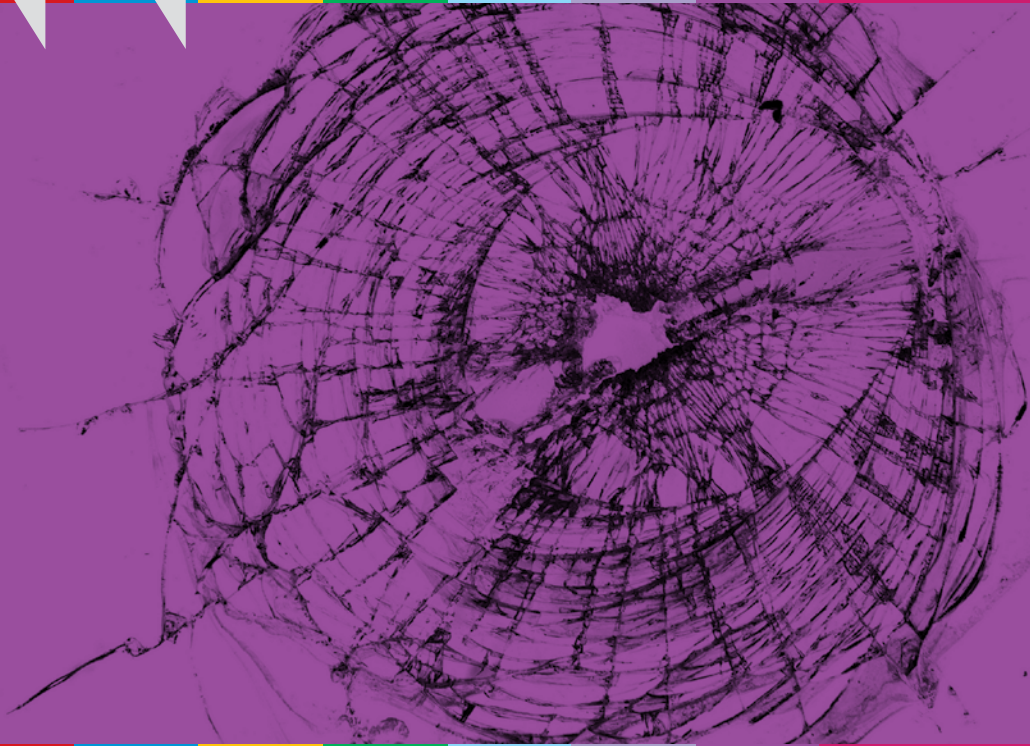




Reducing the Involvement of Youth in Armed Violence

PROGRAMMING NOTE



Conflict and Fragility

Reducing the Involvement of Youth in Armed Violence

PROGRAMMING NOTE



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Foreword

Armed violence is an everyday reality for millions of people around the globe. More than 700 000 people die as a result of armed violence each year. Many more experience traumatic loss in their families and are left with lasting psychological and physical scars. The impact of armed violence extends further, negatively influencing development, peace and good governance, often by creating a climate of impunity, corruption and by undermining public institutions. It is also closely tied with transnational crime and the misery and abuse associated with the illegal trafficking of arms, drugs and people. Finally, the economic impact of armed violence is striking with the cost of lost productivity due to non-conflict armed violence alone estimated to cost upwards of USD 95 billion annually worldwide. This violence has important youth and gender dimensions. The majority of perpetrators and victims are men, while women and girls are at greater risk of violence that is less visible and committed in the private sphere, including intimate partner violence, child abuse, sexual and gender based violence. Measures at reducing armed violence are therefore also measures at reducing human suffering.

The OECD DAC policy paper *Armed Violence Reduction: Enabling Development*, published in 2009, acknowledged as a challenge the increased levels of armed violence in non-conflict countries, the increasing linkage between conflict and crime, rapidly growing youth populations in the south and accelerating levels of unregulated urbanisation. The paper provided a methodology to help donors tackle the programming challenging of reducing armed violence. Building on the OECD DAC policy paper, three programming notes were developed to contribute to our understanding of specific types of armed violence: **Youth and armed violence**, **armed violence in urban areas** and **Security System Reform in relation to Armed violence reduction**. Each note aims to improve our understanding of these dynamics while also offering practical assistance on assessments, programme design, risk management, monitoring and evaluation, as well as on entry points for direct and indirect programming.

2011 is an important year for global efforts at Armed violence reduction with a series of regional best practice seminars as well as the high-level

conference on Armed violence reduction in the context of the Geneva declaration on armed violence and development, scheduled for October 2011. I strongly encourage the use of these programming notes to strengthen our understanding of these critical development issues and to support new innovative programmatic guidelines for Armed violence reduction.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jordan Ryan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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Table of contents

List of abbreviations	9
OECD Armed Violence Reduction (AVR) programming notes	11
1. The links between youth and armed violence	13
Youth armed violence: Trends	15
Factors that put youth at risk of engaging in armed violence	17
Factors that prevent youth from engaging in armed violence	19
2. Assessments	21
Assessment and analysis: Key approaches	21
Assessment tools	23
3. Programming	27
The role of donors	27
Entry points for programming	28
Programming approaches	31
Direct programme interventions	32
Indirect programme interventions	33
4. Specific interventions	37
Supporting parents	37
Supporting youth participation in the society and economy	38
Supporting and enforcing youth rights	41
Supporting and keeping the peace	41
Managing risks	45
5. Monitoring and evaluation	47
Data collection	47
Performance indicator development	49

6. Conclusions and recommendations	51
General lessons	51
Lessons for programme design	52
Lessons for programme implementation	53
Notes	57
Bibliography	59
Figure	
Figure 3.1 Differing levels of youth engagement with violent groups	33
Table	
Table 3.1 The armed violence reduction framework and programme initiatives .	28
Boxes	
Box 1.1 Youth: An important segment of the population	13
Box 1.2 The Armed Violence Reduction (AVR) framework applied to youth ..	14
Box 1.3 Child soldiers	15
Box 2.1 Gender issues and considerations	22
Box 2.2 West Bank Gaza: Palestinian Youth Empowerment Programme (Ruwwad) ..	24
Box 3.1 Tajikistan: The Juvenile Justice Alternatives Project (JJAP)	30
Box 3.2 Systemic prevention of youth violence: A GTZ handbook to design and plan comprehensive violence prevention measures	34
Box 3.3 Youth targeted interventions	35
Box 4.1 Supporting parents	38
Box 4.2 Creating structures for youth participation in Bosnia and Herzegovina ..	39
Box 4.3 Youth empowerment and employment in Kenya	40
Box 4.4 Community issues	41
Box 4.5 Establishing family and child protection units in police stations in Northern Sudan	42
Box 4.6 Examples of DDR programmes	43
Box 4.7 Conflict prevention for youth and their communities in Guinea	44
Box 4.8 Reforming juvenile justice systems: UNICEF examples from around the world	45
Box 4.9 Understanding risks	46
Box 5.1 The Inter-American observatory on security	48
Box 5.2 Juvenile justice system indicators	49
Box 6.1 Multi-sector programming	53
Box 6.2 Youth training	55

List of abbreviations

AVR	Armed violence reduction
DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
DDR	Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration
GTZ	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</i> (German Society for Technical Co-operation)
INCAF	International Network on Conflict and Fragility
JJAP	Juvenile Justice Alternatives Project in Tajikistan
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
SSR	Security system reform
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

OECD Armed Violence Reduction (AVR) programming notes

Approximately 740 000 people die as a result of armed violence each year. Armed violence erodes governance and peace whilst slowing down achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It can have as significant an effect on security and development in settings of chronic violent crime and inter-personal violence as it can in societies affected by war or civil conflict. An armed violence agenda therefore includes a wide range of countries, cities and citizens whose development and security are under threat. It refers to the use or threatened use of weapons to inflict injury, death or psychosocial harm.

To help desk officers and conflict/fragility experts who are working to tackle the problem of armed violence, OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members have requested three *Armed Violence Reduction (AVR) Programming Notes* to build on the OECD DAC policy paper on *Armed Violence Reduction: Enabling Development* (OECD, 2009). The three notes cover:

- **Armed violence in urban areas:** The majority of the world's population now lives in urban centres. As economic transformations accelerate rural-urban migration, the rural poor are being converted into an urban poor who populate mega-slums on the periphery of major urban centres. More and more of these areas are afflicted by high levels of armed violence.
- **Youth and armed violence:** The largest-ever generation of young people is now entering adulthood. Almost half of the world's population is under the age of 24 and the vast majority of 10-24-year-olds live in less developed countries. Youth are particularly at risk of being exposed to and engaging in armed violence and crime.
- **AVR and security system reform (SSR):** AVR and SSR have similar objectives and are mutually reinforcing. But they also have their distinct methods, entry points and comparative advantages. It is important to understand the linkages between the two approaches in order to maximise the impact of public safety and security interventions.

To ensure an effective response to armed violence, the programming notes use an armed violence “lens”, which was developed in *Armed Violence Reduction: Enabling Development*. The lens helps practitioners consider the key elements shaping armed violence patterns. These include the **people** affected by armed violence, the **perpetrators** and their motivations, the availability of **instruments** (arms) and the wider **institutional/cultural environment** that enables and/or protects against armed violence. The lens highlights risk factors associated with armed violence and their vertical linkages from the local to the global level. It encourages practitioners to think outside specific sector mandates and provides practical entry points for AVR programming.

Armed violence prevention and reduction are feasible but require significant leadership by affected states and investment of financial resources by development partners. They also require the ability to engage with non-state and sub-national actors. Finally, effective interventions need a good evidence base, participatory assessments and the simultaneous engagement in multiple sectors (reflecting the broad range of interrelated issues and actors involved), at multiple levels (local, national, regional and global) and over a longer time horizon.

Chapter 1

The links between youth and armed violence

It is critical that donors focus on youth because they are the largest and potentially most significant population in the developing world; approximately 1.3 billion youth live in developing countries (World Bank, 2007; Box 1.1). Rather than using a rigid construct based on age, this programming note defines youth as those people in the transitional stage between childhood and adulthood.¹ The majority lack basic education, marketable skills, decent employment and opportunities for positive engagement in their communities. While most youth do not engage in significant or repeated acts of violence, evidence suggests that out-of-school and un- or underemployed youth are at greater risk of becoming perpetrators – and victims – of violence and crime, along with youth who suffer from economic and social deprivation, marginalisation, neglect and abuse (Social Development Direct, 2009). Such negative outcomes have costs for the individuals themselves, as well as their families, communities, society and the economy. On the other hand, when their energies and skills are supported and channelled productively, youth can be a powerful force for constructive change.

This programming note builds on the recent OECD publication, *Armed Violence Reduction: Enabling Development* (OECD, 2009) and applies the framework it presents specifically to youth armed violence (Box 1.2).² That framework describes the key elements that shape armed violence patterns:

Box 1.1. Youth: An important segment of the population

In Afghanistan, 68% of the population is under 25; in the Palestinian Territories, 67% of the population is under 24 (World Bank, 2007). At the end of the Sierra Leone civil war in 2002, 63% of the population was under 25 (IRIN, 2007). In West Africa, 40% of the population is less than 15 years old.

Source: Florquin and Berman, 2005.

the **people affected** by armed violence, the **perpetrators** and their motivations, the availability of **instruments** and the wider **institutional/cultural environments** that enable or protect against armed violence. It encourages

Box 1.2. The Armed Violence Reduction (AVR) framework applied to youth

The AVR framework takes into consideration the main elements shaping armed violence patterns:

- The people affected by armed violence – the victims, communities and societies that suffer. Evidence shows that youth who are witnesses and victims of violence at family and community levels and during armed conflicts can become conditioned to regard violence as an acceptable means to resolve problems. This can increase the likelihood that they will be future perpetrators.
- The perpetrators of armed violence, their motives, and the ways in which they are organised. Violent youth tend to commit a range of crimes and exhibit a range of risky behaviours. Youth may not always be willing perpetrators of violence but engage in violence due to external pressures, including peer pressures and negative social norms, perceptions and practices.
- The instruments of armed violence, focusing on an analysis of how arms are integrated into a community's socio-economic, cultural, and political fabric. The widespread availability of weapons does not cause armed violence, but is a risk factor, with youth viewing weapons as sources of protection and status. The increasing availability of small arms, which are used in about 60% of all homicides, and their ease in handling, makes them accessible to even young children.
- The institutions, including both the formal and informal, which regulate and control the use of armed violence. Formal institutions focus on capacities and deficits in the public security and justice, education, and health sectors as well as broader problems of governance, service delivery, and social protection. Informal institutions focus on social and cultural factors, including culturally-accepted norms that facilitate or prohibit the use of armed violence, as well as community-based organisations that are part of and affect the social fabric.
- The AVR lens includes four levels of engagement: the local, national, regional and global. Examples of youth armed violence at these levels include:
 - Local: Central American neighbourhood gang warfare.
 - National: youth used to create fear and intimidation by politicians in Zimbabwe and Kenya.
 - Regional: cross-border militias in Africa's Great Lakes region that include youth from four countries.
 - Global: Muslim youth drawn into global jihad extremist movements.

Source: OECD, 2009.

practitioners to think outside of specific programming mandates and offers a shared analysis that can bring together a diverse array of actors who work on different aspects of armed violence, even if they are not working in tandem.

This note also outlines how development agencies should target interventions to prevent and reduce youth armed violence. It covers characteristics of youth armed violence, assessments, entry points for programming, programming options by sector, risk management, monitoring and evaluation. It takes a holistic approach to youth armed violence, recognising that in practice, similar developmental factors underlie youth engagement in violence, regardless of the context. Youth armed violence occurs in multiple contexts such as within relationships or in the course of criminal activity.

This note emphasises the importance of providing constructive alternatives to violent groups and ideologies. Extensive research has been done on youth violence stemming from biological, psychological and family risk factors (WHO, 2002; Social Development Direct, 2009). A key conclusion is that intervention at infant and early childhood stages is critical. The most effective programming would include preventative strategies alongside programmes to address current issues.

Youth armed violence: Trends

Children and youth are increasingly growing up in cultures where armed violence is a norm within families, communities, or states. Trends in contemporary conflict affecting youth include the increasing proximity of violence to the lives of young people and the eroding of boundaries between different kinds of violence (UNICEF, 2007a). Young people in the developing world are living in environments in which firearms are cheap, poorly regulated, widely circulated and often traded illicitly, increasing armed violence and hindering peace building and humanitarian assistance. These weapons are easy for youth to learn to use and to carry; for example, more than 90% of young people

Box 1.3. Child soldiers

There are an estimated 300 000 child soldiers under the age of 18 engaged in more than 33 conflicts around the world. Boys and girls are used as combatants, messengers, porters and cooks and for forced sexual services. Some are abducted or forcibly recruited; others are driven to join by poverty, abuse and discrimination, or to seek revenge for violence enacted against them or their families.

Source: UNICEF, 2007a.

involved in conflict in a variety of roles in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone had access to weapons (Florquin and Berman, 2005). The increasing familiarity of youth with small arms and their proliferation can sustain a culture of interpersonal and gang-related violence in stable societies that are “at peace”, as well as in fragile and post-conflict societies, where the easy access to guns has the potential to help trigger or reignite conflict.

Today’s armed groups are often non-state actors using non-traditional forms of warfare to fight internal rather than inter-state conflicts. Frequently, they adopt strategies that bring the battle more immediately to the civilian population and into the lives of millions of youth (Box 1.3). A state’s use of paramilitary and proxy forces increases youth vulnerability because these forces are less accountable to government and the public. Youth are increasingly used as perpetrators or accomplices in terrorist acts and in some places have increasingly come under suspicion and suffer severe abuses when detained. Motivations and actions of violent groups fluctuate between criminal, ideological and political such that clear lines can be difficult to draw. For example, armed conflict that began over political grievances can be furthered by opportunistic greed. Mischaracterising violent groups can exclude them from conflict resolution dialogue and demobilisation (UNICEF, 2007a).

The result of the realities described above is that young people are often involved in armed violence simultaneously as perpetrators, victims and witnesses. Young people are frequently the victims of violence – boys and young men are most at risk of conflict-related death and homicide; girls and young women are increasingly at risk of sexual violence, especially in situations of armed conflict. Youth homicide and non-fatal violence not only contribute greatly to the global burden of premature death, injury and disability, but also have a serious, sometimes lifelong, impact on behaviour and psychological and social functioning, and affect victims’ families, friends and communities. Violence involving young people adds greatly to the costs of health and welfare services, reduces productivity, decreases the value of property, disrupts essential services and undermines the fabric of society (WHO, 2004).

Policy makers and practitioners have tended to conduct separate analysis for different forms of collective violence – political, criminal and ideological – in which youth are involved. A close examination of the evidence suggests that the underlying psychological factors that influence voluntary youth participation in different types of violent groups are similar, despite the different contexts in which youth participate. For example, youth living in Latin America may be motivated to join a gang for the same reasons that youth in Africa join armed groups as child soldiers. The developmental tasks of adolescence include solidifying a set of values that guide behaviour, responding more to their peers than adults, achieving independence from adults emotionally and financially, and becoming members of the community (Erikson,

1968). Coming of age in conflict environments makes it particularly difficult for young people to complete this transition as community structures and state functions such as health care and education are disrupted. For marginalised young people, violent groups seemingly offer a fast transition to adulthood as well as protection and opportunities for economic advancement and adventure. These groups also provide a sense of identity and affinity, cultivate respect or status among peers and the community, or allow for revenge on other groups. The type of group joined is more a result of proximity, opportunity and familiarity than a reflection of fundamental differences in the psychological motivations of young people. While men are predominantly involved in armed violence, women are increasingly involved – not just in support roles, but also in perpetrating acts of violence themselves.

Factors that put youth at risk of engaging in armed violence

Risk factors for youth armed violence are the conditions that increase the possibility of a young person becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence. Preventing violence involves direct efforts to remove or reduce risk factors, as well as harnessing the indirect effects of other policies and programmes that may reduce exposure to underlying causes and risk factors. No single factor explains why a person or group is at high or low risk of such violence. Instead, violence is an outcome of interaction among risk factors at four levels: individual (including biological factors), relationship, community and societal (WHO, 2002). The following risk factors for youth violence have been documented in a variety of socially and culturally-distinct settings:

Individual factors: traits such as hyperactivity, impulsiveness, poor behavioural control and attention problems; a history of early aggressive behaviour; early involvement with drugs, alcohol and tobacco; antisocial beliefs and attitudes; low intelligence; low commitment to school and school failure; and exposure to violence and conflict in the family. Additionally, studies show that drunkenness is an important immediate situational factor that can precipitate violence.

- Relationship factors: these refer to family, friend, intimate partner and peer relationships, and include poor parental supervision of children; harsh or inconsistent disciplinary practices; witnessing violence or experiencing abuse as a child; low levels of attachment between parents and children; low parental involvement in children's activities; parental alcohol/substance abuse or criminality; experiencing parental separation or divorce at a young age; poor family functioning; coming from a single-parent household; and low socio-economic status of the household. Associating with delinquent peers is also an important risk factor for youth violence.

- Community factors: high residential mobility; high unemployment; high population density; social isolation; proximity to drug trade; ease of access to alcohol; and weak social welfare policies and programmes in schools.
- Societal factors: rapid social change; economic and gender inequalities; social policies that create and sustain or increase economic and social inequalities; poverty; weak criminal justice systems that allow the excessive use of force by police with impunity; the availability of firearms; and social or cultural norms that support violence.
- Risk factors can also be considered in terms of (1) factors that “push” youth into engaging in violence; (2) factors that “pull” or attract youth towards violent acts; and (3) factors that may “trigger” violence. (Social Development Direct, 2009). There is a strong interplay and causal relationship among the three factors.

The literature on youth armed violence outlines a number of different factors that may “**push**” youth into violence or towards joining violent or extremist groups. These include poor living conditions, devastation of family and social structures from disease; limited or unequal access to education and vocational training; lack of employment or livelihood opportunities; social exclusion and inequality; weak political participation and decision-making power; previous exposure to violence; and lack of public safety and security. Recent research suggests that political, social and economic exclusion can prevent youth from completing the key steps their societies require to achieve adulthood, effectively blocking the transition of many young people to adulthood and resulting in frustration and discontent which may be expressed in acts of violence, or leave them more vulnerable to coercion.

Research also suggests that there are a number of factors that “**pull**” individuals towards armed violence, or networks and groups that advocate violence. These factors include a need to uphold values and ideology, a sense of inclusion or identity, a sense of safety or protection, a means to obtain material and non-material benefits, a sense of adventure and excitement, a sense of structure to life and the opportunity for a voice in their societies.

Certain situations may **trigger** violent behaviour. On an individual level, violence by a young person may be sparked by events in their lives, such as mistreatment or detention by the police; loss of a job or failure to find one; rejection by a peer, partner, or family member; substance abuse; or emotional trauma. On a group level, the decision of a group to engage in violence can be sparked by public events: acts that citizens view as coerced or accomplished by fraud and deceit of public officials, public denigration of an ethnic or religious group, abuse by security forces, policy changes, or economic crises.

Factors that prevent youth from engaging in armed violence

Protective factors can help build youth resiliency and reduce overall risk for violent behaviour (WHO, 2010):

At the individual level, these include a belief in a positive future, a commitment to school and the ability to act independently with a sense of control over one's environment. Problem-solving skills, plans for the future, resourcefulness in finding sources of support, adaptability, empathy and skills in critical thinking and conflict resolution are also important.

- Family protective factors include parental involvement with their children, reasonable disciplinary measures, clear expectations of behaviour, open lines of communication and a support network of other adults that offers a variety of experiences and viewpoints.
- A strong community infrastructure can serve as a protective factor. Communities can generate activities for youth that offer opportunities to make decisions and share responsibility, helping them to increase their skills and self-confidence as well as contribute to the community. Structures within communities, such as faith-based organisations in sub-Saharan Africa, help build youth resilience by giving them a sense of identity and belonging as well as a place to grow and practise adult skills such as leadership.
- Protective factors on a societal level include national and local policies and basic services that support child and youth-oriented programmes, reduced group conflict, reduced economic inequality, changed cultural norms to end tolerance of violence and increased adult understanding of and engagement with young people.

Chapter 2

Assessments

A sound assessment focused on the local context and involving youth as participants is important to set the foundation for effective programme design and implementation. Donors should conduct a thorough assessment, preferably prior to the start of any programming, to ensure they understand the parameters of youth armed violence in a given context – including any existing push/pull factors for perpetrators – as well as resources available at any of the AVR framework’s four levels of engagement (local, national, regional and global). Such an assessment will allow donors to better target interventions to groups, communities, or institutions and can also serve as a baseline for measuring programme effectiveness later. This chapter looks at the main approaches to this kind of assessment and outlines the variety of tools available.

Assessment and analysis: Key approaches

A **participatory methodology** will help to ensure that assessments capture young people’s own perceptions of their needs, threats and vulnerabilities compared to the adults around them. Girls will also have different perspectives than boys (Box 2.1). Representative youth must be consulted as an essential stakeholder. For example, as far as possible, obtaining the views of non-state stakeholders and illicit groups such as youth gangs can also yield vital perspectives on ways forward.

Local knowledge of the key elements and dynamics of armed youth violence is essential to avoid the risk of doing harm. This means using assessment tools and methods that generate reliable data on local conditions, relationships and perceptions (Anderson, 1999). In particular, data should be collected on what fuels youth unrest, what potentially connects youth to the community and how aid will affect this context. It may be difficult to collect data in fragile and conflict affected settings. Rapid community surveys (see Box 2.2) can replace in-depth assessments that are not feasible in unstable environments. Local organisations and youth may themselves be best placed to gather data in hostile environments.

Box 2.1. Gender issues and considerations

Gender refers to the social identity of men and women built through history, culture and economic relations, resulting in differences in roles and relationships. Girls and young women have different challenges, needs and motivations than boys and young men in terms of the societal pressures and barriers that put them at risk of being victims, witnesses and participants in armed violence. Integrating gender into effective direct and indirect programmes includes:

- Collecting gender-disaggregated data on youth, recognising that in some cultures young women with their own family responsibilities may be considered adults rather than youth.
- Including women and girls on assessment teams and eliciting the challenges and needs of girls, particularly from women’s civil society organisations.
- Recognising gender inequalities that serve as risk factors (such as greater obstacles in employment opportunities and lack of participation in decision-making processes).
- Conducting training to increase community awareness about gender-specific issues (like gender-based violence).
- Ensuring that activities accommodate and target females in programme design and recruiting both female and male staff to implement programmes.
- Collaborating with civil society groups to address gender issues.
- Working with national governments to include gender in policies and action plans and to promote intolerance of adverse treatment in government institutions.

Programme examples:

Preventing and Addressing Violence and Juvenile Delinquency at the Local Level (El Salvador): Local project staff noted that girls’ participation was limited by parents’ fears of assault on the way home or that they would become pregnant. Project co-ordinators addressed these fears through personal contact to reassure parents. Additionally, boys were included in activities seen as typically female, such as poetry and dance workshops. These activities helped to change boys’ perceptions about male and female roles. It also fostered mutual respect among the participants.

Palestinian Youth Empowerment Program (West Bank and Gaza): The project is staffed by both men and women. Sub-grantees are expected to address gender in their proposals, ensuring that activities are inclusive. Leadership trainings always include women and girls. Recognising that parents are not always comfortable with girls participating in mixed events, the project creates certain activities that are for girls only.

Box 2.1. Gender issues and considerations *(continued)*

Youth Empowerment and Employment (Kenya): The project is implementing a strong gender-sensitive evaluation system, where the data collected are disaggregated by gender to allow further analysis of the project’s impact on female *versus* male youth, such as measuring the share of female participation in programmes that support the vulnerable and unemployed.

Establishing Family and Child Protection Units in Police Stations (Northern Sudan): The project works with the Sudanese police to establish Family and Child Protection Units to strengthen child-friendly procedures. The units work to introduce a policing approach that is sensitive to the needs of vulnerable women and children. They employ staff members that are specially trained to work with women and children.

Assessment tools

Assessment tools range from those focusing explicitly on youth, to others – such as conflict or education frameworks – that can be adapted to incorporate youth concerns. There is a range of **specific assessment tools** to help understand youth violence at community and group levels:

- The National Gang Center’s *Comprehensive Gang Model* (Institute for Intergovernmental Research, 2009).
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)’s *Youth and Extremism Assessment Module* (USAID, 2008).
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)’s *Crime Prevention Assessment Tool* (UNODC and UN-HABITAT, 2009).
- The Centers for Disease Control’s *Measuring Violence-Related Attitudes, Behaviors and Influences Among Youth: A Compendium of Assessment Tools* (Dahlberg *et al.*, 2005). This contains more than 170 tools that focus on individual attitudes, beliefs and measures. It can also be used to evaluate school curriculum and community-based programming.
- UNODC’s *Criminal Justice Assessment Toolkit* has a section devoted to juvenile justice (UNODC, 2006).

Many other thematic and sector-specific assessment tools generate data and insights that are relevant for understanding aspects of youth armed violence. Examples include tools for assessing conflict, stability and fragility, drivers of change, poverty, SSR, governance, social exclusion, public safety, health and education, labour and employment, gender equality, victimisation, vulnerable groups, nutrition and household surveys, agriculture and rural

development as well as water and sanitation. Integrating the AVR framework into these existing assessment tools can help programme planners think through complex considerations to mitigate risk factors, increase resiliency and protective factors and promote the successful transition of youth to adulthood.

Different tools and methods can be combined or adapted to conduct an assessment through an armed violence lens, with the most directly relevant assessment tools focused on conflict, stability, fragility, public health, education and employment, governance and criminal justice, victimisation and vulnerable groups.

For example, USAID’s *Education and Fragility Assessment Tool* is designed to help identify and analyse the links between education and fragility in failing, failed or recovering countries (USAID, 2006). The agency’s strategic approach is particularly concerned with legitimacy and effectiveness in governance in four domains: economic, social, political and security. It analyses specific patterns of fragility such as organised violence, corruption, exclusion and elitism, transitional dynamics, insufficient capacity and public disengagement.

However, collecting data and monitoring trends in youth armed violence is not only politically sensitive but also challenging to accomplish. Governments can be reluctant to acknowledge and discuss issues around youth violence. Efforts to track global and national indicators of youth armed violence are generally encumbered by lack of data, failure to disaggregate age, under-recording and under-reporting. Data disaggregated by gender may be particularly questionable as young married females may not be considered “youth”. Assessment teams that include women, girls and female translators and that target women’s civil society organisations and gender experts for interviews can increase gender-responsive findings.

Box 2.2. West Bank Gaza: Palestinian Youth Empowerment Programme (Ruwwad)

The Palestinian Youth Empowerment Programme (Ruwwad) gives young Palestinians tools and skills to serve their communities. The project is divided into two components: (1) partner institution capacity building, focusing on the development and maintenance of Youth Development Resource Centres (YDRCs); and (2) youth and community development, focusing on youth-led civic engagement within communities at large. A mid-term evaluation showed that Ruwwad had a positive impact on youth – they had gained practical skills, experienced personal growth and developed a sense of belonging. Youth reported that through trainings, community service initiatives and internships they had acquired new job skills, developed a better work ethic and discovered new career opportunities. Ruwwad has achieved positive results largely because it has involved youth and key stakeholders in project planning and initiatives. Lessons include:

Box 2.2. West Bank Gaza: Palestinian Youth Empowerment Programme (Ruwwad) *(continued)*

- **Rapid appraisal assessment.** Before the project started, a team of international and local specialists conducted a rapid appraisal assessment to determine Palestine's capacity for supporting a youth empowerment programme. The team gained an understanding of youth priority needs from the perspectives of both youth and adults. On this basis it identified areas where programming could have a positive impact.
- **Community-based service-learning (CBSL).** Ruwwad's CBSL model has been successful partly because it recognises that most Palestinian youth have completed their studies through the formal education system but are unemployed due to a lack of practical experience. It gives youth the opportunity to learn practical skills and leadership skills and to apply these to the benefit of the community.
- **Communication.** A challenge for the project was ensuring that stakeholders and beneficiaries understood the project's goals and objectives. Ruwwad used a grassroots approach to reach youth and local organisations. Its most successful communication tools include word of mouth, SMS texts, workshops and the production of a film (distributed via Ruwwad's media centres and posted on sites like YouTube).
- **Monitoring and evaluation.** Ruwwad's evaluations include baseline surveys, annual evaluations, a mid-term evaluation and an end-of-project evaluation. Ruwwad has built monitoring and evaluation into its implementation and youth are involved in the evaluation process whenever possible.
- **Youth participation at all levels.** Ruwwad engaged youth throughout the project, from programme design to implementation and monitoring and evaluation. This created youth ownership of project activities, gave project beneficiaries an increased sense of self-reliance and provided an additional means for youth to learn practical skills.
- **Flexibility.** Political events and changing government priorities caused several modifications to Ruwwad's programming, demonstrating the importance of flexibility. Constant communication with stakeholders and beneficiaries allowed Ruwwad to maintain momentum despite shifts in project focus.

Source: USAID, 2009.

Chapter 3

Programming

This chapter looks at the role of donors in developing programmes to address youth armed violence, their key entry points and programme approaches, which can be either direct or indirect. The following chapter outlines some specific interventions.

The AVR framework helps guide programming by focusing on the intersection between youth, security and development (Table 3.1). Interventions can target a wide array of issues, including advocacy, policy reform, awareness campaigns, youth vulnerability, youth development opportunities and specialised services for particular needs. Programming for youth should include activities for young women who are married or have children; young girls are often considered adults because of household and family responsibilities regardless of their age. Programme design should be context specific and target risk factors and resilience.

The role of donors

Youth armed violence can be tackled in several ways. Donors can incorporate a youth focus into programming designed to address conflict prevention, or they can address the issue in tandem with related issues (such as education or health). Alternatively, they can work from the perspective of national policy (through work with national governments), local government levels, or the grassroots (through work with civil society). Wherever donors choose to focus programming, they can identify and work to remove the risk factors promoting youth participation in armed violence as well as strengthen the protective factors that prevent youth from getting involved in such crime.

Table 3.1. **The armed violence reduction framework and programme initiatives**

People affected	Community-based approaches involve the community as a central part of the solution and seek to improve community capacity to integrate youth and develop opportunities for youth participation in community affairs (both protective factors that increase youth resilience).
Perpetrators	Enforcement removes the most violent individuals and leaders from the community. Intervention can target active members of violent groups to strengthen protective factors and offer credible alternatives. These might include employment opportunities; meaningful skills training and development; sporting and cultural activities that strengthen self-respect and self-esteem; exit strategies from gangs, militias and groups espousing violence; reducing the availability of alcohol, drugs and arms; trauma treatment for victims, witnesses or perpetrators. Preventive strategies target at-risk youth to boost protective factors and try to address forces that might push or pull them toward violent groups. Such strategies include early childhood development and parent mentoring; keeping youth in school; increasing availability of after-hours school activities and youth centres that offer productive activities; involving youth in the community; and orienting youth to the realities and dangers of violent group membership (Wyrick, 2006).
Instruments	The instruments of violence can be controlled through measures targeting temporary or long-term reduction of arms availability, prohibiting the public display of weapons and targeting organised crime syndicates.
Institutions	Formal institutions can be strengthened to improve governance, improve capacities to fight organised crime, create employment, support national and local policies protecting youth and retain students through secondary school. All of these strategies can help increase youth resilience and offer alternatives to violent groups. Informal institutions can be strengthened to address silence about violence, gender relations, masculinity and identity, family violence, sexual violence and gender-based violence. They can also be strengthened to promote non-violent cultural norms or to discourage criminal behaviour.

Entry points for programming

Donors can engage counterparts at any of the AVR framework’s four levels of engagement.

Local level: The dynamics and impacts of armed violence and insecurity are often localised at the community level. It is therefore essential to work at this level to design appropriate prevention and response strategies. Working with local partners who are knowledgeable about the context is key. In the longer-term, once they have been refined and proven, community-level projects and approaches can be rolled out or scaled up to other communities.

Local governments assist national governments in implementing youth policies and procedures, tailoring specific plans in their territories according to unique needs and contexts. Due to their close proximity to the community, local governments are in many cases best placed to create broad

spaces for interaction between youth and the larger community. For example, in El Salvador, the UNDP-funded programme *Preventing and Addressing Violence and Juvenile Justice Delinquency at the Local Level* has created a model based on inter-institutional co-ordination, decentralisation and youth participation for designing public policies for prevention.

Donors can also provide support to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that promote youth resilience through programming that builds personal autonomy and maturity, increases and allows youth to practice skills of adulthood, provides alternatives for youth already involved in violence, supports families and promotes youth integration into the community. Donors can also support NGOs that give a voice to youth from challenged environments, or even look beyond youth organisations as youth may not have organised themselves in entities recognised by adult criteria. For example, the Ruwwad Project (Box 2.2.), which operates in the West Bank and Gaza, awards sub-grants to local grassroots NGOs to support youth programming in civic engagement, leadership development, livelihood, sports and culture. Working through civil society organisations is particularly important in highly volatile contexts where government is weak or non-existent.

National level: When discussing broad support to partner national governments, donors can encourage governments to address youth issues. They can suggest, for example, that they collect data on the situation facing youth and that they design and resource policies and programmes to address youth needs and build on the potential of young people to contribute. Programme planners can support national governments in fulfilling their role and tasks. National governments have the responsibility to produce national youth policies and action plans that are based on consultations with youth. For example, between 2004 and 2008 UNICEF supported a Juvenile Justice Alternatives Project in Tajikistan (JJAP) to help the government comply with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This obliges states to establish a separate juvenile justice system for youth under the age of 18 that promotes prevention, diversion and community rehabilitation and that only allows detention as a last resort. Through the JJAP, UNICEF and other donors supported the national government, along with the local government and NGOs, in complying with the UNCRC (Box 3.1). Chapter 4 discusses juvenile justice systems further.

National governments can strengthen and modernise the main institutions that serve the people, promote intolerance of institutional violence towards the public in general and youth in particular, and shape organisational cultures to value the role of youth. They can include gender issues in national policies and programmes and involve women in decision making. They provide the legal and financial support for strategies to prevent youth violence and protect communities at risk. National governments can facilitate

consensus, outreach to and participation in regional initiatives. Central authorities can support collection and analysis of data and dissemination of key information and tools, local lessons learned and best practices.

Regional level: Donors may wish to engage with regional organisations working to reduce violence, particularly where conflict is regional or where the youth among trans-border refugees are at risk of joining violent groups. Alternatively, donors might bring together national organisations from several countries in a region to develop co-ordinated strategies to tackle youth armed violence. For example, regional co-ordination can be a key ingredient in a strategy to reduce youth armed violence in a trans-national conflict or among groups engaged in regional illicit drug trade or other smuggling activities.

Global level: Engagement with global counterparts – such as the United Nations – offers donors a way to learn from experiences under various conditions to reduce youth violence around the world. Conventions related to youth armed violence offer opportunities to systematise reforms that benefit youth. Donors might engage multiple counterparts (governmental and non-governmental) in countries around the world in a co-ordinated effort to combat a problem like the involvement of Muslim youth in global *jihād* extremist movements.

Box 3.1. Tajikistan: The Juvenile Justice Alternatives Project (JJAP)

To comply with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Tajikistan introduced its JJAP project for youth between the ages of 10 and 18 to provide alternatives to prosecution and detention when youth were charged with criminal offences. Five JJAP projects provided non-residential community-based rehabilitation programmes that used both state-run Child and Youth Centres and NGOs as resources to provide support and assistance. Each project was staffed by a project co-ordinator, lawyer, two social workers and one psychologist who provided individually tailored programmes of psychosocial and practical assistance for each child and their families. Interventions included individual psychological assessment and support; therapy and family work, including parental skill development; legal support; social services support; and remedial education. Some activities were offered to all local children through the Child and Youth Centres, including vocational classes, classes in “soft skills” such as civic education, healthy living and social activities such as sports and excursions. The JJAP staff worked with schools to return project participants to mainstream classes and aimed for full attendance. The JJAPs also formed links with a range of NGOs to expand activity options, such as vocational training, job assistance and social assistance including prevention of violence against women.

Box 3.1. Tajikistan: The Juvenile Justice Alternatives Project (JJAP) *(continued)*

The JJAP projects accepted more than 250 youth who would otherwise have been charged with a crime and prosecuted. Over 250 youth participated, with an average drop of 42% in the rate of juveniles offending in districts where projects operated, while juvenile offending rose by 3% in areas not offering a JJAP. Only six young people had reoffended by April 2008. Notable best practices and lessons learned include the following:

- **Plan for sustainability and replicability.** The possibility of financial sustainability was increased by leveraging existing resources such as the network of government-run youth centres. Three JJAP staff learned to train new staff members and participated in starting up three JJAP projects, building local capacity to start new programmes.
- **Ensure legal authority.** Legislative reform was needed for full project implementation. Some officials were hesitant to refer youth to the programme because legislation failed to give clear authority and oblige police, prosecutors and courts to divert youth to community-based programmes instead of pursuing prosecution.
- **Leverage expertise.** All youth received intensive social worker services. However, the availability and capacity of trained professionals is limited in Tajikistan. The majority of referrals could have been effectively rehabilitated with a lower level of intervention through trained youth workers. Projects could be supported by a roving regional team consisting of a social worker, a lawyer and a project manager to assist the youth workers in the centres and NGOs with more complex cases.
- **Communicate success.** Some referring bodies at local levels recognised the importance of the projects, as evidenced by one local government's decision to fully fund and manage the project when donor funding ended. Good communication about project impact helps community leaders advocate for and justify project continuation.
- **Build on early success and take risks.** The project worked with youth who committed non-serious offences and who admitted their guilt. Youth who were re-offenders were generally excluded from a second referral. The projects were very successful with their target population, but could have reached a much larger population had the inclusion criteria been expanded.

Source: UNICEF, 2008a.

Programming approaches

Donors can take either a direct or indirect approach to the challenge of reducing youth armed violence. Direct approaches – such as gang reduction or disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) activities – target youth involved in armed violence. Indirect approaches seek to address a broader problem – such as lack of market-appropriate employment skills, lack

of knowledge about disease prevention, etc. – that influences youth violence, as well as a broader constituency.

Direct programme interventions

There are a number of approaches for addressing youth violence directly. This section describes an approach which integrates the AVR framework with emerging gang violence reduction strategies. Categorising the population into their level of engagement with violent groups allows donors to develop more targeted interventions. Figure 3.1 categorises perpetrators as leaders of violent groups or chronic offenders (Group 1); youth actively involved in violent groups (Group 2); and people affected – defined as either youth at risk of joining a violent group (Group 3) or the population living in areas where violent groups operate (Group 4).

Different interventions are needed for each of these four groups:

- Members of Group 1 are candidates for targeted prosecution and enforcement, due to their substantial involvement in crime and low probability of criminal behaviour reduction. Where violence is high, sanctions grounded in human rights and the rule of law can reduce the level of violence and restore an environment of security in which preventative measures can be implemented.
- Group 2 members are candidates for interventions that balance supervision and accountability with services and opportunities. Research into the effect of harsh sanctions for various types of offenders has found that they are counterproductive and that excessive punishment can result in continued youth involvement in criminal activity or violence, often through new networks built during incarceration. Youth who are not leaders or chronic offenders and who receive rehabilitation, treatment and restoration, are less likely to reoffend (Wyrick, 2006). Co-ordinated partnerships between government agencies and service providers are key to reach out to this group and their families, as are a system of graduated sanctions and close case management. Partners include criminal justice actors, schools, community groups, employment services and social services.
- Group 3 members should receive, after identifying any existing risk and protective factors, priority preventive interventions. These can include attractive alternatives to violent group lifestyles – such as legitimate opportunities for work, education and positive community involvement (to compete with any push or pull factors present) – effective support systems and being held accountable for inappropriate behaviours that violate clear expectations and standards.

- Group 4 interventions target the broad community where violence is common. They should involve government agencies and non-governmental groups conveying the message that both residents and the government care about the community, thereby boosting youth resilience.

Figure 3.1. Differing levels of youth engagement with violent groups



Source: Wyrick, P. (2006), "Gang Prevention: How to Make the 'Front End' of Your Anti-Gang Effort Work", *United States Attorney's Bulletin*, Vol. 54 (3), Washington, DC.

Armed youth violence is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon. Effective strategies therefore have to take a systemic approach. In recognition of this, a newly-released GTZ handbook provides practical, context-specific guidance for planning and implementing systemic violence prevention measures (Box 3.2).

Indirect programme interventions

Overall, there are four main approaches to indirect programme interventions that donors can take:

1. Comprehensive multi-sector youth programmes which address different issues of concern to youth in a specific context. For example, the German development agency's (GTZ) multi-sector strategy in Sierra Leone focused on integrating young people into the labour market and their communities. Adopted in 2004, it includes capacity-building, skills-training, income-generating, peace-building and community empowerment activities (MacDonald, 2006).

Box 3.2. Systemic prevention of youth violence: A GTZ handbook to design and plan comprehensive violence prevention measures

The handbook includes:

- Background information on youth violence.
- Two step-by-step workshop concepts which provide:
 - analysis of the causes, extent and consequences of youth violence in order to identify strategic starting points for prevention activities;
 - planning suggestions for context specific and tailor-made prevention measures and activities.
 - Examples of approaches and methods for the prevention of youth violence.

Innovative aspects of the handbook:

- The young individual is positioned at the centre of a complex system of actors, who all affect his/her behaviour in positive or negative ways. Thus, the **actors most heavily influencing the environment of young people** – including parents, teachers, the police, social workers and staff from municipal authorities – are identified and activated as partners and target groups of the planned violence prevention measure.
- During the planning process, the handbook focuses on concrete **behavioural changes**, both among young people and among the actors who have a direct or indirect influence on them. This change is understood as the core element of a social transformation. The whole planning process is guided by the question: Who needs to do what differently with whom in order to prevent and reduce youth violence effectively and sustainably?
- The handbook supports the conscious inclusion of a **variety of actors from a range of relevant sectors** who each can make a contribution to prevent armed youth violence.
- The need for **monitoring and evaluation** is taken into consideration as early as during the planning phase. This is achieved through detailed analysis that is conducted at the beginning of the process, which can be used as baseline data for monitoring the impact of the measure later on.

Source: GTZ, 2010.

2. Programmes that target youth in a specific sector, such as employment creation, sexual and reproductive health, HIV-AIDS, DDR, peace building and political participation.
3. More general development programmes where youth are among the beneficiaries and where the programme can be modified and monitored to ensure the desired impacts on youth are achieved (Box 3.3). This might involve a specific youth component to the project or measures to ensure that youth are key beneficiaries of activities. In this case, it is critical to gather age-disaggregated data to establish baseline indicators on the situation of youth that can then be measured to evaluate the programme's specific impact on them. However, in practice, it is more common for project and programme documents to mention youth at a general level as among the beneficiaries or targets for a project, which mean that these projects fail to include any youth-specific targets or indicators or to dedicate financing to youth-focused interventions.
4. Cross-sectoral approaches. For example, health, education and security system reform efforts can provide key opportunities to ensure that youth issues are adequately assessed and addressed and cross-sector linkages made where possible. Donors can encourage a specific youth component to be incorporated or policies or earmarked resources that target particular groups of youth. Again, it is critical to obtain age- and gender-disaggregated data so the actual impact on youth can be measured rather than assumed.

Box 3.3. Youth targeted interventions

In recognition of the need to explicitly target interventions at youth, USAID added a complementary programme on Youth for Change and Conflict Reduction (YCCR) to an existing economic assistance programme for Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) in Colombia. The YCCR programme had a number of components: (1) training youth in business and vocational skills and provide income generation opportunities; (2) training youth in leadership, social responsibility and conflict management; (3) facilitating dialogue between youth, the local authorities and police, training youth in human rights and community security and involving them in community security mechanisms; and (4) training local police forces to better manage high conflict areas.

Source: USAID, 2008.

Chapter 4

Specific interventions

The previous chapter has outlined the general approaches that donors can take to programming with a youth focus. This chapter describes targeted programming options in sectors relevant for tackling the problem of youth armed violence. These span the entire period from conception, early childhood to adulthood and include approaches such as supporting parents to build close and protective relationships with their children to creating juvenile justice systems which focus on reforming rather than punishing young people. These interventions are drawn from a review of more than 100 project documents, including project appraisals, periodic reviews, end-of-project evaluations and sector reviews. These interventions will not be appropriate for every context. Donors should use information from their assessments to identify the appropriate intervention for the particular contexts in which they are working.

Supporting parents

Inadequate monitoring and supervision and lack of parental involvement in the activities of children and adolescents are well-established risk factors for youth violence, while a **warm, supportive relationship with parents or other adults** protects against antisocial behaviour. Given this, an increase in youth violence would be expected where families have disintegrated following wars or epidemics, or because of rapid social change (WHO, 2008). Three general approaches to increasing safe, stable and nurturing relationships are parenting training, provision of social support for parents and families, and the creation of social environments that support and protect children (Liverpool John Moores University and WHO, 2009; Box 4.1).

Evidence from developed countries shows that the **life skills** acquired in social development programmes aimed at building social, emotional and behavioural competencies can prevent youth violence. Preschool enrichment programmes, which provide children with academic and social skills at an early age, also appear promising. These effects are most pronounced in

children from poor families and neighbourhoods. However, more evidence is needed on the impacts of preschool enrichment and social development programmes in low-income and middle-income countries (Liverpool John Moores University and WHO, 2009).

Prenatal alcohol exposure can cause foetal alcohol syndrome or foetal alcohol effects. These are associated with increased risk of child abuse and with delinquent and violent behaviour in youth and young adults (Mercy *et al.*, 2008). Central to **preventing alcohol-related violence** is to create societies and environments that discourage risky drinking behaviour and do not allow alcohol to be used as an excuse for violence. Other interventions include legislating the minimum age for purchasing alcohol, raising alcohol prices through increased taxes and minimum price policies, restricting the hours and days alcohol can be sold and reducing the number of alcohol retail outlets.

Box 4.1. Supporting parents

A programme supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in Colombia worked with over 4 000 vulnerable individuals and families to deliver support services and training in health education, counselling, and conflict management, which reportedly had positive impacts on adolescent behaviour and family violence levels. Similarly, in Angola, a USAID-supported programme with the Christian Children's Fund worked with children, adolescents and parents to promote healing, social reintegration and positive parenting and to provide skills training and small grants

Source: CIDA, 2007; USAID, 1999.

Supporting youth participation in the society and economy

Much research on young people and their involvement in gangs and violent groups discusses the role these groups play in creating a sense of status and belonging for young people, especially those who may have frustrated expectations and may lack opportunities to participate in the economic and social life of their communities and nations. By promoting **youth political participation**, supporting youth leadership and development programmes³ and supporting youth centres, donors can build greater participation and inclusion of young people in their societies as a way to embrace their potential and meet their needs. This helps combat risk factors, promotes a sense of usefulness and optimism about the future and gives young people a voice. Together these strengthen protective factors and build resilience in young people (Box 4.2). In Brazil, the Open Schools programme, originally piloted

Box 4.2. Creating structures for youth participation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Between 2003 and 2010, GTZ funded the project *Establishment and Promotion of Structures in the Youth Sector* in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This multi-level project works at a national level to support the Ministry of Civic Affairs, the National Youth Commission and the development of a national youth policy. It also works at a local level with local authorities to establish local strategies, budgets and structures for youth participation. Finally, it supports the networking of groups and committees between the different levels. Key results of this support include:
- A national youth policy developed by the National Youth Commission.
- Eighty-five percent of 50 pilot local authorities are now responsible for implementing their own multi-sector youth strategies using their own budgets, reaching 50 000 youth.
- One-third of all Bosnian local authorities now employ a qualified youth adviser.
- The training of youth advisers is recognised and regulated by the government.
- The budget for youth promotion in the pilot authorities has increased.
- Local-level Youth Councils create key structures for youth participation in local communities. These young people organise activities such as training courses, awareness campaigns and leisure activities, and, in some cases, have set up youth centers in their communities.

Source: GTZ, 2008.

by UNESCO in partnership with the state and municipal education authorities in Brasilia, was taken up as a national programme in 2004. This opened public schools to young people and their communities at the weekend to provide a range of artistic, cultural, leisure and sports activities as well as some skills and vocational training and spaces for dialogue. Programme evaluations suggest that the levels of violence in and around the participating schools decreased as a result of the initiative (UNESCO, 2005).

Education is highly valued by youth in many places and is essential to prepare them for adulthood, for participating in the workforce and for instilling values of citizenship, responsibility and co-operation. However, access to education is often highly unequal, which can be a major source of frustration for some young people. Additionally, the education provided is sometimes poorly matched to the life skills young people need in the job market. Key programming options

include delivering emergency education for conflict-affected and displaced populations; supporting the rapid rehabilitation, equipping and staffing of schools; improving equality of access to education; supporting accelerated “catch-up” programmes; supporting non-formal, vocational education linked to employment programmes, secondary and tertiary education; ensuring the relevance of education and training to the local job market; and supporting curriculum reform and development, as well as teacher training.

Unemployment or underemployment and lack of **viable and sustainable livelihood opportunities** are perhaps the most common factors underlying youth exclusion and the frustrations that can lead to violence. Ensuring there are opportunities for gainful employment and secure livelihoods is key both as a violence prevention strategy and as a post-conflict recovery strategy. Programming options include working with governments to promote enabling labour policies; supporting rapid job creation and employment-intensive public works; supporting

Box 4.3. Youth empowerment and employment in Kenya

The World Bank has recently agreed funding to the Government of Kenya (GoK) for a youth empowerment programme. This aims to increase access to youth-targeted temporary employment programmes and to improve youth employability. There are three components to the project:

1. Labour-intensive works and social services: This component is designed to reduce the vulnerability of young unemployed women and men. The component will finance labour-intensive projects that provide income opportunities to between 200 000 and 300 000 participating youth (18-35-year-olds). At the same time the projects will enhance the communities’ access to social and economic infrastructure (e.g. water dams and irrigation, roads, forestry resources, waste management systems).
2. Private sector internships and training: This component improves youth employability by providing youth with work experience and skills through the creation of internships and relevant training in the formal and informal sector. This pilot component will provide unemployed youth aged 15-29, who have at least eight years of schooling and have been out of school for at least a year, with an opportunity to acquire relevant experience through a private sector internship and training programme.
3. Capacity building and policy development: The main objective of this component is to enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYAS) to implement the national youth policy and increase the institutional capacity for youth policy planning. This will be done through training of MoYAS staff, particularly the district youth officers; communication activities to increase awareness of the project; and policy development, through the provision of technical assistance to the National Youth Council and youth policy development.

Further information: <http://go.worldbank.org/A3PA7DER80> and www.kkv.go.ke/.

private-sector development and entrepreneurship (especially in the small and medium enterprise sector); supporting income generation and microfinance projects; youth-friendly land reform and rural development programmes; providing market-tailored employment and livelihood advice and support to youth; and supporting social protection programmes that include youth (Box 4.3).

Supporting and enforcing youth rights

The rights of children and young people are enshrined in international law and most domestic laws and the state has an obligation to protect and promote them. However, many young people are dissatisfied with the (lack of) services the government provides, with their lack of voice in the decisions that affect them and with the abuses they are sometimes subjected to at the hands of state security actors. This is therefore a key area for programming. Possible options include supporting the development and implementation of national youth policies and legal rights for youth, protecting the rights of children and young people, promoting accountable child- and youth-friendly security and justice services, empowering and informing young people and their families to hold state actors accountable, and supporting preventative programmes to protect youth at risk and their families (Boxes 4.4 and 4.5). Some governments – conscious of the failure of the state to deliver the goods and services their citizens’ require – have enacted specific national-level policies that support youth’s social inclusion and strengthen the role of families as a protective barrier from fraying social tensions and the emergence of a youth under-class.⁴

Supporting and keeping the peace

Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes are designed to help in the transition from war to peace by assisting former combatants to acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. The

Box 4.4. Community issues

In Colombia, the USAID-funded Youth for Change and Conflict Reduction (YCCR) programme facilitated communication between youth groups, the community, local authorities and the police via workshops to discuss community issues, security and human rights concerns. The police supported the training of youth in human rights, citizen security and conflict mediation as “Promoters of Peaceful Coexistence” and strengthened neighbourhood watch groups. Community members reported a decrease in violence and increased involvement of youth in positive leadership roles. The majority of young people felt the training would help them secure a better future and economic future for their families

Source: USAID, 2008.

Box 4.5. Establishing family and child protection units in police stations in Northern Sudan

In Sudan, UNICEF supported the Sudanese police to establish Family and Child Protection Units (FCPU) to strengthen child-friendly procedures over the period 2007-2008. The FCPU were designed to provide a “one-stop-shop” of professional services to children who have survived crimes, witnessed crimes, or are accused of having committed an offence. The units:

- Introduce a policing approach that is sensitive to the needs of vulnerable children and women.
- Employ staff that are specially trained to deal with women and children.
- Provide services in a non-threatening environment.
- Provide multiple services in one place, including psycho-social support, social work services, legal aid and forensic investigation.
- Secure proper investigation of cases involving children as victims and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for their crimes.
- Raise awareness among local communities about sexual and gender-based violence and the services provided by the Family and Child Protection Units and encourage communities to use the system.
- Establish a system of close collaboration with specialists from different sectors to ensure an integrated response to children and women in contact with the law – including social work, legal aid, prosecution, judiciary, psycho-social and health professionals.
- Establish and maintain a database on all cases reported to the unit.

The first FCPU was set up January 2007 in Khartoum and handled more than 1 260 cases of reported violence against children and youth in its first year (mainly children aged 6-10 reporting sexual violence). Another 11 units were established in Khartoum and across Northern Sudan in late 2007 and 2008. Of 813 cases prosecuted in the Khartoum courts that year, an impressive 473 defendants were convicted. Key to this was the presence of medical experts, forensic investigators and skilled police officers in the units, as well as the improved referral mechanisms and co-operation between service providers. As a result, reports of abuse and violence were followed up more quickly, forensic and other evidence were gathered rapidly from victims and more robust legal cases were presented to the courts, where children’s evidence is now accepted and respected.

Source: UNICEF, 2008b.

DDR of young ex-combatants is a key priority in consolidating peace. Successful programming requires integrated and sustainable approaches. To address underlying issues, assistance should be based on an assessment of the reasons why youth joined the armed forces in the first place and identity interventions with social and psychological dimensions. Additionally, DDR programmes should take an integrated approach towards youth combatants, civilian youth and the general community. The focus should be on activities like employment that prevent recruitment and re-recruitment into the armed forces. Successful reintegration depends both on the capability of the economy to create employment opportunities and on the ability of DDR programmes to increase the employability of youth combatants. Key lessons learned from evaluations of youth DDR programmes over the last decade suggest that interventions should be targeted at non-combatants as well as combatants; prioritising flexible, appropriate and long-term reintegration packages; supporting a wide range of skills training and awareness raising; addressing gender issues, as women often have different experiences and needs for reintegration; supporting community sensitisation and benefits programmes; increasing family acceptance; and ensuring programmes reach and address the special needs of vulnerable groups and women (Box 4.6).

There has been increasing interest in programmes seeking to engage young people directly in **violence prevention and peace-building activities**. These offer a means to empower youth, to harness their energies and capacities as a force for change and to prevent them from being drawn into renewed violence. These programmes include peace education and dialogue

Box 4.6. Examples of DDR programmes

The USAID-funded Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace Program (YRTEP, 2000-2002) in Sierra Leone located its 6-12 month training programmes (covering psychosocial support, life skills, literacy, peace education, vocational and agricultural skills) in the communities where ex-combatants were to be integrated. It also targeted both ex-combatants and other at-risk or marginalised youth in those communities. This inclusive, community-centred approach was vital for improvements in youth behaviour and community-level peace building. However, the main challenges to this programme were the ongoing insecurity and the lack of sufficient programme follow-up to ensure sustainability of outcomes and links to longer-term community development (Care Inc. and Creative Associates International Inc., 2002).

Another USAID-supported Office of Transition Initiatives programme in Colombia ensured that a special programme of assistance was provided to child ex-combatants and at-risk children from indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, respecting the different laws that apply to these groups in indigenous territories

Sources: USAID, 2006; 2008.

Box 4.7. Conflict prevention for youth and their communities in Guinea

Between 2005 and 2007, USAID funded an initiative in the conflict-prone south-eastern border regions of Guinea. Its objectives were to:

1. Improve community capacity to manage conflict:
 - The project organised workshops, meetings and events with local authorities, youth and community members to follow-up a National Peace Conference to discuss, disseminate and apply its resolutions locally.
 - Members of 35 Community Management Committees (CMCs) and numerous community-based organisations were trained in conflict resolution, community reconciliation and mediation.
 - Conflict prevention small grants were provided for projects to link youth and their communities in conflict prevention.
2. Build youth and community capacity to resist violence:
 - 12 Master Trainers and 200 youth animators were trained in a range of violence prevention, facilitation and other skills.
 - 6 000 at-risk youth were trained in life skills, numeracy and literacy.
 - Follow-on apprenticeship schemes and microenterprise start-up grants were provided.

As a result of the project – and in spite of a period of strikes, political instability and proactive recruitment by armed groups – the project reported a small decrease in the incidence of violence in target communities. This was reinforced by a community perception that youth involvement in violence had decreased. There was also an increase in the peaceful resolution of less serious incidents of crime and violence with the increased involvement of CMC members and community leaders. The outstanding question relates to the long-term impact and sustainability of outcomes once the project ends.

Source: Harrelson, Macaulay and Campion, 2007.

initiatives; training in rights, peace building and conflict resolution (Box 4.7); and the direct involvement of youth in elections, human rights monitoring and violence prevention initiatives.

In some countries, children and young people can still be incarcerated before they are 18, yet international research suggests prison is usually ineffective and may increase the chance of reoffending. To prevent this, donors should work with partners to promote restorative justice mechanisms, focus on rehabilitation and provide second-chance opportunities for young offenders. Another entry point for donor assistance is to support the adoption of

Box 4.8. Reforming juvenile justice systems: UNICEF examples from around the world

In 2003, UNICEF supported the development of a juvenile justice system in Papua New Guinea almost from scratch. This has included the establishment of police juvenile policy and protocols, with a monitoring unit to oversee implementation and identify diversion mechanisms and alternatives to custody. The reforms were based on the adoption of traditional restorative justice principles – including revitalising the tradition of mediation – which UNICEF reports has led to greater local ownership and has played a key role in reducing the number of children in detention, especially for minor offences (UNICEF, 2007b).

In Montenegro, a capacity-building project reinforced the role of the Ombudsmen’s office in ensuring legal reforms met international standards for the protection of child rights (UNICEF, 2009b). In Ukraine, the pilot Kharkiv Public Defence Office provided free legal aid to needy people including youth. Its involvement has reduced levels of pre-trial detention and diverted a number of young offender cases into mediation, avoiding criminal prosecution (UNICEF, 2009a). Similarly, a UNICEF-funded project in Kenya engaged 335 lawyers to volunteer to provide free legal counselling and representation to around 2 500 children in conflict with the law each year. As a result, in September 2009, the Justice Ministry launched a pilot Legal Aid and Education Programme to provide free legal representation to children and adults in six districts (UNICEF, 2009b).

In Macedonia, successful support was given by a joint government-donor-civil society working group for drafting a new law on juvenile justice in line with international standards, which also included an action plan and budget (National Alliance for Children’s Rights, 2009).

and compliance with UN conventions that address **juvenile justice systems** (Box 4.8 and Box 3.1). These include the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Beijing Rules, Tokyo Rules and Guidelines for Action on Children in the Criminal Justice System. The UNCRC obliges signatory states to establish a separate juvenile justice system for youth under the age of 18 that promotes prevention, diversion and community rehabilitation. It mandates that detention is only used as a last resort. Possible programming options include supporting legislative reforms in the sector and supporting a free legal aid service for children and young people who are in conflict with the law.

Managing risks

Chapters 3 and 4 discussed programming options and specific interventions for addressing and reducing youth violence. Risk is inherent in designing and implementing such activities. Some risks can be managed, while

others cannot be controlled in any way. This subsection outlines the strategies that can be taken to identify, manage and reduce risk.

Programme planners should first identify the likely risks arising from planned interventions, and then assess and prioritise their likelihood and severity (Box 4.9). Risk management strategies could include avoiding the risk by planning a different course; transferring the risk to other parties; mitigating the risk through a set of actions; accepting the risk and proceeding; developing a pilot or demonstration project that can be narrowly focused to minimise the risk; identifying entry points with lower levels of risk; establishing indicators that reflect programme direction as early as possible to best manage risk; or monitoring and controlling risk as much as possible. For example, understanding the perceptions that a community may have about opening a centre that serves youth at risk of gang involvement can encourage approaches (e.g. community awareness campaigns) that may make the difference between the centre's success or failure.

Methods to monitor and control risk could include periodic re-assessment of risks, training staff to recognise and address risk, dedicating staff and resources to managing risk, building flexibility into the programme to allow for course change as needed, and tracking risk factors and devising protocols to manage those factors.

Communication is a key component of risk management. Continual discussion with staff and stakeholders (including youth and other members of the local community) should inform the development of risk management strategies. A communication plan can be generated at programme inception, tailored to address different stakeholders and their different risks. Regular communication with senior and youth leaders can keep them informed of project activities, so that if problems materialise, they already have a working knowledge of project objectives and activities. Developing relationships with the media, particularly sources followed by young people, can help manage information flows. Transparency in programme objectives and activities is fundamental. Finally, an event task force can be appointed in advance, so that if negative risks occur, the project is prepared to respond.

Box 4.9. Understanding risks

Research in the United States indicates that programmes bringing high-risk youth together can actually lead to increased violence.

Source: Dishion *et al.*, 1999.

Chapter 5

Monitoring and evaluation

This chapter outlines the steps and data needed to monitor and evaluate the impact of programmes aimed at addressing youth armed violence. Although there is some evidence of positive outcomes of programmes designed to combat armed youth violence, information on longer-term impacts remains limited. Programmes tend to report on specific outputs, such as how many people have been trained or received assistance, rather than the outcome of those activities and their impact on youth violence in a particular community. More systematic evaluations are needed on what works and why, as well as more post-programme evaluations that look at the extent to which positive short- or medium-term outcomes translate into longer-term impacts and should be prioritised. This subsection outlines the steps needed in setting up useful data collection over the life of a programme and the types of indicators that can be used.

Data collection

- **Establish a baseline.** One of the first steps that programme planners should require is the development of an accurate, detailed picture of the environment which the programme specifically intends to affect. With a sound baseline and continued data collection, trends and patterns can be revealed to help adjust programming and maximise programme effectiveness.
- **Design surveys carefully.** Because a valid evaluation depends on the quality of the data collected, data collection strategies need careful consideration. Samplings can be used to offset the cost of surveys if they are of sufficient size and reflect the population. Young people can be reluctant to discuss sensitive subjects in public. Where feasible, audio or computer assisted self-interviewing can help young people discuss openly sensitive subjects, such as illegal or stigmatising behaviour.

- **Collect individual information.** Institutions (such as police, courts, prosecutors and social service agencies) that disaggregate information by age may use different ranges to identify youth, thus making comparisons between aggregate data from these institutions difficult and individual data from them more useful. To resolve this issue, donors can work with these institutions to ensure that the records reflect the age of the people involved (allowing later aggregation). Other important categories include gender, specific charges and ethnicity to determine how interventions affect youth in these categories.
- **Invest in strengthening national capacities for multi-agency data collection, reporting and analysis.** Cost-effective systems to gather and manage data with clearly defined and shared data terms can build the capacity of local and community systems to gather useful information. One potential method is to create crime and violence observatories, as has been done in Latin America countries (Box 5.1). Donors can support the establishment of comprehensive information systems early on in the project to ensure better data collection, which leads to a more accurate and complete analysis of changes over time. Developing clear, uniform definitions of key terms and standards (such as age categories) will ensure that information from different agencies is comparable.
- **Ensure local buy-in for information collection.** Reliable, verifiable data are necessary to measure the impact of a programme. Data are most accurate when the collectors value them for their own use. Early education of host-country counterparts about the value of data for management and planning purposes is often necessary to improve collection of and access to data for programme evaluation purposes. High-level leadership is the key to ensuring that mid-level managers will prioritise processes necessary for gathering and accessing data.

Box 5.1. The Inter-American observatory on security

The Inter-American Observatory on Security (OIS) gathers general and specific statistics on crime and violence in member countries of the Organization of American States (OAS). It evaluates and analyses statistical data and makes this information available to the OAS member states, national, regional and international bodies, civil society and the general public. The OIS is a multi-sector and multi-disciplinary forum that facilitates the definition of indicators, policies, monitoring of public policies and interventions focused on the improvement of the security and the coexistence of the population in general or a specific community.

For more information: www.oas.org/dsp/english/cpo_observatorio.asp.

- **Anticipate unique challenges.** In addition to the typical challenges of monitoring and evaluating development programmes, youth projects face other hurdles. Young people are more mobile than other age groups and maintaining contact with specific individuals can be difficult. Privacy laws and ethical considerations can restrict access to, or sharing of, information and the necessity of parental consent under certain circumstances can pose an obstacle. Ethical standards should underlie data collection processes and policies must control disclosure of personal and identifying information, prioritise the immediate protection of youth and govern interview protocols.

Performance indicator development

- **Develop indicators in partnership with local stakeholders** (Box 5.2). Local stakeholders know best the availability and reliability of data as well as the appropriate milestones and measures of success. Local engagement can also build long-term capacity for research, as well as investing in continued collection of data beyond project parameters and promoting advocacy around youth and armed violence issues.
- **Measure multi-dimensional concepts with a basket of indicators.** Complex concepts cannot easily be measured by one indicator. For example, an increase in reported youth gang assaults might not necessarily imply an actual increase in youth gang action. Instead, it could reflect an increase in trust of the police and courts and thus a

Box 5.2. Juvenile justice system indicators

Typically, local justice institutions do not collect data consistently to determine how many youth are detained, for what reasons, and how their cases are resolved. The following indicators are measurable in countries with all levels of development:

- Policy indicators, such as the existence of a law defining the age of criminal responsibility; the existence of a complaints system for youth in detention; and the existence of a juvenile justice system that provides separate, appropriate processes and facilities for youth.
- Quantitative indicators, such as the number of youth arrested, charged, detained, and sentenced for armed violence; the amount of time youth spend in detention before and after sentencing; percent of youth who receive visits by family members; and the percent of youth who receive custodial, non-custodial, and diversion sentences.

Source: UNODC and UNICEF, 2006.

willingness to report gang activity, along with a decrease of vigilante action or tolerance of gang activity. Evidence shows that a basket of three to seven indicators carefully selected to represent different aspects of a multi-dimensional concept is sufficient to capture meaningful change (Vera Institute of Justice, 2003).

Chapter 6

Conclusions and recommendations

The experiences described above, combined with the literature on donor practice, reveal a number of broad lessons which we summarise here as recommendations.

General lessons

- **Avoid taking a harsh, punitive approach towards youth.** This risks alienating them further. Instead, seek to understand their perspectives and the positive role they can play in violence prevention.
- **Do not assume that general development programmes will automatically benefit youth.** Indeed, the evidence suggests that groups like women and youth are often excluded from development programmes, worsening their situation. It is essential to build in specific youth components and targets and dedicated resources to ensure that general programmes reach youth, especially the poorest and those most susceptible to involvement in violence.
- **Look at youth-led violence holistically,** rather than engaging in separate work on violent conflict, armed violence, violent extremism, sexual and gender-based violence, etc. Even if working in multiple sectors at once, donors should be attentive to the linkages between those sectors or the similar motivations that might drive youth behaviour in different sectors.
- **Involve youth from a variety of different backgrounds directly in programme design, implementation and evaluation.** Young people often have a clear understanding of their own situation and needs and how these relate to the needs of others. They often also have the time, energy and enthusiasm to devote to designing and implementing projects. Do not assume that local organisations – even youth organisations – speak for youth.

- **Look for opportunities to include youth in existing programmes**, e.g. promoting the political participation of youth in “deepening democracy” programmes; ensuring micro-credit programmes do not exclude youth; involving youth in community security and arms control projects.

Lessons for programme design

- **Base programmes on a comprehensive and context-specific analysis of the particular youth population and the particular risk factors.** In many cases, this analysis needs to be at the community or neighbourhood level (although linked to the broader national and global context) as the dynamics of violence can vary considerably within the same country or region. Therefore, the assessment tools chosen should focus on the community or neighbourhood level to prepare programme designers to create programming that generates the best possible outcomes.
- **Address both structural and proximate factors** that contribute to youth armed violence. Development programmes often focus primarily on the former (e.g. via employment generation, improving education provision and quality), assuming the latter are related to the decisions of individuals and cannot be addressed. However, some proximate factors can also be addressed effectively (e.g. training youth in conflict resolution and anger management; running positive parenting programmes; supporting tolerant media; promoting dialogue to counter radical messages and propaganda, etc.).
- **Take a multi-level approach to violence prevention at the local/community, sub-regional and national level, and create linkages between these levels.** It is important to understand the range of factors that contribute to youth armed violence and tackle these at different levels. For example, a programme could support reforms for an accountable security sector at a national level; support structures and organisations that can hold security actors to account at a regional or local level; raise awareness of the role and responsibilities of security actors at a local level; and involve local security actors in alternative community initiatives to prevent and respond to crime and violence.
- **Employ multi- or cross-sector programming** (Box 6.1). For example, health, education and security system reform (SSR) efforts provide key opportunities to ensure that youth issues are adequately assessed and addressed and cross-sector linkages made where possible. This may involve a specific youth component, policies or dedicated resources targeted at particular groups of youth. Other examples

Box 6.1. Multi-sector programming

Early evidence from favelas in Brazil suggests that community security approaches – which bring together legal reform, police reform, service delivery, alternative dispute resolution, etc. – are enjoying some success in preventing violence.

Source: GTZ, 2008.

include integrating peace education and health education into school curricula; linking skills training and microfinance projects together to give youth a direct use for their new skills; or combining sports and recreation programmes with conflict resolution training.

- **Focus on both ex-combatant youth and non-combatant youth and their communities.** It is important to involve a range of stakeholders in projects and create opportunities for reconciliation and confidence-building between ex-combatants, other youth and their communities. Only involving those who are/were involved in violence can create considerable tensions and resentment. It is important to work with war-affected communities as a whole, creating opportunities for positive interaction and integration of at-risk young people with other community members.
- **Include girls and young women.** Girls and young women are still under-represented in policy and programmes. A recent document on gender and conflict warned that girls and young women “risk falling between the cracks as programs target children but do not take account of the differences between girls and boys, or target women but fail to make provision for the different needs of older women and younger girls.” (Plan, 2008) It is critical to analyse the different needs of young men and women and ensure that programmes meet them effectively.

Lessons for programme implementation

- **Act rapidly and flexibly, taking a phased approach.** Although thorough analysis and good project design are essential, this is best viewed as an ongoing and phased task. In situations of chronic violence or immediately following a conflict, there are sometimes very small windows of opportunity to intervene and transform dynamics in a positive direction. It is best to get started on something, even if small scale, to demonstrate the value of peace and non-violence.

- **Pilot, prove and then scale up.** Although many small community-level projects for at-risk youth have had a high impact locally in tackling violence and supporting individual youth, problems of sustainability, scaling-up and high transaction costs have led some donors to reduce funding to community-level approaches to violence prevention. However, community-level approaches should continue to be supported as they are critical for violence prevention at a local level. The community is a key location for interventions that boost protective factors, such as activities that give youth a voice in community affairs (including sharing responsibility for decisions that affect them), help parents improve their parenting skills, or create/reinforce communal norms against violence. Community-level interventions are also key for piloting and proving approaches before they are rolled out on a larger scale. Attention to institutionalisation should be incorporated right from the start. The aim should be to involve key government bodies, local authorities and service providers (e.g. police, judiciary, schools) as early as possible in oversight and other roles to build their ownership and commitment to these approaches and pave the way to institutionalise and/or pilot initiatives to ensure sustainability.
- **Build partnerships and co-ordinate initiatives.** Engaging a range of actors and building partnerships is essential for sustainability and effectiveness. The most successful initiatives seek to involve a range of local actors involved in penalising violence and boosting protective factors (e.g. police, lawyers, NGOs, community-based organisations, local authorities and government ministries). Doing so can help build a coalition for change, align important members of the community against violence (thereby promoting a positive community norm), share analysis and co-ordinate initiatives for greater impact. For example, there are opportunities for complementary programmes implemented by different actors (e.g. linking vocational training programmes to cash-for-work programmes, linking DDR with community development programmes; Box 6.2). At the same time, unnecessary duplication and overlaps are minimised (e.g. many parallel and uncoordinated programmes training young people in the same skills and saturating the market).
- **Conduct ongoing analysis, risk assessment and management.** In contexts of violence or immediately after the cessation of conflict, situations are often unstable and change rapidly. It is therefore critical to conduct ongoing analysis of political and conflict dynamics, assess the risks to the programme and adapt it as necessary. It is important to remember that the ways a donor country itself is perceived locally by programme counterparts – and young people in particular – may vary, which might affect the implementation of programmes.

- **Incorporate clear monitoring and evaluation** to allow programming to adapt as it goes along. However, young people present unique data-gathering challenges and the topic of armed violence is a sensitive one, so donors must be prepared to identify and address those challenges.
- **Develop a robust exit strategy.** Sustainability continues to be the major challenge. It is essential to take the necessary time to strengthen the institutional capacity of partner organisations to take over and continue key aspects of the project once donor funding is withdrawn.

Given that youth are a significant population group in the developing world – and will eventually take the reins from their elders – young people must be a critical focus for donors. The lens offered by the OECD’s AVR framework can help donors approach anew the challenge of reducing youth armed violence by encouraging practitioners to think outside particular programming mandates and providing the foundation for a shared analysis among the diverse actors that work on different aspects of preventing and reducing armed violence.

Box 6.2. Youth training

The evaluation of a USAID-supported youth programme in Casamance, Senegal, concluded that it was essential to link the youth leadership and skills training programmes with microfinance projects to ensure youth have a direct outlet for their new skills. Otherwise, the training can just result in frustrated expectations.

Source: World Education, 2005.

Notes

1. There is no single agreed definition of what constitutes “youth” and age ranges vary between countries, cultures, organisations, and contexts. As life spans lengthen, the age span of youth can likewise lengthen. The United Nations General Assembly has defined “youth” as people aged between 15 and 24. The World Health Organization defines youth as between 10 and 29. The concept of youth can differ for males and females, as females often are no longer considered “youth” once they have children. In this stage, youth are defining their identity, establishing financial and emotional independence from their families of origin or contributing to the family well-being in an adult role, and becoming members of their communities (Erikson, 1968). Differing reference points for defining “youth” by international organisations, national governments, or local communities in terms of policies and programmes can lead to different understandings of the risks and challenges, as well as the most appropriate programmes to address them.
2. Armed violence is the use or threatened use of weapons to inflict injury, death or psychosocial harm. It thus extends beyond armed conflict to include situations of chronic violent crime and inter-personal violence (OECD, 2009).
3. For example, as part of the USAID’s transition support programme in Nepal, local level Youth Management Committees worked closely with Village Development Centres and local NGOs in the design and implementation of community development projects (QED report for USAID, 2009).
4. For example, Kenya’s national programme *Supporting the Role of Families*.

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Reducing the Involvement of Youth in Armed Violence

PROGRAMMING NOTE

To help experts and practitioners working to tackle the problem of armed violence, three Programming Notes build on the 2009 publication entitled *Armed Violence Reduction: Enabling Development*. These three notes cover:

- Armed violence in urban areas
- Youth and armed violence
- The linkages between Armed Violence Reduction and Security System Reform (SSR)

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