

Christian Brothers (Sierra Leone)

*Massam Kpaka

Pujehun Town

Christian Children's Fund (Sierra Leone)

Gawama/Ngiehun (Kailahun District)

Mamudia (Koinadugu District)

CCSL (Council of Churches Sierra Leone)

Binkolo

*Makeni

National Network for Psychosocial Care (NNEPCA) (Sierra Leone)

City Centre

*Goderich

SAVE the Children Liberia

Palala

Slipway

THINK Liberia

Buchanan

Pipeline

Caritas (Uganda)

Palabek

Parabongo

CPA - Concerned Parents Association (Uganda)

Apala subcounty

Railways division

TPO (Uganda)

Obalanga

Otobui

World Vision (Uganda)

Odek- Gulu

Pader town council-Pader

APPENDIX B

Ethnographic Interview Questions (Individual and Focus Group Interviews)

Girl Mother Participants (and do basically the same for drop-outs with some added queries about reasons for dropping – either in small focus groups or with individuals)

Tell how they joined the group [their story]

What are signs that girls have reintegrated after they return from armed groups?

How conflicts settled (give stories of problems in the group and solutions)

Sustainability (6 months after funding stops in October 2009): stories here about what has happened since project ended.

Tell a story about a girl who thrived in the PAR.

Give a story about a girl in the PAR who did not do well [poor reintegration].

Talk about how the girls in the PAR are doing as members of the community [be specific].

Has the PAR made a difference in how you take care of your children?

Trust issues between girls and agencies

Sources of livelihood [PAR + other] – maybe tell this about **other** girl participants and probe

For those going to school, how are they treated? How are their children treated?

Sexual exploitation issues [how to ask about this?]

What are community activities in which you've participated during the last month?

What is your livelihood like now (amount of income, etc) compared to when the PAR ended?

What have been girls' responses when other girl mothers have been sexually exploited by boys or men?

Girl Mothers who started in the PAR but dropped

What were reasons that you left the PAR [tell stories]

Did your life improve/get worse or stay about the same when you left the PAR?

Children of Girl Mothers

Tell a story about what it is like for you to live in this community.

PAR Field Support Workers (Social Workers, RAs)

Why are some girl mother participants doing better and others not?

What is the core learning from the PAR?

Agency Partners

What is core learning from the PAR?

Why is it so hard to do participation?

What were successes by your agency in this project (particular strengths) and failures?

What were the challenges and how were these addressed?

What were key points of resistance (by agency personnel) to girls fully participating?

When did it start to make sense to do the PAR? [narrative]

Reflection on the overall PAR

Community Advisors & Leaders

Why are some girl mother participants doing better and others not?

Who were the girls who were fully involved, who came to PAR meetings and made decisions?

Was decision making done by a few girls or most/all of them? Tell a story to explain.

Have there been more pregnancies among girl participants or the same as other girls who live in the community? Is this good for the community? Not good?

How have the children of the girl participants been accepted by the community? Is there a difference between those born in the bush and those born in the community? Is there a difference according to gender?

How are the girls doing as mothers? [Share stories]

Is there more awareness of girl mothers in community discussions, organizations and gatherings?

Are girl mothers invited to participate in community meetings/organizations?

Have the girl mother participants continued to meet together and support each other? Are community advisors and leaders still involved? What are other ways the girls have continued together? [could ask all this of the girl mothers].

Sexual exploitation issues.

At the start of the PAR some girls complained about being called names like prostitute. Do you think this has changed? If yes, how?

Boyfriends/partners/husbands

Have there been changes in your relationships because of participation in the PAR? Better? Worse? (Probe here)

Have you been included in the PAR? Please explain what ways boyfriends/partners/husbands should be involved.

Family

Has the atmosphere in the family changed?

How do you see your daughters as mothers?

Have you seen any changes in the babies/children of the girl mothers?

Was there a time when the PAR was good? Not good?

Was the family involved in PAR activities?

Community members

Tell a story about how girls in the PAR changed [for better or worse].

Why are some girl mother participants doing better and others not?

Have relationships between the girl mothers and the community changed? Is there a difference between girls who came back from armed groups and other girl mothers in the PAR who were not in armed groups?

“Do No Harm”

(to several/all focus groups)

Are there any bad things that have happened [life gotten worse] because of the PAR?

Has sexual exploitation/sexual violence become better, worse, about the same?

How would the girl mothers have been better off without the PAR?

What is their understanding of the informed consent process? Of data confidentiality?

What has happened in the girls’ groups when there has been abuse?

How have research assistants understood codes of conduct and issues of sexual exploitation and abuse?

Did the PAR do enough?

APPENDIX C

Interview details

DATE	SITE	CODE	INT TYPE	SEX	ROLE/REL
10/23/2009	Makeni	1	Paired	M	Teacher
10/23/2009	Makeni	2	Paired	M	Teacher
10/24/2009	Makeni	3	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
10/24/2009	Makeni	4	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
10/24/2009	Makeni	5a	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
10/24/2009	Makeni	6	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
10/24/2009	Makeni	7	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
10/24/2009	Makeni	8	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
10/24/2009	Makeni	9	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
10/24/2009	Makeni	10	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
10/25/2009	Binkolo	11	Individual	F	Girl Mother
10/24/2009	Makeni	12	Family	F	Mother
10/24/2009	Makeni	13	Family	M	Brother
10/25/2009	Makeni	14	Family	F	Mother
10/25/2009	Makeni	15	Family	M	Father
10/26/2009	Makeni	16	Individual	M	Community
10/26/2009	Makeni	17	Individual	F	Advisory Council
10/26/2009	Makeni	18	Family	F	Mother
10/26/2009	Makeni	19	Individual	F	Ex-Girl Mother
10/26-27/09	Makeni	20	Individual	M	Site facilitator
10/27/2009	Makeni	21	Individual	F	Advisory Council
10/27/2009	Makeni	5b	Individual	F	Girl Mother
10/27/2009	Makeni	22	Individual	F	Ex-Girl Mother
10/29/2009	Massam	23	Paired	F	Guardian
10/29/2009	Massam	24	Paired	F	Mother
10/29/2009	Massam	25	Paired	M	Community
10/29/2009	Massam	26	Paired	F	Community
10/29/2009	Massam	27	Paired	M	Community
10/29/2009	Massam	28	Paired	M	Guardian
10/29/2009	Massam	29	Paired	F	Community
10/29/2009	Massam	30a	Paired	F	Community

DATE	SITE	CODE	INT TYPE	SEX	ROLE/REL
10/30/2009	Massam	31	Individual	F	Mother
10/30/2009	Massam	30b	Individual	F	Community
10/30/2009	Massam	32	Individual	M	Community
10/30/2009	Massam	33	Individual	F	Site facilitator
10/30/2009	Massam	34	Focus Group	M	Community
10/30/2009	Massam	35	Focus Group	M	Community
10/30/2009	Massam	36	Focus Group	F	Community
10/30/2009	Massam	37	Focus Group	M	Community
10/31/2009	Massam	38	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
10/31/2009	Massam	39	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
10/31/2009	Massam	40	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
10/31/2009	Massam	41	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
10/31/2009	Massam	42	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
10/31/2009	Massam	43	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
10/31/2009	Massam	44	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
10/31/2009	Massam	45	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
10/31/2009	Massam	46	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
10/31/2009	Massam	47	Family	M	Husband
10/31/2009	Massam	48	Family	F	Guardian
11/1/2009	Massam	49	Family	F	Mother
11/1/2009	Massam	50	Family	M	Husband
11/1/2009	Massam	51	Family	M	Uncle
11/1/2009	Massam	52	Family	M	Boyfriend
11/1/2009	Massam	53	Individual	M	Agency Partner
11/3/2009	Goderich	54	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
11/3/2009	Goderich	55	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
11/3/2009	Goderich	56	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
11/3/2009	Goderich	57	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
11/3/2009	Goderich	58	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
11/3/2009	Goderich	59	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
11/4/2009	Goderich	60	Family	M	Boyfriend
11/4/2009	Goderich	61	Family	F	Mother
11/4/2009	Goderich	62	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
11/4/2009	Goderich	63	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
11/4/2009	Goderich	64	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
11/4/2009	Goderich	65	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
11/4/2009	Goderich	66	Focus Group	F	Girl Mother
11/4/2009	Goderich	67	Family	F	Great-Aunt

DATE	SITE	CODE	INT TYPE	SEX	ROLE/REL
11/5/2009	Goderich	68	Individual	M	Community
11/5/2009	Goderich	69	Focus Group	M	Community Leader
11/5/2009	Goderich	70	Focus Group	M	Community Leader
11/5/2009	Goderich	71	Focus Group	F	Advisory Council
11/5/2009	Goderich	72	Focus Group	F	Advisory Council
11/5/2009	Goderich	73	Focus Group-small group	F	Girl Mother
11/5/2009	Goderich	74	Focus Group-small group	F	Girl Mother
11/5/2009	Goderich	75	Focus Group-small group	F	Girl Mother
11/5/2009	Goderich	76	Individual	F	Girl Mother
11/5/2009	Goderich	77	Individual	F	Site facilitator
11/6/2009	Freetown	81	Paired	F	Agency Partner
11/6/2009	Freetown	82	Paired	M	Agency Partner
10/29/2009	Massam	83	Focus Group	M-F	Community Meeting