

International Foundation for Education and Self-Help
Demobilization and Community-Based Reintegration
of Former Child Soldiers in Northern Katanga
Quarterly Report – October-December 2003

Democratic Republic of Congo

Demobilization and Community-Based Reintegration of Former Child Soldiers in Northern Katanga

Goal: The effective demobilization and reintegration of former child soldiers in northern Katanga based on an integrated program to help children leave the armed forces and resume their development within a family and community environment.

Objective One: Develop a profile of the situation of child soldiers in or originating from Orientale, northern Katanga and Maniema Provinces, and evaluate the good faith of all accessible armed groups to provide access to and develop DDR programs for these children.

Objective Two: Assess the current capacity of families and communities to facilitate the reintegration of children returning from armed groups, and identify and develop potential partners and resources needed for successful reintegration and prevention of recruitment, through an action-oriented process that will include pilot activities.

Objective Three: Design a comprehensive demobilization and reintegration (DR) program for child soldiers in selected provinces within the framework of the national demobilization and reinsertion program as it evolves.

Objective Four: Implement the comprehensive DR program in northern Katanga province, in close collaboration with the national program, UNICEF and other key actors for a trial implementation period of six months and produce a proposal for a second implementation phase in year two.

1. Introduction:

The International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH) is implementing the program in northern Katanga in close collaboration with CARE in Maniema, and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Orientale Provinces (The NGO Group). An initial six-month preparatory phase will assess the situation in each province and design and test program interventions. A subsequent 18-month implementation phase is planned. The official beginning date of the program is December 15, 2003, however the partners have been working together on the project since December 2002 and received authorization to incur certain reimbursable costs in mid-2003.

2. Activities:

IFESH began recruitment for the Program Coordinator, to be based in Kalemie, northern Katanga, as well as consultants for the assessment phase in September. A contract concluded with the Coordinator in late October and he arrived in country at the beginning of November. Initial activities in Kalemie involved establishing the project office and recruiting local staff (which also included recruitment in Kinshasa and Lubumbashi).

Within the overall project, IFESH is responsible for fielding the consultant who will conduct an assessment in the three provinces of community capacity to receive and reintegrate former child

soldiers. Accordingly, priority was given to recruiting this consultant. After unsuccessful negotiations with two candidates, a third consultant has been hired and is expected to arrive in country in early January 2004.

IFESH began negotiation with Save the Children UK to take over management of its transit center (CTO) in Kalemie. Save has been operating a small program in Kalemie since October 2002 and in 2003 assisted the local Division of Social Affairs (DIVAS) to open the CTO. IFESH will assume management of the center and support to DIVAS in January.

IFESH, CARE and IRC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in December with War Child Holland to provide psycho-social training for staff and partners. This resulted from long-term discussions with War Child regarding needs in DRC and War Child's expertise in this area.

3. Results:

Objective 1:

IFESH established a project office in Kalemie and recruited local staff to begin developing contacts with local authorities and military commanders in order to begin assessing the situation of child soldiers in northern Katanga.

Objective 2:

A consultant was hired to conduct the community assessment in northern Katanga, Maniema and Orientale provinces. IFESH has entered into an agreement with DIVAS to manage a CTO in Kalemie and will consider this model for use in other sites in northern Katanga.

Objective 3:

Preparatory activities under Objectives 1 and 2 above will lead to achievement of this Objective.

Objective 4:

Nothing to report at this time. The program is still in the preparatory phase.

4. Constraints and Adjustments:

Nothing significant to report at this time. The slow pace of implementation of the national DDR program means that while the public, local authorities and commanders are generally aware that children will not be incorporated in the reunified national army, there is a "wait and see" attitude which results in commanders not moving proactively to release children from their ranks. Similar attitudes prevail among the Mai Mai ("irregular forces") and these groups remain intact, including child members. However, IFESH has been working on DDR issues in northern Katanga for some time and maintains good working relations with local authorities, civil society groups and military commanders and this should facilitate implementation of the preparatory phase and expeditious response to ad hoc demobilizations, should these occur.

5. Partner and other Coordination:

IFESH participates in the regularly-scheduled meetings of the NGO Group and joins the NGO Group members in the weekly meetings of the Sub-Group on Child Soldiers (initially chaired by Unicef and now by CTPC) charged with developing a national DDR plan.

The NGO Group is also linked with Save the Children UK through an MOU to work collaboratively on child soldier issues, as represented in northern Katanga by the seamless transfer

of CTO and other activities to IFESH, once the World Bank funding for the program was confirmed.

As noted above, IFESH joined the other members of the NGO Group in an MOU with War Child for specialized training of national staff and partners.

6. Observations and Recommendations:

Nothing to report at this time.

7. Activities Planned for the next Quarter:

Objective 1:

- Conduct awareness-raising in the six Territories in northern Katanga and put in place initial community-based child protection networks in the Territorial towns.
- Intensify contacts with military commanders and respond proactively to openings from Mai Mai groups.

Objective 2:

- Complete the community-capacity assessment in three provinces, prepare a final report and share recommended program design consideration with project partners.
- Follow up with prospective partners identified through the community-assessment process and design pilot activities.
- Conduct assessments of local capacity (NGO, CBO, state structures) to provide services to reintegrating child soldiers. Identify economic opportunities and approaches facilitating reintegration.

Objective 3:

- Work with NGO Group members to evaluate the results of various research initiatives and the implications of developments at the national and provincial levels which impact program development and implementation.
- Develop the elements of a preliminary demobilization and reintegration program in concert with the NGO Group.
- Begin preliminary planning for Kinshasa seminar on the results of the preparatory phase.
- Maintain capacity to respond to ad hoc developments in the DDR process which may require receiving and reintegrating significant numbers of child soldiers.

Objective 4:

- Nothing to report at this time. The program is still in the preparatory phase.

8. Beneficiaries:

Level I.

 29 Children Passing through CTOs *

 0 Children from Irregular Forces

 0 Children not re-recruited

Level II.

___0_ Family Members

Level III.

___0_ Community Members

* This figure represents the number of children in the Kalemie CTO as of December 31, 2003. Reintegration activities by Save the Children during the reporting period are not germane to this report.

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