

Mozambique: Civil Society Roles in DDR

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From 1977-1992, a civil war traumatised the country, as both sides, FRELIMO and RENAMO, relied on child soldiers and committed atrocities against civilians. Religious leaders from the Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM), the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church and its affiliates at the Catholic Community of Sant'Egidio based in Rome encouraged RENAMO and FRELIMO to bring an end to the war through dialogue in a 1992 peace agreement. The UN oversaw demobilisation of 100,000 troops and collected over 200,000 weapons between 1992-1994.⁴⁹ At the end of this process, the country still suffered from violent crime and a widespread sense of trauma. Millions of weapons and caches of ammunition, landmines and explosives still littered the country, obstructing agriculture, and economic development. These local stashes were a source of instability, as it remained unclear whether the peace agreement would hold or whether groups would return to fighting.

Religious organisations and NGOs in Mozambique led a nation-wide DDR programme following the end of the UN's program. The Christian Council of Mozambique's (CCM) pivotal role in the peace process gave it trust and respect to also play roles in disarmament. CCM noted in its 2002-2204 report that "Mozambique is the first Country in the world with a government who accepted in 1995 to give the civil society, (Christian Council of Mozambique) completely the responsibility for collection, massive destruction of small arms and light weapons as well as all security process of these complex and political very sensible issue."⁵⁰

In addition, over a dozen Mozambican youths, some of whom were former child soldiers from both the RENAMO and FRELIMO forces, came together in 1995 to discuss effective ways for community participation in peacekeeping and security processes. Initially named the Community Intelligence Force (Força de Inteligência Comunitária, or FIC) the group eventually changed their name to FOMICRES (Mozambican Force for Crime Investigation and Social Insertion). FIC joined together with the CCM in a "transformation of swords into ploughshares" or "TAE" disarmament project.⁵¹ Early efforts included helping community members build trust with one another, establishing a culture of peace, and fostering understanding of the need for reconciliation and weapons collection. FIC trained community members on techniques to gain intelligence for public collection and destruction of small arms and light weapons that were still in illicit hands. The six elements of the project included:

- Weapons collection
- Exchange of weapons for tools
- Destruction of weapons
- Civic education in the community
- Transformation of the destroyed weapons into art pieces

The challenge

After the UN's DDR programme was over, there were still many weapons obstructing human security.

Theory of change:

Programs to increase trust between communities by building relationships to identify weapons' caches and to foster alternative livelihoods to support human security.

⁴⁹ Sami Faltas and Wolf-Christian Paes, Brief 29 Exchanging Guns for Tools: The TAE Approach to Practical Disarmament—An Assessment of the TAE Project in Mozambique. World Vision and Bonn International Center for Conversion April, 2004: 9.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ "Weapons collection in Mozambique: FOMICRES" in *An Introduction to Local First: Development for the Twenty-First Century*. London: Peace Direct, 2012.

- Post-exchange follow-up with beneficiaries

FIC staff worked with communities, former combatants and leaders on both sides to gather information on the location of weapons stashes. Individuals and communities would share information about weapons based on promises that they would receive tools such as bicycles, sewing machines, zinc roof sheeting or agricultural tools in exchange. General criteria for the exchange allowed for standardizing negotiations depending on the type and condition of the weapons.



Photo 27: Artistic chair made from guns gathered

For example, for 1 operational weapon, 12 non-operational weapons, or 520 units of ammunition, an informant could expect to receive 10 zinc sheets (often used for roofing) or 1 bicycle.⁵² Technical staff from the capital Maputo would then travel to these areas to verify the information and arrange a process with the communities to collect and destroy the weapons.

In the capital city Maputo, artists transformed some of the weapons and ordinance into objects of art for sale such as the chair pictured here. The artists helped to attract attention to the project, reinforcing public values in a culture of peace. The art also attracted donor's attention and sponsorship of FOMICRES other work.

FOMICRES also worked with Mozambican government authorities and the South African police in a project called "Operation Rachel;" a cross-border weapons collection and destruction initiative. This partnership brought together government-scale logistics and technical support, together with FOMICRES' trust with communities, needed in order to enter communities and then locate and collect weapons.

FOMICRES expanded its programming to begin work on other security issues, such as the shortage of police. In Mozambique, more policemen die of AIDS than can be trained to replace them. According to FOMICRES reports, nearly a million community volunteers now assist the police. With new funding from the German Government via Peace Direct, FOMICRES is now refining the selection of policing volunteers and offering training course for community volunteers, hoping that this can bring down rates of violent crime.

Evaluations of the work of the TAE project indicate a variety of outcomes. First, the project collected thousands of weapons and hundreds of thousands of pieces of ordinance. While this is a small amount compared with the UN missions' DDR efforts, it is a considerable contribution for a CSO without the scale of resources and logistics as government. Evaluators note that "collecting and destroying illegal weapons is not very meaningful unless it is part of a wider effort to improve security and maintain peace. In the case of TAE, it is an attempt to promote a culture of peace, advocate a life without guns, help ex-combatants to gain a peaceful livelihood and reduce the suspicion between former enemies. Much of this costs money, which is why a programme like TAE cannot be as cheap as a straightforward gun buy-back program."⁵³ TAE asserts that the real value of its work is to foster public awareness of a culture of peace.

⁵² Faltas and Paes, p. 28.

⁵³ Faltas and Paes, p. 31.