

International Foundation for Education and Self-Help
Demobilization and Community-Based Reintegration
of Former Child Soldiers in Northern Katanga
Quarterly Report – January-March 2004

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. Small-scale start-up activities began in late 2003, with activities under the preparatory phase launched in January 2004.

2. Activities:

As part of the joint NGO Group effort of the preparation phase, IFESH assumed responsibility for organizing and implementing a survey assessing community capacity to reintegrate children. Beginning in late January, an international consultant arrived in country and after consultation with partners and stakeholders in Kinshasa, travelled to Kalemie to design and pilot the participatory survey methodology, based on rapid rural appraisal techniques. For logistical reasons, it was decided to recruit and train all the researchers in Kalemie and send them to Maniema and Orientale after the Katanga surveys were completed. Six communities in Katanga were surveyed, five in Maniema and three in Orientale. At the end of March, a detailed report was submitted, including reports at the community and provincial levels as well as a series of national recommendations.

The survey identified both similarities as well as differences among communities, but generally supported the NGO Group's approach of a community-based program. There remain serious reservations about former child soldiers that require the full engagement of the entire community. Deploying a 15-member team across 14 communities in eastern Congo was a significant logistical challenge, but was facilitated by good cooperation among the three partners.

IFESH initiated outreach efforts with the Etat Major (HQ) of the 6th Military Region in Lubumbashi to obtain provisional release certificates for the children residing in the CTO in Kalemie. Despite several meetings with the Commander and senior officers, and with support from MONUC Child Protection and Unicef, the Commander declined to sign any provisional certificates, citing lack of proper instruction from Kinshasa. While continuing to pursue this effort in Lubumbashi, IFESH has also arranged with the Territorial Administrator in Kalemie to sign such certificates for those children who will reintegrate in Kalemie town and with whom IFESH and local officials can remain in contact.

In addition to the awareness-raising on child protection and child soldiers resulting from the survey, IFESH conducted reconnaissance and sensitization meetings in Kalemie, Nyunzu, Moba, and Manono, leading to initial organization or revitalization of existing child protection networks in the Territorial capitals.

Throughout March, IFESH hosted a consultant provided to the NGO Group by IRC to design employment opportunities for reintegrated youth. The approach employs a community-based assessment of employment opportunities and uses local artisans to create apprenticeships.

During the quarter, IFESH completed planned staff recruitment for the Kalemie office and northern Katanga program and assumed full responsibility for the CTO in Kalemie from Save the Children UK. A workshop was organized in Kalemie for DivAs (Social Affairs) staff who manage the CTO with IFESH support, orienting them to the IFESH approach and the NGO Group's commitment to a community-based approach (in addition to the role of the CTO).

3. Results:

Objective 1:

- IFESH initiated contact with community groups in targeted *Territoires* to establish a basis for outreach and sensitization. The broadly inclusive community capacity survey conducted in each target *Territoire* further reinforced this initiative. Given the ongoing insecurity in the region and the government's offer of payment to members of armed groups, most factions remain unprepared to disarm and demobilize and access to children remains severely constrained.

Objective 2:

- The community capacity survey provided a contextually-rich level of information and analysis at the community, provincial and national levels. A summary document is being prepared for general distribution. In addition, the consultant prepared a detailed survey implementation manual which may be used by other actors in the field as appropriate.

Objective 3:

- Preparatory and pilot activities under Objectives 1 and 2 above will lead to achievement of this Objective, however, the broad lines of this design are being discussed among the partners at regular monthly meetings and during consultant "exit interview" presentations.

Objective 4:

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

4. Constraints and Adjustments:

As noted in the results for Objective 1, access to children in northern Katanga remains highly sensitive and problematic, given a perception of continued insecurity and unresolved political issues in the region. Despite reunification, political and military jurisdiction in northern Katanga remains in the hands of RCD-G administrators and commanders. Mai Mai groups in Manono, Moba, Nyunzu and Kabalo are appear increasingly to be evolving into armed bands accountable only to a war lord figure. IFESH will continue to develop community linkages and trust and disseminate information about the national demobilization process and the role of children in that process. IFESH plans to return to each community and share the results of the survey as a basis for community dialogue on the use of children in armed groups.

5. Partner and other Coordination:

- IFESH regularly participates in the weekly meeting of the CTPC and through that forum remains in regular programmatic contact with Unicef.
- On behalf of Unicef's training of trainers initiative, IFESH organized and facilitated the identification of three master trainers to participate in the emergency response training program. In addition, at the request of Unicef, one IFESH program staff in Kalemie has been made available to participate in the provincial training program.

6. Observations and Recommendations:

Nothing to report at this time.

7. Activities Planned for the next Quarter:

Objective 1:

- Continue outreach and sensitization activities in each *Territoire* in northern Katanga to develop a broad-based awareness of the inappropriateness of children in armed groups and the responsibility of local military and administrative leaders to ensure compliance with national laws and international conventions to which Congo is a signatory.

Objective 2:

- Continue development of child-protection networks in each *Territoire*, based on broad dissemination of the results of the community capacity survey.
- Develop, in concert with the NGO Group, a tracing and reintegration methodology and procedures for use throughout northern Katanga.
- Monitor the results of the employment and income generation pilot activities in Kalemie town and develop appropriate procedures, structures and systems for broad implementation in communities of return for former child soldiers.

Objective 3:

- Organize, in concert with IRC and CARE, a strategic planning workshop in May to elaborate the broad outlines of the program design. This workshop will lead to seminar presentation of the results of the preparatory phase and outline of the implementation design,

currently scheduled for mid-June.

Objective 4:

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

8. Beneficiaries:

Level I.

29 Children (Mo/Avg.) Passing through CTO, 8 new admissions, 23 reunified.

0 Children from Irregular Forces

0 Children not re-recruited

Level II.

115 Family Members *

Level III.

0 Community Members

* estimated 5 family members per household.

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