

MAKING VOCATIONAL TRAINING WORK: A Study of Vocational Training in DDR

RWANDA · Executive Summary

Dr. Anthony Finn · David Baxter · Murat Onur



JANUARY 2014



Transitional Demobilization and Reintegration Program



THE WORLD BANK

Executive Summary

The very moment soldiers lay down their weapons for the last time signals the beginning of a long and arduous journey. Almost instantaneously, the identity of the individual is transformed from combatant to *ex-combatant*. Up until this point, the soldier's entire being has been molded and influenced almost exclusively by combat training, fellow soldiers and the threat of armed conflict. In many ways, conflict has displaced most other economic, educational and social opportunities.

Work is a powerful thing. It holds the promise of a livelihood from which an individual can potentially earn a living and shape a new identity. Due to years of missed educational and economic opportunities, however, attaining a sustainable income-generating livelihood can seem like an impossible task for a new ex-combatant. Employment is the product of skills and knowledge forged by training and experience which many ex-combatants simply do not possess at the time of reinsertion. Skills training, education and practical experience can propel ex-combatants forward to parity, economically and socially, with their civilian counterparts. Conversely, if Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) initiatives do not sufficiently recognize and account for key factors that affect training outcomes, there are negative consequences for both the economic and social rehabilitation of some of society's most vulnerable individuals and for society as a whole. For ex-combatants, effective vocational training presents a second chance at a string of missed opportunities; a window to be self-sufficient and provide for their families; it is a chance to begin to shed the negative aspects of the combatant identity for good.

To support social and economic reintegration of former combatants, demobilization and reintegration programs offer vocational training, which is essentially designed to provide the beneficiary with skills and pathways to employment.

What aspects of vocational training programs can boost socio-economic reintegration and ensure sustainable and effective outcomes?

This report details the findings from a research study of outcomes of the vocational training provided to ex-combatant beneficiaries through the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Program.

Context

The civil war and genocide destroyed Rwanda's economic base, impoverished the population, and damaged the country's ability to attract foreign and private investments. Networks of social links in rural and urban areas were damaged either by war or genocide. However, Rwanda has achieved impressive development progress in the last decade. The country is now in the process of consolidating gains in social development and accelerating growth while ensuring that the gains are broadly shared in order to mitigate risks to Rwanda's hard-won political and social stability.

An important aspect of Rwanda's development and stability in the last decade has been the country's national Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) program. From the onset, the country's DDR program has been closely linked to economic development and social inclusion efforts which in turn have contributed to economic and social parity between ex-combatants and civilians.

The Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Program has been implemented in three major stages: stage I covering the period from 1997 to 2001; stage II covering from 2002 to 2008; and the current stage III which began in 2009. The central objective of RDRP has been to support ex-combatants to reintegrate into social and economic networks of the civilian society. It is in this context Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission has offered vocational skills training as an integral component of the reintegration effort.

The Research

Implementing DDR programs for more than a decade, Rwanda's reintegration experiences and the country's DDR vocational training framework provide an important opportunity to explore the factors that may influence the sustainability and efficacy of vocational training and reintegration outcomes. It is in this context, from March 2 to 29, 2013, a team of AFTCS/TDRP consultants worked with Rwanda National Demobilization and Reintegration Commission to administer a quantitative and qualitative study of the outcomes of DDR vocational training in Rwanda.

The team surveyed 280 ex-combatants in Southern, Northern and Kigali provinces: 180 who completed vocational training under the Vulnerability Support Window (VSW) (Group A), 50 who completed Apprenticeship training (Group B), and 50 ex-combatants who participated in neither program (Group C). In addition, the team interviewed a number of key stakeholders who were perceived to possess a high level of knowledge of the vocational training program and/or direct involvement with Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Program, and visited eight vocational training centers in Southern, Northern and Kigali provinces. By comparing Group A to the other groups, positive socio-economic outcomes of undergoing vocational training are visible as Group A respondents are preferred in the job market not only because they possess vocational skills, but they are seen as confident and determined individuals with strong social and life skills - features that are highly valued among employers. Compared to the other groups, Group A respondents also benefit from collateral outcomes that emerge alongside economic outcomes, which further contribute to the success, sustainability and efficacy of vocational training.

As this research did not intend to evaluate Rwanda's DDR program, the primary focus was to explore the key factors that result in success, sustainability and effectiveness in DDR vocational training. The central objective of this study was, therefore, to ascertain which factors affect DDR vocational training and what measures could be taken to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of training.

Additional questions the study aimed to address include:

What types of factors result in success and what others contribute to sustainability of training outcomes? What kinds of collateral outcomes emerge alongside social and economic outcomes of vocational training? To what extent does entrepreneurship and social skills contribute positively to training outcomes?

Collateral outcomes alongside economic outcomes

The study finds that several *collateral outcomes* emerged alongside economic outcomes including self-confidence and independence, self-employment, sector shifting, and social skills. A key outcome of DDR vocational training program was the increase in *self-confidence and independence* among ex-combatants as well as a *widening of perspective* in terms of their careers and lives. Another notable outcome was the increased rates of *self-reliance* among vocational training participants. In addition to the higher rates of trade-, retail-, and manufacturing-related self-employment indicated by the quantitative survey data, interviews with vocational training center staff and ex-combatant employers described how self-employment factors into the ex-combatant experience and indicates a higher degree of self-reliance. Further, self-employment often signaled a shift away from one's skill area to another sector, but sector-shifting was not unique to the self-employed in Rwanda. The majority of vocational training beneficiaries were found to be working in their area of training. Finally, *increase in social capital* such as improvements in social behavior, life skills, teamwork, networking with colleagues and employers, and community involvement was a key outcome of DDR vocational training.

Factors that result in success

The study identifies a number of factors that result in success and general areas that contribute further to success and sustainability of vocational training outcomes.

- Capacity building of local institutions in tandem with DDR vocational training can reinforce outcomes by providing critical infrastructure for long-term national growth and development. Local capacity has a profound impact on the outcomes of vocational training with regards to creating national buy-in and awareness of the

benefits of formal skills training.

- Labor Market Analysis can inform skills offerings and curriculum as well as reinforce training outcomes.
- Provision of literacy and numeracy training prior to vocational training can help maximize the impact of training on economic and social reintegration.
- Orientation for all vocational training participants can allow beneficiaries to make an informed decision as to which skill is the best choice.
- Providing economic support to ex-combatant participants and their families during training can help mitigate the difficulties faced by trainees with families.
- Post-training follow-ups to identify challenges, offering information counseling and advice, and ensuring that graduates have resources and information can reinforce training outcomes.
- Peace, Economic growth and stability contribute to the economic and social reintegration of ex-combatants as they allow pathways to employment.
- Profile characteristics of ex-combatants: Profile characteristics of ex-combatants (such as age, familial status, education levels, etc.) can inform vocational training programming with regards to developing tailor-made training activities and reinforces training outcomes.
- Community acceptance allows ex-combatants develop social networks which is key to sustainable economic activity.