

## Annex I - Great Lakes Region

### **EX-COMBATANT REINTEGRATION: COMPARATIVE SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

## 7. Demographics

The following is a capture of the demographics of the ex-combatant sample for this comparative study. The demographics reflected in the sample here are not those of the overall ex-combatant populations in each of the five GLR countries at the time of study, but rather reflect certain purposive sampling biases. For more information about the specific sampling methods and decisions in each of the GLR countries please see the individual survey studies for ex-combatants in each of the five GLR countries.<sup>93</sup> For a brief introduction to the reintegration programming context in each of the GLR countries see section 5.1.

The unweighted ex-combatant sample contributions from the five GLR countries for the total sample of 6,475 ex-combatants in this study is as follows: Burundi comprises 19.4% (n=1,256) of the total raw sample, DRC 56% (n=3,625), Republic of Congo 10.3% (N=667), Rwanda 8% (N=517) and Uganda 6.3% (N=410). However, in an effort to create valid cross-country analysis of ex-combatants across the GLR, and especially for comparison to the community member sample, which contains proportionally different sample contributions from the five GLR countries, the raw sample contributions from each country have been weighted evenly.

Integrating the full range of data from Rwanda has proved challenging in this study. The evolving format for the individual GLR country surveys has been a continual process of learning and iterative refinement. The Rwanda survey format is the starting point from which surveys evolved in RoC, Burundi, Uganda, and DRC. So, while data content in the Rwanda surveys is very much in line with the rest of the GLR countries, much of the specific question formatting is often different enough that a direct comparison of data is not feasible. Such instances are explained in footnotes.

Collectively the data restrictions present in this study of ex-combatants across the GLR countries mean that the task of this study is to present a mosaic of findings. Up close, the pieces of the picture are not always complete and data is not always congruent. Nonetheless, there are clear data trends that represent a distinct narrative of ex-combatant reintegration across the GLR countries.

Of the total sample of ex-combatants 88.1% were male and 11.9% were female. While across all individual countries the disparity of representation of males and females was high, this is most true in Rwanda where only 2.5% of the country sample was female. The sample contribution from Uganda was comprised of the largest proportion of women (25.4%). The remaining countries fell closer to the overall sample composition.<sup>94</sup> Table 1 above gives a cross-tabulated breakdown of the age, sex and disability of the ex-combatant sample from each of the five GLR countries.<sup>95</sup>

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93 For Burundi see (2011) Troisième Enquête des Bénéficiaires du PDRT; for DRC see (2011) Rapport d'Évaluation des Bénéficiaires du PNDDR Réintégration des hommes soldats et ex-combattants démobilisés; for RoC see (2011) Réintégration Socio-Economique des ex-Combattants Région du Pool, République du Congo; for Rwanda see (2012) Comparative report: Ex-combatant and community study on the socio-economic reintegration; and for Uganda see (2011) Reporter Re-integration and Community Dynamics Survey Report Reporter Re-integration and Community Dynamics Survey Report.

94 It is important to note that a portion of ex-combatants never participate in formal reintegration programming. This is especially true of female ex-combatants who are hyperaware of the heavy stigmatization that can accompany self-identification as an ex-combatant. As such, the actual proportion of female ex-combatants in the GLR is likely higher than the figures above suggest.

95 For the purposes of this report as a comparative study the demographic breakdown of the Ex-combatant sample by armed group will not be included for systematic analysis. The contexts of the different armed groups within the five GLR countries are seen as unique to each country context thus, while important units of analysis within each GLR country, not systematically comparable across the GLR countries. Further details on the Ex-combatant sample by armed group within each country are available in some of the five GLR country survey reports.

**Table 1: Ex-Combatants - GLR Country Demographics**

|                     | Country |        |        |        |        |           |
|---------------------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|
|                     | Burundi | DRC    | RoC    | Rwanda | Uganda | GLR Total |
| <b>Male</b>         | 91.6%   | 86.1%  | 91.0%  | 97.5%  | 74.6%  | 88.1%     |
| <b>Female</b>       | 8.4%    | 13.9%  | 9.0%   | 2.5%   | 25.4%  | 11.9%     |
| <b>Subtotal</b>     | 100.0%  | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0%    |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>    | 65.4%   | 39.4%  | 31.3%  | 22.6%  | 38.6%  | 39.5%     |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>    | 26.9%   | 29.0%  | 40.6%  | 53.4%  | 24.6%  | 35.0%     |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>  | 7.7%    | 31.6%  | 28.1%  | 24.0%  | 36.9%  | 25.6%     |
| <b>Subtotal</b>     | 100.0%  | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0%    |
| <b>Disabled</b>     | 7.8%    | 4.6%   | 4.7%   | 24.1%  | 17.1%  | 10.9%     |
| <b>Not Disabled</b> | 92.2%   | 95.4%  | 95.3%  | 75.9%  | 82.9%  | 89.1%     |
| <b>Subtotal</b>     | 100.0%  | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0%    |

In the total sample of ex-combatants 10.9% were categorized as disabled, the remaining 89.1% were categorized as not disabled. Most GLR countries were composed of a similar proportion of disabled ex-combatants, though Rwanda and Uganda had higher representations of disabled ex-combatants – 24.1% and 17.1% respectively. However, these higher compositions of disabled ex-combatants may be an artifact of the process by which disability categorizations were combined across the total sample.<sup>96</sup>

Of the total sample of ex-combatants 39.5% are between the ages of 18 and 30, 35% are between 31 and 40 years of age, and 25.6% are over the age of 40.<sup>97</sup> Most of the GLR countries' age compositions follow the trend of the total sample split, with two notable exceptions. Burundi's age composition is heavily skewed towards those aged 18-30 (65.4%), and Rwanda is particularly heavy in the 31-40 years of age category (53.4%). In the case of Rwanda this age composition is likely a result of ex-combatants prolonged time spent participating in conflict – 50.9% of ex-combatants in Rwanda having spent between 10 and 20 years participating in conflict.

The aspects of the lives of ex-combatants discussed in the following sections are key indicators of the process that ex-combatants experience in accessing pathways to reintegration across the GLR countries. Within the following sections of this report age, gender and disability dimensions to these processes to reintegration are explored to extract key trends across the GLR countries. The family and community, education and training, and addressing health needs are all seen as key pathways to reintegration of ex-combatants that will temper this discussion.

## 7.1 From Mobilization to Demobilization

The following is a brief snapshot of the ex-combatants' time with armed groups and the ways in which pertinent demographic details play in their experiences. Indeed, understanding the dynamics of the pathways into mobilization can add considerable nuance to our understanding of the specific challenges that ex-combatants can face at the time of demobilization.

<sup>96</sup> Criteria for disability varied slightly from country to country across the GLR. To create a consistent categorization of disabled ex-combatants across the GLR countries, disability status was computed using the disability criteria from the Ugandan Amnesty Commission which included: (i) amputees; (ii) blind and partially blind; (iii) paralysis and partial paralysis; and (iv) body and head injury.

<sup>97</sup> Across the total sample of ex-combatants from across the five GLR countries there were 300 under the age of 18. These 300 have been omitted from the analysis in this study for two main reasons: (i) the systematic capture of information pertaining to the specific dynamics of reintegration facing minors was absent from the surveys used across the GLR countries – with the exception of DRC, where 291 of the total 300 ex-combatants under the age were sampled; and (ii) the validity issues that the small sample of ex-combatants under the age of 18 (again, almost entirely from DRC) make meaningful comparative analysis infeasible.

**Table 2: Ex-Combatant Age at Mobilization**

|                     | Age at Mobilization    |             |                      |             |                      |             |                       |             |
|---------------------|------------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|
|                     | Mobilized Under Age 18 |             | Mobilized Age 18-30  |             | Mobilized Age 31-40  |             | Mobilized Over Age 40 |             |
|                     | Proportion of Sample   | Average Age | Proportion of Sample | Average Age | Proportion of Sample | Average Age | Proportion of Sample  | Average Age |
| <b>Male</b>         | 32.30%                 | 13.83       | 48.40%               | 22.64       | 10.50%               | 34.71       | 8.70%                 | 51.71       |
| <b>Female</b>       | 40.10%                 | 13.58       | 30.90%               | 22.74       | 11.80%               | 35.07       | 17.30%                | 50.11       |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>    | 64.10%                 | 13.75       | 35.90%               | 20.86       | XXX                  | XXX         | XXX                   | XXX         |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>    | 8.80%                  | 15.09       | 78.40%               | 23.41       | 12.90%               | 33.41       | XXX                   | XXX         |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>  | 3.90%                  | 15.52       | 30.30%               | 24.01       | 27.00%               | 35.51       | 38.80%                | 51.34       |
| <b>Disabled</b>     | 30.10%                 | 13.39       | 41.50%               | 22.67       | 8.30%                | 34.02       | 20.10%                | 51.18       |
| <b>Not Disabled</b> | 33.60%                 | 13.82       | 46.60%               | 22.65       | 10.80%               | 34.79       | 9.00%                 | 51.39       |
| <b>Burundi</b>      | 35.20%                 | 14.53       | 59.30%               | 21.85       | 4.30%                | 33.97       | 1.20%                 | 45.01       |
| <b>DRC</b>          | 43.00%                 | 13.96       | 48.10%               | 22.21       | 7.00%                | 34.53       | 1.90%                 | 48.69       |
| <b>RoC</b>          | 32.40%                 | 13.3        | 46.00%               | 23.36       | 13.30%               | 34.8        | 8.30%                 | 56.07       |
| <b>Uganda</b>       | 22.00%                 | 12.87       | 29.80%               | 24.08       | 18.80%               | 35.02       | 29.50%                | 50.43       |
| <b>GLR Average</b>  | 33.40%                 | 13.79       | 46.10%               | 22.66       | 10.60%               | 34.76       | 9.90%                 | 51.34       |

*In this table the use of XXX indicates a logically impossible field.*

While obtaining reliable information about ex-combatants' age at mobilization, especially younger ex-combatants who may have been only adolescents, is a challenging endeavor we can pull out general trends for comparison across the GLR countries. The following data should be treated with caution and be regarded as a rough picture rather than concrete truth of age of mobilization in the GLR countries.<sup>98</sup> The average age at mobilization was 23.8 across the GLR countries, however this figure masks considerable nuance in the age at mobilization.<sup>99</sup> There are two steps to understanding age at mobilization more deeply. First is to understand the proportion of ex-combatants mobilized in different age brackets and then to understand the average age at mobilization within each bracket – this data is displayed in Table 2.

The largest proportion of ex-combatants across the GLR countries (46.1%) was between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of mobilization (on average aged 22.6). Indeed, with all GLR countries the 18-30 group is the largest. However, it is important to note the sizable number of ex-combatants who were mobilized under the age of 18 (38.9%) and who were very young at the time (on average at age 13.79) – a factor that can have a profound impact on their psychosocial wellbeing and in turn prospects for reintegration. The under 18 category was second largest within all GLR countries and in some almost even with the 18-30 category – for example in DRC where 43% of ex-combatants were aged under 18 at the time of mobilization (on average 13.79) and 48.1% were aged 18-30 (on average 22.21).<sup>100</sup>

Mobilization into violent conflict at an adolescent age can have a profound impact on the social and psychological development of individuals as they mature and, in turn, carry considerable weight for their ability to interact

98 For example, in Uganda 41.95% of ex-combatants were unsure of their age at the time of mobilization. However, working backwards from the current age of ex-combatants we can subtract away the time since demobilization and the time spent with armed groups to calculate an approximate age at mobilization for all ex-combatants.

99 Rwanda is excluded from all findings on age at mobilization due to lack of directly comparable data.

100 Disaggregation of the average age at mobilization in Uganda by armed group provides some necessary nuance here. The average age at mobilization for members of the LRA in Uganda, known for their strategy of youth abduction for mobilization, was 18.38 years. This stands in contrast to the ADF who had an average age of mobilization at 31.02 years, West Nile Bank Front with 41.34 years, and UNRF with 42.18 years. Further examination reveals that 51.3% of LRA ex-combatants were mobilized under the age of 18, with an average age of 12.78.

with communities upon their return. While data on abduction versus voluntary mobilization was not available for comparison across the GLR countries, this data may have added considerable nuance in exploring further gendered dynamics of mobilization. For example in Uganda, the only GLR country in which such data is available, where abduction is a well-known tactic for recruitment and mobilization 92.9% of females sampled between the age of 18 and 30 reported being abducted. Though as a counterpoint, there is reason to be cautious to such data. There are enormous social pressures at work and ex-combatants may fear stigma, retribution, or denial of amnesty as a result identifying themselves as willing participants in conflict – possibly inflating the proportion of ex-combatants that report abduction.

As illustrated in Table 2, it appears that there are certain gendered dynamics to the age of mobilization. Across the GLR sample, female ex-combatants were more frequently mobilized under the age of 18 (40.1%, average age 13.58) when compared to male ex-combatants (32.3%, average age 13.83), and with decreasing frequency as the age at mobilization increases – 64.1% between the ages of 18 and 30, 8.8% between the ages of 31 and 40, and 3.9% over the age of 40. This trend holds true in all of the GLR countries except for the Republic of Congo in which the pattern of age at mobilization follows more closely to the male ex-combatants' trend in which the majority of ex-combatants are mobilized between the ages of 18 and 30. Though the exact reason for this gendered dimension to the age of mobilization is unclear, it is likely related to the benefits of mobilizing child soldier from an armed group's perspective – though child soldiers may be less effective soldiers in the traditional sense they are also easier to intimidate, indoctrinate, and misinform than adults.<sup>101</sup>

Not surprisingly current age showed a positive correlation to age at mobilization – meaning that on average the older an ex-combatant was at the age of mobilization the older they were at the time of sampling. Disability did not show any relationship to age at mobilization.

Across the GLR countries the average number of years ex-combatants had spent with armed groups varied. At a cross-country level ex-combatants in the GLR countries spent an average of 7.08 years with armed groups. DRC and Rwanda stand out on the high end of this cross-country average with 11.16 years and 9.09 years spent with armed groups on average (respectively). Ex-combatants in Uganda spent the least amount of time on average with armed groups (4.38 years). A full table of the average time spent with armed groups is presented in Table 3. Drawing from DRC and Rwanda we can observe that those ex-combatants that were members of national armed forces (FAC in DRC and RPA in Rwanda) spent longer on average participating in conflict than those in other irregular armed groups (mean 18.99 years vs. 5.27 years in DRC and mean 12.57 vs. 8.15 years in Rwanda).<sup>102</sup>

The number of years spent with armed groups displayed a gendered trend across the GLR countries. Female ex-combatants spent a lower average number of years (mean = 4.95 years) with armed groups compared to their male ex-combatant counterparts (mean = 7.37 years). This trend holds across the GLR countries with the exception of Uganda – in which female ex-combatants spent on average slightly more years (mean = 4.84 years) than their male ex-combatant counterparts (mean = 4.22 years). A more detailed breakdown of years spent with armed groups across cross-cutting demographic lines can be found below in Table 3.

Again, as with age at time of mobilization, current age showed a positive correlation to years spent with armed groups at a cross-country level. Though RoC and Uganda stood apart from this trend – in Uganda there was even a negative relationship between current age and average years spent with armed groups. Those ex-combatants who were categorized as disabled spent slightly longer on average (mean = 9.40 years) compared to their non-disabled counterparts (mean = 7.27 years).

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101 See Beber and Blattman (2013) *The Logic of Child Soldiering and Coercion*, International Organization, 67, pp 65-104.

102 The caseload of ex-combatants in Uganda and RoC consisted almost wholly of ex-combatants from irregular armed groups (such as the LRA and ADF in Uganda and the Ninjas in RoC), thus a valid comparison of their average time spent with armed groups compared to national armed forces is not feasible here.

**Table 3: Ex-Combatant Average Years Spent with Armed Group**

|                        | Average Years with Armed Group |       |      |        |        |           |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|------|--------|--------|-----------|
|                        | Burundi                        | DRC   | RoC  | Rwanda | Uganda | GLR Total |
| <b>Male</b>            | 6.4                            | 12.12 | 4.55 | 9.11   | 4.22   | 7.37      |
| <b>Female</b>          | 4.67                           | 5.19  | 4.27 | 8.08   | 4.84   | 4.95      |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>       | 5.01                           | 4.3   | 4.62 | 8.51   | 5.88   | 5.4       |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>       | 7.14                           | 8.48  | 4.77 | 8.56   | 3.79   | 6.77      |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>     | 13.85                          | 24.74 | 4.17 | 10.81  | 3.27   | 10.58     |
| <b>Disabled</b>        | 8.43                           | 12.57 | 4.5  | 13.24  | 6.41   | 9.4       |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>    | 6.07                           | 11.09 | 4.54 | 12.48  | 3.96   | 7.27      |
| <b>Country Average</b> | 6.25                           | 11.16 | 4.55 | 9.09   | 4.38   | 7.08      |

On average across the GLR countries it had been 4.05 years since ex-combatants were formally demobilized at the time of sampling. In Uganda the time since demobilization was about half the cross-country average (1.87 years) while in RoC it was roughly twice the cross-country average (8.07 years).<sup>103</sup> It is important to remember that some ex-combatants may spontaneously self-demobilize during conflict, leaving behind their armed groups. In addition, after the cessation of violence, ex-combatants may leave armed groups and return to their home community, or another place, on their own initiative. A considerable amount of time may pass between these ‘informal’ demobilizations and the point at which ex-combatants take part in a formal demobilization process. Being able to measure this gap may prove an important indicator in assessing dynamics of return within the GLR countries. Unfortunately, while there is data on formal demobilization across the GLR countries, there is only data in Uganda on both informal and formal demobilization collected – 42.1% having informally demobilized as much as a decade or more before participating in formal demobilization processes. These findings however are most likely relevant to the specific dynamics of return and reintegration in Uganda where ex-combatants escape from armed groups (primarily the LRA) and return directly to their communities and then retroactively applying for amnesty, reinsertion assistance and possibly attain further referral to reintegration programming – often with a lengthy time-lapse. In contrast, other reintegration programs in the GLR leave few opportunities for accessing reintegration benefits without participating in a formal demobilization process and a fairly linear supply of reinsertion and reintegration assistance upon their return.<sup>104</sup>

## 7.2 Marriage and Household

Marriage dynamics are an important indicator of ex-combatants’ basic social standing. Indeed, marriage dynamics can tell us much about ex-combatants’ ability to leverage familial, economic, and social networks towards the attainment of marriage and in turn their ability redouble their engagement in these social structures through marriage – all indicators of a strong footing in the community.

Across the GLR countries there is a clear trend of increasing marriage and cohabitation rates among ex-combatants at three time points: before demobilization, at demobilization, and at sampling. As is visible in *Table 4*, the proportion of ex-combatants that were married across the GLR countries increased from 33.9% prior to demobilization,

103 Though examination of trends by armed group is not included in the analysis here, it is worth noting that in Uganda membership to different armed groups appeared to play an important role in the time since demobilization and could serve as a valuable line of inquiry for more focused analysis within each of the individual GLR countries.

104 For a thorough examination of trends of formal and informal demobilization in Uganda see: (2011) Reporter Re-integration and Community Dynamics Survey Report Reporter Re-integration and Community Dynamics Survey Report.

to 36% at demobilization, and 46.8% at the time of sampling.<sup>105</sup> These increases in marriage (and cohabitation) rates among ex-combatants are matched by an even clearer decline in the proportions that were single and or never married.

There are two noteworthy trends in regards to the trajectory of ex-combatant marital status with the specific GLR countries. First, in RoC the proportion of married ex-combatants at all three time points was much lower than the GLR cross-country average (6.7% prior to demobilization, 5.6% at demobilization, and 5.6% at the time of sampling), instead the decrease in the proportion of ex-combatants that were single / never married were absorbed into the category 'living together' (47.1% prior demobilization, 60.1% at demobilization, and 75.3% at the time of sampling). Second, Rwanda is the only GLR country in which ex-combatants are more frequently married than community members at the time of sampling (77.4% vs. 46.9%) – a point that will receive attention in the summary of the ex-combatant portion of this study.

There are certain demographic trends that can be extracted regarding marriage. Concerning gender, female ex-combatants are less likely to be married at all time points than male ex-combatants. As is visible in Table 4, this disparity between female and male ex-combatants grows from 7.7% prior to demobilization, to 13.2% at the time of demobilization, and 24.2% at the time of sampling. This growing disparity between male and female ex-combatants can be explained in part by looking at the proportion of female-combatants who were divorced, separated, or widowed compared to male ex-combatants – female ex-combatants are the most likely to be divorced, separated, or widowed at any time period.

Essentially it appears that while male ex-combatants' marital trajectory across the three time points is primarily one of moving from single / never married to married or living together, female ex-combatants by contrast see only very marginal increases in marriage and cohabitation – instead their decreases in the single / never married category are absorbed into the divorced or separated, or widowed categories. These differing trajectories flag female ex-combatants across the GLR countries as facing clear barriers to accessing marriage and in turn the primary social unit for reintegration, the family, leaving them at increased risk for social isolation and marginalization. It is likely that stigma plays a core role in female ex-combatants very shallow trajectory towards marriage compared male ex-combatants.<sup>106</sup> While male and female ex-combatants alike carry the burden of stigma and distrust as perpetrators of violence, female ex-combatants can face the additional cultural stigma of having stepped out of traditional gender roles.

Turning now to age demographics, at all time points age shows a positive relationship to the likelihood of being married and accordingly a negative relationship to the likelihood of being single / never married (as is visible in Table 4). While those aged 18-30 are the least likely age demographic to be married at all time points they have the most positive trajectory towards marriage across age demographics – there is a 25.6% increase in the rate of marriage between prior to demobilization and the time of sampling among those aged 18-30 versus a 22.1% increase in those 31-40, and only 1.9% increase in those over the age of 40. So while it appears that younger ex-combatants face considerable challenges in accessing reintegration pathways through marriage compared to other age demographics, their rate of change towards the near stagnant levels of marriage among those over 40 is the greatest – giving credence to the idea that one dimension to younger ex-combatants' lag behind their elder peers, struggling to make up for time lost in conflict.

As seen above divorce was low across the GLR countries, however of those who were divorced 26% of ex-combatants across the GLR countries said that their divorce was related to their ex-combatant status.<sup>107</sup> When asked to explain

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105 Rwanda is excluded from findings on marital status before demobilization and at demobilization due to lack of comparable data. In addition, Burundi is excluded from findings on marital status at demobilization due to lack of directly comparable data.

106 For a good introduction to the range of gender specific challenges that female ex-combatants can face see Coulter, Perssan and Utas (2008) *Young Female Fighters in African Wars: Conflict and Its Consequences*, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala.

107 Burundi is excluded from findings on ex-combatant divorce due to lack of directly comparable data.

**Table 4: Ex-Combatant Marital Status at Three Time Points**

|                                  | Marital Status Before Demobilization |                 |                       |         |                      |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------|----------------------|
|                                  | Married                              | Living together | Divorced or Separated | Widowed | Single/Never married |
| <b>Male</b>                      | 35.00%                               | 15.10%          | 1.00%                 | 0.30%   | 48.60%               |
| <b>Female</b>                    | 27.30%                               | 14.30%          | 4.50%                 | 9.10%   | 44.80%               |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>                 | 14.40%                               | 8.10%           | 0.60%                 | 0.40%   | 76.50%               |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>                 | 38.80%                               | 23.20%          | 2.10%                 | 0.70%   | 35.30%               |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>               | 65.00%                               | 18.60%          | 2.30%                 | 4.80%   | 9.20%                |
| <b>Disabled</b>                  | 36.10%                               | 10.10%          | 1.30%                 | 3.10%   | 49.40%               |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>              | 33.80%                               | 15.30%          | 1.50%                 | 1.40%   | 47.90%               |
| <b>Burundi</b>                   | 29.90%                               | 4.50%           | 0.20%                 | 0.10%   | 65.30%               |
| <b>DRC</b>                       | 45.50%                               | 7.40%           | 2.00%                 | 1.50%   | 43.60%               |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b>         | 6.70%                                | 47.10%          | 3.40%                 | 1.30%   | 41.50%               |
| <b>Uganda</b>                    | 51.20%                               | 3.70%           | 0.70%                 | 3.40%   | 40.90%               |
| <b>GLR Average</b>               | 33.90%                               | 15.00%          | 1.60%                 | 1.60%   | 48.00%               |
| Marital Status at Demobilization |                                      |                 |                       |         |                      |
| <b>Male</b>                      | 38.20%                               | 24.10%          | 3.80%                 | 1.30%   | 32.70%               |
| <b>Female</b>                    | 25.00%                               | 15.00%          | 11.30%                | 19.10%  | 29.60%               |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>                 | 15.70%                               | 17.70%          | 4.70%                 | 1.70%   | 60.30%               |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>                 | 38.50%                               | 32.90%          | 5.60%                 | 2.00%   | 21.00%               |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>               | 60.70%                               | 19.70%          | 5.10%                 | 9.60%   | 4.90%                |
| <b>Disabled</b>                  | 30.60%                               | 13.10%          | 7.60%                 | 12.20%  | 36.50%               |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>              | 36.70%                               | 23.40%          | 4.80%                 | 3.30%   | 31.80%               |
| <b>DRC</b>                       | 51.20%                               | 8.60%           | 3.90%                 | 1.90%   | 34.40%               |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b>         | 5.60%                                | 60.10%          | 5.00%                 | 3.10%   | 26.20%               |
| <b>Uganda</b>                    | 48.40%                               | 2.70%           | 6.40%                 | 7.40%   | 35.10%               |
| <b>GLR Average</b>               | 36.00%                               | 22.70%          | 5.10%                 | 4.20%   | 32.10%               |
| Marital Status at Sampling       |                                      |                 |                       |         |                      |
| <b>Male</b>                      | 55.90%                               | 23.30%          | 2.90%                 | 1.20%   | 16.60%               |
| <b>Female</b>                    | 31.70%                               | 17.60%          | 13.00%                | 16.30%  | 21.30%               |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>                 | 40.00%                               | 21.50%          | 4.00%                 | 1.10%   | 33.40%               |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>                 | 60.90%                               | 27.30%          | 4.10%                 | 1.60%   | 6.10%                |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>               | 66.90%                               | 18.40%          | 4.70%                 | 8.10%   | 2.00%                |
| <b>Disabled</b>                  | 57.70%                               | 16.50%          | 6.10%                 | 7.70%   | 12.10%               |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>              | 51.00%                               | 23.90%          | 4.00%                 | 2.60%   | 18.50%               |
| <b>Burundi</b>                   | 60.00%                               | 11.50%          | 0.80%                 | 0.60%   | 27.00%               |
| <b>DRC</b>                       | 59.90%                               | 9.30%           | 4.10%                 | 2.70%   | 24.00%               |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b>         | 5.60%                                | 75.30%          | 7.40%                 | 2.80%   | 9.00%                |
| <b>Rwanda</b>                    | 77.40%                               | 13.00%          | 1.70%                 | 0.60%   | 7.40%                |
| <b>Uganda</b>                    | 60.70%                               | 5.90%           | 6.80%                 | 8.30%   | 18.30%               |
| <b>GLR Average</b>               | 46.80%                               | 25.10%          | 4.80%                 | 3.60%   | 19.60%               |

*Rwanda is not calculated into the cross-country statistics for marital status at the time of sampling. Essentially, even with the sample weighting, including Rwanda in cross-country figures on marital status at the time of sampling can make it appear as though across the entire GLR ex-combatants marry more often than community members – even though Rwanda is the only country in which this is actually true.*



more specifically the most common responses were: (i) Stigma or the influence of the spouses family (19%); (ii) the emotional abuse and fear that spouses married with ex-combatants faces; (iii) lack of tools or money. Female ex-combatants most notably cited that they were in the bush with their spouse, but escaped leaving them behind (29.9%).

On average across the GLR countries, 13.5% of ex-combatants who were married had a spouse who either was then, or had at one point been a combatant.<sup>108</sup> The GLR countries deviating notably from this trend were RoC, in which a slightly higher proportion of ex-combatants had a spouse who was or had at one point been a combatant (24%), and Rwanda where rates of marriage with other ex-combatants were considerably lower (3%). The proportion of ex-combatants with a current or past spouse who is or was a combatant was fairly even across all demographics except for sex. Female ex-combatants were vastly more likely to currently have, or at one point have had, a spouse who was a combatant (53%) compared to male ex-combatants (9.1%). There are two dynamics which likely play some role in these findings: (i) in conflict where the proportion of females to males is relatively low it may be that female combatants marry at a higher rate than male combatants and (ii) upon return to the community female ex-combatants may face higher barriers (e.g. stigma) to marriage with non ex-combatants (see below).

Across the GLR countries, ex-combatants' attitudes towards marrying another ex-combatant varied considerably – in DRC as low as 25% would consider marrying another ex-combatant, and as high as 54.2% in Uganda. However, on average 32.2% of ex-combatants across the GLR countries would consider marrying another ex-combatant.<sup>109</sup> Concurrent to the rate at which ex-combatants marry other ex-combatants outlined above, attitudes towards marrying ex-combatants in the future display a distinctly gendered dynamic – 50.2% of female ex-combatants across the GLR countries would consider marrying an ex-combatant versus 29.8% of males.

When asked to explain negative attitudes towards marrying another ex-combatant respondents most commonly cited the misbehavior of ex-combatants (22.7%) or stigma related the perceived criminality of ex-combatants (16.7%).<sup>110</sup> Uganda was the only GLR country that departed from this trend – as stigma was only cited by 3.1% of ex-combatants and instead risk associated with living with ex-combatants (12.5%) was cited most commonly. Of female ex-combatants that would not consider marrying an ex-combatant, 28.4% cited stigma due to their perceived criminality as an explanation, compared to 15.6% of male ex-combatants.

Across the GLR countries ex-combatants most commonly saw themselves as the household head (52.8%) – responsible for household food and finances – followed by those who saw themselves and their spouse as responsible (19%) and those who saw only their spouse as responsible (6.7%).<sup>111</sup> Across demographic lines there are clear trends: (I) female ex-combatants are less than half as likely as male ex-combatants to cite themselves as the household head (25.4% vs. 57%); (ii) female ex-combatants are vastly more likely to cite solely their spouse as the household head than male ex-combatants (21.9% vs. 4.4%); and (iii) both disabled ex-combatants and those aged 18-30 are far more likely to cite their parents and grandparents than non-disabled and other age demographic ex-combatants (14% of disabled vs. 5.7% of non-disabled, and 15.3% of those aged 18-30 vs. 1.3% of those 31-40 and 0.5% of those over 40).

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108 Burundi is excluded from findings on combatant status of spouse due to lack of directly comparable data.

109 Burundi is excluded from findings on attitudes towards marrying an ex-combatant due to lack of directly comparable data.

110 Burundi is excluded from findings on explanations of attitudes towards marrying an ex-combatant due to lack of directly comparable data.

111 In Burundi, DRC, and RoC inquiry about household head as constituted by who was primarily responsible for household finance and food was asked in one question, whereas in Uganda these were two separate questions (finance and food respectively). However, due to the high correlation between the two answers in Uganda (over 80%) they were recoded as one question for direct comparability with the other GLR countries. Rwanda is excluded from findings on household food and finance responsibility due to lack of directly comparable data.

### 7.3 Literacy, Education, and Vocational Training

Levels of literacy, educational achievement, and vocational training are important indicators of ex-combatants’ basic life chances and their ability to engage with educational and vocational structures, to the extent they exist, in the different GLR country contexts and to leverage the dividends of this engagement towards further economic and social opportunities – in the end solidifying their footing in the community.

While literacy was generally high across the ex-combatant samples in the GLR countries (71.6 % could read and write), female ex-combatants had the lowest literacy rate (56.8%) and were most likely to be completely illiterate (36.9%) compared to any other crosscutting demographic (17.3% of males for example).<sup>112</sup> Disabled ex-combatants and ex-combatants age 18-30 also scored notably lower on literacy. Across the GLR countries these three categories (female, disabled and age 18-30) of ex-combatants were consistently poor performers on literacy, though they closely switch places for worst performer within the individual GLR countries. These trends are displayed in Table 5.

|                          | Literacy               |           |                |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------|----------------|
|                          | Neither Read nor Write | Read Only | Read and Write |
| <b>Male</b>              | 17.30%                 | 8.60%     | 74.10%         |
| <b>Female</b>            | 36.90%                 | 6.30%     | 56.80%         |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>         | 22.60%                 | 7.80%     | 69.60%         |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>         | 15.60%                 | 8.20%     | 76.10%         |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>       | 20.60%                 | 8.40%     | 70.90%         |
| <b>Disabled</b>          | 27.40%                 | 10.20%    | 62.40%         |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>      | 19.40%                 | 8.10%     | 72.60%         |
| <b>Burundi</b>           | 11.90%                 | 4.20%     | 83.90%         |
| <b>DRC</b>               | 13.10%                 | 8.50%     | 78.50%         |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b> | 18.70%                 | 13.10%    | 68.30%         |
| <b>Uganda</b>            | 37.00%                 | 7.40%     | 55.60%         |
| <b>GLR Average</b>       | 20.10%                 | 8.30%     | 71.60%         |

Regarding educational achievement there was very little change across all demographic groups between level of educational achievement at demobilization and at the time of sampling. The largest portion of all ex-combatants had some primary level of education (33.6%) at the time of demobilization and at the time of sampling (34.2%), followed by some secondary education (26.3% at demobilization and 23.4% at sampling).<sup>113</sup> However, as is visible in Table 6, there is considerable variation in the individual GLR countries as far as the levels of ex-combatant educational achievement. Generally speaking, ex-combatants in Burundi and Uganda had educational achievement levels skewed more towards partial or complete primary education, while those in DRC and RoC were more skewed towards partial or complete secondary education.

Again, while there was generally very little change in ex-combatants’ educational achievement levels in the time between demobilization and sampling (which as discussed above was on average 4.05 years) DRC and RoC stand out in that ex-combatants across all levels of educational achievement at the time of demobilization were absorbed substantially into professional level achievement at the time of sampling (visible in Table 6), though this was especially true for male ex-combatants in DRC.<sup>114</sup> Across the GLR countries female ex-combatants educational achievement levels were skewed lower than their male counterparts at demobilization and the time of sampling. Ex-combatants

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112 Rwanda is excluded from findings on literacy due to lack of directly comparable data.

113 Rwanda is excluded from findings on educational achievement at demobilization and the time of sampling due to lack of directly comparable data.

114 Movement into professional level educational achievement is likely related to vocational training provided as a part of reintegration programming. Vocational training is a component of most reintegration programs in the GLR countries, however they were an especially large component in DRC specifically – where vocational training was given to ex-combatants and community members together in combination with the formation of related economic associations.

**Table 6: Ex-Combatant Educational Achievement Levels**

|                             | Education Level at Demobilization |                      |              |                   |                |                     |                       |                            |              |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
|                             | None                              | Islamic or religious | Some primary | Completed primary | Some secondary | Completed secondary | Some higher education | Completed higher education | Professional |
| <b>Male</b>                 | 7.7%                              | 1.5%                 | 32.2%        | 20.3%             | 27.8%          | 7.9%                | 1.1%                  | .6%                        | .9%          |
| <b>Female</b>               | 15.6%                             | 4.9%                 | 41.2%        | 12.2%             | 18.6%          | 6.1%                | .8%                   | .2%                        | .5%          |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>            | 9.4%                              | 1.0%                 | 39.4%        | 20.6%             | 25.2%          | 3.2%                | .9%                   | .0%                        | .2%          |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>            | 6.0%                              | 1.7%                 | 28.2%        | 19.7%             | 30.7%          | 11.5%               | 1.2%                  | .6%                        | .4%          |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>          | 10.4%                             | 4.3%                 | 28.2%        | 15.2%             | 25.0%          | 11.7%               | 1.4%                  | 1.5%                       | 2.3%         |
| <b>Disabled</b>             | 12.5%                             | 2.4%                 | 42.2%        | 21.6%             | 16.7%          | 2.5%                | 1.6%                  | .3%                        | .3%          |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>         | 8.6%                              | 2.0%                 | 32.8%        | 18.8%             | 27.3%          | 8.1%                | 1.0%                  | .6%                        | .8%          |
| <b>Burundi</b>              | 8.4%                              | 2.5%                 | 27.2%        | 34.8%             | 24.0%          | 2.0%                | .9%                   | .1%                        | .2%          |
| <b>DRC</b>                  | 8.5%                              | .2%                  | 21.4%        | 14.0%             | 38.2%          | 12.9%               | 1.6%                  | 1.7%                       | 1.5%         |
| <b>RoC</b>                  | 3.9%                              | 0.0%                 | 12.8%        | 20.7%             | 26.3%          | 31.8%               | 1.1%                  | 0.0%                       | 3.4%         |
| <b>Uganda</b>               | 11.3%                             | 3.9%                 | 58.0%        | 7.9%              | 16.7%          | 1.5%                | .7%                   | 0.0%                       | 0.0%         |
| <b>GLR Average</b>          | 8.9%                              | 2.0%                 | 33.6%        | 19.0%             | 26.3%          | 7.6%                | 1.1%                  | .5%                        | .8%          |
| Education Level at Sampling |                                   |                      |              |                   |                |                     |                       |                            |              |
| <b>Male</b>                 | 7.7%                              | 2.0%                 | 32.8%        | 19.5%             | 24.8%          | 5.7%                | 1.3%                  | .9%                        | 5.4%         |
| <b>Female</b>               | 17.4%                             | 6.0%                 | 42.1%        | 9.6%              | 16.2%          | 2.7%                | .9%                   | .6%                        | 4.6%         |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>            | 7.9%                              | 1.1%                 | 35.3%        | 19.2%             | 26.5%          | 5.3%                | 1.2%                  | .4%                        | 3.3%         |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>            | 6.2%                              | 2.6%                 | 34.4%        | 21.1%             | 19.9%          | 5.4%                | 1.9%                  | 1.1%                       | 7.3%         |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>          | 15.7%                             | 6.6%                 | 33.3%        | 12.8%             | 18.4%          | 4.3%                | .8%                   | 1.7%                       | 6.4%         |
| <b>Disabled</b>             | 13.9%                             | 2.8%                 | 40.2%        | 19.1%             | 16.0%          | 2.1%                | 1.1%                  | 1.0%                       | 3.8%         |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>         | 8.6%                              | 2.6%                 | 33.5%        | 17.8%             | 24.4%          | 5.6%                | 1.3%                  | .8%                        | 5.4%         |
| <b>Burundi</b>              | 8.4%                              | 2.5%                 | 26.8%        | 33.8%             | 24.5%          | 2.8%                | .9%                   | .2%                        | .2%          |
| <b>DRC</b>                  | 3.0%                              | .4%                  | 4.7%         | 2.8%              | 32.4%          | 17.6%               | 2.6%                  | 2.3%                       | 34.3%        |
| <b>RoC</b>                  | 5.1%                              | 0.0%                 | 6.8%         | 5.1%              | 23.7%          | 33.9%               | 3.4%                  | 1.7%                       | 20.3%        |
| <b>Uganda</b>               | 12.4%                             | 3.7%                 | 53.5%        | 7.7%              | 19.6%          | 1.2%                | 1.0%                  | 1.0%                       | 0.0%         |
| <b>GLR Average</b>          | 9.2%                              | 2.6%                 | 34.2%        | 17.9%             | 23.4%          | 5.2%                | 1.2%                  | .8%                        | 5.3%         |

aged 18-30 were also more clearly represented in slightly lower levels of educational achievement than their older counterparts as were disabled in relation to non-disabled.

In line with the very low levels of mobility in ex-combatants' levels of educational achievement between demobilization and sampling, only 15.2% of ex-combatants across the GLR countries reported that they were continuing education since demobilization.<sup>115</sup> DRC, where 30.2% of ex-combatants were continuing education, was the only GLR country that stood out significantly from this trend. Ex-combatants aged 18-30 were the most likely (18.8%) demographic group across the GLR countries to be continuing education since demobilization. Of those who were continuing education since demobilization across the GLR countries, the most notable pathways were: (i) pursuing professional qualifications (34.8%), or (ii) pursuing normal academic qualifications (34.1%).

115 Uganda is excluded from findings on rates and varieties of continuing education due to lack of directly comparable data.

Across the GLR countries the majority of ex-combatants (58.1%) did not partake any form of vocational training as part of the reintegration process. This is not to suggest that vocational training was not available as all reintegration programs in the GLR offer, or in some cases serve as a referral to, some form of vocational training.<sup>116</sup> However, as visible in Table 7, there is considerable variation between the respective GLR countries. Notably in DRC, where vocational training was a large component of reintegration programming, ex-combatants had indeed received vocational training at a higher rate. Rwanda also displayed higher rates of vocational training – though it is unclear whether this is due to reintegration programming.<sup>117</sup> By contrast in Uganda, where reintegration services merely served as a referral to existing vocational programs for the general population, there was considerably lower reported participation.

|                          | Participated in Skills or Vocational Training |        |
|--------------------------|---|--------|
|                          | Yes   | No     |
| <b>Male</b>              | 41.20%  | 58.80% |
| <b>Female</b>            | 47.30%  | 52.70% |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>         | 39.90%  | 60.10% |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>         | 42.40%  | 57.60% |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>       | 44.30%  | 55.70% |
| <b>Disabled</b>          | 47.10%  | 52.90% |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>      | 41.40%  | 58.60% |
| <b>DRC</b>               | 66.10%  | 33.90% |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b> | 20.20%  | 79.80% |
| <b>Rwanda</b>            | 76.40%  | 23.60% |
| <b>Uganda</b>            | 32.60%  | 67.40% |
| <b>GLR Average</b>       | 41.90%  | 58.10% |

While at a cross-country level it appears as though there is a slight positive relationship between age and the likelihood of receiving vocational training, this is only truly evident in DRC. Female ex-combatants, however, are slightly more likely to receive vocational training compared to male ex-combatants (47.3% vs. 41.2%), with the exception of RoC where they pair only slightly lower (18% vs. 20.6%).

Of those ex-combatants who had received skills or vocational training, the majority (62.7%) were utilizing these skills and training.<sup>118</sup> Female ex-combatants were using skills and training slightly less than male ex-combatants (61.3% vs. 63%). In addition ex-combatants were using their skills and training progressively more across age demographics (53.9% for ages 18-30, 56.8% for ages 31-40, and 76.3% for those over 40). Disabled ex-combatants utilized their skills and training at a lesser frequency (54.5%) than their non-disabled counterparts (63.8%).<sup>119</sup> Of those ex-combatants who were not using their skills and vocational training the most common explanations were: (i) 29.4% lost necessary tools and have no money for new ones, (ii) 21.6% lack of capital, and (iii) 10.9% lack of facilities for carrying out the vocation and skills they were trained in.

## 7.4 Summary

Conflict represents an immense social disruption that often results in the disintegration of families, communities, and the broader fabric of society. The process of DDR is aimed at reconnecting the fractured pieces of these social entities so that collective norms and processes can be re-solidified. For ex-combatants facing this transition from conflict to peace by returning to families, gaining economic independence and participating in their communities represent the core challenges of reintegration. While there are few that do not feel the effects of conflict across the

116 Burundi is excluded from findings on vocational training received due to lack of directly comparable data.

117 In Rwanda entrepreneurship training, with the end result of a business plan and small grant were a core part of reintegration programming. It is unclear however if this programmatic component is higher for Rwanda's higher vocational training rates

118 Burundi is excluded from findings on use of vocational training due to lack of directly comparable data.

119 Though unclear, it is possible that this trend is an indication of inadequate targeting of disabled ex-combatants for skilling and training specific to their unique needs and abilities.

GLR countries, it is noteworthy that ex-combatants face a range of distinct challenges in the process of reintegration.

A large proportion of ex-combatants across the GLR countries were mobilized into conflict under the age of 18 (who were on average only early adolescents around 13 years old) and spent a number of their formative years as adults socialized in a context of violence. One way to view this is that a significant proportion of ex-combatants have missed the opportunity of the socialization of adult norms and behavior during normal peacetime, setting them with a steep learning curve upon return for socializing to these norms and values that they may have never learned in the first place – due to their absence from traditional family and community structures during their formative adult years in conflict. Further study into the specific modes of mobilization, for example abduction, may add considerable explanatory power to the specific challenges the ex-combatants who were mobilized at a young age face. While the evidence presented on the age at mobilization is not conclusive, this line of inquiry deserves further attention in future studies.

Ex-combatants across the GLR countries, with the exception of Rwanda, are married less frequently than community members. However, ex-combatants generally show a positive trajectory towards marriage and cohabitation over time. It appears that across the GLR, ex-combatants' largest obstacle in reintegrating into, or in most cases building the familial unit is making up for the time lost by participation in conflict, especially for younger ex-combatants.

Ex-combatants' levels of educational achievement and literacy are skewed slightly lower than community members' – with lower levels of partial secondary, secondary, partial tertiary, or complete tertiary level achievement. While educational mobility was very low in general, it appears as though time lost while in conflict is a significant barrier to educational achievement – especially for younger ex-combatants who are a step behind their older peers, but are more aggressive about closing this gap through continuing education since demobilization.

#### **7.4.1 Vulnerable Subgroups**

As discussed above, while younger ex-combatants (aged 18-30) tend to be a step behind their older peers as far as access to marriage and educational achievement, this appears to be a product of the time lost while in conflict. In addition, though younger ex-combatants tend to be a step behind, they share the same general positive trajectory as their older peers. Female ex-combatants, however, show a widening gap in relation to male ex-combatants – who themselves generally have a positive trajectory in terms of education and marriage.

In assessing trends in marriage across the GLR countries we can summarize several key points regarding female ex-combatants: (i) female ex-combatants are less likely than male ex-combatants to be married or cohabitate; (ii) the gap in marriage and cohabitation rates between male and female ex-combatants has grown over time from prior to demobilization to the time of sampling; and (iii) female ex-combatants are the most likely group to be divorced, widowed, or separated. The weight of female ex-combatants' disadvantage in these regards is exaggerated further when compared to female community members marriage rates – who themselves rank lower in marriage rates than male community members, though still notably higher than female ex-combatants (31.7% of female ex-combatants are married versus 38.1% of female community members). Essentially while male ex-combatants are making steady progress towards parity with community members in terms of marriage, female ex-combatants' progress is extremely shallow.

Female ex-combatants also have the lowest prospects for marriage in the future, as attitudinal indicators reveal that male ex-combatants are much less likely to be willing to marry another ex-combatant than female ex-combatant (29.8% vs. 50.2%). When analyzed against the back drop of community members' ranking on the same attitudinal indicator (25.7% of male community members and 25% of female community members would consider marrying an ex-combatant) we can see that female ex-combatants have a considerably smaller pool of individuals who are attitudinally open to marrying them compared to male ex-combatants.

Collectively these findings cement the fact that in the GLR countries female ex-combatants are not only the least likely group across all demographics (ex-combatants and community members alike) to be married and have a family, but also the group that faces the largest barriers to accessing marriage in the future – placing them outside of the primary unit of reintegration and at substantial risk for marginalization and social isolation.

As an additional note, female ex-combatants lag behind male ex-combatants with lower levels of literacy, and educational achievement – also lagging behind the female community members on both measures as well. As with those aged 18-30, female ex-combatants are slightly more aggressive than their male counterparts (16.5% vs. 15.1%) in pursuing further education to close this gap.

### 7.4.2 Unique Country Trends

Rwanda stands out from the rest of the GLR countries as the only country where ex-combatants appear to be more frequently married than community members – and to a considerable extent (77.4% versus 46.9%). However, there are reasons to be skeptical to these figures. In the Rwandan sample female ex-combatants (a group that consistently displayed the lowest marriage rates across the other GLR countries) were severely under represented (only 2.5% or n= 13 of the total 517 Rwandan ex-combatants) compared to female community members (31.2% or n=159 or the total community member sample). In addition, those ex-combatants aged 18-30 (who across all other GLR countries were the least likely age demographic to be married) were more than twice as represented in the community member sample (57% or n=290) as in the ex-combatant sample (22.6% or n=132). In effect, these facets of the demographic representations in the ex-combatant and community member samples may have inflated the rate at which it appears that ex-combatants marry, and deflated the rate at which community members appear to marry.

However, there are further contextual details to consider in terms of marriage in the case of Rwanda. In Rwanda males are required to have access to adequate housing in order to get married. However, the formal regulations for what qualifies as adequate housing in Rwanda are somewhat narrowly defined under the policy of *imidugudu* – a large scale body of housing policy aimed at consolidating dispersed land and housing in an overall effort toward villagization. The result has been inflation in adequate housing prices and in turn a severe crisis in the availability of adequate housing overall that in effect is locking many Rwandans out of official marriage – though they may co-habitate without formalized marital status.<sup>120</sup> This dynamic may further deflate the rate of marriage in Rwanda for community members.

In contrast to community members, most ex-combatants are returning to Rwanda from Eastern DRC, where they have been away for an average of nine years. In this time some ex-combatants have married and when returning to Rwanda bring their spouse with them. The legal status of these marriages in Rwanda is unclear, however it is possible that some ex-combatants unwittingly navigate past the formal barriers to marriage that community members face – in turn accounting for their slightly higher marriage rates. While it is likely that the interaction of housing policy, marriage, and dynamics of return are key in understanding why ex-combatants marry more than community members in Rwanda, this exact narrative must be treated as conjecture. In the future a more focused inquiry into the dynamics of ex-combatant and community member marriage in Rwanda could prove prudent. For if indeed ex-combatants have been more successful than community members in accessing pathways to marriage in Rwanda the details of this finding could hold considerable explanatory value in analyzing other cases and, not least, in developing reintegration programming in the future.

RoC, where marriage rates for both ex-combatants and community members alike were drastically lower than in other GLR countries (5.6% of ex-combatants and 18.5% of community members at the time of sampling were

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120 This narrative of the interrelated nature of housing policy and marriage in Rwanda is well documented in Sommers (2012) *Stuck: Rwandan Young and the Struggle for Adulthood*, Ga: University of Georgia Press.

married versus 60.2% and 64.3% on average of the remaining respective ex-combatants and community members), stood out as well. What is notable in RoC is that while marriage rates are much lower than average across the GLR countries, a much higher proportion of both ex-combatants and community members are cohabitating, but are not married, than on average across the GLR countries (75.3% of ex-combatants and 53.5% of community members in RoC were cohabitation versus 8.9% and 4.9% on average of the remaining respective ex-combatants and community members across the GLR).

It appears that while community members do access marriage at a higher rate than ex-combatants in RoC, community members also face considerable barriers to accessing marriage themselves. Instead the most significant marital status for both community members and ex-combatants alike is cohabitation. As ex-combatants' levels of cohabitation in RoC increase from 47.1% prior to demobilization, to 60.1% at demobilization, and 75.3% at sampling, it would appear as though this is the primary pathway to accessing the familial unit. Further study to explore the dynamics of formal and informal marriage in RoC would prove illuminating – especially if formal marriage, largely understood as the primary pathway to accessing the familial unit, is not necessary for reintegration in the RoC context. It should also be noted that without a clear explanation or triangulation for RoC's departure in terms of marriage rates the data should also be treated carefully. It is possible that there are unbeknownst errors in data capture or coding that have produced these findings.

Lastly, in Uganda ex-combatants are considerably more likely than average across the GLR countries to report willingness to marrying an ex-combatant in the future. Though there is no direct explanation it is possible that the specific dynamics of combatant mobilization in Uganda may play a role in this trend. In Uganda abduction was a well-known tactic of mobilization, especially by the LRA. Though abductees may have committed violent acts against their communities, often forcibly, there is evidence that ex-combatants are simultaneously understood as victims and perpetrators by community members – a factor that has reportedly contributed to a general willingness to accept returning ex-combatants back into communities.<sup>121</sup> This dynamic, combined with the extensive use of traditional reconciliation ceremonies (not necessarily part of reintegration programming), may contribute to community members in Uganda's openness to marriage with ex-combatants. Futures studies could flag this conjecture for further analysis.

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121 See for example: Finnegan, A. C. (2010), Forging Forgiveness: Collective Efforts Amidst War in Northern Uganda. *Sociological Inquiry*, 80: 424–447.

## 8. Housing, Land, Livestock and Food Security

The following is an examination of the core dimensions of: (i) the types of dwellings that ex-combatants live in and related issues such as ownership and tenure; (ii) access to land for agricultural production and (iii) its connection to food security.

### 8.1 Dwelling, Living Conditions and Land Security

In examining who ex-combatants live with across the GLR countries the three most common categories are: (i) with the same family as before conflict (29.2%), (ii) with a family but different to that from before conflict (24.3%), and (iii) with a partner (19.9%). Two countries across the GLR stood out from this general trend. First in RoC the majority ex-combatants reported living with a partner (43.6%) at a proportion more than double the cross-country average. Second, in Rwanda the majority of ex-combatants reported living with a family that was different from the one before conflict (57.7%) at a proportion more than double the cross-country average.

As is visible in *Table 8* above, female ex-combatants were more likely to be living with a family either the same or different to the one before conflict than male ex-combatants – though less likely to be living with a partner or a family that consisted of a partner and children. It is also noteworthy that disabled ex-combatants were the least likely demographic group to be living with a partner – at a proportion less than half the cross-country average.

Regarding housing types, there were diverse compositions across the GLR countries; however at a cross-country level ex-combatants were most commonly living in: (i) a house (48.2%); or (ii) in a hut or tent (30.8%). Only

**Table 8: Ex-combatant Household Membership**

|                     | Who Do You Live With? |              |   |  |              |  |       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|---|--|--------------|--|-------|
|                     | Alone                 | With partner | With same family as before the conflict | With family but different to that from before the conflict | With Friends | Family (unidentified) / Partner and children | Other |
| <b>Male</b>         | 5.00%                 | 20.00%       | 28.40%                                  | 23.80%   | 3.50%        | 17.70%                                       | 1.50% |
| <b>Female</b>       | 3.30%                 | 18.90%       | 35.20%                                  | 27.60%   | 2.20%        | 12.00%                                       | 0.80% |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>    | 5.70%                 | 20.20%       | 24.70%                                  | 17.20%   | 4.00%        | 26.60%                                       | 1.50% |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>    | 4.80%                 | 20.10%       | 25.40%                                  | 31.10%   | 2.00%        | 15.10%                                       | 1.60% |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>  | 3.40%                 | 20.20%       | 41.10%                                  | 27.10%   | 1.30%        | 5.70%  | 1.10% |
| <b>Disabled</b>     | 5.80%                 | 8.40%        | 38.30%                                  | 32.60%   | 1.80%        | 12.40%                                       | 0.70% |
| <b>Not Disabled</b> | 4.70%                 | 21.20%       | 28.10%                                  | 23.40%   | 3.50%        | 17.70%                                       | 1.50% |
| <b>Burundi</b>      | 4.50%                 | 11.50%       | 0.00%                                   | 0.00%  | 3.20%        | 78.90%                                       | 1.80% |
| <b>DRC</b>          | 5.60%                 | 22.40%       | 41.70%                                  | 21.50%   | 8.20%        | 0.00%  | 0.60% |
| <b>RoC</b>          | 8.20%                 | 43.60%       | 16.60%                                  | 25.70%   | 1.70%        | 0.90%  | 3.30% |
| <b>Rwanda</b>       | 4.40%                 | XXX%         | 32.80%                                  | 57.70%   | 3.60%        | 0.00%  | 1.60% |
| <b>Uganda</b>       | 1.20%                 | 16.20%       | 56.00%                                  | 26.50%   | 0.00%        | 0.00%  | 0.00% |
| <b>GLR Average</b>  | 4.80%                 | 19.90%       | 29.20%                                  | 24.30%   | 3.30%        | 17.00%                                       | 1.50% |

*The use of XXX indicates that respondents in Rwanda were not given the option to respond that they live with a partner or spouse – the responses that would have been in the field are likely absorbed into the categories of those who live with a family either the same or different from the one before conflict.*



**Table 9: Ex-Combatant Housing Ownership**

|                     | Who Owns the Housing You Currently Live In? |                 |              |   |                   |           |                      |        |
|---------------------|---|-----------------|--------------|---|-------------------|-----------|----------------------|--------|
|                     | I own it                                    | Spouse, partner | Joint owners | Family I live with such as son, mother, parents | Non-family member | My friend | My relatives, family | Other  |
| <b>Male</b>         | 43.70%                                      | 1.70%           | 4.20%        | 6.80%   | 0.00%             | 2.10%     | 18.10%               | 23.40% |
| <b>Female</b>       | 22.80%                                      | 17.60%          | 3.00%        | 13.70%  | 0.00%             | 0.60%     | 16.30%               | 25.90% |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>    | 31.10%                                      | 4.30%           | 3.20%        | 11.40%  | 0.00%             | 1.90%     | 26.90%               | 21.10% |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>    | 44.20%                                      | 3.10%           | 4.70%        | 4.40%   | 0.00%             | 2.60%     | 13.00%               | 27.90% |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>  | 55.10%                                      | 3.80%           | 4.70%        | 4.90%   | 0.00%             | 1.10%     | 8.30%                | 22.10% |
| <b>Disabled</b>     | 40.40%                                      | 5.30%           | 3.10%        | 15.00%  | 0.00%             | 3.40%     | 14.20%               | 18.60% |
| <b>Not Disabled</b> | 41.20%                                      | 3.60%           | 4.20%        | 6.80%   | 0.00%             | 1.80%     | 18.30%               | 24.20% |
| <b>Burundi</b>      | 51.00%                                      | 2.00%           | 0.40%        | 0.00%   | 0.00%             | 1.00%     | 21.70%               | 23.90% |
| <b>DRC</b>          | 28.60%                                      | 3.80%           | 4.40%        | 10.20%  | 0.00%             | 2.40%     | 17.00%               | 33.70% |
| <b>RoC</b>          | 24.70%                                      | 3.50%           | 11.30%       | 1.80%   | 0.00%             | 2.00%     | 29.70%               | 27.00% |
| <b>Rwanda</b>       | 39.80%                                      | 1.40%           | 0.00%        | 12.70%  | 0.00%             | 5.40%     | 13.80%               | 26.80% |
| <b>Uganda</b>       | 59.80%                                      | 7.40%           | 3.20%        | 15.20%  | 0.00%             | 0.00%     | 5.90%                | 8.60%  |
| <b>GLR Average</b>  | 41.00%                                      | 3.70%           | 4.10%        | 7.70%   | 0.00%             | 2.00%     | 17.80%               | 23.70% |

Uganda stood out significantly from this trend, with the majority of ex-combatants (77.6%) living in a hut or tent. Across demographic categories there was fairly even membership to types of housing categories. Though, female ex-combatants were notably less likely to live in a house compared to male ex-combatants (41.8% vs. 49.1%) and more likely to live in a hut or tent (43.7% vs. 29%).

There were varying rates of housing ownership across the GLR countries. Generally speaking self-ownership was the most common across the GLR countries (41%), followed by family ownership (17.8%). However, in RoC family member ownership was most common (29.7%) followed by self-ownership (24.7%).

As is visible in *Table 9*, housing ownership rates were consistently lower for female ex-combatants than male ex-combatants across the GLR countries; 22.8% of female ex-combatants owned their land versus 43.7% of male ex-combatants – though Rwanda is an exception from this trend where 63.9% of female ex-combatants owned their land versus 39.1% of male ex-combatants. In contrast female ex-combatants were more likely to cite that their housing was owned by their spouse (17.6% vs. 1.7%) or by family that they live with (13.7% vs. 6.8%) when compared to male ex-combatants. Concerning age dynamics of housing ownership, there was a positive correlation visible between age and rate of housing ownership. Inversely, as age increased ex-combatants were less likely to rely on their relatives or family.

When housing ownership was cross-tabulated against marital status a clear trend emerged. Of those ex-combatants who reported self-ownership of their housing, 68.4% were married and 16.9% were cohabitating – only 5.8% of those who reported self-ownership were single / never married. Inversely, when we look at the marital status of those who reported family ownership of their housing, 52.2% of those who reported their housing as owned by family they live with and 39.8% of those who reported family ownership were single / never married. Marriage rates show a clear correlation to housing ownership. This evidence supports the idea that marriage is a key pathway to housing, land access and security.

Ex-combatants had a standard distribution of perceptions of their current living situation relative to perceptions at the time of demobilization across all the GLR countries – 21.8% of ex-combatants saw their current living situation

as better than at the time of demobilization, 49% saw it as the same, 26.2% saw it as worse, and only 2.9% pointed out that they did not have housing at the time of demobilization.<sup>122</sup> Across demographic categories these perceptions were remarkably even as well.

When examining ex-combatants' perceptions of their own living situation compared to their neighbors, the majority saw themselves as well off, or worse off.<sup>123</sup> Only 10.9% of ex-combatants saw their neighbors as having a better living situation, 47.8% saw it as the same, and 40.8% saw it as worse. There was some notable variation in ex-combatants' perceptions of their living situation relative to their neighbors within specific GLR countries. In Uganda and Rwanda ex-combatants were more likely to have seen their living situation as worse than their neighbors (53.7% and 52.6% respectively) than in DRC and RoC (31.4% and 29.1% respectively). Looking at specific demographic differences it is apparent that disabled ex-combatants more commonly saw their situation as worse than their neighbors (59.6%), than non-disabled ex-combatants (38.3%).

## 8.2 Land Access and Food Security

Gaining access to land for agricultural production is seen as a key pathway to both economic mobility and food security for ex-combatants. However, comparing land ownership across, and even within, the GLR countries can prove challenging. In many areas land ownership structures vary considerably and thus across the context of findings. For example, in many areas land ownership is organized around clans and infrequently owned on a private basis. However, land tenure can be very secure because of the clan structure despite the absence of deeds or titles. Though there is no systematic capture of the types of ownership structures across the GLR countries, these must be kept in mind when viewing the findings in this section.

Land access for cultivation purposes was universally high across GLR countries and within crosscutting demographic categories, with 92.6% of ex-combatants having access to land for cultivation purposes. In Uganda a more in-depth questioning of the tenure status of the land ex-combatants used for cultivation showed ex-combatants aged 18-31 were more likely to have a title for the land they cultivated (58.6%) compared to those 31-40 (29%) and those over 40 (30%). However these older age demographic groups were more likely than their younger counterparts to use communally owned land: 40% of those aged over 40, 28% of those aged 31-40, and 16.6% of those 18-31. Disabled ex-combatants also more frequently accessed communally owned land than non-disabled counterparts (35.7% vs. 26.5%). Though there is no comparable data for the other GLR countries these findings from Uganda may lend some nuance to the land ownership dynamics across demographic lines.

Of the ex-combatants who did not have any access to land for cultivation at all in the DRC and RoC, lack of interest (29.9%) and lack of capital (27.2%) were the most common explanations.<sup>124</sup> Other notable trends were that female ex-combatants more commonly cited fear of conflict (35.7%) than male ex-combatants (13.5%). Also, disabled ex-combatants more commonly cited distance / living in the city (28.6%) as an explanation for their lack of access to land for cultivation than their non-disabled counterparts (8.1%).

In examining changes in ex-combatants' access to arable land over a two-year period it was found that a significant proportion of ex-combatants (38%) had experienced an increase in their access to arable land over the last two years.<sup>125</sup> Despite this general trend, the GLR countries vary considerably on this point – see Table 10. On the one hand, in DRC and RoC the majority ex-combatants had seen an increase in their access to land and, on the other

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122 Rwanda is excluded from findings on perceptions of current living situation compared to at the time of demobilization due to lack of data directly comparable data.

123 Burundi is excluded from findings on perceptions of current living situation compared to neighbors due to lack of data.

124 DRC and RoC are the only GLR countries with data available on reasons for lack of access to arable land.

125 Rwanda is excluded from findings on changes in access to arable land due to lack of directly comparable data.

**Table 10: Ex-Combatant Change in Access to Arable Land**

|                          | Change in Access to Arable Land |                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
|                          | More Access                     | Same or Less Access |
| <b>Male</b>              | 39.80%                          | 60.20%              |
| <b>Female</b>            | 26.50%                          | 73.50%              |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>         | 34.70%                          | 65.30%              |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>         | 43.50%                          | 56.50%              |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>       | 35.50%                          | 64.50%              |
| <b>Disabled</b>          | 22.30%                          | 77.70%              |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>      | 39.40%                          | 60.60%              |
| <b>Burundi</b>           | 30.40%                          | 69.60%              |
| <b>DRC</b>               | 63.50%                          | 36.50%              |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b> | 72.20%                          | 27.80%              |
| <b>Uganda</b>            | 10.40%                          | 89.60%              |
| <b>GLR Average</b>       | 38.00%                          | 62.00%              |

hand, in Burundi and Uganda the majority had not seen an increase in their access to land.<sup>126</sup> On average female ex-combatants had less often experienced an increase in their access to land (26.5%) than male ex-combatants (39.8%) – though Uganda was the only country where this trend was not displayed (12.4% of female ex-combatants having an increase vs. 9.7% of males). Similarly, disabled ex-combatants also tended to less often have experienced increases in their access to arable land (22.3%) when compared to non-disabled ex-combatants (39.4%).

There is a diverse range of findings across the GLR countries when looking at ex-combatants' explanations for gains in access to land for cultivation.<sup>127</sup> In general it appears as though capital gained through strong agricultural yields has served as ex-combatants' primary pathway to in-

creased access to land for cultivation across the GLR countries. Looking to DRC, RoC, and Uganda we can observe that 42.2% of ex-combatants explained their increased access to land as a result of a combination of factors: (i) capital accrued from bountiful agricultural yields and (ii) the desire to produce more agriculturally for both subsistence and commercial purposes. Likewise, when explaining unchanged or decreased access to land for agricultural production in DRC and RoC 48.3% of ex-combatants cited lack of capital or resources as their primary barrier to land access mobility.

While capital, especially that acquired through strong agricultural production, appears to be an important explanation for ex-combatants' upward land access mobility across the GLR countries, two other explanations also deserve attention: (i) inheritance dynamics and (ii) marriage. These two pathways to land mobility appear especially relevant to female ex-combatants and young ex-combatants (age 18-30).

In DRC and RoC 28.7% of ex-combatants (40.3% in DRC alone) cited inheritance as their pathway to increased land access. This was especially true for younger ex-combatants (aged 18-30), of which 32.8% cited inheritance. Further, while inheritance was only cited by 19.3% of ex-combatants in Uganda as their explanation for upward land access mobility, 53.5% cited regulated division of their land, such as inheritance, sharing and dividing, as the reason for their decreased access to land for cultivation. Female ex-combatants were significantly less likely than male ex-combatants (19.7% vs. 29.6%) to cite inheritance as a pathway to increased land access – which could suggest a lack of access to inheritance structures. Ex-combatants aged 18-30 were the most likely age demographic to cite inheritance (32.3%) as their pathway to increased land access.

In terms of marriage, while in Uganda only 12.9% of ex-combatants cited marriage as a pathway to increased land access an examination of demographic subgroups reveals that only 3.4% of male ex-combatants cited marriage as their pathway to increased land access compared to 36.4% of female ex-combatants. In addition, 38.5% of those aged 18-30 cited marriage as their pathway to increased land access compared to 0.0% of those aged 31-40 or over 40.

126 With specific reference to Uganda, a more finely grained scale reveals that 10.4% had more land access, 63.4% had the same level of access, and 26.3% had less access.

127 Burundi and Rwanda are excluded from findings regarding explanations for access to more or less arable land due to lack of directly comparable data.

Though findings are scattered across the GLR countries, collectively they form a mosaic that suggests that capital is a primary enabler of ex-combatant land access mobility. For young ex-combatants and female-combatants, the two demographic subgroups least likely to see increases in land access, inheritance and marriage also appear to play a distinct role.

Livestock ownership excluding poultry was at 35.7% across the GLR countries, though generally higher in Burundi (40.2%) and Uganda (52.7%).<sup>128</sup> Age showed a positive relationship to the likelihood of owning livestock across the GLR

countries – 33.5% of those aged 18-30, 35.1% of those aged 31-40 and 42.2% of those over 40. Increases in livestock in the last two years were cited by 54.2% of ex-combatants across the GLR with a similar distribution across demographic lines. Of those ex-combatants who had no livestock, poverty and lack of resources was the most common explanation (56.7%) followed by insecurity due to conflict (11.8%).

Beyond access to land for cultivation and the ownership of livestock, another important indicator of food security is the level of household hunger and nutrition – presented in Table 11. Across the GLR countries 13% of ex-combatants explained that people in their household always go hungry, 37.3% they often went hungry, 28.7% that they seldom went hungry and 16.1% that they never went hungry.<sup>129</sup> The exception to this distribution is Uganda, where the majority seldom went hungry (45.3%). In general rates of household hunger were very even across demographic lines.

In regards to household nutrition 24.6% of ex-combatants said that in the last two years nutrition had improved, 43.8% that nutrition was unchanged and the remaining 31.6% that nutrition had worsened.<sup>130</sup> Again, the only exception is Uganda, in which the proportion of ex-combatants with improvements in household nutrition was greater (36.9%). Of those ex-combatants for which household nutrition had gotten worse in the last two years disabled ex-combatants (39.2%) were more commonly represented compared to non-disabled ex-combatants (31%).

### 8.3 Summary

Ex-combatants display a very high level of access to housing and land for cultivation across the GLR countries. The majorities of ex-combatants across the GLR countries are living in permanent housing, with a family or spouse and see their living situation as equal to their neighbors – and in this sense have reached considerable parity with community members. Assessing the security of their housing tenure, however, is more challenging. The variety of housing ownership structures that exist across, and within, the GLR countries create unique contexts to land tenure

**Table 11: Ex-combatant Household Hunger**

|                          | How Frequently Do People in Your Household Go Hungry? |        |        |        |
|--------------------------|---|--------|--------|--------|
|                          | Always  | Often  | Seldom | Never  |
| <b>Male</b>              | 13.50%  | 37.20% | 27.80% | 21.60% |
| <b>Female</b>            | 10.00%  | 38.10% | 33.90% | 18.00% |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>         | 12.50%  | 40.80% | 26.40% | 20.30% |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>         | 12.60%  | 37.80% | 27.90% | 21.70% |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>       | 14.50%  | 32.40% | 32.30% | 20.80% |
| <b>Disabled</b>          | 9.80%   | 38.10% | 33.60% | 18.50% |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>      | 13.20%  | 37.20% | 28.30% | 21.30% |
| <b>Burundi</b>           | 11.60%  | 49.10% | 20.70% | 18.60% |
| <b>DRC</b>               | 21.00%  | 35.50% | 24.50% | 19.00% |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b> | 16.70%  | 43.20% | 24.00% | 16.10% |
| <b>Uganda</b>            | 2.70%   | 21.60% | 45.30% | 30.40% |
| <b>GLR Average</b>       | 13.00%  | 37.30% | 28.70% | 21.00% |

128 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding livestock ownership due to lack of directly comparable data.

129 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding household hunger due to lack of directly comparable data.

130 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding household nutrition due to lack of directly comparable data.

security. Owing to a lack of systematic capture of land ownership structures a direct comparison is not possible here. However, what we can note is that lack of housing and land title does not necessarily indicate a lack of tenure security – there are other structures such as clans that can insure land tenure.

While at a cross-country level ex-combatants have exhibited a significant level of upward mobility in terms of their access to land for cultivation there remains a divergence between DRC and RoC, on the one hand, which showed very high rates of increased access to arable land and Burundi and Uganda, on the other, which displayed much lower rates of increased access to arable land. Accounting for this divergence is puzzling. While the absolute availability of land is an important dimension of increased land access (for example in Rwanda land scarcity is a well identified issue, while in DRC there are large tracts of uninhabited land) it is likely that the local dynamics of negotiating access to land through various pathways is equally if not more important component (for example in DRC ex-combatants and community members alike must navigate between both customary and statutory land access regimes that can stand in direct contradiction to each other).<sup>131</sup> As gaining access to land is a key pathway to ex-combatants' economic stability, food security, and contribution to the community then further investigation of this divergence could prove important for future programming.

While access to arable land and livestock ownership are generally considered important indicators of the food security of ex-combatants, it appears as though there is little correlation between these indicators and ex-combatants' levels of household hunger and nutritional improvement. While ex-combatants' access to arable land was very high across the GLR countries, nearly on par with community members, they were significantly more likely to face hunger and nutrition problems. Future inquiry into the sources and nature of household hunger and nutrition problems to nuance these findings could prove insightful.

### 8.3.1 Vulnerable Subgroups

Female ex-combatants face a unique set of challenges in regards to access to arable land. Female ex-combatants across the GLR are less likely than male ex-combatants to see increases in their access to land for cultivation (26.5% vs. 39.8%) – the low level of female ex-combatants' land access mobility is even more stark when they are compared to female community members (45.4%), who are themselves on par with male community members. Scattered evidence suggests that, as with male ex-combatants, female ex-combatants view capital as their primary pathway to increased land access. However, as female ex-combatants are the least likely group to see increases in their access to land this could suggest that they also face considerable barriers in access to capital. There is evidence to suggest that female ex-combatants experience additional barriers to land access mobility, especially in terms of (i) inheritance dynamics and (ii) marriage.

Female ex-combatants less frequently cite inheritance as a pathway to land access mobility than male ex-combatants and female community members – who are on par with male community members. This could suggest that female ex-combatants face challenges in accessing land inheritance structures that are open to not only community members, but male ex-combatants as well. Lack of access to capital and inheritance structures for female ex-combatants is accentuated further when contextualized against marriage dynamics. Female ex-combatants in Uganda are more than ten times as likely to cite marriage as their pathway to increased land access compared to males – however (as discussed in section 7.2) female ex-combatants remain the least marrying demographic group with the weakest prospects for marriage in the future. Collectively this evidence suggests that female ex-combatants face a diverse range of barriers to land access. Future study to confirm and nuance these findings could prove beneficial for developing gender focused reintegration programming.

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131 Some scholars have posited that local – national contradictions in land access and ownership structures have played a role in shaping new power structures in effect shaping and sustaining insecurity in some parts of the GLR. See for example: Huggins and Clover (2005) *From the Ground Up: Land Rights, Conflict and Peace in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ISS Africa

Young ex-combatants (aged 18-30) tend to be a step behind their elder peers in terms of many housing, land access, and food security indicators. Young ex-combatants are less likely to own their housing, less likely to have livestock, and less likely to see increases in their access to land. However it appears that these disadvantages, as with marriage and education, may be a product of their years lost in conflict – as they now struggle to make parity with elder ex-combatants and show a clear trajectory of improvement – most notably in terms of accessing marriage, and in turn the familial unit, and access to land for agricultural production, which is tied to the primary economic pathway for ex-combatants across the GLR: small scale agriculture.

Supporting the findings that disabled ex-combatants are slightly more likely to be married, so too are they slightly more likely to be living in household with a family. It appears that the majority of disabled ex-combatants fall in line with line with their non-disabled peers in terms of housing, access to land, and livestock. However, few those who do fall behind do so at varying levels – likely commensurate to their particular level of disability. Overall, disabled ex-combatants saw similar levels of access to land for cultivation, but fewer increases in their land access in the years prior to sampling.

### **8.3.2 Unique Country Trends**

While across the GLR countries ex-combatants were most likely to be living with the same family as prior to conflict, Rwanda and RoC stand out from this trend. In Rwanda ex-combatants were more likely to be living with a family, but one different from prior to conflict. Have ex-combatants in Rwanda faced challenges in reintegrating into the same familial unit as prior to conflict? While there is no clear evidence in this study, it is possible that this may in part be a product of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and the prolonged period of time that ex-combatants have been away from communities since the first and second Congo Wars. By contrast, in RoC ex-combatants were more likely to be living with a spouse (though unmarried, as detailed in section 7.2). Have ex-combatants in RoC been more successful in accessing the familial unit, even if it is not officiated in marriage? As accessing the familial unit is understood as a key pathway to reintegration, further investigation into these diverging trends could prove instrumental.

## 9. Economic Issues

Attaining a level of economic stability through employment, access to credit and participation in economic associations are seen as key elements to the economic prospects of ex-combatants and essential for peace and development. As such, the analysis here is presented in five main parts: (i) an examination of ex-combatants' employment statuses and general outlooks on employment; (ii) an examination of the barriers that non-economically active ex-combatants face to gaining a stable economic status; (iii) an examination of female ex-combatants' specific economic issues; (iv) an examination of ex-combatants' levels of income, savings, and access to credit as indicators of their general economic stability and ability to leverage economic opportunities; and (v) an examination of ex-combatants' level of engagement with economic associations as an extended support / opportunity network.

In the context of the severe development challenges that characterize the GLR countries, attaining economic reintegration (parity with community members) and economic stability may not necessarily be the same thing. Thus, to truly identify the economic challenges that are specific to ex-combatants, we must understand ex-combatants economic prospects in relation to the wider community. As such, this section should be read in conjunction with section 15 on economic issues in the Community Dynamics Comparative Survey and Analysis in Annex II of this report.

### 9.1 Economic Status and History

Concerning employment status, at a cross-country level prior to conflict ex-combatants were most commonly studying or training (37.6%), self-employed in agriculture (26.3%), or unemployed (12.9%).<sup>132</sup> At the time of demobilization the number of ex-combatants studying or training had dropped to 2.2%. Those who had previously been studying or training prior to conflict were effectively absorbed into the categories of self-employed in agriculture (which grew to 33.3%), unemployment (which grew to 31.1%), and employed working in the public sector (which grew from 3.1% prior to the conflict to 11% at demobilization. At the time of sampling unemployment had shrunk to 21.3% and the number of ex-combatants working in the public sector had shrunk to 1.7%. These changes in ex-combatant employment status continued to be absorbed into the categories of self-employed in agriculture which grew to 36.7% and other self-employed in non-agricultural services categories which had grown to 10.4% from the time of demobilization (see Table 12 below) – RoC is an exception to this trend towards self-employment in agriculture with retail instead being the primary pathway.

Though levels of employment varied from country to country, with each GLR country ex-combatants followed the same arc in their employment trajectory – a spike of unemployment at the time of demobilization, to a drop in unemployment at the time of sampling that was slightly worse than pre-conflict levels. This unemployment trend coupled with a continual growth in self-employment in agriculture, services, and retail.

In examining the demographic trends in employment status across the GLR countries at these three time points we can observe some trends. Female ex-combatants are slightly more frequently unemployed than male ex-combatants prior to conflict and at demobilization, though slightly less so at the time of sampling. Though Rwanda, where 54.5% of female versus 38.2% of male ex-combatants were unemployed at the time of sampling, stood apart in this regard. Younger ex-combatants (age 18-31) are most frequently studying compared to other age groups at all time points.

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<sup>132</sup> Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding employment status prior to demobilization and at demobilization and Burundi is excluded from findings regarding employment at demobilization due to lack of directly comparable data.

**Table 12: Ex-Combatant Economic Status at Three Time Points**

|  | GLR Ex-Combatant Employment at Three Time Points |  |   |  |                           |   |                                       |  |  |   |                      |                                  |                                      |
|--|--|--|---|--|---------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|  | Unemployed                                       | Employed working for employer, agriculture | Employed working for employer, private sector | Employed working for employer, public sector | Self-employed agriculture | Self-employed non agriculture -services | Self-employed non agriculture -retail | Self-employed non agriculture -manufacturing | Hustle or involved in or reliant on the informal economy i.e. economically active in informal sector | Supplementing income through subsistence activities | Studying or Training | Housewife or Working in the home | Retired, but not economically active |
| <b>Employment Status Prior Conflict</b>    |  |  |   |  |                           |   |                                       |  |  |   |                      |                                  |                                      |
| <b>Male</b>                                | 12.80%   | 3.90%                                      | 5.60%   | 3.40%  | 26.20%                    | 6.10%                                   | 3.20%                                 | 0.60%  | 0.10%  | 0.00%   | 37.20%               | 0.70%                            | 0.00%                                |
| <b>Female</b>                              | 13.00%   | 2.30%                                      | 2.50%   | 1.30%  | 26.90%                    | 4.00%                                   | 2.90%                                 | 0.50%  | 0.50%  | 0.50%   | 40.20%               | 5.30%                            | 0.00%                                |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>                           | 12.20%   | 3.30%                                      | 3.90%   | 0.80%  | 16.90%                    | 3.80%                                   | 2.10%                                 | 0.30%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%   | 55.00%               | 1.80%                            | 0.00%                                |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>                           | 14.10%   | 4.90%                                      | 6.50%   | 3.20%  | 28.80%                    | 7.10%                                   | 4.50%                                 | 0.70%  | 0.30%  | 0.00%   | 29.20%               | 0.80%                            | 0.00%                                |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>                         | 10.70%   | 3.20%                                      | 6.60%   | 7.40%  | 43.00%                    | 8.80%                                   | 4.20%                                 | 1.10%  | 0.30%  | 0.30%   | 13.10%               | 1.40%                            | 0.00%                                |
| <b>Disabled</b>                            | 7.80%  | 3.60%                                      | 3.30%   | 1.90%  | 32.00%                    | 4.10%                                   | 2.40%                                 | 0.20%  | 0.80%  | 0.80%   | 40.30%               | 2.90%                            | 0.00%                                |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>                        | 13.30%   | 3.70%                                      | 5.30%   | 3.20%  | 25.80%                    | 6.00%                                   | 3.30%                                 | 0.60%  | 0.10%  | 0.00%   | 37.50%               | 1.30%                            | 0.00%                                |
| <b>Burundi</b>                             | 7.10%  | 2.50%                                      | 5.90%   | 1.80%  | 26.60%                    | 7.60%                                   | 4.00%                                 | 0.60%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%   | 42.80%               | 1.20%                            | 0.00%                                |
| <b>DRC</b>                                 | 26.50%   | 2.30%                                      | 5.30%   | 2.90%  | 9.60%                     | 7.00%                                   | 5.00%                                 | 1.40%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%   | 37.70%               | 2.20%                            | 0.00%                                |
| <b>RoC</b>                                 | 8.60%  | 25.40%                                     | 15.10%  | 9.20%  | 41.60%                    | 0.00%                                   | 0.00%                                 | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%   | 0.00%                | 0.00%                            | 0.00%                                |
| <b>Uganda</b>                              | 6.10%  | 0.20%                                      | 1.50%   | 2.90%  | 38.60%                    | 4.40%                                   | 1.50%                                 | 0.00%  | 0.50%  | 0.20%   | 42.80%               | 1.20%                            | 0.00%                                |
| <b>GLR Average</b>                         | 12.90%   | 3.70%                                      | 5.20%   | 3.10%  | 26.30%                    | 5.80%                                   | 3.20%                                 | 0.60%  | 0.10%  | 0.10%   | 37.60%               | 1.40%                            | 0.00%                                |
| <b>Employment Status at Demobilization</b> |  |  |   |  |                           |   |                                       |  |  |   |                      |                                  |                                      |
| <b>Male</b>                                | 30.30%   | 1.60%                                      | 5.00%   | 12.30%                                       | 32.70%                    | 6.40%                                   | 4.00%                                 | 0.50%  | 0.20%  | 0.00%   | 5.40%                | 0.90%                            | 0.60%                                |
| <b>Female</b>                              | 34.10%   | 0.40%                                      | 2.10%   | 5.90%  | 35.70%                    | 5.70%                                   | 2.60%                                 | 0.60%  | 1.30%  | 0.00%   | 4.10%                | 7.60%                            | 0.00%                                |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>                           | 43.00%   | 0.60%                                      | 4.70%   | 8.20%  | 21.80%                    | 4.80%                                   | 2.80%                                 | 0.40%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%   | 9.40%                | 4.10%                            | 0.20%                                |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>                           | 29.30%   | 1.20%                                      | 3.40%   | 10.60%                                       | 34.20%                    | 8.20%                                   | 6.00%                                 | 0.90%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%   | 4.20%                | 1.30%                            | 0.60%                                |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>                         | 16.40%   | 2.40%                                      | 3.10%   | 13.60%                                       | 49.20%                    | 7.20%                                   | 3.40%                                 | 0.50%  | 1.10%  | 0.00%   | 1.40%                | 1.10%                            | 0.60%                                |
| <b>Disabled</b>                            | 42.30%   | 0.50%                                      | 1.30%   | 5.20%  | 35.80%                    | 2.60%                                   | 0.50%                                 | 0.30%  | 2.30%  | 0.00%   | 3.80%                | 2.60%                            | 2.80%                                |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>                        | 29.60%   | 1.40%                                      | 4.80%   | 11.70%                                       | 33.10%                    | 6.70%                                   | 4.10%                                 | 0.60%  | 0.10%  | 0.00%   | 5.30%                | 2.20%                            | 0.20%                                |
| <b>DRC</b>                                 | 32.20%   | 2.20%                                      | 7.70%   | 21.30%                                       | 12.20%                    | 8.40%                                   | 6.90%                                 | 1.10%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%   | 4.80%                | 2.80%                            | 0.40%                                |
| <b>RoC</b>                                 | 28.60%   | 0.00%                                      | 0.00%   | 0.00%  | 14.30%                    | 42.90%                                  | 0.00%                                 | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%   | 14.30%               | 0.00%                            | 0.00%                                |
| <b>Uganda</b>                              | 30.00%   | 0.50%                                      | 1.20%   | 0.70%  | 54.80%                    | 3.70%                                   | 0.50%                                 | 0.00%  | 0.70%  | 0.00%   | 5.50%                | 1.70%                            | 0.50%                                |
| <b>GLR Average</b>                         | 31.10%   | 1.40%                                      | 4.50%   | 11.00%                                       | 33.30%                    | 6.30%                                   | 3.70%                                 | 0.60%  | 0.40%  | 0.00%   | 5.20%                | 2.20%                            | 0.50%                                |
| <b>Employment Status at Current</b>        |  |  |   |  |                           |   |                                       |  |  |   |                      |                                  |                                      |
| <b>Male</b>                                | 21.70%   | 4.50%                                      | 6.90%   | 1.70%  | 35.80%                    | 10.60%                                  | 7.00%                                 | 1.40%  | 0.50%  | 1.70%   | 6.70%                | 0.80%                            | 0.60%                                |
| <b>Female</b>                              | 18.20%   | 2.10%                                      | 1.20%   | 1.80%  | 42.50%                    | 9.10%                                   | 7.10%                                 | 1.50%  | 1.00%  | 0.50%   | 4.50%                | 10.10%                           | 0.60%                                |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>                           | 19.40%   | 3.10%                                      | 7.50%   | 1.10%  | 33.60%                    | 10.60%                                  | 7.90%                                 | 1.00%  | 0.60%  | 1.20%   | 10.40%               | 3.50%                            | 0.00%                                |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>                           | 23.30%   | 5.70%                                      | 5.50%   | 2.00%  | 35.80%                    | 10.50%                                  | 8.60%                                 | 1.70%  | 0.20%  | 2.30%   | 3.10%                | 1.10%                            | 0.30%                                |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>                         | 20.00%   | 4.50%                                      | 4.80%   | 2.60%  | 45.90%                    | 10.50%                                  | 3.80%                                 | 1.90%  | 1.10%  | 1.30%   | 0.90%                | 0.80%                            | 1.90%                                |
| <b>Disabled</b>                            | 29.20%   | 5.10%                                      | 3.70%   | 1.00%  | 38.00%                    | 5.40%                                   | 5.20%                                 | 1.90%  | 1.10%  | 2.50%   | 3.30%                | 2.20%                            | 1.50%                                |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>                        | 20.10%   | 4.10%                                      | 6.50%   | 1.80%  | 36.60%                    | 11.10%                                  | 7.30%                                 | 1.40%  | 0.50%  | 1.40%   | 6.90%                | 2.00%                            | 0.40%                                |
| <b>Burundi</b>                             | 13.70%   | 4.10%                                      | 11.00%  | 2.30%  | 34.50%                    | 12.20%                                  | 13.60%                                | 1.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%   | 5.70%                | 1.60%                            | 0.20%                                |
| <b>DRC</b>                                 | 28.40%   | 3.60%                                      | 5.90%   | 1.70%  | 20.40%                    | 16.40%                                  | 7.80%                                 | 2.50%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%   | 9.10%                | 3.50%                            | 0.60%                                |
| <b>RoC</b>                                 | 12.50%   | 0.00%                                      | 12.50%  | 0.00%  | 25.00%                    | 50.00%                                  | 0.00%                                 | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%   | 0.00%                | 0.00%                            | 0.00%                                |
| <b>Rwanda</b>                              | 38.70%   | 10.40%                                     | 4.10%   | 1.10%  | 22.30%                    | 3.60%                                   | 2.50%                                 | 2.20%  | 1.60%  | 6.30%   | 5.80%                | 1.10%                            | 0.30%                                |
| <b>Uganda</b>                              | 9.20%  | 0.50%                                      | 2.70%   | 1.70%  | 66.20%                    | 6.70%                                   | 2.70%                                 | 0.20%  | 1.00%  | 1.20%   | 5.00%                | 1.70%                            | 1.00%                                |
| <b>GLR Average</b>                         | 21.30%   | 4.20%                                      | 6.10%   | 1.70%  | 36.70%                    | 10.40%                                  | 7.00%                                 | 1.40%  | 0.60%  | 1.50%   | 6.40%                | 2.10%                            | 0.60%                                |

*The use of the phrase "at three time points" indicates that respondents were surveyed at one time point with questions regarding three different time points.*



Older ex-combatants (over the age of 40) are most frequently in the self-employed agriculture group at all time points. Disabled ex-combatants were more frequently unemployed at the time of demobilization and the time of sampling compared to non-disabled ex-combatants. These trends are visible in *Table 12*.

Of those ex-combatants who were unemployed at the time of sampling the explanations most commonly given were lack of work opportunities (61.2%) followed by financial problems (12.2%).<sup>133</sup> Uganda departed from this cross-country trend and instead health and disability (46.9%) was most commonly cited as the reason for not working, followed by financial problems (21.9%).

Within demographic categories female ex-combatants were slightly less likely to perceive their unemployment as a result of a lack of opportunity (44.1%) and slightly more likely to view it as a result of financial problems (21.3%) or lack of skills (14.5%) than male ex-combatants (63.8%, 10.9% and 7.6% respectively). Disabled ex-combatants were much more likely to perceive health and disability constraints (58.4%) as their primary reason for unemployment compared to non-disabled ex-combatants (3.2%).

On average across the GLR countries 31.7% of ex-combatants relied on more than one income earning activity.<sup>134</sup> RoC, where 93.6% of ex-combatants relied on more than one income generating activity, departed dramatically from this cross-country trend. Female ex-combatants were slightly less likely to rely on multiple income generating activities (27.1%) compared to male ex-combatants (32.5%). Again, RoC is the exception to the gendered trend for multiple income sources as 100% of female ex-combatants relied on multiple income sources as compared to 92.8% of males. Disabled ex-combatants were slightly less likely to rely on multiple income generating activities (25.6%) compared to non-disabled ex-combatants (32.1%).

On average across the GLR countries, 40.6% of ex-combatants returned to their pre-conflict employment / type of work. On average younger ex-combatants were less likely to return to their previous field of work or employment: 28.9% of those aged 18-31 versus 40.1% of those 31-40 and 56.4% of those over 40. Viewed in the context of age at mobilization into conflict, though approximate, it is perhaps understandable that younger ex-combatants do not return to the same employment type – indeed, as 64% of ex-combatants aged 18-30 were under the age of 18 at the time of mobilization they may not yet have had an established employment type. Further, those ex-combatants aged 18-30 were also slightly more likely to be studying or training at the time of sampling, likely returning to study interrupted by mobilization (10.4% vs. 3.1% of those aged 31-40 and 0.9% of those aged over 40).

When asked to explain why they had chosen to return to their previous line of work after conflict in DRC and RoC ex-combatants most commonly cited three key explanations: (i) lack of other opportunities (51.8%); followed by (ii) that it was a reliable job (18.6%); and (iii) out of economic necessity to take care of the family (16.4%).<sup>135</sup>

Across the GLR countries ex-combatants communicated that they on average would be very willing to move to another part of their own country for a better job (75.4%) – though significantly lower in Uganda (40.7%).<sup>136</sup> Though there is no cross-country data for comparison on explanations for ex-combatants' attitudes towards migration, looking at Uganda alone may provide some initial insights. The most common explanation for willingness to migrate in Uganda was that ex-combatants were willing to move for financial reasons and the prospect of improving their standard of living (58.4%). A smaller proportion of ex-combatants (15.5%) was bored of their environment

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133 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding reasons for unemployment due to lack of directly comparable data.

134 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding multiple incomes sources due to lack of directly comparable data.

135 Questions regarding ex-combatants reasons for returning to the same job as prior to conflict were only asked in DRC and RoC.

136 This lower willingness to migrate among ex-combatants in Uganda may be related to their overall higher levels of social capital compared to other GLR countries – discussed more in depth in section 10. Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding willingness to migrate for work due to lack of directly comparable data.

and wanted a life change. In Uganda of those ex-combatants who were not willing to move for a better job the most common explanation (29.6%) was that they had a lack of education or qualifications followed by having family responsibilities that prevent them from moving (26.6%). Across the GLR countries female ex-combatants were considerably less likely to be willing to migrate for a job than male ex-combatants (57.6% vs. 78.4%) – though there is no clear explanation for why.<sup>137</sup>

Across the GLR countries, 64.6% of ex-combatants perceived that they have a harder time finding a job than community members.<sup>138</sup> It appears as though there is a division between Burundi and Uganda on the one hand, where ex-combatants frequently perceived that they have a harder time than community members, and DRC and RoC on the other, where this frequency was still significant but considerably lower than in their neighbors to the east. These findings here are presented in *Table 13* above. Age showed a negative relationship to the likelihood of thinking that ex-combatants have a harder time finding employment.

Of those ex-combatants who thought that ex-combatants find it more difficult to find a job than community members there were diverse explanations across the GLR countries however, the common thread through all countries was stigma or distrust towards ex-combatants at varying levels – though in Uganda the most common explanation was ex-combatants’ low education levels (59.7%).<sup>139</sup> A table of the proportion of ex-combatants from each GLR country

|                          | Do you think ex-combatants find it harder than others to get a job? |        |
|--------------------------|---|--------|
|                          | Yes   | No     |
| <b>Male</b>              | 65.20%  | 34.80% |
| <b>Female</b>            | 61.20%  | 38.80% |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>         | 71.50%  | 28.50% |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>         | 63.00%  | 37.00% |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>       | 56.50%  | 43.50% |
| <b>Disabled</b>          | 72.90%  | 27.10% |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>      | 64.00%  | 36.00% |
| <b>Burundi</b>           | 83.60%  | 16.40% |
| <b>DRC</b>               | 50.30%  | 49.70% |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b> | 42.70%  | 57.30% |
| <b>Uganda</b>            | 78.70%  | 21.30% |
| <b>GLR Average</b>       | 64.60%  | 35.40% |

|                        | Stigma / Distrust is the Reason Ex-Combatants Find it Difficult to Gain Employment |       |        |        |           |
|------------------------|--|-------|--------|--------|-----------|
|                        | Burundi  | DRC   | RoC    | Uganda | GLR Total |
| <b>Male</b>            | 59.1%  | 43.9% | 88.5%  | 18.5%  | 52.5%     |
| <b>Female</b>          | 53.9%  | 40.0% | 100.0% | 14.3%  | 52.5%     |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>       | 60.8%  | 39.3% | 91.9%  | 9.5%   | 50.4%     |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>       | 54.3%  | 46.5% | 88.0%  | 26.3%  | 53.8%     |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>     | 53.5%  | 45.2% | 86.0%  | 20.4%  | 51.3%     |
| <b>Disabled</b>        | 41.8%  | 42.3% | 90.0%  | 14.8%  | 48.1%     |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>    | 60.0%  | 43.4% | 88.7%  | 18.1%  | 52.6%     |
| <b>Country Average</b> | 58.7%  | 43.4% | 88.9%  | 17.6%  | 52.2%     |

137 In Uganda both male and female ex-combatants both identify lack of education / qualifications and family responsibilities as the primary reasons for unwillingness to migrate at almost identical levels. Uganda is the only GLR country in which this question was asked.

138 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding perceptions of relative challenges of finding a job due to lack of directly comparable data.

139 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding explanations for why ex-combatants find it more difficult to find a job due to lack of directly comparable data.

that cited stigma or distrust of ex-combatants as the reason why they find it more difficult than non-ex-combatants to find a job is presented in *Table 14*. On average across the GLR countries, 52.2% of ex-combatants saw stigma / distrust as a barrier to employment – though this was higher in RoC (88.9%) and lower in Uganda (17.6%).<sup>140</sup>

Concerning outlook for economic prospects in the future, across the GLR countries 73.7% of ex-combatants perceived that their economic situation would improve in the near future. Across demographic lines the perceptions of ex-combatants about their economic prospects in the future were remarkably even. However, across and within the GLR countries, disabled ex-combatants perceived slightly weaker economic outlooks (66.5% versus 74.3% at a total sample level).

When asked to explain the main reasons for if they perceived their economic situation improving in the future ex-combatants across the GLR countries gave a wide range of responses.<sup>141</sup> Very generally speaking, we can say that in Uganda ex-combatants with both positive and negative outlooks for the future saw this as tied to their ability to participate and produce in agriculture. In contrast, in Burundi, DRC and RoC ex-combatants more commonly expressed a range of explanations for positive and negative outlooks more closely tied to their attainment of employment and capital. Across all countries disabled ex-combatants saw health as a key barrier to their economic future.

Looking specifically across Burundi, DRC and RoC we can observe that on average ex-combatants work 9.34 months of the year in paid employment – a proportion roughly reflected across all three countries.<sup>142</sup> However in contrast, when looking at the number of months that ex-combatants spend participating in unpaid labor, for example subsistence farming or labor in trade for food or housing, there is a division that emerges. In DRC and RoC the majority of ex-combatants spend on average 3.97 months in unpaid labor through the year. However in Burundi the ex-combatants work 10.93 months a year in unpaid labor; in fact the vast majority (78.4%) spend 12 months of the year working in unpaid labor. By cross tabulating months of the year spent in paid versus unpaid labor we find that 83.8% of those who spend 12 months of the year in unpaid labor (heavily represented in Burundi) do this in addition to working 12 months of the year for paid labor. Of those who work for paid labor for 9 months of the year (heavily represented in DRC and RoC), 96.2% do so in addition to working 9 months of the year for unpaid labor. These trends are likely indicative of regional and seasonal farming and employment practices.

## 9.2 Non-Economically Active Ex-Combatants on Employment Issues

When non-economically active ex-combatants across the GLR countries are asked how they get by when they are not working the most common responses are: (i) 29.3% reply that they rely on their family cash contributions; (ii) 18.6% have to borrow money; and (iii) 12.8% say they just find a way to cope.<sup>143</sup> Looking within gender demographics we can see that female ex-combatants more commonly rely on family cash contributions (49.9%) compared to male ex-combatants (26.4%). Younger ex-combatants (age 18-30) are also more likely to rely on family cash contributions (37.1% vs. 22.1% of those 31-40 and 26.8% of those over 40).

At a cross-country level of those ex-combatants that are not economically active, 33.2% of them feel that being an ex-

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140 The analysis throughout annex I & II suggest that stigma and distrust are considerably less prominent in Uganda – it is possible that this is related to the dynamics of ex-combatant return in Uganda – where ex-combatants who were abducted return to communities and are seen as both victims and perpetrators. In some communities this dynamic can play a role in greater overall acceptance of ex-combatants in Uganda. In addition, the extensive use of traditional reconciliation ceremonies in Uganda, though not a part of reintegration programming, may play a role in explaining this stark contrast against RoC.

141 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding reasons for outlook on future economic situation due to lack of directly comparable data.

142 Rwanda and Uganda are excluded from findings regarding annual time spent working for pay and without pay due to lack of directly comparable data.

143 These are only the three most common explanations across the GLR countries. Rwanda is excluded from findings on how non-economically active ex-combatants get by due to lack of directly comparable data.

combatant contributes to them not working. However, a closer examination of these perceptions within individual GLR countries show a sharp split between Burundi and Uganda in which 70.9% and 66.7%, respectively, felt that their ex-combatant status contributed to their unemployment, versus DRC and RoC where only 22% and 21.1% respectively. Future investigation into the reason for this divergence in ex-combatants' perception of ex-combatant status playing a role in unemployment would add considerable explanatory value in future studies.<sup>144</sup>

Across and within the GLR countries male ex-combatants and younger ex-combatants more commonly see their ex-combatant status as contributing to their unemployment. The extent of these trends can be seen in *Table 15*.

| <b>Table 15: Ex-combatant Status Contributes to Unemployment</b> |   |           |
|--|---|-----------|
|  | <b>Do you feel that being an ex-combatant contributes to you not working?</b> |           |
|  | <b>Yes</b>  | <b>No</b> |
| <b>Male</b>  | 34.50%  | 65.50%    |
| <b>Female</b>  | 25.00%  | 75.00%    |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>   | 38.90%  | 61.10%    |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>   | 32.10%  | 67.90%    |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>   | 27.60%  | 72.40%    |
| <b>Disabled</b>  | 43.50%  | 56.50%    |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>  | 31.90%  | 68.10%    |
| <b>Burundi</b>   | 70.90%  | 29.10%    |
| <b>DRC</b>   | 22.00%  | 78.00%    |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b>   | 21.10%  | 78.90%    |
| <b>Uganda</b>  | 66.70%  | 33.30%    |
| <b>GLR Average</b>   | 33.20%  | 66.80%    |

Attempting to account for the sharp split between Burundi and Uganda, on the one hand, and DRC and RoC, on the other, in the perception of ex-combatant status playing a contributing role in the unemployment of non-economically active x-combatants is challenging. In Burundi the most common explanation for why ex-combatant status contributes to unemployment is unspecified political problems (44.6%) followed by stigma and distrust in ex-combatants (34.7%). In Uganda, lack of skills and education are the most common explanations (43.5%), followed by poor health (26.1%) and stigma/ distrust in ex-combatants (21.7%). By contrast, in DRC and RoC stigma accounts for the vast majority of explanations for why ex-combatant status contributes to unemployment (80.2% in DRC and 79.6% in RoC). In summary, in DRC and RoC where the likelihood of perceiving ex-combatant status as contributing to unemployment was dramatically lower than in other GLR countries – the perception that stigma and distrust in ex-combatants was the reason why ex-combatant status contributed unemployment was dramatically higher. While the relationship between perceptions of stigma and the perception of ex-combatant status playing a contributing role to being non-economically active is unclear here, stigma should at the very least be flagged as an important dimension.

At a cross-country level there is a very even split in the perceptions of non-economically active ex-combatants on their future prospects of gaining employment – 50.4% saying that they had a good chance of finding a job in the future, 2.4% saying they had a neither good or bad chance, and 48.6% saying that they had a poor chance. Disabled ex-combatants consistently expressed a less positive outlook towards future employment – 25.4% of disabled ex-combatants across the GLR countries having a positive outlook versus 54.3% of non-disabled ex-combatants. While there is no data to directly compare across GLR countries, it is notable that in Uganda 100% of disabled ex-combatants explained their positive outlook on gaining employment in the future on improved health and/or healing.

### 9.3 Female Ex-Combatants on Employment Issues

Of female ex-combatants who were not economically active 36.5% feel that they are discriminated against as a female

144 To further complicate these findings on the role that ex-combatant status plays in gaining employment for those who are non-economically active, they stand in contrast to the similar findings on the role that stigma / distrust plays in gaining employment presented in Table 14.

– though in Burundi this number was significantly higher (66%) and in Uganda significantly lower (16.7%).<sup>145</sup> Similarly, of female ex-combatants who are economically active 24.5% feel they are discriminated against as a female in the workplace. In both instances female ex-combatants between the ages of 18 and 30 are the most likely age demographic to perceive discrimination (44.7% of those unemployed and 23.2% of those employed). In addition, in both of these instances 34.8% perceive their status as not just a female, but a female ex-combatant is related to the discrimination they encounter.

While there is no data for direct comparison across GLR countries as to who female ex-combatants see as the main people discriminating against them, Uganda can offer some leads for further investigation. In Uganda 50% of unemployed female ex-combatants see female employers or bosses as the main group discriminating against them, the other 50% see everyone as discriminating against them. Of those female ex-combatants who were employed 30% saw female co-workers as the main group discriminating against them, followed by 15.4% who saw all employers at the main group discriminating against them, 15.4% who saw male co-workers discriminating against them, and 15.4% who saw everybody discriminating against them. What is notable is that, at least in the case of Uganda, in both instances of female ex-combatants who are employed and those who are unemployed, the group most commonly perceived as discriminating against them is other females – be they employers or co-workers. This point could be related to female community members’ overall higher levels of fear, and perhaps in turn discrimination, surrounding the return of ex-combatants discussed in section 17.2.

## 9.4 Disabled Ex-Combatants on Employment Issues

Of disabled ex-combatants who are not economically active 62.4% feel they are discriminated against as a disabled person and 37.6% feel they are not.<sup>146</sup> Of those disabled ex-combatants who are economically active the proportions of those who feel they are discriminated against is almost perfectly inverse, with 34.2% saying that they perceived being discriminated against and 62.5% saying they did not. When asked if discrimination was related to their ex-combatant status 51.1% of disabled ex-combatants perceive that this discrimination has to do specifically with them being a disabled ex-combatant rather than merely disabled. Female disabled ex-combatants were less likely to perceive discrimination linked to their ex-combatant status, 37.5% versus 58.7%.

Again, as with the case of female ex-combatants on employment issues, there is no data to directly compare across the GLR countries as to who disabled ex-combatants see as the main groups discriminating against them. However, again looking at data from Uganda can offer some initial insights. In Uganda 80% of non-economically active disabled ex-combatants who perceived discrimination see all employers or bosses as discriminating against them, with the remaining 20% seeing everyone as discriminating against them. Of those economically active ex-combatants who perceived discrimination 40% saw the discrimination as coming primarily from all employers or bosses, 20% from male co-workers, 20% from all co-workers, and 20% from everybody. Confirming these trends across the GLR countries would require further triangulation.

## 9.5 Income, Savings and Access to Credit

In the context of the severe development challenges that characterize most of the Great Lakes Region, ex-combatants’ economic statuses are a good starting point for understanding basic individual and household economic stability. However, a deeper examination of ex-combatants’ income, savings and access to credit can begin to reveal some about their ability, or inability, to move beyond mere subsistence by leveraging economic opportunities.

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145 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding perceptions of discrimination among both economically active and non-active disabled ex-combatants due to lack of directly comparable data.

146 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding perceptions of discrimination among both economically active and non-active female ex-combatants due to lack of directly comparable data.

Across the GLR countries 49.6% of ex-combatants identified as the sole breadwinner of their household with the remaining 50.4% saying that their household relied on multiple incomes. As is visible in Table 16, in Rwanda and DRC ex-combatants are notably more likely to identify themselves as the sole breadwinner (79.6% and 71.6% respectively) – generally an indicator of household income instability. Across the GLR countries female ex-combatants were dramatically less likely to identify as the sole breadwinner (29.1%) when compared to male ex-combatants (53%). In some GLR countries this disparity between male and female ex-combatants was even more accentuated – for example in Rwanda 100% of female ex-combatants said their household relied on multiple incomes compared to 19.6% of male ex-combatants.

**Table 16: Ex-Combatant Sole Breadwinner Status**

|                          | Are you the sole, or only, breadwinner or do others in your household also earn an income? |               |
|--------------------------|--|---------------|
|                          | Sole   | Others Assist |
| <b>Male</b>              | 53.00%   | 47.00%        |
| <b>Female</b>            | 29.10%   | 70.90%        |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>         | 41.10%   | 58.90%        |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>         | 56.10%   | 43.90%        |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>       | 56.70%   | 43.30%        |
| <b>Disabled</b>          | 42.40%   | 57.60%        |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>      | 50.80%   | 49.20%        |
| <b>Burundi</b>           | 42.90%   | 57.10%        |
| <b>DRC</b>               | 71.60%   | 28.40%        |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b> | 63.80%   | 36.20%        |
| <b>Rwanda</b>            | 79.60%   | 20.40%        |
| <b>Uganda</b>            | 40.40%   | 59.60%        |
| <b>GLR Average</b>       | 49.60%   | 50.40%        |

Of those ex-combatants who identify themselves as the sole breadwinner in their household across the GLR countries 39.3% say that they usually have to borrow money to meet their monthly household expenses, 22.4% say that they usually break even, 20.4% rely on family money transfers, 13.5% usually have to use past savings, and only 4.4% have money left over.<sup>147</sup> As displayed in Table 17, these trends were remarkably durable within each of the GLR countries with the exception of RoC in which a similar proportion of ex-combatants (41.2%) had to borrow to meet monthly expenses, but in contrast to the cross-country trend 41.2% of ex-combatants usually had money left over.<sup>148</sup>

Across the GLR countries, female ex-combatants were more likely to rely on family money transfers (27.2%) when compared to male ex-combatants (19.1%), and less likely to use past savings to meet monthly expenses (7.8%) when compared to male ex-combatants (14.6%). Younger ex-combatants were also more likely to rely on family money transfers than their elder peers (27.8% vs. 12.4% of those 31-40 and 15.4% of those over 40).

Of those ex-combatants who were sole breadwinners and did not earn enough to meet monthly household expenses across the GLR countries, they were on average short by 41% of their income.<sup>149</sup> DRC and, to a larger extent, RoC sat below this cross-country average, with average sole breadwinner income shortages of 23% and 7% respectively. Across demographic lines these disabled ex-combatants had notably higher income shortages on average (52%) compared to non-disabled ex-combatants (40%). Of those ex-combatants who were sole breadwinners and did meet monthly household expenses there was a clear trend in which ex-combatants had a surplus on average of 22%.<sup>150</sup> However, as is visible in Table 18, in RoC income surpluses were on average only 5%.

Of those 49.6% of ex-combatants across the GLR countries who say that their household relies on multiple incomes, there was an average contribution of 46% of their total household income. As is visible in Table 19, Rwanda and DRC stand out with smaller average non-sole breadwinner household income contributions (35% and 37% respectively).

147 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding sole household breadwinners due to lack of directly comparable data.

148 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding sole household breadwinners due to lack of directly comparable data.

149 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding monthly income deficits due to lack of directly comparable data.

150 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding monthly income surpluses due to lack of directly comparable data.

**Table 17: Ex-Combatant Sole Breadwinner Meeting Monthly Expenses**

|                          | At the end of each month, do you meet your household expenses? |                    |                                  |                                |                        |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
|                          | Usually have money left over                                   | Usually break even | Usually have to use past savings | Rely on family money transfers | Usually have to borrow |
| <b>Male</b>              | 4.80%  | 21.50%             | 14.60%                           | 19.10%                         | 40.10%                 |
| <b>Female</b>            | 2.80%  | 27.20%             | 7.80%                            | 27.20%                         | 35.10%                 |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>         | 3.60%  | 17.60%             | 14.10%                           | 27.80%                         | 36.90%                 |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>         | 5.20%  | 22.30%             | 17.30%                           | 12.40%                         | 42.80%                 |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>       | 5.10%  | 30.80%             | 8.70%                            | 15.40%                         | 40.00%                 |
| <b>Disabled</b>          | 5.10%  | 28.90%             | 9.30%                            | 22.60%                         | 34.10%                 |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>      | 4.30%  | 21.50%             | 14.10%                           | 20.10%                         | 40.00%                 |
| <b>Burundi</b>           | 1.40%  | 13.90%             | 20.50%                           | 18.90%                         | 45.30%                 |
| <b>DRC</b>               | 6.80%  | 22.60%             | 20.40%                           | 14.60%                         | 35.70%                 |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b> | 41.20%   | 0.00%              | 11.80%                           | 5.90%                          | 41.20%                 |
| <b>Uganda</b>            | 2.50%  | 32.70%             | 6.50%                            | 24.20%                         | 34.10%                 |
| <b>GLR Average</b>       | 4.40%  | 22.40%             | 13.50%                           | 20.40%                         | 39.30%                 |

Generally speaking female ex-combatants and younger ex-combatants contributed less on average of total household income (39% and 42% respectively).

Since reintegration programming 31.7% of ex-combatants have had to borrow money to help meet their daily needs.<sup>151</sup> Across age, gender and disability demographics all groups lay very closely to the total sample trend. In Burundi, DRC and RoC, of those who did borrow 34.6% borrowed from a friend, 28% borrowed from family, 11.7% borrowed from community leaders – only 4% borrowed from some form of formal credit institution. Ex-combatants aged 18-30 were most likely to borrow from family (34.8%) compared to those 31-40 (22.7%) and those over 40 (19.7%).

**Table 18: Ex-Combatant Sole Breadwinner Average Monthly Income Surpluses and Deficits**

|                          | Average Monthly Income Shortage | Average Monthly Income Surplus |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Male</b>              | 40%                             | 22%                            |
| <b>Female</b>            | 45%                             | 21%                            |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>         | 42%                             | 22%                            |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>         | 39%                             | 22%                            |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>       | 41%                             | 22%                            |
| <b>Disabled</b>          | 52%                             | 23%                            |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>      | 40%                             | 22%                            |
| <b>Burundi</b>           | 40%                             | 26%                            |
| <b>DRC</b>               | 23%                             | 24%                            |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b> | 7%                              | 5%                             |
| <b>Uganda</b>            | 50%                             | 31%                            |
| <b>GLR Average</b>       | 41%                             | 22%                            |

In terms of the use of funds borrowed since reintegration programming packages there were three key uses: (i) subsistence; (ii) business investment; and (iii) familial support. 34.6% of ex-combatants identified their first use of borrowed funds as mere subsistence, 22.5% as business investments, and 18.9% as assistance for their family.<sup>152</sup> Similarly, 27.8% of ex-combatants identified their *second* use of borrowed funds as to assist their family, 24.7% as subsistence, and 11.3% as a business investment. As a *third* use of borrowed funds 17.1% used funds as subsistence, 15.1% as assistance to their family, and 10.9%

151 Due to the varying contexts of reintegration programming across the GLR countries this question should be treated as a broad indicator of the rate at which ex-combatants need to borrow money after the bulk of immediate reintegration assistance (including reinsertion) has passed. Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding money borrowing due to lack of directly comparable data.

152 Rwanda and Uganda are excluded from findings on the most common uses of reinsertion payments due to lack of directly comparable data.

as business investments. The drops in these categories were absorbed into, among others, education for children (10.1%) and medical expenses (7.6%) – especially among disabled ex-combatants. These spending patterns for borrowed money overlap strongly with the spending patterns of reinsertion payments in section 11.1 – indicating a key set of immediate costs those ex-combatants across the GLR countries face.

Only 6.7% of ex-combatants across the GLR countries have ever applied for micro-credit from a financial institution. This figure is reflected in all GLR countries except for Uganda and Rwanda where higher proportions of ex-combatants (18.4% and 13% respectively) had at some point applied for micro-credit. Ex-combatants over the age of 40 were the most likely age demographic to have applied for micro-credit (11%) when compared to those aged 31-40 (6.5%) and those aged 18-40 (4.6%). This trend is further accentuated in the cases of Uganda (27.9% vs. 13.6% and 9.8%) and Rwanda (18.6% vs. 11.5% and 10.3%) where the overall proportion of ex-combatants who had at some point applied for micro-credit was significantly higher.

Of those ex-combatants who had applied for micro-credit at some point, 76.6% had had a successful application. The only GLR country that did not reflect this average was RoC in which only 28.6% of micro-credit applications were successful – the explanation for this is unclear. Female ex-combatants more commonly had successful micro credit applications (86.9%) than male ex-combatants (78.5%). There were no other consistent demographic trends across the GLR countries.

## 9.6 Economic Associations

Across the GLR countries 37.3% of ex-combatants were currently involved in some form of micro-economic activity. Burundi departed most significantly from this trend with 78.6% of ex-combatants being involved in a micro-economic activity.<sup>153</sup> In Uganda and Burundi female ex-combatants (39.4% and 100% respectively) were more likely to be currently participating in some form of micro-economic activity than male ex-combatants (32.5% and 76.9% respectively). In contrast, in DRC and RoC female ex-combatants (22.2% and 0.0% respectively) were less likely to be involved in some form of micro-economic activity (46.2% and 80% respectively).

Since receiving reinsertion packages, 72.2% of ex-combatants across the GLR countries have never been a member of an economic association, 21.9% are currently members, and 5.9% have previously been members but are not currently.<sup>154</sup> Across all GLR countries ex-combatants aged 18-30 were least frequently currently a member of an economic association (15.6%) compared to those aged 31-40 (23%) and those over 40 (29.1%). This could be an indication of older ex-combatants' generally longer economic track record with economic associations and access to credit. Looking to Rwanda and Uganda we can see that local savings and credit associations and farmers associations

**Table 19: Ex-Combatant Average Non-Sole Breadwinner Household Income Contributions**

|                          | Average Non-Sole Breadwinner Household Income Contribution Percentage |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Male</b>              | 47%   |
| <b>Female</b>            | 39%   |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>         | 42%   |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>         | 51%   |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>       | 48%   |
| <b>Disabled</b>          | 41%   |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>      | 47%   |
| <b>Burundi</b>           | 50%   |
| <b>DRC</b>               | 37%   |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b> | 48%   |
| <b>Rwanda</b>            | 35%   |
| <b>Uganda</b>            | 43%   |
| <b>GLR Average</b>       | 46%   |

153 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding current participation in micro-economic activities due to lack of directly comparable data.

154 Burundi is excluded from findings regarding membership in economic associations due to lack of directly comparable data.



are the varieties of economic associations that ex-combatants are members of.

Across the GLR countries the most common benefits that ex-combatants identified receiving as a member of their economic associations were economic networking (34.2%) followed by social networking (21.1%) and financial support (17.9%).<sup>155</sup> Ex-combatants in Uganda were the least likely to cite social and economic networking as the primary benefit of economic associations (3.1% and 4.6% respectively) and more likely to cite financial support as the primary benefit (42.4%). Female ex-combatants across the GLR countries were more likely to identify economic networking (42.5%) and less likely to identify social networking (12.1%) than male ex-combatants (33% and 22.4% respectively).

**Table 20: Ex-Combatant Economic Association Membership**

|                          | Since reinsertion, have you ever been a member of an Economic Association? |                                |   |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|
|                          | Yes, have been a member previously, but not now                            | Yes, am currently a member now | No, have never been a member of an economic association |
| <b>Male</b>              | 6.10%  | 21.60%                         | 72.40%  |
| <b>Female</b>            | 4.60%  | 24.40%                         | 71.00%  |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>         | 4.20%  | 15.60%                         | 80.30%  |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>         | 6.50%  | 23.00%                         | 70.50%  |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>       | 7.20%  | 29.10%                         | 63.80%  |
| <b>Disabled</b>          | 7.10%  | 24.60%                         | 68.40%  |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>      | 5.80%  | 21.60%                         | 72.60%  |
| <b>Burundi</b>           | 0.00%  | 0.00%                          | 0.00%   |
| <b>DRC</b>               | 2.30%  | 19.70%                         | 78.00%  |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b> | 7.90%  | 12.10%                         | 80.00%  |
| <b>Rwanda</b>            | 13.00%   | 36.60%                         | 50.40%  |
| <b>Uganda</b>            | 2.70%  | 21.80%                         | 75.50%  |
| <b>GLR Average</b>       | 5.90%  | 21.90%                         | 72.20%  |

Of those ex-combatants across the GLR countries who were members of an economic association, there were varying compositions of ex-combatant versus non-ex-combatant membership in the given economic association.<sup>156</sup> As is visible in Table 21 below, at a cross-country level there was a typical bell curve distribution between categories of economic association membership composition. However, closer inspection within countries shows that there are diverging trends. What is noteworthy is that the level at which ex-combatants move into economic associations with only other ex-combatants is low – suggesting that the majority of those ex-combatants who do join an economic association have the benefit of social interaction with community members, building social and economic networks, in addition to the economic benefits of associations.

## 9.7 Summary

Across the GLR countries the general economic trajectory of ex-combatants is positive. The number of ex-combatants who are unemployed is shrinking – these ex-combatants are most commonly being absorbed into self-employment in agriculture, followed by self-employment in non-agricultural business. In line with this positive trajectory, ex-combatants generally have a positive outlook on their economic situation in the future; 76.3% saying that they expected their situation to improve in the future. When ex-combatants explain this positive outlook they generally cite improved agricultural production and improved access to capital and credit – two explanations that can be tied to ex-combatants’ main paths of economic reintegration: self-employment in agriculture and small business. This signals that ex-combatants’ perceptions of their future economic situation and the pathways to attaining it are rooted in their collective trajectory towards self-employment in agriculture or small business.

This generally positive economic trajectory has seen ex-combatants reach near parity, but slightly weaker across

155 Burundi is excluded from findings regarding the benefits of economic associations due to lack of directly comparable data.

156 Burundi is excluded from findings regarding the membership composition of economic associations due to lack of directly comparable data.

all indicators, in levels of economic stability compared to community members. Ex-combatants are more likely to be unemployed, less likely to meet their household expenses, and more likely to borrow from family than formal economic institutions to close this income gap than community members. Ex-combatants are considerably less likely to participate in micro-economic activities or belong to economic associations than community members – an indication of their considerably shortened economic track record and the time lost while in conflict for establishing themselves in formal economic institutions.

Regarding ex-combatants perceptions of the barriers they face to gaining productive economic status, the majority of ex-combatants cite lack of opportunity, signaling that they generally identify the barriers to economic improvement as contextualized in larger development challenges that affect the entire community. Simultaneously, ex-combatants perceive themselves as a disadvantaged group that have a harder time finding a job and are subject to stigma and distrust in the community. By contrast community members are much more likely to cite lack of access to credit and lack of skills as key barriers to their economic stability.

It appears that ex-combatants understand the dual dimensions of the barriers they face to gaining a productive economic status – the larger context of severe development challenges that characterize the GLR countries, and the context of being an ex-combatant in this development setting – facing challenges with stigma and distrust in the community. Indeed, ex-combatants are far more likely to identify the social networking value of economic interactions, bringing about the slow set of social interactions that erode stigma and facilitate social reintegration, than community members. However, in this it appears that with weaker economic track records ex-combatants also fail to recognize capital and credit barriers to economic prosperity to the same extent as community members.

In summary, ex-combatants' economic trajectories are generally positive though in absolute terms they are disadvantaged to community members. The barriers to reaching true parity with community members revolve around: (i) closing literacy, education and skill gaps with community members; (ii) establishing an economic track record; (iii) accessing credit and other financial institutions; and (iv) eroding stigma and distrust through the slow process of confrontation that social reintegration entails.

### **9.7.1 Vulnerable Subgroups**

In this analysis of the economic dimensions of reintegration, female ex-combatants continue to stand out as a key vulnerable group. Female ex-combatants are more likely to be unemployed than male ex-combatants and more likely to see lack of skills as among their core barriers to reaching economic stability – this aligns with earlier analysis revealing that female ex-combatants have significantly lower literacy and educational achievement levels compared to male ex-combatants. Female ex-combatants and community members alike report significant levels discrimination on the basis of gender as a barrier to gaining employment, though female ex-combatants report this at twice the rate of community members. This may suggest that stigma associated with ex-combatant status may have an amplifying effect on already entrenched gender inequalities present in the community. Interestingly while female community members that experienced gender-based discrimination identified it as coming primarily from males, female ex-combatants identified female community members as the main sources of discrimination. This point may be related to female community members' overall higher levels of fear surrounding the return of ex-combatants to their community discussed in section 17.2 of the community dynamics annex of this study. Collectively, these issues represent a clear set of challenges for female ex-combatants in achieving economic reintegration.

Health is a key barrier to economic reintegration for disabled ex-combatants who are the most likely demographic group, of ex-combatants and community members alike, to be unemployed at the time of sampling across the GLR countries. Accordingly disabled ex-combatants are the least likely demographic group to have a positive outlook on their economic future. In addition disabled ex-combatants who are unemployed report high levels of discrimination in seeking employment on the basis of their disability (twice the proportion of females that perceive discrimination). However – those who are employed perceive discrimination on the basis of their disability at half the rate (on

par with females). This may suggest that while there is clearly discrimination in terms of gender and disability, there is an amplifying effect that overall levels of stigma and distrust in the community have on these dynamics.

### **9.7.2 Unique Country Trends**

In terms of economic reintegration ex-combatants in the Republic of Congo display a number of unique trends – though they do not necessarily depart from the dominant narrative of economic reintegration for ex-combatants across the GLR. Most notably perhaps is that while self-employment in agriculture is still an important economic pathway for ex-combatants in RoC, self-employment in non-agricultural services is the dominant economic path. It is possible that migration to the urban capital of Brazzaville among ex-combatants has removed agriculture as a viable economic activity – lending some explanation to this trend of economic status tending away from the self-employment in agriculture.

# 10. Social Capital

Examining the social dynamics of ex-combatant reintegration requires the exploration of a range of concepts including: (i) social networks, (ii) trust, (iii) social cohesion, (iv) social inclusion, and (v) empowerment. Collectively these various concepts come together to represent social capital, essentially the idea that social networks have value, both tangible and intangible, for individuals and communities and are a key indicator of the overall social health of ex-combatants – and in turn their ability to leverage this social capital towards social and economic outcomes. Examining social capital can allow us some insights into the process of social reintegration that ex-combatants go through upon return to their communities. However, when looking at the complex social dynamics that ex-combatants experience we cannot draw meaningful insights without contextualizing these social dimensions with that of the community at large. Thus for optimal analytical value this section of the report should be read in conjunction with section 16 on social capital in the community dynamics annex of this report.

## 10.1 Networks and Sociability

Across the GLR countries ex-combatants and community members are unlikely to be in many social groups – though community members are in slightly more. On average ex-combatants were in 0.46 social groups, while community members were in 0.63.<sup>157</sup> Uganda stood apart from this overall GLR trend – community members averaging 0.93 social groups. Age showed a positive relationship to the average number of social groups among ex-combatants and community members alike, however this trend was much more pronounced among ex-combatants – in which young (18-30) ex-combatants have the lowest average number of social groups across all demographic groups (0.37).

Across the GLR countries, 38.5% of ex-combatants said that the current number of social groups to which they are a member is greater than that of one year ago, 50.8% said the number is the same as one year prior and 10.7% said that their current number of social groups is less than it was one year ago. These proportions were reflected well within the GLR countries with the exception of Uganda, in which 85.3% said that their number of social groups had stayed the same in the last year. Across the GLR countries, female ex-combatants less frequently saw an increase in their number of social groups (23.1%) when compared to male ex-combatants (41.4%). Similarly, disabled ex-combatants less frequently saw an increase in their number of social groups (24.4%) when compared to non-disabled ex-combatants (40.1%).

Of ex-combatants, 32.6% were on a management or organizing committee for a local group or organization. Female ex-combatants were significantly less likely to be on a management committee (25.9%) compared to male ex-combatants (34%). Ex-combatants over the age of 40 are most frequently on management or organizing committees (37.4%) compared to those 31-40 (36.8%) and those 18-30 (24.3%). The fact that older ex-combatants (over 40) have the most social groups on average and are most frequently on management committees is a broad indication of their social footing in the community. Inversely it flags younger ex-combatants as lagging behind in building a social foundation in the community.

Generally speaking a large proportion of ex-combatants across the GLR countries had contact with their families (91.3%). However, DRC is a clear standout in this trend of high familial contact – only 62.1% reported having

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157 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding social networks due to lack of data.

**Table 22: Ex-Combatant Frequency of Familial Contact**

|                     | Frequency of contact between community member and immediate family these days |        |         |             |             |              |       |
|---------------------|---|--------|---------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------|
|                     | Daily   | Weekly | Monthly | Half yearly | Once a year | Occasionally | Never |
| <b>Male</b>         | 64.90%  | 13.10% | 11.60%  | 1.20%       | 1.00%       | 7.70%        | 0.40% |
| <b>Female</b>       | 76.50%  | 9.70%  | 4.20%   | 1.40%       | 1.50%       | 6.20%        | 0.50% |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>    | 71.00%  | 10.00% | 8.80%   | 1.50%       | 2.00%       | 5.90%        | 0.80% |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>    | 59.90%  | 13.40% | 13.60%  | 1.60%       | 0.30%       | 10.50%       | 0.60% |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>  | 71.90%  | 13.20% | 7.80%   | 0.30%       | 1.00%       | 5.80%        | 0.00% |
| <b>Disabled</b>     | 88.20%  | 6.80%  | 1.10%   | 0.00%       | 0.00%       | 3.90%        | 0.00% |
| <b>Not Disabled</b> | 64.70%  | 13.20% | 11.20%  | 1.40%       | 1.30%       | 7.90%        | 0.40% |
| <b>DRC</b>          | 35.30%  | 20.00% | 23.50%  | 1.10%       | 2.20%       | 17.90%       | 0.00% |
| <b>RoC</b>          | 28.90%  | 24.30% | 22.10%  | 3.00%       | 2.50%       | 18.00%       | 1.40% |
| <b>Uganda</b>       | 92.70%  | 4.80%  | 1.80%   | 0.30%       | 0.30%       | 0.30%        | 0.00% |
| <b>GLR Average</b>  | 67.00%  | 12.40% | 10.20%  | 1.20%       | 1.10%       | 7.50%        | 0.50% |

contact with their families. What is even more notable though is that DRC is the only GLR country in which ex-combatants have dramatically more contact with their families than community members have with their own families (62.1% vs. 31%).

Of those ex-combatants who did have contact with their families, 67% across the GLR countries had daily contact with their family, 12.4% had weekly contact, 10.2% had monthly contact, and the remainder had less frequent contact.<sup>158</sup> As visible in *Table 22*, Uganda stands out most clearly from the cross-country trend in this instance, as 92.7% of ex-combatants in Uganda who had contact with their family had daily contact with their family. In general female ex-combatants had slightly higher levels of daily contact than male ex-combatants (76.5% vs. 64.9%). The only standout along gender demographic lines is in RoC, in which only 11.1% of female ex-combatants had daily contact with their family and 45.5% had contact with their family less frequently than monthly – as compared to male ex-combatants of whom 30.4% had daily contact and 22.2% had contact less frequently than monthly. Disabled ex-combatants were more likely to have daily contact with their families (88.2%) than non-disabled ex-combatants (64.7%). In all, ex-combatants across the GLR countries had daily contact with their families slightly more frequently than community members (67% vs. 63.9%).

Across the GLR countries 27.2% of ex-combatants thought that contact with their family could be more frequent and 72.8% felt that their current level of contact with their family was the most they would prefer (see *Table 23*).

**Table 23: Ex-Combatant Desired Level of Familial Contact**

|                          | Is the current level of contact the maximum you wish or could it be more frequent? |                        |
|--------------------------|--|------------------------|
|                          | Maximum  | Could be more frequent |
| <b>Male</b>              | 71.00%   | 29.00%                 |
| <b>Female</b>            | 80.40%   | 19.60%                 |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>         | 71.10%   | 28.90%                 |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>         | 69.10%   | 30.90%                 |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>       | 83.40%   | 16.60%                 |
| <b>Disabled</b>          | 83.00%   | 17.00%                 |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>      | 71.40%   | 28.60%                 |
| <b>DRC</b>               | 36.70%   | 63.30%                 |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b> | 52.30%   | 47.70%                 |
| <b>Uganda</b>            | 92.80%   | 7.20%                  |
| <b>GLR Average</b>       | 72.80%   | 27.20%                 |

<sup>158</sup> Rwanda and Burundi are absent from findings on levels and frequency of familial contact, as well as preferred levels of familial contact, due to lack of directly comparable data.

In DRC, where ex-combatants had the lowest actual levels of familial contact, ex-combatants were dramatically more likely than average to think that their frequency of familial contact could be more – even though those who did have contact had it at a similar level to other GLR countries.

Interestingly, ex-combatants across the GLR were more likely to think the level of contact that they had with their families was the maximum they would want than community members (72.8% vs.29.3%). Additionally, although in RoC female ex-combatants had notably lower contact with their families than male ex-combatants (as outlined above), they actually less frequently expressed that they thought they could have more frequent contact with their family (41.9%) than their male ex-combatant counterparts (48.4%).

In DRC and RoC, the GLR countries where ex-combatants most frequently thought they could have more contact with their families, 30.9% of those who thought they could see their family more frequently cited the distance of travel as the main reason they do not see their family more often, 20.4% cited lack of time, and 17.1% cited the cost of travel – flagging the geographic spread of families as a dimension to reintegration in these countries.

Across the GLR countries, 49.1% of all ex-combatants had lots of friends, 30% had a few, good friends and 20.9% did not have many friends.<sup>159</sup> This trend is well reflected within the GLR countries with the exception of Rwanda – where 23% had lots of friends, 44.2% had a few good friends and 32.8% did not have many friends. On average female ex-combatants slightly less frequently had lots of friends (44.3%) and more frequently had a few good friends (33.4%) or not many friends (22.3%) than male ex-combatants (49.9%, 29.5% and 20.6% respectively). Rwanda is the exception to this gender demographic trend in which female ex-combatants slightly more frequently than male ex-combatants had lots of friends (27.3%) or a few good friends (54.5%) than male ex-combatants (22.9% and 43.9% respectively).

Across the GLR countries there were clear and consistent trends in terms of the age, gender, ex-combatant status and educational background of the friends of ex-combatants.<sup>160</sup> The majority of ex-combatants across the GLR countries were likely to have friends within the same age and gender categories, but less likely to have friends who were ex-combatants or shared the same education level. These trends are displayed in *Table 24*.

What is perhaps most noteworthy in these findings is that ex-combatants’ friend groups appear to be fairly diversi-

**Table 24: Ex-Combatant Friend Group Demographics Summary**

|                     | Frequency of contact between community member and immediate family these days |                                  |                                |  |
|---------------------|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
|                     | Most friends are the same age   | Most friends are the same gender | Most friends are ex-combatants | Most friends have the same education level |
| <b>Male</b>         | 64.90%  | 13.10%                           | 11.60%                         | 1.20%                                      |
| <b>Female</b>       | 76.50%  | 9.70%                            | 4.20%                          | 1.40%                                      |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>    | 71.00%  | 10.00%                           | 8.80%                          | 1.50%                                      |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>    | 59.90%  | 13.40%                           | 13.60%                         | 1.60%                                      |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>  | 71.90%  | 13.20%                           | 7.80%                          | 0.30%                                      |
| <b>Disabled</b>     | 88.20%  | 6.80%                            | 1.10%                          | 0.00%                                      |
| <b>Not Disabled</b> | 64.70%  | 13.20%                           | 11.20%                         | 1.40%                                      |
| <b>GLR Average</b>  | 35.30%  | 20.00%                           | 23.50%                         | 1.10%                                      |
| <b>RoC</b>          | 28.90%  | 24.30%                           | 22.10%                         | 3.00%                                      |
| <b>Uganda</b>       | 92.70%  | 4.80%                            | 1.80%                          | 0.30%                                      |
| <b>GLR Average</b>  | 67.00%  | 12.40%                           | 10.20%                         | 1.20%                                      |

159 Burundi is excluded from findings regarding number of friends due to lack of directly comparable data.

160 Burundi is excluded here from findings regarding the proportion of other ex-combatants in ex-combatants’ social groups due to lack of data. Rwanda is excluded from findings on age, gender, and ex-combatant makeup of ex-combatant’s social groups due to lack of data. However, the case of ex-combatant status of ex-combatants’ social groups Rwanda is excluded from direct comparison due to a scaling issue in the data. In Rwanda 68.9% said that some of their friends were ex-combatants, 22.9% said that most of them were ex-combatants, 7.6% said none were ex-combatants and only 0.5% said that all their friends were ex-combatants.

fied, especially in terms of having friends who are ex-combatants. Indeed, only 26.7% of ex-combatants say that most of their friends are fellow ex-combatants, 23.6% say some, 36.4% say few and 13.3% say none. This suggests that ex-combatants are not becoming an isolated social group – only socializing with each other.

Across the GLR countries, when asked who they would turn to for help if they were to encounter an economic problem 39.7% of ex-combatants responded that they would turn to their family; 30.9% responded that they would turn to a friend; 13.5% would turn to no one; and 10% would rely on a range of business, communal, or formal financial resources. Generally across the GLR countries older ex-combatants were more likely to rely on friends for economic help than younger ex-combatants – who were, themselves, more likely to rely on family than older ex-combatants. This lends evidence to the idea that, in general, ex-combatants’ primary pathway to economic assistance is through their families and extended social circles as opposed to formal institutional pathways. Indeed, while as a whole ex-combatants would turn to similar sources as their community member counterparts for economic help, community members were slightly more likely (7.5% vs. 3.3%) to rely on formal institutions.

## 10.2 Trust and Solidarity

Drawing from Rwanda and Uganda we can see that ex-combatants have generally high levels of trust in their communities.<sup>161</sup> Of the respondents, 58% said that they trust people in their community to a great extent, 31.2% said to neither a great nor small extent, and the remaining 10.8% said they trusted those in their community to a small extent. In Rwanda and Uganda female ex-combatants generally trusted less than male ex-combatants (18.5% vs. 9.5% trusted those in their community to a small extent). Age displayed a positive correlation to high trust in others in the community (47% of those 18-30, 62% of those 31-40, and 64.3% of those over 40). Overall ex-combatants displayed a similar level of trust, though slightly weaker than community members.

Across the GLR countries, 18.3% of ex-combatants felt that if they were to disagree with what everyone else in their area agreed on, they would not at all feel free to speak out, 60.2% felt that they would definitely feel free to speak out and 19.5% felt that they would only feel free to speak out on certain matters.<sup>162</sup> This trend was visible within each of the GLR countries; only in Uganda was willingness to speak out slightly higher – 9.6% feeling they would not speak out, 71.3% feeling they would definitely speak out and 19.1% feeling that they would only speak out on specific matters. Community members were slightly more likely to feel they could definitely speak out.

Across the GLR countries, 52% of ex-combatants felt that in the last year / two years the level of trust between

|                          | In the past year/ past two years has the level of trust in your area got better, worse, or stayed about the same? |        |        |
|--------------------------|---|--------|--------|
|                          | Better  | Same   | Worse  |
| <b>Male</b>              | 53.40%  | 36.90% | 9.80%  |
| <b>Female</b>            | 42.30%  | 48.50% | 9.20%  |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>         | 51.50%  | 37.90% | 10.50% |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>         | 54.30%  | 36.30% | 9.40%  |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>       | 50.70%  | 40.40% | 8.80%  |
| <b>Disabled</b>          | 45.80%  | 43.60% | 10.60% |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>      | 52.70%  | 37.70% | 9.60%  |
| <b>Burundi</b>           | 62.70%  | 24.00% | 13.20% |
| <b>DRC</b>               | 23.30%  | 67.70% | 9.00%  |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b> | 73.70%  | 19.70% | 6.60%  |
| <b>Rwanda</b>            | 59.30%  | 28.00% | 12.70% |
| <b>Uganda</b>            | 43.60%  | 48.60% | 7.70%  |
| <b>GLR Average</b>       | 52.00%  | 38.30% | 9.70%  |

161 This specific question regarding the overall extent of community trust was asked to ex-combatants only in Rwanda and Uganda.

162 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding willingness to speak out due to lack of directly comparable data.

people in the area that they lived in had improved, 38.3% felt that trust had stayed the same and the remaining 9.7% felt that trust had deteriorated (displayed in *Table 25*).<sup>163</sup> Female ex-combatants less frequently thought that trust had improved (42.3%) than male ex-combatants (53.4%). Disabled ex-combatants also slightly less frequently felt that trust had improved (45.8%) compared to non-disabled ex-combatants (52.7%). Community members were less likely to see trust as improved than ex-combatants (43.4% vs. 52%) but more likely to think it had stayed the same (47.9% vs. 38.3%).

When those ex-combatants who felt that trust had improved were asked to explain why they thought it had improved the most common responses were: (i) 25.4% of ex-combatants across the GLR countries felt that peace in general was the reason for improved trust; and (ii) 22.5% thought communal living and growing understanding were the reasons for improved trust.<sup>164</sup>

It is important to note that while these trends give a general picture of the perceived drivers of trust across the GLR countries, within each country there were unique trends as well that deserve further investigation – for example in Burundi the charging of ex-combatants for their behavior was seen as the main driver of improvements in trust by 56% of the ex-combatants sample.<sup>165</sup> One demographic trend that does endure across the GLR countries is that those ex-combatants aged 18-30 most frequently see the charging of ex-combatants for their behavior as the central driver of improved trust – 32.2% of those 18-30 compared to 15.8% of those 31-40 and 5% of those over the age of 40.

When those ex-combatants who felt that trust had gotten worse were asked to explain why they thought trust had deteriorated, 27.8% cited dishonest people and 21.9% cited political problems or distrust in authorities. While the internal proportions of these two driving factors behind worsening perceptions of trust among ex-combatants varied within the individual GLR countries they were consistently the two most common explanations.

## 10.3 Social Cohesion and Inclusion

When asked about the level of diversity in the area in which they live ex-combatants displayed a spread of responses across the GLR countries almost identical to community members.<sup>166</sup> 35.2% of ex-combatants described the people in the area in which they live in as characterized by many differences (diverse), 24% characterized them as having neither a great or small extent of differences, and 40.8% said there were few differences between people (not diverse). As visible in *Table 26*, Rwanda stood out from this trend – 61.4% saw high diversity, 17.8% average, and 20.8% low diversity.<sup>167</sup>

When asked whether or not the differences between people (level of diversity) were a source of problems such as disagreement, arguments, and disputes there were split results. In DRC and RoC, a low portion of ex-combatants

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163 In Uganda and Rwanda this question was asked with reference to the last year, where as in DRC and RoC it was asked in reference to the last two years. This creates some issues with periodization and comparability. These figures should be treated with caution. Interestingly, though the question refers to a longer period of time in DRC, this does not appear to translate to greater perceptions of improved trust among community members. In the case of DRC this may be the product of continuing insecurity.

164 It is unclear whether ex-combatants being charged for their behavior is in formal or informal charging / accountability. Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding drivers of improved or depreciating levels of trust due to lack of directly comparable data.

165 Further information regarding trends within each of the countries can be found in each of the individual survey reports from the GLR countries.

166 Here the perception of diversity in constituted but the perception of unspecified differences among people in the community. Another way to phrase this would be the level of "differentness" that ex-combatants perceive in their community.

167 It is possible that the perception of differences (or diversity) can have a varying range of meanings across the contexts of different GLR countries. For example DRC is a country with rich diversity along cultural, ethnic, and linguistic groups. However, the difficulty of movement in eastern DRC means that many such socio-linguistic groups live in isolation from each other. The community members may accurately perceive low diversity in their community, though at a national level diversity may be high. In contrast, the perception of differences (or diversity) may be high in Rwanda due to the centrality of the Hutu / Tutsi divide in the social history of the country and conflict there. Deciphering the role of perceived differences across the different GLR countries is a challenging task with few clear answers.



saw differences between people (diversity) as a problem (13.7% and 13.6%, respectively), whereas in Burundi and Uganda these differences were much more likely to be perceived as the source of problems (72.7% and 55.4%, respectively). A similar split was seen in the community member sample. In DRC and RoC, when questioned further as to the type of problems that these differences can cause, 27.8% of ex-combatants said that envy, slander, and taunts were the most common problems, 17.8% said misunderstandings were the main problem, and 10.8% said that mistrust was the result of differences (diversity) between people in the area they live. Unfortunately there is no data available from Burundi and Uganda on the types of problems associated with diversity.

When questioned as to the level of togetherness that ex-combatants feel with other people (unspecified who) in the area they live the response across the GLR countries was generally a high level of togetherness / closeness that was on par with community members. 76.6% felt close with others, 16.6% felt neither close nor distant and 6.8% felt distant from others in the area they lived – this trend was well reflected within the individual GLR countries – though in DRC, ex-combatants were slightly less likely to report high levels of togetherness (63.1%). Across demographic dimensions only age stood out – which showed a slight positive relationship to the likelihood of feeling close to the community (75.3% of those 18-30, 77.6% of those 31-40, and 79.3% of those over 40).

Across the GLR countries, 69.3% of ex-combatants had at some point in the past year worked with others in the place where they live to do something for the benefit of the community. Burundi and Rwanda stand out with even higher levels of working with the community – 79.3% in Burundi and 90.8% in Rwanda.<sup>168</sup> Female ex-combatants less frequently took part in community projects (57.5%) when compared to male ex-combatants (71%) across the GLR countries – again, with the exception of Rwanda where female participation in community projects in the last year was absolute (100%), exceeding male ex-combatants (90.5%).

When ex-combatants were asked whether there were any penalties for those who did not participate in community activities, 33.3% responded that penalties were very likely, 23.9% that they were somewhat likely, 16.9% that they were neither unlikely nor likely, 7% that they were somewhat unlikely, 14.3% that they were very unlikely and 4.7% that total social exclusion would be the result.<sup>169</sup>

**Table 26: Ex-Combatant Perceptions of Community Diversity**

|                          | To what extent do differences between people characterize your community? |                                |  |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--|
|                          | To a great extent, i.e. lots of differences between people                | Neither great nor small extent | To a small extent, i.e. few differences between people |
| <b>Male</b>              | 36.20%  | 24.00%                         | 39.80%   |
| <b>Female</b>            | 29.10%  | 23.80%                         | 47.10%   |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>         | 35.20%  | 25.60%                         | 39.20%   |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>         | 37.60%  | 23.20%                         | 39.20%   |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>       | 32.30%  | 21.70%                         | 46.10%   |
| <b>Disabled</b>          | 36.50%  | 21.60%                         | 42.00%   |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>      | 35.10%  | 24.30%                         | 40.60%   |
| <b>Burundi</b>           | 30.30%  | 25.20%                         | 44.50%   |
| <b>DRC</b>               | 42.40%  | 37.10%                         | 20.50%   |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b> | 28.80%  | 21.30%                         | 49.90%   |
| <b>Rwanda</b>            | 61.40%  | 17.80%                         | 20.80%   |
| <b>Uganda</b>            | 20.90%  | 16.40%                         | 62.70%   |
| <b>GLR Average</b>       | 35.30%  | 24.00%                         | 40.80%   |

168 In the case of Rwanda, higher levels of working for the benefit of the community is very likely a result of the institutionalized practice of Umuganda – a practice dating back to Rwanda’s colonial era in which on the last Saturday of every month all able bodied adults participate in unpaid communal labor – with enforced penalties for non-participation. In Burundi this trend is likely related to the similar policy of *Travaux Communautaires*.

169 Rwanda and Uganda are excluded from these findings due to lack of directly comparable data.

## 10.4 Empowerment

Empowerment is an important indicator of overall levels of social capital and is understood as a result of individuals' levels of social connection and their ability to leverage the benefits of these connections in the community and the larger context of society. Collectively, the extent of these benefits, and in turn the functions that they fulfill for individuals, play a role in the psychosocial concept of empowerment – the individual or collective ability to affect change in one's life. In exploring issues around empowerment this report builds on survey data regarding: (i) the extent to which ex-combatants feel generally happy; (ii) the extent to which they perceive that they can make important decisions; (iii) the extent to which they have control over decisions in their daily life; (iv) the extent to which they feel valued by the community; and (v) the extent to which they engage in collective political action.

Across the GLR countries when asked about their level of happiness 57.2% of all ex-combatants said that they were generally happy, 23.7% were neither happy nor unhappy, and 19.1% were generally unhappy. In this regard ex-combatants were considerably less likely to report themselves as happy than community members (57.2% vs. 71.8%). This trend was well displayed with the individual GLR countries with the exception of Burundi in which the spread of responses from ex-combatants was much more even (31.6% happy, 39.7% neither happy nor unhappy, and 28.7% unhappy). Generally speaking, female ex-combatants were slightly less happy across the GLR countries than male ex-combatants in terms of happiness within the GLR countries with the exception of Rwanda where female ex-combatants were considerably more happy (90.9%) compared to male ex-combatants (61.6%). Across the GLR countries there was a slight positive relationship between age and happiness – 54% of those aged 18-30, 58.1% of those 31-40, and 60.7% of those over 40 identified as happy.

When questioned about the extent to which they felt that they had the power to make important decisions that change the course of their lives 59.9% of all ex-combatants across the GLR countries responded that they felt that they had this power to a large extent, 25.7% to neither a large nor small extent, and 14.4% to a small extent.<sup>170</sup> This trend was consistently displayed within all of the GLR countries. In examining demographic subgroups both female ex-combatants and disabled ex-combatants showed considerably lower perceptions of power in shaping their lives (see Table 27). Overall, 44.1% of female ex-combatants compared to 62.5% of male ex-combatants felt they had the power to make important decisions in their lives to a large extent. Similarly, 49% of disabled ex-combatants compared to 61% of non-disabled ex-combatants felt they had the power to make important decisions in their lives to a large extent.

While in the case of female ex-combatants the disparity with males was absorbed into both the categories “neither to a large nor small extent” and “to a small extent,” however in the case of disabled ex-combatants this difference with non-disabled ex-combatants was almost absolutely absorbed into the category “to a small extent” (28.1% of disabled vs. 16.1% of non-disabled). This may perhaps suggest that there is a more polarizing dynamic to the nature of empowerment for disabled ex-combatants than female ex-combatants, or any other demographic subgroup for that matter.

Ex-combatants were asked the extent to which they felt they had the ability to make important decisions that change their lives.<sup>171</sup> Across the GLR countries, 82.9% felt they were able to change their lives, 11.2% felt that they were neither able nor unable, and 5.9% felt that they were unable to make important decisions to change their lives. As with sense of power to change their lives, female and disabled ex-combatants less frequently reported having the ability to change their lives (73% and 68.8% respectively).

When questioned as to the extent to which ex-combatants felt they had control over decisions that affect their

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170 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding ability to make large decisions due to lack of directly comparable data.

171 Rwanda and Burundi are absent from findings on ability to make important decisions in life due to lack of directly comparable data.

| <b>Table 27: Ex-Combatant Empowerment (Power, Ability, Control)</b> |   |   |                              |
|---|---|---|------------------------------|
|   | <b>Do you feel that you have the power to make important decisions that can change the course of your life?</b>   |   |                              |
|   | <b>Large extent</b>   | <b>Medium extent</b>                      | <b>Small extent</b>          |
| <b>Male</b>   | 62.50%  | 24.60%                                    | 12.90%                       |
| <b>Female</b>   | 44.10%  | 32.80%                                    | 23.10%                       |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>  | 59.80%  | 23.20%                                    | 16.90%                       |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>  | 66.10%  | 25.00%                                    | 9.00%                        |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>  | 56.50%  | 29.90%                                    | 13.60%                       |
| <b>Disabled</b>   | 49.00%  | 26.40%                                    | 24.60%                       |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>   | 61.00%  | 25.50%                                    | 13.50%                       |
| <b>GLR Average</b>  | 59.90%  | 25.70%                                    | 14.40%                       |
|   | <b>Do you feel that you have the ability to make important decisions that can change the course of your life?</b> |   |                              |
|   | <b>Able to change life</b>  | <b>Neither able nor unable</b>            | <b>Unable to change life</b> |
| <b>Male</b>   | 84.80%  | 10.40%                                    | 4.80%                        |
| <b>Female</b>   | 73.00%  | 15.80%                                    | 11.30%                       |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>  | 80.70%  | 13.30%                                    | 6.00%                        |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>  | 85.40%  | 10.80%                                    | 3.80%                        |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>  | 84.30%  | 8.20%                                     | 7.50%                        |
| <b>Disabled</b>   | 68.80%  | 14.90%                                    | 16.30%                       |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>   | 84.00%  | 11.00%                                    | 5.00%                        |
| <b>GLR Average</b>  | 82.90%  | 11.20%                                    | 5.90%                        |
|   | <b>How much control do you feel you have over decisions that affect your everyday activities?</b>                 |   |                              |
|   | <b>Lots of Control</b>  | <b>Neither a lot nor a little control</b> | <b>Little Control</b>        |
| <b>Male</b>   | 73.40%  | 18.40%                                    | 8.20%                        |
| <b>Female</b>   | 55.00%  | 28.90%                                    | 16.00%                       |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>  | 68.90%  | 20.20%                                    | 10.90%                       |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>  | 76.60%  | 16.80%                                    | 6.50%                        |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>  | 70.30%  | 22.00%                                    | 7.70%                        |
| <b>Disabled</b>   | 63.50%  | 21.10%                                    | 15.50%                       |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>   | 72.10%  | 19.50%                                    | 8.50%                        |
| <b>GLR Total</b>  | 71.10%  | 19.70%                                    | 9.20%                        |

everyday activities, 71.1% of all ex-combatants across the GLR countries expressed that they felt that they had a high level of control, 19.7% felt that they had neither a little nor a lot of control, and 9.2% felt that they had little control over decisions.<sup>172</sup> This decreasing trend is present in all the GLR countries, however the peak is slightly shifted in Uganda where the curve is slightly different (52.1%, 31.4%, 16.5%). Female ex-combatants were consistently less likely to feel they had lots of control over decisions in their lives (55%) when compared to male ex-combatants (73.4%). Disabled ex-combatants also were consistently less likely to feel they had a high level of control over deci-

172 This question regarding community members' levels of control over everyday decisions has been recoded from a five point scale to a three point scale for increased comparability to the other two measures of empowerment (power and ability) presented here.

sions in their lives (63.5%) when compared to non-disabled ex-combatants (70.3%). Overall ex-combatants felt slightly higher levels of empowerment than community members in all three (power, ability, and control) measures.<sup>173</sup>

When asked to gage the impact that they have on the place they live, 59.5% of ex-combatants across the GLR countries feel that they have a positive impact, 27.57% feel that they have neither a positive nor negative impact, and 13% feel that they have a negative impact.<sup>174</sup> This trend is well reflected in Burundi, DRC and RoC – however, in Uganda and Rwanda perceptions of positive impact were much more frequent (82.1% of ex-combatants in Uganda perceived that they had a positive impact and 99.2% of those in Rwanda) – see Table 28.

Across age demographics lines there was a positive relationship visible between age and ex-combatants perception of having a positive impact on the area in which they lived – 52.4% of those aged 18-30, 64.4% of those 31-40, and 67.8% of those over 40.

Across the GLR countries, 72.1% of all ex-combatants felt that people in the area in which they live valued them, the remaining 27.9% did not feel valued. Uganda was the only country that departed slightly from the cross-country trend, displaying higher levels of perceived value among ex-combatants (94.6%). Female ex-combatants were slightly less likely to feel valued (62.3%) compared to male ex-combatants (73.6%).

Regarding collective political action, ex-combatants were asked how often they had joined with other people to express concerns to government officials or local leaders on issues concerning the community. Across the GLR countries 43% of all ex-combatants said that they had never done so in the last year, 12.7% that they had once, 18.1% that they had a few times (five or less), and 26.3% that they had many times (more than five times) – levels very similar to community members. Burundi to some extent, and Rwanda to a greater extent, broke from this trend and displayed higher levels of collective political action (visible in Table 29). In Burundi, 34.5% of ex-combatants had joined to address local leaders many times (more than 5) and 30.7% had a few times (less than five). In Rwanda, 91% of ex-combatants had joined to address local leaders many times in the last year.<sup>175</sup> Across the GLR countries female ex-combatants were less likely to have gathered for collective political action than male ex-combatants, though at a

**Table 28: Ex-Combatant Perception of Individual Impact on Community**

|                          | Do you personally have a positive or negative impact on the place that you live? |                                      |                 |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
|                          | Positive impact  | Neither positive nor negative impact | Negative impact |
| <b>Male</b>              | 59.90%   | 27.20%                               | 12.90%          |
| <b>Female</b>            | 56.60%   | 29.90%                               | 13.50%          |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>         | 52.40%   | 33.30%                               | 14.30%          |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>         | 64.40%   | 24.30%                               | 11.20%          |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>       | 67.80%   | 21.00%                               | 11.20%          |
| <b>Disabled</b>          | 74.10%   | 18.80%                               | 7.20%           |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>      | 57.80%   | 28.60%                               | 13.70%          |
| <b>Burundi</b>           | 41.50%   | 42.80%                               | 15.70%          |
| <b>DRC</b>               | 38.80%   | 37.90%                               | 23.40%          |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b> | 47.10%   | 32.60%                               | 20.30%          |
| <b>Rwanda</b>            | 99.20%   | 0.00%                                | 0.80%           |
| <b>Uganda</b>            | 82.10%   | 16.50%                               | 1.50%           |
| <b>GLR Average</b>       | 59.50%   | 27.50%                               | 13.00%          |

173 The analytical distinction between senses of empowerment in terms of power vs. ability is not clear. Interpreting any meaning to the disparity in levels of power and ability is therefore problematic and these data should be treated as a broad indicator of a positive sense of empowerment rather than as exact measures of different components of empowerment.

174 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding ex-combatants' perceived impact on their community due to lack of directly comparable data.

175 This high rate of public gathering to express concerns in Rwanda is likely another effect of Umuganda. While the main purpose of Umuganda is community work it also serves as a platform for leaders to communicate important news on a national and local level as well as for individuals and communities to express concerns and plan for future Umuganda. Further, every community has an ex-combatant representative who is responsible for relaying specific communication.

**Table 29: Ex-Combatant Frequency of Public Gathering to Express Concerns**

|                          | In the past year, how often have you joined other people to express concerns to officials or local leaders on issues benefiting the community? |        |                           |                            |
|--------------------------|--|--------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
|                          | Never  | Once   | A few times, five or less | Many times, more than five |
| <b>Male</b>              | 40.80%   | 12.70% | 18.30%                    | 28.30%                     |
| <b>Female</b>            | 58.80%   | 12.80% | 16.80%                    | 11.60%                     |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>         | 46.10%   | 13.10% | 18.00%                    | 22.70%                     |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>         | 38.80%   | 10.70% | 17.20%                    | 33.30%                     |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>       | 40.90%   | 14.20% | 20.30%                    | 24.60%                     |
| <b>Disabled</b>          | 37.00%   | 7.40%  | 15.90%                    | 39.70%                     |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>      | 43.70%   | 13.30% | 18.40%                    | 24.70%                     |
| <b>Burundi</b>           | 25.60%   | 9.20%  | 30.70%                    | 34.50%                     |
| <b>DRC</b>               | 64.10%   | 15.50% | 12.80%                    | 7.60%                      |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b> | 62.30%   | 17.00% | 14.50%                    | 6.10%                      |
| <b>Rwanda</b>            | 1.90%  | 0.30%  | 6.80%                     | 91.00%                     |
| <b>Uganda</b>            | 49.60%   | 17.90% | 22.10%                    | 10.30%                     |
| <b>GLR Average</b>       | 43.00%   | 12.70% | 18.10%                    | 26.30%                     |

very similar level to female community members– 58.8% of female ex-combatants having never gathered and 11.6% having gathered many times versus 40.8% and 28.3.2% respectively of male ex-combatants.

When asked to what extent local government and leaders take into account the concerns voiced by their community when they make decisions, 17.6% of all ex-combatants across the GLR countries felt that local leaders took them into account a lot, 41.2% felt their voices were taken into account a little, and 41.2% felt that their concerns were not taken into account at all – nearly identical levels to those expressed by community members.<sup>176</sup> Across gender and disability dimensions, ex-combatants’ responses were approximately even. However concerning age, older ex-combatants (aged over 40) were the most likely age demographic group (54.7%) to feel that their concerns were not taken into account, while younger ex-combatants (aged 18-30) were most likely of age demographic groups to feel that they were taken into account a lot (19.2%). This is likely related to older ex-combatants overall higher levels of social capital.

## 10.5 Social Change

When asked about their outlook on the likelihood of their overall situation improving in the future, responses were quite polarized between those who thought that things would improve in a few years and those that thought that their situation would deteriorate in the future.<sup>177</sup> Overall, only 1.2% of all ex-combatants across the GLR countries thought that their situation would improve within some weeks, 5.2% thought it would improve in some months, 43.7% thought that it would hopefully improve in some years, 8.7% thought that their situation would not improve in the future but stay the same, and 41.2% expressed that they thought that their situation would deteriorate in the future. The only GLR country that stepped away from this trend was Uganda in which 71.7% of ex-combatants were

<sup>176</sup> Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding ex-combatants’ perceptions of whether leaders take their voices into account due to lack of directly comparable data.

<sup>177</sup> Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding ex-combatants’ outlook on their future situation due to lack of directly comparable data.

**Table 30: Ex-Combatant Social Change Ladder – One Year Ago and Today**

| Consider a 9-step ladder where on the bottom, the first step, stand the poorest people, and on the ninth step, stand the richest - On which step were you one year ago in relation to: | One Year Ago |          |           |           |              |         |          |
|--|--------------|----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|---------|----------|
|  | FOOD?        | HOUSING? | CLOTHING? | FINANCES? | SCHOOL FEES? | HEALTH? | LEISURE? |
| <b>Male</b>  | 3.17         | 2.97     | 3.20      | 2.70      | 3.39         | 3.23    | 3.33     |
| <b>Female</b>  | 2.95         | 2.76     | 3.00      | 2.55      | 3.39         | 3.25    | 3.08     |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>   | 3.02         | 2.89     | 3.09      | 2.57      | 3.25         | 3.09    | 3.17     |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>   | 3.23         | 2.99     | 3.28      | 2.82      | 3.46         | 3.34    | 3.36     |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>   | 3.18         | 2.93     | 3.17      | 2.62      | 3.54         | 3.37    | 3.43     |
| <b>Disabled</b>  | 2.73         | 2.62     | 2.71      | 2.33      | 3.28         | 2.90    | 2.99     |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>  | 3.18         | 2.97     | 3.22      | 2.71      | 3.40         | 3.26    | 3.32     |
| <b>Burundi</b>   | 3.22         | 3.03     | 3.42      | 2.79      | 2.94         | 3.08    | 2.92     |
| <b>DRC</b>   | 3.45         | 3.39     | 3.65      | 2.91      | 3.81         | 3.30    | 3.79     |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b>   | 3.28         | 3.05     | 3.14      | 2.95      | 3.42         | 3.33    | 3.18     |
| <b>Uganda</b>  | 2.60         | 2.28     | 2.47      | 2.06      | XXX          | XXX     | XXX      |
| <b>GLR Average</b>   | 3.14         | 2.94     | 3.17      | 2.68      | 3.39         | 3.24    | 3.30     |
| Consider a 9-step ladder where on the bottom, the first step, stand the poorest people, and on the ninth step, stand the richest - On which step are you on today relation to:         | Today        |          |           |           |              |         |          |
|  | FOOD?        | HOUSING? | CLOTHING? | FINANCES? | SCHOOL FEES? | HEALTH? | LEISURE? |
| <b>Male</b>  | 3.30         | 3.15     | 3.34      | 2.77      | 3.51         | 3.36    | 3.41     |
| <b>Female</b>  | 2.99         | 2.80     | 3.25      | 2.62      | 3.38         | 3.32    | 3.07     |
| <b>Age 18-30</b>   | 3.13         | 3.08     | 3.28      | 2.68      | 3.37         | 3.24    | 3.26     |
| <b>Age 31-40</b>   | 3.40         | 3.15     | 3.41      | 2.90      | 3.56         | 3.42    | 3.43     |
| <b>Age Over 40</b>   | 3.18         | 2.97     | 3.25      | 2.62      | 3.56         | 3.39    | 3.43     |
| <b>Disabled</b>  | 2.76         | 2.64     | 2.77      | 2.34      | 3.30         | 3.01    | 2.95     |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>  | 3.31         | 3.14     | 3.38      | 2.79      | 3.51         | 3.38    | 3.40     |
| <b>Burundi</b>   | 3.40         | 3.25     | 3.56      | 2.88      | 3.04         | 3.20    | 2.98     |
| <b>DRC</b>   | 3.38         | 3.46     | 3.61      | 2.84      | 3.82         | 3.34    | 3.79     |
| <b>Republic of Congo</b>   | 3.51         | 3.22     | 3.38      | 3.14      | 3.65         | 3.54    | 3.35     |
| <b>Uganda</b>  | 2.75         | 2.48     | 2.75      | 2.14      | XXX          | XXX     | XXX      |
| <b>GLR Average</b>   | 3.26         | 3.10     | 3.33      | 2.75      | 3.50         | 3.36    | 3.37     |

hopeful that their situation would improve within a few years.<sup>178</sup> In general, these findings suggest that ex-combatants across the GLR countries have a good understanding of the time horizons of social change, but that a sig-

<sup>178</sup> While there is no direct evidence for explaining why in this case ex-combatants in Uganda have more optimistic outlooks for their future, it is possible that this is linked to the relative stability of Northern Uganda and the overall pace of improvement away from a context of widespread displacement due to conflict and humanitarian intervention.

nificant proportion remains pessimistic for the future. Overall, ex-combatants had slightly less optimistic outlooks compared to community members.

Interestingly, ex-combatants' outlook on their economic situation (see section 9.1) was considerably better (73.7% reported seeing their economic situation improving in the future) than their overall outlook (a total of 58.8% reporting expected improvement at various time scales). This evidence tacitly supports the idea that while ex-combatants can make improvements relatively quickly in economic terms, the diverse set of challenges that exist in the social sphere are slower to resolve.

When asked about whether or not they were satisfied with their life in general up until then, 30.6% of all ex-combatants across the GLR countries said they were satisfied, 7.5% that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 61.9% were dissatisfied.<sup>179</sup> This trend of the overwhelming majority of ex-combatants expressing dissatisfaction with their life was consistent in all the GLR countries except for Uganda where the spread of responses was much more even – 33.2% were satisfied, 30.7% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 36.1% were dissatisfied. These findings are perhaps not surprising, considering the heavy toll conflict can take on the lives of individuals. However, these effects are not isolated to ex-combatants – community member displayed a similar range of responses about life satisfaction. However, these findings stand in contrast to those on overall happiness (see section 10.4) in which nearly 60% of ex-combatants indicated that they were generally happy. Understanding the interplay between ex-combatants levels of happiness and their overall life satisfaction is a challenging task with no clear explanation in study.

Ex-combatants were questioned using a 10-step ladder response prompt. Their responses are tabulated below in *Table 12* by mean score.<sup>180</sup> The lower the mean score is the closer the ex-combatant is to the bottom rung of the ladder – where the poorest people tend to be. Generally speaking, across and within the GLR countries ex-combatants consistently identified themselves in the poorest half of society (between steps 2 and 4).

When looking across the GLR countries as a whole, there is a slight improvement in mean scores in all question categories from one year ago to the time of sampling. This trend is almost completely consistent within the individual GLR countries with the only exception being DRC – in which there was a slight decrease in mean scores from one year ago and time of sampling in the categories of finance, clothing and food. When focusing on demographic subgroups, however, there are less consistent results. Three demographic subgroups stand out in particular: female ex-combatants, ex-combatants aged 31-40, and disabled ex-combatants. Though female ex-combatants saw near unanimous improvements across all categories, leisure being the only exception, they consistently ranked a rung lower than male ex-combatants. Those aged 31-40 rank higher or equal than other age demographics across all categories. Similar to the trend of female ex-combatants, disabled ex-combatants saw improvements across all categories, leisure being the only exception. However disabled ex-combatants ranked consistently lower than non-disabled ex-combatants.

## 10.6 Summary

The social-fabric of communities endures great detriment in the course of violent conflict. Indeed, it is no wonder that ex-combatants and community members alike struggle to mend their damaged social footing. However, consistent with analysis presented throughout much of this study, ex-combatants experience a range of additional challenges in the process of social reintegration that collectively entail their disadvantage to community members. While collectively ex-combatants display a positive trajectory in terms of social reintegration, rebuilding social capital, and connecting into the social fabric of the community, the angle of this trajectory is considerably more shallow than

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179 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding life satisfaction due to lack of directly comparable data.

180 Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding ex-combatants' perceptions of change within specific categories due to lack of directly comparable data.

in other dimensions of reintegration, such as economic – i.e. though ex-combatants are catching up to community members in terms of social indicators, the rate at which they are doing so is considerably slower than in other dimensions of reintegration. This evidence supports the idea that social reintegration is a slow process of social confrontation and atonement with no shortcuts. Though trust with community members may improve quickly, as outlined in section 17, ex-combatants still struggle to recover from the damage done to their social networks, solidarity with the community, their cohesion and inclusion in the community, as well as their overall sense of empowerment and positive social change.

Ex-combatants have fewer social groups than community members and slightly less familial contact than community members overall. Though, ex-combatants who do have contact with their families have it much more frequently than community members indicating their heavy reliance on their immediate family for social support. Accordingly ex-combatants are more likely to turn to their family for economic help than friends or community / formal institutions. In terms of ex-combatants' friend base there is a clear split in the GLR countries. In Uganda and Rwanda, on the one hand, ex-combatants have fewer friends than community members and thus an extremely focused social support network relying heavily on the family. However, by contrast, in DRC and RoC ex-combatants had larger friend bases than community members, indicating a good extended social support network – despite the clear presence of a range of social limitations in relation to community members. Collectively these findings indicate the extent to which ex-combatants' social networks are more limited than those of community members and in turn the extent to which the functions of those social networks are limited as well – i.e. the psychosocial and economic value of social and familial networks.

Despite the challenges that ex-combatants face in the process of rebuilding interpersonal social ties within the community, they are generally well integrated and have a very similar understanding of the dynamics of their community. Ex-combatants and community members alike have generally high levels of trust – though ex-combatants perceive larger improvements in trust. The frequency at which ex-combatants work for the improvement of the community and feel an overall sense of togetherness is similar to community members.

Ex-combatants generally feel similar if not stronger senses of empowerment to affect changes in the direction of their lives and control their everyday circumstance than community members. This is further evidenced in ex-combatants' similar level of political engagement in community issues to community members. However, it is interesting to see that higher senses of empowerment among ex-combatants does not necessarily translate to higher levels of overall happiness or better perceptions of impact on the community. Indeed ex-combatants across the GLR countries report being much less happy than community members and are less likely to view themselves as having a positive impact on the community. It is possible that ex-combatants' overall happiness and senses of self-worth may be more tied to the personal psychological trauma ex-combatants carry with them in the wake of conflict than their absolute conditions (which while worse than community members in absolute terms, do display a clear positive trajectory) at the time of sampling. If this is so, it would lend considerable support to the idea of social reintegration as a slow, long-term process of interpersonal exchange and in turn intrapersonal betterment.

Despite ex-combatants' lower levels of happiness and sense of positive impact on the community, their outlook on the future and understanding of the temporal dynamics of social change are similar to community members. Ex-combatants and community members alike understand that positive change in their overall situation will happen on the scale of years – not weeks or months. This makes sense, as both community members and ex-combatants have seen slight improvement in their overall conditions in the past years / since demobilization, ex-combatants less so in absolute terms, but still consistently identify themselves in the worst off half of society.

### **10.6.1 Vulnerable Subgroups**

When examining social reintegration female ex-combatants continue to represent the most clearly and consistently vulnerable demographic group among ex-combatants. Female ex-combatants have fewer and less diverse social networks, tending to rely even more exclusively on their immediate family than the rest of ex-combatants – who do



so to a greater extent than community members. In this sense, female ex-combatants face the highest risk of social isolation and marginalization across the GLR countries. This weak social capital in terms of the number and diversity of social groups corresponds to lower levels of trust, lower perceptions of improvement in trust, dramatically weaker senses of empowerment, and lower perceptions of their overall situation than the rest of ex-combatants.

Despite the clear and consistent range of vulnerabilities that female ex-combatants exhibit, their overall levels of happiness, life satisfaction and general outlook for the future are on par if not better than the rest of ex-combatants. Developing a clear understanding of the social and psychological coping strategies that female ex-combatants have developed to maintain even, if not more positive, senses of self worth, worth in the community, and outlook for the future – effectively mitigating against their heightened vulnerability across almost all social indicators – could prove relevant the development of future programming for female ex-combatants and male ex-combatants alike.

Disabled ex-combatants exhibit a complex range of disadvantages in terms of social capital. In general disabled ex-combatants report far lower levels of personal empowerment and control of their lives. However, this is counter-balanced against their unexpectedly higher levels of political engagement in the community and stronger sense of positive impact on the community in comparison to non-disabled ex-combatants. In terms of social change disabled ex-combatants perceive a positive trajectory of social change over time across a broad range of categories. However despite this perceived positive trajectory, disabled ex-combatants consistently rank themselves a step below non-disabled ex-combatants.

### **10.6.2 Unique Country Trends**

Despite the many ways in which the individual GLR countries come together to represent a consistent collective narrative of the process of reintegration, there are also many ways in which they diverge – especially in terms of social reintegration. Here we can highlight a selection of unique country trends focused in DRC that represents an alternate narrative of reintegration than the one consistent across the other GLR countries.

When examining the many dimensions of social reintegration across the GLR countries, DRC stands out most consistently and sharply. As presented above, the dominant narrative of social reintegration reflected across the GLR countries was one where ex-combatants had high levels contact with the family, though slightly less than community members, but stunted development in terms of social networks, friends, and connections to the broader community – in turn correlating to lower levels of happiness and perceptions of worth in the community. In DRC however, we see a distinctly different narrative emerge.

Ex-combatants and community members alike in DRC have dramatically lower levels of familial contact than other GLR countries. DRC stands out even further in this regard because it is the only GLR country where ex-combatants are more likely to have contact with their family than community members – twice as much so. Further, those ex-combatants who do have contact with their families have it at a much lower frequency (split between daily, weekly and monthly contact) than in other GLR countries where daily contact was the norm (this divergence is also visible in RoC). As such, it makes sense when ex-combatants in DRC are the most likely to say that their contact with their family could be more frequent.

When pared with findings on marriage rates in section 7.2, what emerges is an image of ex-combatants in DRC who are isolated from their immediate family though are on par with other GLR countries in terms of building new familial connections (marriage / cohabitation). However, as mentioned, when ex-combatants in DRC are compared to community members in DRC in terms of contact with the immediate family, community members are half as likely to be in contact with their immediate family. This is a perplexing trend to explain. While ex-combatants in DRC have weaker family networks than ex-combatants in other GLR countries, they are the only GLR country that has stronger familial connections than community members – which could simultaneously suggest that ex-combatants in DRC have been exceptionally successful in terms of rebuilding social capital relative to community

members; and that community members in DRC are a key vulnerable group across the GLR countries in terms of social capital.

A hint to understanding the overall lower levels of familial contact in DRC is that of those few ex-combatants who did have familial contact and felt that this contact was the maximum that they would desire – the distance, time and cost of travel were all cited as reasons for not seeing their family more often. Indeed, the social geography of eastern DRC is particularly troubling. While countries across the GLR have experienced varying scales of war, and in turn levels of impact on society both economically and socially, the incessant insecurity in eastern DRC can perpetuate a series of dynamic forces that disperse pre-conflict social networks through displacement and migration. Persistent conflict and can trap individuals, due difficulty of travel due to zones continued insecurity. When these dynamic forces are coupled with static forces such as the mountainous topography of eastern DRC and heavy rains that can render roads impassible it is understandable that social networks are separated. Future study into this line of inquiry could prove valuable for explaining why ex-combatants and community members alike in DRC have considerably weaker familial and social networks than other GLR countries.

It appears that though ex-combatants in DRC have strong connections to their immediate family relative to community members this does not compensate for the overall lower levels of familial contact in absolute terms relative to other GLR countries in terms of overall social capital. Indeed ex-combatants in DRC are the most likely group among the GLR countries to turn to no one for economic help; have the weakest feeling of togetherness with the community; feel they have the least amount of power to make important decisions in their life; perceive the weakest ability to control their everyday activities; are the least likely to perceive that they make a positive impact on the community; are the least likely to gather to express political concerns; the least likely to feel their voice is taken into account by leaders; the most likely to think their overall situation will deteriorate in the future; and have the lowest level of life satisfaction across the GLR countries. In terms of social change, DRC is the only country where ex-combatants see drops in their perception of their situation relative to the rest of society in the last year in the categories of food, clothing, and finance – though beyond weak social capital ongoing insecurity in eastern DRC likely plays a role in this.

# 11. DDR Experiences

**D**DR processes across the GLR countries have taken place in a diverse range of contexts, as such the amount of validly comparable data on all phases of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration is limited. As such, offering a comprehensive comparison of across the GLR countries of ex-combatants' experiences of the process and dynamics of return, reception, demobilization, reinsertion, and reintegration is unfortunately not feasible in this study – primarily as a result of data validity challenges.<sup>181</sup> However, drawing from the select data we can offer comparative insights on: (i) ex-combatants' experiences of reinsertion process across the GLR countries, and (ii) a limited range of comparative insights regarding initial experiences with the community.

## 11.1 Reinsertion

In examining ex-combatants' attendance to a range of information sessions on various topics from general information to sessions on how to apply for credit or loans, and information on peace and reconciliation processes as part of the reinsertion phase of programming there were quite unique trends in each GLR country, though approximately even across all types of information sessions within each country.<sup>182</sup> As a general indication, 96.3% of ex-combatants attended a general presentation of information related to the reinsertion process in Burundi, 85.7% in DRC, 68.5% in RoC, and 39.2% in Uganda. Looking at demographic subgroups, female ex-combatants and disabled ex-combatants were noticeably less likely to have attended information sessions – 63.5% of all female ex-combatants versus 74.8% of all male ex-combatants, and 59.5% of all disabled ex-combatants versus 74.5% of all non-disabled ex-combatants. Within each GLR country the disparities between demographic subgroups were very similar to those at a cross-country level, though fitting to the overall attendance level with each country.

When asked whether or not they thought they had received enough information about the reinsertion package and its contents there was a clear correlation between the level of participation in information sessions within GLR countries and the perception of receiving sufficient information. In Burundi 81.4% of ex-combatants felt they received sufficient information regarding reinsertion, in DRC 65.2%, in RoC 45.8%, and in Uganda 19%. Further, it is perhaps not surprising then that female ex-combatants and disabled ex-combatants, the two demographic subgroups least likely to attend information sessions on reinsertion package and process, were the most likely to feel that they received insufficient information surrounding the reinsertion process and package – 44.4% of female ex-combatants versus 55.9% of male ex-combatants, and 41.7% of disabled ex-combatants versus 55.6% of non-disabled ex-combatants.

Not only did the level of attendance to information sessions about the reinsertion package and process correlate to the perceived level of information sufficiency among ex-combatants, but also to the actual frequency at which they received reinsertion payments. The same descending trend can be observed again in Burundi, as 99.7% of

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181 Essentially, the contextual differences between the different programming components of the entire DDR process in the various GLR countries are at times great – thus the range of captured data on ex-combatants's experiences of these processes is equally diverse. A valid systematic comparison of the different data from each context is judged as infeasible here. The few areas discussed here are those few in which data overlapped in each of the GLR countries.

182 Rwanda is excluded from all findings regarding the reinsertion process due to incompatible data. For a review of the key trends in Rwanda see the Rwanda comparative study report.

ex-combatants received payments as a part of reinsertion, in DRC 88.3%, in RoC 56.2%, and in Uganda 35.6%.<sup>183</sup> Collectively these findings suggest that across the GLR countries attaining a sufficient level of information and sensitization regarding the reinsertion process is a key to reaping the benefits of reinsertion payments and support.

Female ex-combatants also showed a visible correlation between information and sensitization exposure and actual reception of reinsertion payments at a cross-country level, though they were less likely to receive reinsertion assistance than male ex-combatants overall - 62.9% of female ex-combatants versus 73.2% of male ex-combatants received reinsertion payments. Interestingly, disabled ex-combatants – though they attended information sessions on reinsertion less frequently and were less satisfied with the information they received – were nearly evenly as likely (68.4%) compared to non-disabled ex-combatants (72%) to receive reinsertion payments at a cross country level.

When those ex-combatants who did not receive reinsertion payments were asked why they thought that they had not received payments, a large number connected this to lack of information. In Uganda 44.4% of all ex-combatants identified lack of information at some level as the primary reason they did not receive a reinsertion payment. Female ex-combatants identified information more frequently than male ex-combatants in Uganda (55.1% vs. 43.7%). A similar trend along gender lines existed across Burundi, DRC and RoC, in which 35.5% of females identified information as the reason they did not receive reinsertion payments as compared to 13.7% of male ex-combatants.

Both ex-combatants who had received reinsertion payments and those who had not were questioned about their levels of satisfaction with those payments. Surprisingly, there was no clear correlation between the rate at which ex-combatants received reinsertion payments and their satisfaction with those payments. Across the GLR countries, 32.3% of ex-combatants were satisfied with their reinsertion payments, 33.9% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 33.9% were dissatisfied. This trend was well reflected across the GLR countries with the exception of Uganda where levels of satisfaction were more clearly polarized (41.3%, 14.3%, and 44.3%, respectively). With the exception of RoC, female ex-combatants were generally more satisfied with reinsertion payments than male ex-combatants (41.8% vs. 30.8% at a cross-country level), even though the rate at which they actually received reinsertion payments was lower.

Similarly, when questioned further to their overall level of satisfaction with the totality of the reinsertion package contents ex-combatants were generally satisfied. Across the GLR countries, 47.1% of ex-combatants said that they were satisfied, 29.2% said that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 23.7% were dissatisfied. This trend towards general satisfaction is reflected within all of the GLR countries. Again, this is somewhat puzzling, as one would expect some correlation between overall satisfaction of reinsertion packages and the rate at which they are actually received. Female ex-combatants are more likely to be satisfied at a cross-country level (54.1%) when compared to male ex-combatants (46%) – this is reflected in all GLR countries with the exception of DRC. Examining age demographics reveals some interesting contrasts. In Uganda and Burundi, there is a clear trend that as age increases likelihood of satisfaction with the overall contents of the reinsertion package decreases. However this trend was reversed in DRC, as age increased likelihood of being satisfied increased as well.

A comprehensive analysis of the uses of reinsertion payments across the GLR countries is challenging, however we can extract several general observations here.<sup>184</sup> Generally speaking the most consistently cited use of reinsertion payments was meeting immediate food and subsistence needs, suggesting that perhaps food security is among

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183 The especially low reception of reinsertion payment in Uganda warrants some contextualization. Most ex-combatants in Uganda receive amnesty and reinsertion / reintegration assistance retroactively after returning to their communities. This "trickle in" model in the context of Uganda means that many ex-combatants demobilize informally and thus the bottleneck for information and sensitization that formal demobilization processes represent is largely absent – making information and sensitization a key programming challenge. In addition, this data does not necessarily mean that those ex-combatants that have not received reinsertion payments have not received amnesty – as of 2011 (the time of sampling) the UgDRP still had a considerable backlog of unpaid reinsertion assistance.

184 The main barrier to a comprehensive analysis lay in the different scales used to capture data on the use of reinsertion payments across the GLR countries. Rwanda is excluded from general trends due to lack of data.

the most pressing needs for ex-combatants at the time of demobilization. Assistance to family, parents, spouse or partner was also among the most common uses of the reinsertion payments. Additionally, investment of some sort, for example for business or in livestock, ranked high among the uses of reinsertion payments.

## 11.2 Experiences of Return

Drawing from DRC, RoC, and Uganda we can see that the vast majority of ex-combatants (90.1%) report being welcomed home by their families immediately after demobilization.<sup>185</sup> This proportion was high in both DRC in Uganda, but notably lower (81.4%) in RoC. This finding supports analysis across this report that ex-combatants generally experience high levels of acceptance and support from their immediate families.

In accordance, after receiving reinsertion packages the majority (76.5%) of ex-combatants reported that they had no problems with their families, however again in RoC this percentage was slightly lower – 63% of ex-combatants had no problems with their family after reinsertion packages. In RoC female ex-combatants and disabled ex-combatants were especially more likely to encounter problems with their families – 48.1% of female ex-combatants having problems with their families after reinsertion payments versus 35.2% of male ex-combatants, and 53.6% of disabled ex-combatants versus 35.7% of non-disabled ex-combatants.

When those ex-combatants who did encounter problems with their families after receiving reinsertion packages were asked to explain the specific nature of these problems a distinct range of answers was given. Although there is little data that is comparable across the GLR countries on this we can look at Uganda for a precursory survey of the kinds of problems that ex-combatants may face. The range of explanations of the problems that ex-combatants face with their families after receiving reinsertion packages in Uganda often reflected a perceived sense of animosity from families and communities towards ex-combatants. Common explanations included: (i) family wanted to take reinsertion money (19%), (ii) accusation of unfairness of payments to ex-combatants (14.3%); (iii) undermined and ridiculed by community (9.5%); (iv) accused of seeking government handouts (9.5%); and (v) attacked by neighbor for being an ex-combatant (9.5%).

Drawing from data on DRC and RoC we can observe that in general ex-combatants feel that most people in their community treat them the same as they do everyone else – though this was slightly more so in DRC. This trend was reflected in reference to a range of different social categories, e.g. elders, male peers, female peers, work colleagues, people in authority, youth, and strangers. Younger ex-combatants (aged 18-30) were slightly less likely across almost all categories to feel that people in their community treated them the same as other non-ex-combatants in the community.

## 11.3 Summary

This limited examination of the DDR experiences of ex-combatants across the GLR countries reveals two key findings of substantial analytical value related to: (i) the importance of information and sensitization campaigns; and (ii) the considerably different levels of acceptance and welcome that ex-combatants perceive from family members versus the wider community upon initial return.

In terms of information sensitization, ex-combatants' levels of participation in various information sessions about the reinsertion and reintegration process has a clear correlation to ex-combatants' levels of satisfaction with the level of information they receive. This in itself is perhaps not surprising, but what is more so is that ex-combatants' levels of participation in information and sensitization sessions have an equally clear correlation to the actual rate at which ex-combatants receive reinsertion payments. Indeed, those ex-combatants who did not receive payment most

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185 Rwanda and Burundi are absent from all findings on immediate reintegration experiences with the family and community due to lack of directly comparable data.

commonly cited lack of information as the reason why. The majority of ex-combatants are using reinsertion funds for their intended purpose of meeting immediate subsistence needs. As such, It appears as though effective information and sensitization campaigns, reaching a large proportion of ex-combatants, can play a key role in assuring that ex-combatants do indeed receive reinsertion funds to meet their immediate subsistence needs upon return to their communities – mitigating the economic burden on the families and wider communities that must absorb them.

Throughout this report there has been considerable evidence to show that ex-combatants experience very high levels of acceptance and support from their immediate families upon return, in both social and economic dimensions. However, by contrast, there is also considerable evidence to suggest that they face only a relatively moderate level of acceptance from the broader community upon their immediate return. As outlined in section 17.2 of the community dynamics portion of this survey, community members hold high levels of fear surrounding the return of ex-combatants and the range of negative behaviors associated with them before ex-combatants' return. However, community members' fear surrounding ex-combatants all but disappears in the time before their arrival in communities to the time of sampling (4.05 years on average across the GLR countries). These findings are part of a dispersed range of evidence that suggest that while the vast majority of ex-combatants are quick to reach acceptance and reintegrate into the family, they experience a slower, though positive, trajectory towards acceptance in the broader community.

### **11.3.1 Vulnerable Subgroups**

In terms of the limited range of DDR experiences explored here, female ex-combatants and disabled ex-combatants experience a clear and continuous range of disadvantages. Female and disabled ex-combatants are the demographic groups that are least likely to attend all varieties of information sessions about the reinsertion and reintegration processes. In turn female and disabled ex-combatants are not only the groups least satisfied with the level information that they received, but also the least likely groups to actually receive reinsertion payments – destabilizing their ability to meet their immediate subsistence needs.

### **11.3.2 Unique Country Trends**

As outlined repeatedly in the analysis in this section, the varying levels of ex-combatants participation in information and sensitization sessions related to reinsertion and reintegration processes displayed a clear correlation to the rate at which ex-combatants actually received reinsertion funds and presumably affected their ability to meet immediate subsistence needs. With this we can ask: how were more ex-combatants exposed to information and sensitization in Burundi and fewer in Uganda (the rest of the GLR countries falling in between)? What strategies were successful in some instances and unsuccessful in others? A more explicit understanding of the considerable variation in information and sensitization exposure across the GLR countries and its relationship to actual reinsertion payment reception and meeting of subsistence needs then would hold considerable programming value for the future.

## 12. Conclusions

This study has found that across numerous dimensions ex-combatants in the GLR countries have been largely successful in reintegrating with community members. While across the range of core social and economic indicators explored in this study ex-combatants collectively represent a disadvantaged group, they show a clear trajectory towards reaching economic and social parity with community members – in many cases having already reached equal footing or occasionally exceeding community members’ performance across core indicators of reintegration processes. This study has found that among ex-combatants across the GLR countries, female ex-combatants and young ex-combatants (18-30) both male and female encounter a distinct range of additional challenges in reintegration processes and in this represent key vulnerable groups. While young ex-combatants lag behind their older peers, their overall trajectory is indeed positive. There is evidence to suggest that, however, for female ex-combatants across the GLR countries there is a consistent range of structural barriers that at the very least could slow down the processes of reintegration further, and at the very worst could leave them locked out of certain economic and social processes – at a high risk for economic marginalization and social isolation.

There is no one driver or determinant of reintegration. Instead reintegration is understood here as embodied by a diverse range of simultaneous and overlapping processes (e.g. social, psychological, political, economic) that dynamically interact with one another. In viewing the sum of these multiple reintegration processes and their interaction we can grasp the overall trajectory of reintegration that ex-combatants hold in their return to and interaction with the community.

Violent conflict throughout the Great Lakes Region has damaged the social and economic fabric of society; disrupting economies, disintegrating families, and fragmenting social networks for ex-combatants and community members alike. Thus understanding the challenges of reintegration must in part be understood in the context of larger post-conflict peacebuilding and development processes. However the challenges that ex-combatants face in rebuilding and reintegrating into the damaged social and economic fabric of society are immediate and acute. It is ex-combatants’ ability to re-enter and make functional the familial unit and larger social networks in the community, in turn the social and economic functions these social units play, that constitute evidence of successful reintegration processes.

With this in mind it appears that ex-combatants have been successful in reintegrating into the family unit. Ex-combatants’ families have been open and accepting, serving the core function of the social and economic support while ex-combatants gain footing. While families appear to have played an especially important role in the immediate return of ex-combatants, the process of confrontation and exchange with the broader community appears to have progressed much more slowly. Rebuilding social networks is not only essential for acceptance and participation in the community, but for economic opportunity. In this, ex-combatants lag behind community members in their broader social footing and economic security – remaining especially reliant on the familial unit.

It is with the support of the familial unit, and through their positive trajectory in terms of access to marriage, that ex-combatants have reached parity with community members in terms of housing, access to land, and upward mobility in land access. Though, ex-combatants continue to face challenges in terms of household hunger and nutrition.

Despite ex-combatants’ positive trajectory, they perceive themselves as worse off than others in the community and see overcoming stigma and distrust in the community as the primary barrier to reintegrating with the community, followed by education and qualification barriers that may exist as a result of time lost in conflict. Community

members corroborate ex-combatants' perceptions, explaining a range of fears and stigma associated with ex-combatants upon their immediate return that, however, dissipate quickly over time leaving key barriers to ex-combatants' reintegration as revolving around making up time for missed education / skills qualification attainment and a broader social and economic track record in the community. Even with the diverse range of social and economic challenges that ex-combatants face, they have strong senses of empowerment to shape their situation going forward (with the exception of females).

## 12.1 Ex-Combatants and Economic Reintegration

This study has found that ex-combatants across the GLR countries show a positive trajectory towards gaining self-employment in agriculture or small business – though there is still considerable improvement that ex-combatants must make to reach parity with community members. The context of economic reintegration across the GLR countries is one of severe overall development challenges. As such, ex-combatants and community members alike identify their primary barrier to gaining employment as lack of opportunity in general. Ex-combatants, however, face a range of additional barriers related to: (i) closing literacy, education and skill gaps with community members; (ii) establishing an economic track record; in order to (iii) access credit and other financial institutions; and (iv) to erode stigma and distrust through the slow process of confrontation that social reintegration entails.

Collectively the unique barriers that ex-combatants face are a product of their overall stunted economic networks – leading to an overall higher exposure to economic insecurity and reliance on the familial unit compared to community members – who have more diversified economic networks and tend to be more integrated into formal and community based economic institutions.

## 12.2 Ex-Combatants and Social Reintegration

This study has found that ex-combatants across the GLR countries exhibit a positive, but shallow, trajectory of social reintegration. While ex-combatants are quick to reintegrate with their immediate family and to breakdown trust barriers with the wider community, their progress from there forward is slow – owing to their stunted social networks and track record in the community. In this sense the social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants are strongly interrelated – their long-term success revolving around rebuilding the networks that are instrumental to social and economic security. Mending the damaged social networks and in many cases building new ones from scratch, with the additional barriers of residual stigma and lack of social track record, is a slow process of confrontation and atonement.

Though ex-combatants have remarkably high levels of agency in terms of social empowerment, often surpassing community members, they understand that the process of social reintegration has no shortcuts and will take place in the scale of years. With this ex-combatants remain significantly less happy and with lower levels of self worth than community members – leaving them exposed to risk of marginalization and social isolation from the wider community.

## 12.3 Female Ex-Combatant Subgroup

Throughout the analysis of the reintegration processes of ex-combatants across the Great Lakes Region presented in this study female ex-combatants have stood out as the most clear and consistent vulnerable subgroup. While young ex-combatants (aged 18-30) and disabled ex-combatants display a range of disadvantages related to a lack of social and economic track record and to health, respectively, they do not depart significantly from the overall positive trajectory of ex-combatant reintegration in the Great Lakes Region. Female ex-combatants, however, encounter an extensive range of disadvantages that collectively paint a picture of the structural barriers they face in reintegration processes in terms of: (i) familial networks; (ii) economic networks; and (iii) broader social networks in the community. These structural barriers force a distinctly different trajectory of reintegration.



As discussed above, rebuilding damaged social and economic networks in the community is a key dimension to the overall process of reintegration. Like male ex-combatants, female ex-combatants have done well to reintegrate into their immediate families. However, unlike male ex-combatants, female ex-combatants have been largely unsuccessful in building new familial connections through marriage – remaining the least marrying demographic group across ex-combatants and community members alike. While male ex-combatants have seen a sharp rise in marriage rates since demobilization, female ex-combatants have shown a very shallow, and ultimately marginal, trajectory of increased marriage. Attitudinal indicators reveal that female ex-combatants have the smallest proportion of the population, both ex-combatant and community member, that is open to marrying them due primarily to stigma related issues – lending some explanation for growing disparity in marriage rates between male and female ex-combatants. Both male and female ex-combatants experience stigma, however in the case of marriage it appears to likely be a key structural barrier to building new familial networks and in turn to accessing the social and economic resources that they represent.

As discussed above, the context of economic reintegration in the Great Lakes Region is one of severe development challenges. The primary pathway to economic stability for ex-combatants and community members alike is through self-employment in agriculture – this is even more so for female ex-combatants. As such, access to arable land is an important indicator of economic stability – in turn growth in access to arable land as an indicator of a positive economic trajectory. In this female ex-combatants lag behind male ex-combatants with slightly lower levels of both land access and improvement in access to land – which when combined indicate female ex-combatants' shallower trajectory of economic improvement – despite their slightly lower unemployment rate. There appear to be three structural barriers to land access mobility for female ex-combatants: (i) capital; (ii) inheritance; and (iii) marriage.

First, both male and female ex-combatants alike identify access to capital as the largest barrier to increased land access. However, for female ex-combatants, who have considerably lower literacy and educational achievement levels, the challenges to accumulating capital through bountiful agricultural production are acute. Indeed, females clearly identify lack of education and skills as among their key barriers to economic stability. Second, the challenges to capital accumulation that female ex-combatants face are amplified when inheritance dynamics are taken into account. Females who do experience increases in land access are much less likely than male ex-combatants to cite inheritance – indicating that this is a pathway to land access, and in turn a positive economic trajectory, that females are not accessing at the same level. Thirdly, marriage is an important pathway to increased land access for male ex-combatants. However, as outlined above, female ex-combatants experience a set of distinct structural barriers to accessing marriage. When these three dimensions interact, the result is a dynamic structural barrier that female ex-combatants face in terms of building a positive economic trajectory and the economic networks associated with them.

By effect of their structurally hindered familial and economic networks, female ex-combatants face challenges in building social capital and broader networks in the community. This weak social capital in the community has consequences for female ex-combatants in terms of lower levels of trust, lower perceptions of improvement in trust, dramatically weaker senses of empowerment, and lower perceptions of their overall situation than the rest of ex-combatants. These factors collectively interact to put females at risk of marginalization and isolation with the community – in turn potentially reinforcing the structural restraints that shape their weak familial and economic networks.

It is the dynamic interaction of the familial, economic and broader social structural dimensions that shape the overall shallower trajectory of reintegration for female ex-combatants across the GLR countries and constitute them as a distinctly disadvantaged group. Looking at the structural challenges that female ex-combatants face reveals much about the overlapping, interrelated, and simultaneous nature of reintegration processes – an insight that is not only relevant to female ex-combatants, but to all ex-combatants across the Great Lakes Region.