

**MIDTERM EVALUATION: UNICEF DEMOBILIZATION,  
SOCIAL & ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION OF CHILD  
SOLDIERS/MINORS ASSOCIATED  
WITH THE FIGHTING FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN PROGRAM**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Acronyms .....	ii
Executive Summary .....	iii
A. Background .....	-1-
1. Evaluation Objectives.....	-2-
2. Methodology .....	-2-
3. Constraints and Risks.....	-3-
B. Evaluation Findings and Recommendations.....	-4-
1. Demobilization of Child Soldiers Component.....	-4-
2. Reintegration/Literacy Training Component .....	-13-
3. Reintegration/Vocational Training Component.....	-16-
C. Other Findings .....	-18-
D. Conclusion .....	-20-

### ANNEXES

Annex 1: Terms of Reference .....	1-1
Annex 2: References.....	2-1
Annex 3: Table of Site Visits and Meetings .....	3-1
Annex 4: List of Respondents.....	4-1
Annex 5: Minutes of a UNICEF Partners Meeting on the Child Soldiers Program .....	5-1
Annex 6: NGO-UNICEF Email Correspondence Re HIV Awareness Training Material .....	6-1
Annex 7 a – b: Documentation on recruitment age for Afghan National Army.....	7-1
Annex 8: UNDP/ANBP Short – Medium Term Phase-out Reintegration Support Strategy.....	8-1
Annex 9: Afghan Aid, Budget Realization Sheet, May, 2005 .....	9-1
Annex 10: Detailed Response to Evaluation Guiding Questions posed in TOR.....	10-1

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## ACRONYMS

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ACBAR	Agency Coordination Body for Afghan Refugees
AIHRC	Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission
AMF	Afghan Military Forces
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANBP	Afghanistan New Beginnings Program
AREA	Agency for Rehabilitation and Energy Conservation in Afghanistan
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CANADEM	Canadian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights
CFA	Child Fund Afghanistan
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DA	Development Associates, Inc.
DACAAR	Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
D&R	Demobilization and Reintegration
EI	Child Labor Education Initiative
GOA	Government of Afghanistan
ICLP	International Child Labor Program
ILAB	International Labor Affairs Bureau
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LDC	Local Demobilization Committee
LRC	Local Reintegration Committee
MAFF	Minors Associated with the Fighting Forces
MDDT	Mobile Demobilization Documentation Team
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
MRRD	Ministry for Rural Reconstruction and Development
MTE	Midterm Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSP	National Solidarity Program
PRR	Public Restructuring Reform
SC	Save the Children
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
UNAMA	United Nations Mission to Afghanistan
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
WFP	World Food Program
YCDP	Youth and Child Development Program

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The background for this mid-term evaluation is a USDOL-funded US \$3M cooperative agreement to UNICEF to demobilize and reintegrate (D&R) Afghani child soldiers into their community settings. The pool for this was some 8,000 child soldiers 14-18 years of age. The evaluation aimed at assessing the success of this reintegration project in (i) raising awareness of Afghanis on the importance of education for all children, (ii) strengthening formal and transitional education systems that encourage working children and those at risk of working to attend school, (iii) strengthening national institutions and policies on education and child labor, and (iv) ensuring long-term sustainability of i-iii. The evaluation was carried out in October-November 2005 by an evaluator specialized in child labor/education programs in Afghanistan.

The independent evaluator made site visits within Kabul and to the provinces of Kapis, Wardak, Balkh and Baghlan. Broader coverage was circumscribed by security conditions in more distant provinces and even in parts of Kabul itself. Almost 250 respondents were interviewed, including 86 male and 93 female participants in eleven project sites.

Responses to all questions in the TOR are provided in a separate annex (Annex 10).

### **Key Findings**

**Demobilization Component:** Since minors under 18 years are generally considered young adults in Afghani society, frequently having commensurate responsibilities, many of the Minors Associated with the Fighting Forces (MAFF) have to some extent remained largely integrated within their families and communities. Many of the MAFF were out of school, along with more than half the school age population. Thus awareness-raising activities have been instrumental in getting significant numbers of children back into school. One focus of UNICEF in this context is to improve girls' enrollment through the awareness-raising part of the D&R. In addition to attending school, many of these girls have work responsibilities at home following classes. Nevertheless, in the case of both boys and girls, none have reverted to participating in hazardous work.

Community-based reintegration committees were observed to be effective in selecting beneficiaries, implementing community-based livelihood projects, and providing community learning space. For children already enrolled, these committees have helped them persist in the reintegration process. At the level of building national capacity to improve educational institutions and policies and to protect children, UNICEF has a broad array of programs that go beyond D&R. Impacts of training teachers and Ministry of Education (MOE) staff are not clear at the project's mid-point. The evaluator felt that quality of education measures were not well developed and could be strengthened.

Sustainability of the D&R, from the perspective of community support of the reintegration process and linkage of the literacy component to the national literacy program, is on track. Further enhancement of the project will need to build on linking child labor issues with national poverty reduction strategies, on active labor and social affairs ministry involvement in the

provinces, and stakeholder coordination to develop interventions aimed at family economies and child laborers. One possible constraint the evaluator identified is the timeframe limitation of a nine month funding cycle during which functional literacy and employment for graduates is expected to happen. An absence of NGO budget allocations for follow-up is another potential constraint.

Partnership and coordination, though well defined by UNICEF, were not always optimal in the case of some partners. For example, coordination of the World Food Program (WFP) package delivery to D&R participants on time was thwarted by UNICEF submission of a global proposal from all NGOs versus WFP's requirement for individual NGO proposals.

On a more general level of coordination, avoiding a certain level of program duplication because of weak donor coordination has not been satisfactorily resolved.

**Reintegration/Literacy Training Component:** The evaluator found some evidence that training was duplicative of earlier skills training in reading, writing and numeracy skills and that as a response the program should build on educational strengths of already selected youth. Another constraint observed is that since the D&R literacy program targets 14-18 year olds, they are often too old to enter formal education. On the other hand, accelerated literacy learning classes for those who are illiterate has been proposed by some NGOs so they can catch up.

A question of program entitlements arose in the case of some beneficiaries, whereby they expected incentives of cash, commodities or services in order to enroll and participate in the D&R.

**Reintegration/Vocational Training Component:** The evaluator questioned the eight skills offered under this component in terms of their linkage to market demand and absorption or to international trade realities. Since it is too early to collect outcome and impact statistics, it is difficult to know if job skills training match with a MoLSA/IRC annual national market survey in terms of actual jobs available to trainees. Some skills were seen to be redundant and thus duplicative of existing skills such as used by tailors and embroiderers. NGOs proposed replacement by training skills in such fast turnaround enterprises as poultry and egg production. UNICEF has noted, on the other hand that, as a direct result of the USDOL-funded intervention, a significant number of beneficiaries are engaged in a number of trades appropriate to the local economy.

## **Key Recommendations**

### **Demobilization Component**

- Starting at the planning stage, close coordination among Afghan government agencies, international organizations (including UNICEF and USDOL), NGO partners and local communities should be exercised so as to avoid unnecessary duplication of earlier reading and writing skills training programs.
- To obtain a better chance for sustainability, it is recommended that UNICEF work with MoLSA to better link the issue of child labor with national poverty reduction strategies, specifically to collaborate with provincial departments of labor and social affairs during project design through the handover to communities and coordinate with other stakeholders to formulate interventions targeted at family economies of child laborers to

enhance and sustain their capability to provide opportunities for education and protection of their children.

- Indicators of quality of education such as teacher to student ratio, student to textbook ratio, among others should be considered for inclusion in UNICEF's database.

### **Reintegration/Literacy Training Component**

- UNICEF/NGO partners should review beneficiary literacy levels and adjust the project accordingly. In the interests of community engagement, and at a lower cost, the NGO could engage local youth who are already educated to at least the secondary school level to teach classes above level three.
- UNICEF should consider integration of literacy training into other projects of longer duration, to allow beneficiaries who are illiterate to achieve functional literacy, either through additional levels of literacy training, or, as NGO partners suggested, through accelerated learning.
- As WFP will not back-date food packages, it is suggested as a goodwill gesture that it add an additional month of food package benefits to the reintegration components at the end of the project period.

### **Reintegration/Vocational Training Component**

- Implementing agencies should consider identifying additional training options which could serve as sources of household income, according to local market needs and capacities. More recent market surveys should be consulted in identifying skills training options.
- Given the difficulty of matching all new skills of graduate trainees with the labor market profile in an emerging national economy such as Afghanistan's, it is incumbent on the project to try to ensure that skills training matches income generation and alternative livelihood opportunities relevant to the local communities.

## **Major Lessons Learned**

### **Demobilization Component**

- Closer coordination among Afghan government, donors, NGO partners and local communities in planning target communities for the intervention lends itself to achieving unnecessary duplication of previous programs.
- In aiming for program sustainability, linkages of the child labor education initiative with national poverty reduction strategies is one way of enhancing opportunities for program continuity.

### **Reintegration/Literacy Training Component**

- Improved knowledge of beneficiary literacy levels could result in engagement of local educated youth in the teaching program.
- Integrating literacy training into other projects of longer duration might provide a greater chance for illiterate students to become functionally literate.

### **Reintegration/Vocational Training Component**

- In matching graduates to jobs, implementing agencies should consider identifying a broad array of skills training options tied closely to income generation and alternative

livelihood opportunities relevant to the local communities and based on up to date market surveys.

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# MIDTERM EVALUATION OF UNICEF AFGHANISTAN'S DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION OF CHILD SOLDIERS AND OTHER WAR AFFECTED CHILDREN PROGRAM

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## A. BACKGROUND

During the long-standing civil conflict in Afghanistan, minors were involved with both state and non-state armed groups in combat-related activities. The voluntary—or involuntary— participation of child<sup>1</sup> soldiers in Afghanistan's fighting forces is attributable to many causes, including socio-economic, political and religious factors. The consequences of enlistment for underage soldiers are multi-dimensional and may include physical and mental trauma as well as lost educational and non-military employment opportunities.

In November 2003, UNICEF Afghanistan formulated a proposal for a project for the “Demobilization of Child Soldiers and the Socio-economic Reintegration of War Affected Young People” (UNICEF's “D&R project”) in an attempt to address some of the root causes of minors' enlistment in the fighting forces. There were to be 15,000 direct beneficiaries between 14-18 years of age. Of these, some 8,000 would be child soldiers. The latter figure was based upon a UNICEF rapid field assessment conducted in March-June 2003.<sup>2</sup>

Although the UNDP/ANBP, a GOA-endorsed DDR project for ex-combatants over age 18, was already in progress, UNICEF's rationale for a separate D&R project was that children need special demobilization and reintegration support in a process that is child specific and separate from adults. UNICEF's child soldier project concept derives primarily from D&R initiatives undertaken in Africa, where interventions target male and female beneficiaries younger than the 14-18 year old age group which is the focus of the Afghan D&R effort. Among other situational differences in Afghanistan are social contexts, including strong family and community networks, a low rate of female participation in the Afghan conflict, and patterns of combat. Due to these and other issues noted below, the UNICEF D&R project's relevance to the Afghanistan situation is controversial; and its appropriateness has been questioned by various actors on the ground.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (“CRC”) and customary Western practice and legal norms, anyone under the age of 18 is considered to be a child. UNICEF defines those between the ages of 10-19 as adolescents. In the context of the agency's D&R program, the term “child soldier” is misleading, as it actually refers to adolescents, or youth.

<sup>2</sup> This estimate has now proven to be overstated: in late October 2005, at the end of the demobilization phase of the D&R program, only some 5,152 “child soldiers” had been demobilized. UNICEF's September 2005 Technical Progress Report states that 5,345 child soldiers had been demobilized. The discrepancy between the September and October figures is due to drop-outs from the program. The drop-out rate is affected by various factors, including enrollees' re-recruitment by commanders or other actors: see, for example, Child Fund Afghanistan Monthly Progress Report for June 2005, p 2. This and other issues affecting the program drop-out rate are considered below under “Demobilization”, p. 7 and n. 22.

## 1. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

This midterm evaluation (MTE) of the UNICEF child soldier project was initiated by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, International Child Labor Program.<sup>3</sup> (The evaluator's Terms of Reference are presented in Annex 1.) The aims of the MTE were to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability in the context of current field activities and their management. More specifically, the evaluation, according to the TOR, has the following purposes:

- Determining if the project achieved its stated objectives at the mid-term point, explaining why or why not;
- Assessing the outcome of the project in terms of sustained improvements achieved; and
- Identifying lessons learned and good practices to inform future USDOL projects.

The extent to which the project design supports the four strategic goals of the Education Initiative (EI) comprises another major purpose of the evaluation. These four goals are:

1. *Raise awareness of the importance of education for all children and to mobilize a wide array actors to improve and expand education infrastructures;*
2. *Strengthen formal and transitional education systems that encourage working children and those at risk of working to attend school;*
3. *Strengthen national institutions and policies on education and child labor; and*
4. *Ensure the long-term sustainability of these efforts.*

The above goals are reviewed in the context of the three main components of the child soldier project, namely (1) Demobilization, (2) Reintegration/Literacy Training, and (3) Reintegration/Vocational Training.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology included a review of UNICEF and NGO implementing partners' documents and reports, as well as other contextual literature and training material (references are presented in Annex 2.) As well, there were site visits within Kabul and to the provinces of Kapisa, Wardak, Balkh and Baghlan. Nearly 250 respondents were interviewed, including UNICEF and NGO project staff and other UN agency representatives and government officials. (A listing of these respondents is provided in Annex 3.) 86 male and 93 female beneficiaries in 11 project sites, including participants in literacy classes and skills training sessions, were also interviewed. (Project sites as well as numbers of male and female beneficiaries and types of activities observed are listed in Annex 4.) Respondents were interviewed individually. In meetings with beneficiaries and their instructors, queries led into focused group discussions. Instruction in both literacy and skills training sessions was gender-segregated.

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<sup>3</sup> UNICEF's D&R program has received funding from eight donors: the governments of the United States (through USDOL), Holland, Germany, Japan (through the Ogata Fund), Sweden (through SIDA), and the UNICEF National Committees of Germany, Japan, the UK and France: V. Chrobok, p. 37, according to the data provided to her by UNICEF Kabul on 15 February 2005. The primary donor to this program is the USDOL/ICLP Child Labor Education Initiative (EI) which has provided approximately US \$3m to this US\$5M program. For the aims of the EI, see below Annex 1, "Terms of Reference", section 1, "Background Justification".

The methodology also included observation of classroom activities. In vocational training sessions, students were asked to show examples of their work and to demonstrate the skill(s) in which they were receiving instruction, e.g. embroidery. In literacy classes, the evaluator observed teacher instruction and student responses. The evaluator randomly checked students' written homework and asked students to read from their textbooks; to write their names and sentences from the textbooks; and to count and/or write numbers from 1-20.

Examples of questions the evaluator asked during both literacy and vocational training sessions are:

- Have you lived in any place other than this village?
- If yes, are you a returnee and, if so, from where? Or are you an IDP and, if so, from where?
- What do you think a school looks like? How do you know that? Have you been in school before (home school, 'maktab', state school)? Where? What did you do there?
- What work do you do? At home, for example, child care, cooking, cleaning, carpet-weaving, agricultural work? Outside home?
- How does your class time affect your work at home/outside home?
- What type of beneficiary package do you receive, or expect to receive?
- What have you received so far?
- Who distributes the packages to you?
- What will you do when you complete this program?
- Do you have any problems with this program—travel, etc.?
- Do you have any recommendations for this program?

Yet another aspect of the methodology was an implementing partners' meeting to informally discuss project progress and challenges with NGO partners and ministry stakeholders. In addition, partners suggested various project modifications. The UNICEF national project assistant and the agency's representative to the MOLSA also participated in this meeting. (The minutes of this meeting and a full list of participants are presented in Annex 5.)

Finally, the methodology included a stakeholder meeting on 16 November 2005 during which the evaluator made an English/Dari Powerpoint presentation of fieldwork findings and recommendations to the stakeholders.<sup>4</sup>

### **3. CONSTRAINTS AND RISKS**

The aims of this assignment were ambitious, and various constraints were encountered during the evaluation. The security situation in Afghanistan is fluid, and both security concerns as well as

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<sup>4</sup> It is noted that the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, project implementing partners, and UNICEF subsequently rendered their impression that this and other meetings held by the evaluator were more of a one-way conversation rather than a consultative review in which feedback was sought by the evaluator. These same parties also noted that while certain issues were clarified for the evaluator, those issues did not appear in an earlier draft of this report. Similarly, following a review of the first draft of this report, it was noted by the implementing partner that it was not clear that the evaluator incorporated feedback from meetings held with local committees regarding their understanding of both the project and the local environment and conditions. From the participatory perspective, it is admitted that the evaluation may not have been perceived as proactive in incorporating local feedback as it might have been.

institutional and logistical challenges curtailed some of the MTE fieldwork both within and outside Kabul. The MTE fieldwork was also affected by the timing of most of the mission during Ramadan, as classroom activities were reduced and re-scheduled to accommodate those observing the fast. The original MTE timetable was therefore revised in the field to reflect these realities.

The evaluator notes that the security constraints faced during the short period of the evaluation are also relevant to the long-term implementation period. Clearly these same constraints comprise a major, serious issue for project implementation, especially given the logistics of extending to remote, difficult-to-reach areas that the evaluator could not visit. Finally, the restricted timeframe (22 days out of a 27 day assignment) allotted to the MTE fieldwork, limited the depth of this assignment.

Evaluation findings are considered below, and organized according to the project components of (1) Demobilization, (2) Reintegration/Literacy Training, and (3) Reintegration/Vocational Training. In each of these sections, project concept, design and implementation is considered. Issues related to partnership and coordination; management; budget; and medium to long term sustainability and impact are also noted. Recommendations follow findings for each of these sections.

## **B. EVALUATION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. DEMOBILIZATION OF CHILD SOLDIERS COMPONENT**

#### **Findings**

*Project Concept:* UNICEF's categorization of "child soldiers" for its D&R project is based upon the definition presented in the 1997 Cape Town Principles.<sup>5</sup> UNICEF's child soldier project concept derives primarily from D&R initiatives undertaken in Africa, where interventions target male and female beneficiaries younger than the 14-18 year old age group, which is the focus of the Afghan D&R effort. While Western constructs of "child" and "childhood" extend to any person under age 18, in Afghanistan minors within the project's targeted age range are considered to be "young adults;" and they often have social and economic responsibilities for themselves as well as their households.

Nevertheless, the Afghan Juvenile Code and Afghan Constitution define a person under 18 as a child. This definition correlates with the UNICEF mandate which is led by UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which also defines a child as any person under the age of 18. Based on this definition UNICEF is promoting a global advocacy project to define the child

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<sup>5</sup> "...any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers and those who accompany such groups, other than purely family members. It includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms." Cape Town Annotated Principles and Best Practices on the Prevention of Recruitment of Children into the Armed Forces and the Demobilization and Social Reintegration of Child Soldiers, 20 April 1997. A semantic issue surrounding this label has cropped up elsewhere in similar D&R programs and is associated with the effect of ostracizing beneficiaries, thus hindering their social reintegration. Child rights advocates therefore now argue against the use of the term "child soldiers" in programming in favor of a more inclusive "children and armed conflict" approach.

according to the provisions of CRC. UNICEF's demobilization and reintegration project was previously more focused on African countries, whose best practices and lessons learned served as a standard in developing its strategy and intervention for demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers in Afghanistan.

Among other situational differences between D&R initiatives elsewhere and the UNICEF Afghanistan effort is the social context, including the maintenance in Afghanistan of strong family and community ties by combatants, a low rate of female participation in the Afghan conflict and the generally localized nature of combat there.<sup>6</sup> As a result, Afghan MAFF often remained largely integrated within their families and communities.

*Project Design:* The context for the project design is that Afghanistan, based on global indicators, has one of the lowest literacy rates. In designing the educational project to combat child labor in the country, the first priority among stakeholders is that there should be an awareness of the need for education occurring at the community level. This has prompted the need for a large-scale countrywide advocacy campaign. In the case of Afghanistan, a large number of children were out of school. Available data indicate that while fully fifty percent of the Afghan population is comprised of children, the total number of children enrolled in schools (primary, secondary and high schools) is only about 5.1 million, considerably less than half the total. A related cultural condition is that large numbers of Afghani families do not permit girls to go to school. Given that particular demographic, UNICEF has launched a targeted project to improve girls' enrollment—mainly through advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns at the community level. The awareness raising element under the D&R project is also part of these efforts.

The UNICEF D&R project, in the context of EI Goal 1a, raising local awareness of the importance of childhood education, was designed in close collaboration by UNICEF with the Afghan government, NGO partners and local communities. Despite such close collaboration, the evaluator observed that in several areas where the D&R project operates, such as Wardak, Kapisa, Balkh, Jalalabad and Herat, there had been a long history of international and local NGO literacy initiatives for boys and girls and of home schools. Their populations seemed to be already well aware of the importance of childhood education. In a few cases the evaluator observed in literacy classes that some students' reading and writing skills were already up to standard and they may have been repeating prior instruction.

With regard to discouraging child labor, EI Goal 1b, female beneficiaries in both literacy and vocational training classes stated that they were not currently engaged in work that could be considered hazardous. Some did say that they were still expected to fulfill their work responsibilities at home following classes. However these girls were formerly captives of fulltime child labor and as a result of the project intervention they now work shorter hours and combine work with education. For male participants the picture is less clear. In no case was there any evidence of either boys or girls participating in hazardous work. (This topic is discussed later under the Vocational Training Component.)

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<sup>6</sup> These points have been considered extensively elsewhere, for example in Chrobok's study, and they are beyond the scope of this short-term assignment to consider in depth: V. Chrobok, Demobilizing and reintegrating Afghanistan's young soldiers: A review and assessment of program planning and implementation, BICC, Bonn, 2005, passim.

Concerning mobilization of community resources (EI Goal 1c), both the demobilization and reintegration components of the UNICEF project are offered in beneficiaries' home communities and beneficiaries are selected for both components by committees composed of local notables, including usually at least one MOLSA and/or MOE representative. It is noted that in Afghanistan, family networks remain strong, and LDRC members and beneficiaries are often related, either by marriage or by other family relationships. For example, in Chemtal, of the eight adult males in the LDRC, at least six had one or more children enrolled in the D&R project there. While there is a possibility that the D&R initiative may reinforce elite groups within the community rather than fostering inclusive community-based programming and an equitable sharing of benefits, evidence did not demonstrate such a trend one way or the other.

The community-based reintegration committees are a key to mobilizing local community resources and in instances where re-recruitment has occurred, these local structures have proven to be an asset in dealing with child protection issues with little or minimum external interventions. These committees play a major role in selection of beneficiaries, providing community resources for project implementation, acting as the focal point for monitoring child rights, advocating on behalf of children and young people in the respective communities and working with implementing partners in the execution of community based livelihood projects.

A related observation is that initially AIHRC was to have had input into the selection of LDRCs, which might have contributed to diminishing the potential for conflicts of interest in beneficiary selection. And while the AIHRC did not participate in this process, UNAMA did provide UNICEF with a list of district level contacts for the targeted project areas. It was not clear that UNICEF necessarily followed UNAMA recommendations. In any case, UNAMA's participation in LDRC selection typically takes into account the knowledge base of those persons involved in political affairs and human rights issues. UNAMA has consistently supported Demobilization and Reintegration Committee members in selecting beneficiaries for both DDR and DR projects.

It is noted that all beneficiaries in the D&R project are selected following application of strict eligibility criteria. No one included in the project is selected without applying eligibility criteria that aim to decrease and discourage child labor. Apart from the child soldiering that constitutes one of the worst forms of child labor, the other war-affected beneficiaries selected for the project, all under the age of 18, were either engaged in full time child labor or at risk of entering worst forms of child labor.

The evaluator perceives that UNICEF's program management should recognize the potential for the selection process to reinforce existing patron-client relationships that, in turn, could contribute to local conflicts of interest. To minimize this possibility, it is noted that the selection of LDRC members and, subsequently, beneficiaries, might be more inclusive if UNICEF proactively engages with AIHRC and gives full consideration to UNAMA's suggested nominees.

Another area of potential conflict of interest is community "contributions" mobilized by the LDRCs. In some cases such contributions are paid for as goods and services through the D&R funds disbursed to NGO partners. The evaluator noted, for example, that there were some cases reported of local landlords renting rooms for the purpose of beneficiary training. (See Annex 9 for expenses noted in NGO budget realization sheets.)

With regard to EI Goal 1—*Raise awareness of the importance of education for all children and to mobilize a wide array of actors to improve and expand education infrastructures*—the local child well-being/reintegration committees established in all the project operational areas function well. They are effective in mobilizing local communities in getting children already enrolled to persist in the reintegration process. These committees also contribute to raising awareness of overall child protection, especially of the importance of education. Finally, they also provide community facilities such as mosques to be used as community learning centers.

The following section concerns EI Goal 2—*Strengthen formal and transitional education systems that encourage working children and those at risk of working to attend school*. From the design perspective the literacy program should provide age-appropriate and relevant education to the out-of-school youth. The government is responsible for issuing certificates upon completion of the literacy courses which facilitate transfer of students to formal schools. The Ministry of Education literacy department with support from UNESCO has revised the literacy/numeracy and life skills, three-series student package and the curriculum for non-formal settings. The new curriculum and learning materials take into account the special needs of out-of-school children and linkage to the formal school system. As soon as the new curriculum is printed, it will be used in the remaining provinces by all implementing partners.

As defined, the literacy project is not a transition project. This has been reported to USDOL/ILAB from the field consistently. However, with the support from provincial departments of education, attempts are made to link as many graduates as possible to the formal schooling and these departments are very supportive in accepting the graduates in formal schools or to link them through accelerated learning projects available in some areas. UNICEF and partners realized that the majority of beneficiaries are over-aged for primary education and therefore an age-appropriate literacy project should be pursued instead of standard, formal schooling. Furthermore, the curriculum for non-formal settings designed and endorsed by the Ministry of Education literacy department in 2002 is in use and has been reviewed with support from UNESCO to include more life skills training.

Concerning EI Goal 3—*Strengthen national institutions and policies on education and child labor*—capacity building of government is at the top of the agenda of the aid community in general. In view of the post-conflict situation in Afghanistan and huge challenges that this country has to deal with in tackling all the problems at once and with short-term interventions seems almost overwhelming. In the context of capacity building, it is noted that UNICEF Child Protection Program is not only working on D&R of underage soldiers. In addition, under funds not covered by the project UNICEF is also addressing other child protection issues such as social protection (including harmful traditional attitudes, street working children, child trafficking, abuse and violence against children in families, communities, institutions including schools, mine risk education, among others). It also deals with matters of legal protection, namely legislation and policies directed at empowering the Afghan National Assembly to improve legal protection mechanisms for children.

UNICEF provided the evaluator with quantitative data on the numbers of teachers and ministry staff trained specifically for activities related to the D&R project. However, the outcome and impacts of these trainings are not presently clear at this stage. In addition to the absence of current data at this mid-term point in time, the measurement issue is also clouded by the fact that the project does not measure the quality of education *per se*. In this context there is still a

significant requirement for capacity building in both MOLSA and MOE, as evidenced in part by the post-MTE (January 2006) advertisement for the new international staff position of Technical Assistant-Child Protection at MOLSA.<sup>7</sup>

Additional evidence of a focus on capacity building is the 12-year Education Development Plan, an Afghan government attempt to improve quality of education and to increase student enrollment. The reintegration project facilitates the enrollment of out-of-school children engaged in child labor activities and provides age-appropriate, relevant and affordable education/literacy. Regarding policies impinging on capacity, UNICEF's 2006-2008 country program aims at working with government for the ratification of ILO convention number 138 on the minimum age standard and convention number 182 for the elimination of worst forms of child labor. Furthermore, UNICEF's three year project (2006-08) aims at removing children from hazardous child labor and providing them with educational opportunities.

Most of the above plans are generated and overseen by MOLSA, which has promulgated a National Strategy for Children at Risk, already endorsed by the Afghan Cabinet. Based on this Strategy, the social department of MOLSA is foreseen to be restructured and the training plan implemented. The latter includes provision for recruitment of an International Consultant, envisaged in the Child Protection Annual Work Plan for 2006.

In addition to the above capacity building focus of UNICEF on child protection issues is that agency's interventions in health and nutrition, education and water and environmental sanitation, which are its focus areas.

The last EI Goal, number 4—*Ensure the long-term sustainability of these efforts*—is aimed at continuing positive effects of the intervention following its completion. The hypothesis underlying the concept of sustainability as follows: the active participation and contribution of communities in the reintegration process and linkage of the literacy component to the national literacy project provide a solid foundation for sustainability. For example, in all communities learning centers are owned and maintained by local authorities. In effect, such a contribution from the communities can be encouraged and possibly sustained in the absence of donor support.

Furthermore, issues of sustainability and follow-up were the topics of a group of counterparts and partners during a mid-year project review meeting in 2005. While the evaluator's suggestion to extend the projects for one or two more years is beyond the current resources available for the project, implementing partners made some worthwhile suggestions. UNICEF has recognized the value of some of these suggestions and has indicated a commitment to carry out the following activities: a) work with MOLSA to better link the issue of child labor with national poverty reduction strategies; b) active engagement of provincial departments of labor and social affairs in the provinces from the project design period and the project hand over to communities upon completion; and c) coordination with other stakeholders to formulate interventions targeted at family economies of child laborers to enhance their capability to provide opportunities for education and protection of their children.

The evaluator believes that the short-term focus of the D&R project (nine months in each project site) and its lack of linkage to other poverty reduction initiatives, suggest that neither functional

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<sup>7</sup> For details on this position, see <http://onlinejobs.redr.org>, job no. 00861

literacy nor a high percentage of employment for graduates will be achieved in the timeframe available. As there is no budget allocation to NGOs for post-project follow-up, it does not seem feasible to determine the extent to which the project will have succeeded in its aims. A recent commitment from the government is that the currently literacy project for nine months per project site will be replaced by an improved package as soon as it is made available. Sustainability is considered in greater detail later under Literacy and Vocational Training.

*Demobilization/Enrolment Numbers and Pre-Demobilization Status of Demobilized Child Soldiers:* The evaluator found a lack of clarity about the pre-demobilization status of the child soldier beneficiaries, whether Taliban, mujahedeen, police, government, or Afghan Military Forces,<sup>8</sup> and this raises some questions about the actual numbers of beneficiaries who were “minors associated with the fighting forces” (MAFF). One of the reasons for this uncertainty is that the pre-demobilization status of underage soldiers proved to be a very sensitive and political issue at the community level. UNICEF did not want to be involved in the politics of pre-demobilization, which no doubt would have raised many questions and probably placed obstacles in the way of project implementation.

That notwithstanding, the evaluator determined that demobilization of new recruits under age 22 from both the Police and from the Afghan National Army by UNICEF’s MDDT is a serious concern. According to Presidential Decree No. 20, dated 25 May 2003 (see Annex 7a), and the ANA recruitment brochure (see Annex 7b), the age range for new recruits to the ANA is 18–28 years of age. This is also the age range for new recruits to the Police Force.

However, on the basis of UNICEF’s English translation of Decree No. 20, in which the original figure of “18” has been misread as “22” recruits under age 22 may have been demobilized from the new Police Force and the ANA.<sup>9</sup> Not only is there a large-scale, concerted effort by the GOA and the international community to build the capacity of both the ANA and the Police Force, but also, UNICEF’s mandate generally pertains to those under age 18 only. UNICEF was unable to explain why the new army and police recruits had been “demobilized” by their team, but there may have been some confusion over uniformed individuals mistaken for ANA military personnel or national police personnel.

In any case, both USDOL and UNICEF are emphatically against demobilizing young persons above the age of 18. The majority of underage soldiers who were demobilized by the project were from illegal armed forces, who provided their recruits military uniforms. The age of recruitment in Afghanistan is 22 and the government is very strict in recruiting correctly-aged personnel and in fact very few under 18 year olds were found within ANA or Afghan National Police who were also demobilized.

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<sup>8</sup> The NGO MDDT and UNICEF were not in agreement about whether the “Afghan Military Forces” referred to the new Afghan National Army or to other, non-state armed actors such as the Taliban; both “Taliban” and “mujahedeen” are given as categories separate from “Afghan Military Forces” in the UNICEF child soldier database, although the AMF is generally used as a term inclusive of both of the former groups.

<sup>9</sup> Interviews with AREA staff, Kabul 11 October and UNICEF Child Protection Officer, 10 October and 9 November 2005. The actual numbers of under age 22 ANA and Police recruits demobilized is not clear, as the D&R database does not, as noted above, distinguish AMF from ANA. Furthermore, they are not distinguishable in the database age 17+ category.

*Demobilization/Numbers of Demobilized Child Soldiers:* As of late October 2005, the demobilization component of the D&R project had been completed. Total demobilization figures from the UNICEF database were:

• Afghan Military Force	1,657
• District Administration	8
• Governor House	11
• Mujahedeen	3167
• Police Force	69
• Taliban	17
• <u>Unknown</u>	<u>223</u>
Total Demobilized	5,152

UNICEF’s original estimate of some 8,000 child soldiers, which was based on its 2003 Rapid Field Assessment, was probably overstated.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, as of 11 October 2005, the UNICEF child soldiers database listed a total of 8,288 beneficiaries enrolled in reintegration projects, only 3,291 of whom (less than 40 percent) were categorized as demobilized child soldiers.

*Demobilization to Reintegration/Time Lags and Drop-out Rates:* In many locations, there has been a considerable time lag between demobilization and reintegration processes, for example, in Wardak demobilization occurred in September 2004 but reintegration did not commence until August 2005. A gap of more than one month between the processes leads beneficiaries to drop out as they look for other sources of income. Some may leave their communities for other places in Afghanistan or migrate to Pakistan or Iran in search of work; others may be re-recruited by commanders or other actors.<sup>11</sup>

*Demobilization/ vocational training options offered to the beneficiaries:* The extent to which the eight vocational training options offered to beneficiaries during the demobilization process is considered later under Vocational Training Issues and Recommendations.

*Demobilization/HIV/AIDS awareness training poster and cultural sensitivity:* Although noted as part of the demobilization project,<sup>12</sup> this training was not offered as, upon review, the material was found to be unsuitable for the Afghanistan context. This is clearly stated in the email from the NGO implementing partner to UNICEF, dated 10 November 2005.<sup>13</sup> (See Annex 5, NGO-

<sup>10</sup> Whether there is any relationship between the lower than estimated number of child soldiers and the demobilization of under age 22 ANA and Police Force recruits is unclear.

<sup>11</sup> Program drop out rates are noted in most of the NGO monthly reports to UNICEF, e.g. CFA’s July 2005 Monthly Narrative Report notes 69 children on UNICEF’s “demobilized” list were no longer “present in the site”. In CFA’s June 2005 Monthly Narrative Report, notes that at least some dropouts are re-recruited by their former commanders or others: p. 2. Drop out rates in some places are near to 10%. In one instance, drop outs from the CRS program were such that UNICEF requested that they transfer approximately 120 girls from the CRS accelerated learning program into the UNICEF literacy program. Apparently the female beneficiaries were pleased with their transfer, as they believed their entitlements package would be greater.

<sup>12</sup> See V. Chrobok, op. cit, p. 34: “in the demobilization process, former underage soldiers are provided with information on their civic responsibilities, drug abuse prevention, hygiene, HIV/AIDS, etc.”

<sup>13</sup> “I received your message regarding the posters used in the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of Demobilization...the one about HIV, I am sorry we don’t have any of them. As due to its being inappropriate it was never used in the field. Thus being useless we were never actually concerned about its whereabouts (sic.)”: AREA to UNICEF Child Protection Officer, 10 November 2005.

UNICEF E-mail Correspondence Re: HIV Awareness Training Material, dated 10 November 2005 from AREA to UNICEF, for the complete email text.<sup>14)</sup>

*Demobilization/Geographically remote areas:* NGO partners noted that as the project required D&R activities to take place in beneficiaries' home communities, and many of the villages are located in geographically remote areas, demobilization required a longer period of time than originally anticipated, as well as often daunting logistical challenges. Difficulty of access to communities has also been an issue in the reintegration component, particularly in hiring and retaining qualified instructors.

As beneficiaries were distributed over large and remote areas, the project might have been implemented in a less costly and more timely fashion had its reintegration components been combined with other youth-focused literary and vocational training initiatives in the same areas. It is one of the responsibilities of UNICEF RPOs and PPOs to be aware of other aid activities in their respective areas; and there are sector specific meetings coordinated by the lead UN agency in each region with other UN and NGO actors on a monthly basis (meetings are more frequent during emergency conditions).

*Partnership and Coordination:* Generally, mechanisms for partnership and coordination of the D&R project are well defined and UNICEF's partnership arrangements with WFP, ANBP, UNAMA and government counterparts are clearly spelled out. The roles and responsibilities, information sharing mechanisms and support from either side are clearly understood by parties involved in the process. A recent example of partnership and coordination is UNICEF's collaborative work with UNDP/ANBP for ensuring long-term sustainability of the project which is based on the former's prior working relationship and coordination with ANBP.

In one specific arena, UNICEF and the UN country team (UNCT), interaction may not have been as effective as it might have. Specifically, cases of interaction with WFP, the provider of beneficiary food packages, of UNDP/ANBP, the "adult" D&R project,<sup>15</sup> and of UNAMA, interactions were observed to be less than satisfactory. Better coordination with other donors and other agencies involved in literacy and vocational training, for example, the World Bank, might have reduced what are perceived to be certain program duplications. Moreover, it might have enhanced project outcomes and impacts for beneficiaries nationwide, including the timely provision of food package entitlements.

*Monitoring and Evaluation:* UNICEF is known in development circles for its strong monitoring and evaluation of its project interventions. In addition to every UNICEF intervention having its own monitoring and evaluation component, UNICEF has a separate Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation section that periodically monitors and evaluates its programs. The only area where the evaluator observed any potential issues relates to bigger picture concerns. That is, the potential of using strong monitoring and evaluation towards the process of building on synergies of the D&R initiative with other UNICEF projects does not appear to have been tapped.

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<sup>14</sup> The UNICEF Child Protection Officer advised that the poster, which depicted how to use a condom, was derived from Where There is no Doctor. UNICEF did not test run this material locally before the demobilization process.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, correspondence from UNDP/ANBP to UNICEF inviting cooperation and an integration of program components, was an exercise in frustration: letter from Peter Babbington, Director, UNDP/ANBP to Dr. Sharad Sapra, Representative, UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office, dated 2004.

At the midterm point in the D&R project, outcomes and impacts are yet to become apparent. To date, only outputs can be measured. The project uses quantitative indicators, for example, numbers of enrollment, to measure outputs, and other data affecting participation/retention, such as rates of absenteeism and actual dropouts. These indicators, reported to USDOL by UNICEF, appear to fulfill the needs of USDOL annual reporting. However, the evaluator noted a relative lack of indicators in the D&R database that underscore issues of quality of education, for example, student/teacher ratios. Overall UNICEF's monitoring system was found to be effective.

## **Recommendations**

- A long history of international and local NGO literacy initiatives for boys and girls and of home schools in some areas might have triggered an effort to avoid duplication in the childhood education arena. Starting at the planning stage, close coordination among Afghan government, international organizations (including UNICEF and USDOL), NGO partners and local communities should be exercised so as to avoid unnecessary duplication of reading and writing skills training.
- In the area of sustainability, it is recommended that UNICEF:
  - work with MoLSA to better link the issue of child labor with national poverty reduction strategies, specifically to collaborate with provincial departments of labor and social affairs during project design through the handover to communities; and
  - coordinate with other stakeholders to formulate interventions targeted at family economies of child laborers to enhance and sustain their capability to provide opportunities for education and protection of their children.
- Quality of education measures should be more specifically defined and indicators identified to capture those. In addition to standard literacy and numeracy measures, examples of the range of quality of education indicators is: student-to-teacher ratio; range of materials used; time on task; training-of-trainers instructional approach; new skills in the learning society; learning-to-learn skills; and active citizenship cultural and social skills.
- There is already a mechanism within the agency to screen UNICEF materials for cultural sensitivity and appropriateness prior to their use in the field. Given that Afghanistan is both a deeply conservative as well as a highly mobilized society, and that attacks on both local and expatriate aid workers and their agencies need little provocation, it is recommended that UNICEF pre-screen all materials, including those from partners, prior to their application in the field.

## Lessons Learned

- Closer coordination among Afghan government, donors, NGO partners and local communities in planning target communities for the intervention lends itself to achieving unnecessary duplication of previous programs.
- In aiming for program sustainability, linkages of the child labor education initiative with national poverty reduction strategies is one way of enhancing opportunities for program continuity.

## 2. REINTEGRATION/LITERACY TRAINING COMPONENT

### Findings

*Literacy Training: Beneficiaries' Varying Literacy Skills Levels:* In site visits to male and female literacy classes, the evaluator found that in some cases beneficiary reading, writing and numeracy skills indicate that some are already literate, that they are repeating subjects they have already had in the past, and that the material in the D&R literacy classes is below their educational levels. Some students did admit to having had previous education, either in formal schools in pre-Karzai Afghanistan or in local home schools.<sup>16</sup> It is notable that several of the areas in which the D&R project operates, such as Wardak, Balkh, and Jalalabad, have a long history of UN/NGO-supported formal and informal education<sup>17</sup>.

This raises questions about the number of illiterates and the selection of beneficiaries in the targeted communities. The beneficiaries have been selected by their local communities and, if insufficient numbers of eligible illiterate minors cannot be identified in those locations, the project should consider adjusting so as to build on the educational achievements of the already selected youth.

*Transition from informal to formal systems (EI Goal 2):* The MOE has recently begun to issue certificates of literacy to students completing the D&R, and other, literacy training. UNICEF's support of the MOE in this process is commendable. However, the D&R literacy project targets 14-18 year olds. Beneficiaries in this age range are generally too old to subsequently enter formal education. The project description of the transition of beneficiaries from an informal/literacy project to a formal project could be recast to more closely reflect the reality of the situation.

*Literacy Training/Follow-up and sustainability (EI Goal 4):* In the D&R project, literacy training is offered for two hours daily over a nine month period.<sup>18</sup> The extent to which this component of the D&R project can provide sustainable, functional literacy to those beneficiaries who have no

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<sup>16</sup> This was particularly notable in the male and female literacy classes in Wardak: most of these students were returnees and had lived in Pakistan, where they had received schooling. Some of the female beneficiaries in Wardak had benefited from NGO home schools in their villages. In Chemtal and Meenah, some students were returnees from Iran, where they had also received some education.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, A. Ittig, *An Overview of Programs for Women and Children in Mazar* (UNICEF document), Islamabad, June 2001, Annex 3, "Table of Educational Programs." See also the annual reports for CARE and Swedish Committee for Afghanistan from 1998-2001 for other listings of home and formal schools.

<sup>18</sup> In Herat, the D&R program will offer 1.5 hours of literacy instruction to a total of 100 hours over the nine month duration of the program there: interview with William Baang, Program Officer, IOM Herat, 15 November 2005.

previous education is questionable, as it provides support to level three only. Class six is usually considered the minimum level for achieving functional literacy. Furthermore, at present, there is no mechanism in the D&R project whereby its graduates can be followed up to ascertain this. In the October partners meeting at MOLSA, some NGO partners suggested that accelerated learning classes might be an alternative to additional levels of literacy training. However, the project has not yet demonstrated any clear strategy for its integration into longer-term reintegration efforts whereby those goals could be realized.

*Literacy Text:* The MOE/Department of Literacy curriculum used in the UNICEF project is a product of the pre-Karzai era. In the NGO consultative meeting, NGO partners agreed that the content of this book was inappropriate for Afghanistan today. A new curriculum had been prepared in 2002, but until now had not been printed by UNESCO, the responsible agency. One NGO partner suggested that donor pressure might expedite the long overdue printing of the new literacy curriculum.

Textbooks were distributed to all project sites observed, except for those in Wardak. SHARQ, the NGO IP in Wardak, advised that UNICEF had decided not to distribute the books as the new UNESCO book would be available by the Eid holiday, that is, by the first week of November 2005.<sup>19</sup>

*Beneficiaries and Project Entitlements:* Beneficiaries require incentives of cash, commodities and/or services in order to enroll and participate in projects.<sup>20</sup> In several site visits, it was apparent that beneficiaries' expectations of project entitlements included cash payments.<sup>21</sup> There is a budgetary allocation to NGO partners of US\$150 per beneficiary for tool kits to be provided to them upon graduation, but UNICEF has strongly stated that there is no direct cash payment made to beneficiaries.<sup>22</sup> It appears that not only beneficiaries were unclear on this point. In the Budget Realization Sheet for one NGO partner for May 2005, under "Training", US\$125,000 was allocated, but not yet disbursed, for a one time payment of US\$250 to each of 500 trainees.<sup>23</sup>

*WFP Beneficiary Food Packages:* In the informal consultation held between the evaluator and NGO partners at MOLSA, they stated that the WFP food packages for project beneficiaries were both late in arrival and less than had been promised by UNICEF.<sup>24</sup> Not only did this decrease the

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<sup>19</sup> In the evaluator's 15 November meeting with UNICEF program staff, it was agreed to distribute the old textbooks, as it appeared there would be a significant delay in receipt of the new books in the field.

<sup>20</sup> For example, "In some area especially Khak Jab ar the trainees demands are more as before this program ZOA and GAA (international NGOs) had some vocational trainings and they were paying some stipends during the training as well as food for the participants." AfghanAid, Community Based Reintegration of Demobilized Underage Soldiers and other War-Affected Children and Young People in the Central Region, Kabul Province, Monthly Report for the month of September 2005, n.p.

<sup>21</sup> In the female literacy class in Kapisa visited by the evaluator on 15 October, beneficiaries asked when they would receive \$250.00, a cash payment they seemed to expect as part of their entitlement package.

<sup>22</sup> For example, UNICEF, "Inputs", opacity, p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> Afghan Aid, Budget Realization Sheet, Balkh, May 2005. This sheet was submitted to UNICEF in July, 2005, and it is stamped by UNICEF Mazar as paid, indicating UNICEF's approval of the amounts allocated to budget items: see Annex 8, Budget Realization Sheet, May 2005. The evaluator was not able to obtain clarification on this issue during the assessment.

<sup>24</sup> Each package is to include a month's rations of 50 kg wheat, 2 kg oil and 2 kg pulses: see Aschiana, Report for Parwan, October 2005. Amounts of food different from these were noted in Balkh. In at least one location, in Bamyan, no food packages were received for the entire duration of the project: evaluator interview with Mr. Jalaluddin Ahmed, Country Director, BRAC (in Kabul), 14 November 2005.

credibility of both the NGOs and UNICEF, but the evaluator heard rumors alleging that shortfalls might be due to pilfering. This could not be substantiated.

It has been suggested that one reason for the delay in delivery of the WFP packages was bureaucratic confusion: UNICEF had submitted to WFP a consolidated proposal with all NGO proposals included. WFP had initially rejected this, as NGO proposals are to be submitted individually by the implementing partners.<sup>25</sup> When the proposals were presented to WFP later, in the required format, WFP was unable to back-date food packages. Therefore, only packages from the date of proposal approval, and not before, could be distributed.

Another possibility of confusion over food deliveries is that WFP distributes food packages through its own local implementing partners. WFP's local NGO partners are not the same agencies with which UNICEF partners work in its D&R project. Food distributions are made in the presence of a WFP food monitor and a representative of the WFP local NGO partner and, at least in some D&R project cases, a MOLSA representative is also in attendance. Clarification of irregularities in food package shortfalls would involve interviewing each of these groups.

*Financial delays in disbursement and reimbursement of funds to NGO IPs:* All NGO partners stated that they had experienced delays in disbursements of project funds from UNICEF (see Annex 6, NGO correspondence to UNICEF, dated 10 November 2005, paragraph 2). In some instances, NGOs were obliged to draw funds from line items for other projects. One reason for delays is the submission of expense sheets first to UNICEF's regional office and then to its Kabul office.

## **Recommendations**

- UNICEF/NGO partners should review beneficiary literacy levels and adjust the project accordingly. In the interests of community engagement, and at a lower cost, the NGO could engage local youth who are already educated to at least the secondary school level to teach classes above level three.<sup>26</sup>
- Consider integration of literacy training into other projects of longer duration, to allow beneficiaries who are illiterate to achieve functional literacy, either through additional levels of literacy training, or, as NGO partners suggested, through accelerated learning.
- UNICEF might wish to reconsider the nine month timeframe for implementation of the D&R project because between the short-term focus and weak linkage to other poverty reduction initiatives neither functional literacy nor a high percentage of graduates gaining employment seems likely.
- UNICEF should clarify the status and anticipated distribution date for the revised UNESCO text, and incorporate it into the literacy project component as soon as possible.

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<sup>25</sup> As UNICEF has had a relationship with WFP for packages for beneficiaries through Food for Education and Food for Work, among other programs, since at least 2000, it is unclear how this confusion arose.

<sup>26</sup> One prototype for this is the Youth Community Development Program, which was under UN-HABITAT's community for a program, in Mazar. The community for a provided one of the models for the NSP: A. Ittig, op. cit.

- UNICEF and MOE should increase the impact of the literacy curriculum by linking it to skills training, by including vocational vocabularies into the text. This suggestion was presented by the evaluator in the stakeholders meeting, and it was endorsed there by the Deputy Minister, MOLSA, as well as by various NGO representatives.
- UNICEF should clarify its financial transactions more clearly to USDOL in light of the fact that UNICEF has an internal audit system and it does not permit external audits.
- UNICEF, on a regular basis, perhaps at TWG meetings, should state exactly what beneficiary entitlements are, and at what point in the project they will be available and distributed. Moreover, UNICEF's ACO Financial Section should be more diligent in its review of partner and regional office accounting for expenses, given that external audits are not currently permitted.
- NGO partners should clarify to beneficiaries what their entitlements are, on a regular and ongoing basis, to minimize unrealistic expectations of the project.
- Since WFP will not back-date food packages, it is suggested as a goodwill gesture that it add an additional month of food package benefits to the reintegration components at the end of the project period.

## Lessons Learned

- Improved knowledge of beneficiary literacy levels could result in engagement of local educated youth in the teaching program
- Integrating literacy training into other projects of longer duration might provide a greater chance for illiterate students to become functionally literate.

## 3. REINTEGRATION/VOCATIONAL TRAINING COMPONENT

### Findings

*Vocational Training: Enrolment and Participation/Retention:* In each of the female vocational training sessions observed, there were high rates of absenteeism: there were from four-to-eight absentees, out of an average class size of 20. Teachers ascribed these absences to illness or “family problems.” Since absenteeism affects participation/retention, it needs to be clearly reflected in the D&R database, which presently it is not.

*Vocational Training: Participation/Gender Dimension:* As in the literacy component, female beneficiaries stated that after classes, they were obliged to undertake work at home, including child care, cooking, cleaning, fetching water, agriculture work and sewing. Furthermore, in Kapisa and Meenah, some female beneficiaries had to bring their children to class in order to provide child care.<sup>27</sup> For females, participation in the D&R project may therefore have inadvertently increased their workloads. It is unclear if this is also the case for male beneficiaries. None of the female or male beneficiaries met appeared to be currently engaged in work that could be considered hazardous.

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<sup>27</sup> Early marriage is commonplace in Afghanistan.

*Vocational Training: Relevance and Sustainability (EI Goal 4):* The eight skills offered generally are not systemically linked to market demand and absorption or to international trade realities. For example, Afghan markets are flooded with inexpensive Chinese footwear and clothing which is more competitive than local manufactures, and there are too many tailors and embroiderers to be absorbed by the markets, particularly in small villages.<sup>28</sup> Of course competition from Chinese products is a challenge not only for Afghanistan but for most of the world's developing countries. This situation should not deter developing countries and their constituent communities from developing and marketing local products. Furthermore, Chinese and other imported products, especially footwear and clothing, affordable in urban areas are not so affordable in rural areas.

All reintegration projects that beneficiaries select are ascertained to be consistent in terms of job skills training with a national market survey conducted by IRC (a project funded by USDOL), and in most situations a local assessment of the market situation is conducted jointly by sub-contractors and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. Nevertheless it has been a challenge to match all new skills of graduate trainees with the labor market profile in an emerging national economy such as Afghanistan's. However, partners endeavor to ensure that skills training match income generation and alternative livelihood opportunities relevant to the local communities. UNICEF has noted that according to field data, a significant number of beneficiaries are engaged in a variety of trades appropriate to the local economy.

The evaluator observed, however, that certain types of training were redundant, as these include skills already known to beneficiaries. An example is training in tailoring offered in areas where young girls traditionally learn how to sew as a household skill.<sup>29</sup> To offset such duplication, NGO partners suggested that production with a fast turnaround time, such as poultry and egg production would have a higher degree of success than other enterprises requiring more time. Furthermore, such production would be suitable for females culturally constrained from working outside the home. Another NGO partner suggestion was that in order for partners to make the placement of their trained graduates more successful, marketing training for beneficiaries should also be provided to project trainers.

*Vocational Training: Follow-up:* There is currently no mechanism or budget, to follow-up graduates from the vocational training project component. BRAC, AfghanAid, AREA and CRS all requested that support be given to NGO partners to follow up the status of trainees over a two year period to determine how many were employed, as well as how and where they are employed—in home communities or elsewhere.

*Vocational Training: Child/Youth Specific:* A child/youth-specific differentiator is not apparent in the vocational training project component, although UNICEF's rationale for a D&R project separate from the UNDP/ANBP initiative was that children need support which is specific and separate from adults. While these beneficiaries receive the same type of training as adults in this part of the project, they do not have the same benefits that their older counterparts in the DDR

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<sup>28</sup> One NGO partner suggested that a beneficiary not receive training in overused skills such as tailoring, until they had received a letter from an employer in the market, agreeing to hire them after the completion of their program.

<sup>29</sup> These girls benefit from the program by obtaining a sewing machine, which increases their marriage prospects. Admittedly, identifying viable vocational options for female beneficiaries who are of marriage age and who live in deeply conservative communities is challenging.

project have, for example, wages. An integration of the D&R vocational training project into that offered by the UNDP/ANBP would have given the UNICEF beneficiaries greater entitlements.

### **Recommendation**

- Implementing agencies should consider identifying additional training options which could serve as sources of household income, according to local market needs and capacities. They could consult market surveys which have been undertaken more recently than the 2002 MOLSA/IRC survey which is the project's main source for identification of skills training options.
- Given the difficulty of matching all new skills of graduate trainees with the labor market profile in an emerging national economy such as Afghanistan's, it is incumbent on the project to try to ensure that skills training matches income generation and alternative livelihood opportunities relevant to the local communities.

### **Lessons Learned**

- In matching graduates to jobs, implementing agencies should consider identifying a broad array of skills training options tied closely to income generation and alternative livelihood opportunities relevant to the local communities and based on up to date market surveys

## **C. OTHER FINDINGS**

***Policy Issues and Recommendations for Donor, UNICEF and Partners: Provision of aid to sites of drug cultivation.*** In Chemtal, Balkh Province, areas of poppy and marijuana cultivation were pointed out to the evaluator by local partners. While it is beyond the scope of this assignment to consider this issue in depth, and it has been undertaken elsewhere, it is notable that the U.S. Government is a major supporter of poppy eradication, as well as of sustainable, licit livelihood initiatives in Afghanistan. It is in this context that drug abuse prevention is part of the life skills training project for beneficiaries and the project provides prevention briefings for all communities participating in the demobilization process. Though the prime responsibility of drug eradication and alternative livelihoods to address this issue is the primary responsibility of UNODC, all other UN agencies share the same concerns surrounding this issue. UNODC has a well structured system of monitoring and reporting and it closely coordinates and collaborates with UNICEF.

Furthermore, the government of Afghanistan and several international organizations are currently using assistance funds to provide alternative means of earning decent incomes by populations living in the areas where drug cultivation is taking place. It is also worth recalling that it is primarily illegal armed groups that are involved in cultivating and trafficking drugs. No beneficiaries of UNICEF programs were found to be implicated in the drug trade.

***“Incentive Payments” to civil servants from project funds.*** LDRC members received a US\$200 incentive from UNICEF through its NGO partners.<sup>30</sup> These committees generally included at least one MOLSA and/or MOE employee. Accordingly, these GOA staff also received the incentive payment. The top-up of civil servant salaries with project funds may increase, as UNICEF transfers more responsibility for this project to MOLSA. This practice occurs in the context of U.S. Government support for civil service reform, as well as the Public Restructuring and Reform (“PRR”<sup>31</sup>), processes in Afghanistan. Some donors, such as the World Bank, have strict policies against augmenting civil servant salaries, since it is considered counterproductive to the PRR process.<sup>32</sup>

***Donor Coordination.*** In the absence of a strong, proactive governmental donor coordination committee, donors themselves have taken primary responsibility for aid coordination in Afghanistan. While there are various coordination bodies such as ACBAR for NGOs, and fora for UN agencies coordination, no analogous bodies exist for donors. Consequently, there is some duplication of projects, resulting in some funding cost-ineffectiveness. For example, several agencies with youth-focused literacy and vocational training are present in the country offering or having offered the same types of interventions to the same beneficiaries in the same locations as the UNICEF D&R initiative. For example, vocational training had already been provided in the Khak Jabar area of Kabul province by the international NGOs ZOA and GAA to the same beneficiaries who were subsequently enrolled in the UNICEF D&R project there<sup>33</sup>. There are other areas where there is also duplication by donors and their implementing partners, notably in the Kabul area.<sup>34</sup> Yet in other regions only one or two agencies are operative. Noteworthy is that USDOL does not have a representative in Afghanistan.

***Project suggestions from NGO implementing partners and beneficiaries.*** Particularly notable were suggestions for training in marketing and small business management as well as for micro-credit and job creation for project graduates. During a field trip, NGO IPs made numerous suggestions for expanding existing projects as well as for new initiatives. Many of these activities are communal and workshop-based, rather than home-based, and most involve the processing of a primary product.

NGO partner suggestions included fruit and vegetable processing; dairy processing; mosquito net production; hairdressing; pharmaceutical production; processing herbs and flowers; bakeries; English language training; and computer literacy training. Small business management and marketing training both for project graduates and for their trainers was suggested by several partners. Although it is beyond the scope of this report to analyze these proposals for projects in depth, it is recommended that ICLP/ILAB consider them in view of its current support to the UNICEF child soldier project and in the planning of new initiatives.

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<sup>30</sup> Incentives are generally itemized in budgets as “training”, e.g. AfghanAid Budget Realization Sheet for May, 2005 notes that US \$100 was paid to each of 20 LDRC members for training.

<sup>31</sup> An initiative to increase civil service salaries in Afghanistan. Currently, the increased funds required are drawn from a multi-donor trust fund.

<sup>32</sup> The evaluator subsequently learned that cash payments to LDRCs or government staff consist of a lump sum amount to cover costs such as travels, food, etc. during their service with Mobile Demobilization and Documentation Teams.

<sup>33</sup> See above, note 26.

<sup>34</sup> There are currently over 3,800 international and local NGOs restricted with the GOA as being active in Kabul. That vocational training similar to that in the D&R initiative have already been offered in some areas now serviced by UNICEF’s skill training component has been noted above: see footnote 26, above.

## Recommendations

- The U.S. Government in its role as donor should articulate its drug prevention policy to UN, government and NGO partners clearly, including statement about consequences for non-compliance.
- Given that UN policy on the drug prevention issue is guided by UNODC and that UNODC has recommended that aid be tied to communities' compliance with not cultivating opium,<sup>35</sup> if it does not do so already, UNICEF should report the location of all drug-producing project sites to UNODC. Furthermore, UNICEF could augment its life skills training to include reference to the negative impact on children that growing up in drug producing areas can have.<sup>36</sup>
- In light of the fact that the UN generally does not endorse augmenting the salaries of civil service partners, as this is considered counterproductive to the PRR process, UNICEF should articulate its own policy on this issue to the government, its NGO partners as well as to its donors.
- In the interest of better coordination and less duplication of projects and programs, USDOL should consider an arrangement with USAID to designate a program officer from USAID/Kabul to liaise with other D&R donors and GOA and to monitor D&R project activities on a regular basis.

## D. CONCLUSION

It has been noted by UNICEF and others that at least half of Afghanistan's population is currently under the age of 18. The overall development of the country's youth is therefore essential in order that they may contribute positively to peace-building and reconstruction. Education and job creation for young people must be key components in any strategy to build their social, civic and economic capabilities.

In post-conflict Afghanistan, the primary cause for children's nonattendance at school and for child labor—including children's participation in military activities—is poverty. To have sustainable and positive impacts, initiatives which aim to benefit Afghanistan's population of children who are out of school, or who are street children, and/or heads of households and/or working—including "child soldiers"—must be designed and implemented within a broad community development/poverty reduction context.

Furthermore, any strategy to decrease child labor in Afghanistan must consider the traditional roles and responsibilities that children and youth have in household economic survival strategies. For example, it is commonplace for children to assist with household tasks and in family cottage industries and, in rural areas, with farm-related work. Moreover, various studies, including WFP's VAM baseline studies, indicate a link between an increase in the number of working

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<sup>35</sup> UNODC, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2005*, 4 November 2005 (available on [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int))

<sup>36</sup> This suggestion was made by Mr. Sikander Khan, Senior Program Manager, UNICEF, in the post-fieldwork meeting with the evaluator, UNICEF Child Protection Officer and the Kabul Regional Program Officer on 15 November 2005.

children and a dependence on child labor by the most vulnerable, or least food secure, households, e.g. households without at least one able bodied male, including child-headed households. It has been estimated that child labor wages may account for some 40 percent of the prevailing market wage in some urban areas.

Given the responsibilities that minors assume at an early age in Afghanistan, the Western constructs of “child” and “childhood” seem less valid in that context. The age group targeted by the D&R program is between 14-18 years of age and, in Afghanistan they consider themselves, and are seen by society, as young adults. Moreover, as noted above, at least some of the D&R beneficiaries already have children of their own. Any interventions to provide access to informal education and vocational training for Afghan youth should acknowledge this and should build upon their considerable resilience and strengths.

Unlike some African contexts for child soldiers, in Afghanistan strong social networks and the generally localized nature of combat have resulted in Afghan MAFF remaining largely integrated within their families and communities. Arguably, the D&R program’s Afghan beneficiaries require equal levels of socio-economic capacity building and “integration.” Additionally, as noted already, since the D&R program targets young adults, its “child soldier” label is debatable. Because only reintegration activities will henceforth be undertaken, it is suggested that USDOL, UNICEF and the government consider that a more accurate name for the program might be something like “Socio-Economic Reintegration of War Affected Young People.” This point is not intended to suggest that the program is misunderstood by government counterparts, NGO partners or local communities. The program in fact fits well into the fabric of Afghan society and economy during a critical transition period. A change in name would not substantively affect the program’s impact; it might, however, render a slightly more accurate label for what the program aims to accomplish.

As noted earlier in the sections on *Reintegration/ Literacy Training and Reintegration and Vocational Training* in the context of the short-term focus of the D&R program, and the absence of direct program linkages to other poverty reduction initiatives, it is difficult at this midterm point to know whether either functional literacy or a high percentage of employment for graduates will be achieved. The absence of a budgetary allocation to NGOs for post-program follow-up may make it difficult to sustain the effort, much less to be able to measure program impact.

UNDP/ANBP has recently developed a proposed strategy for medium-to-longer term reintegration which would extend its beneficiary base and provide greater linkages to integrated community development (see Annex 8, “UNDP/ANBP Short-Medium Term Phase-out Reintegration Support Strategy”). Like the UNICEF D&R program, the ANBP has offered vocational training and literacy classes to its DDR beneficiaries, and the trainings for both groups are analogous. ANBP proposes to extend literacy and vocational training to the households of ex-combatants.

If the D&R and the ANBP reintegration and M&E components were to be integrated, the contractual arrangements between UNICEF and its NGO partners could be amended accordingly, and there need not be any interruption of service provision in the field. The result could be a more cost efficient program, with a potential for greater sustainability and positive impacts for beneficiaries, their households and their communities.

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## ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

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**FOR**  
**Independent Midterm Evaluation of UNICEF**

<p><b>Demobilization, Social and Economic Reintegration of Child Soldiers/Minors Associated with the Fighting Forces in Afghanistan</b></p>
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**August 2005**

**Cooperative Agreement Number (2003): E-9-K-3-0006**

**Financing Agency:** USDOL

**Type of Evaluation:** Independent Midterm Evaluation

**Date and Duration of the Evaluation:** 32 days (including days for  
production of final report)

**Preparation Date of TOR:** August 2005

**Total Project Funds from USDOL**  
**Based on Cooperative Agreement:** US\$3,000,000

**Vendor for Evaluation Contract:** **Development Associates, Inc.**  
The Navy League Building  
2300 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 300  
Arlington, Virginia 22201  
Tel: (703) 276-0677  
Fax: (703) 276-0432

## **I. Background and Justification**

The U.S. Department of Labor's (USDOL) international technical assistance programs have grown quickly over the past decade. In total, the Congress has appropriated more than US\$500 million to fund international labor projects through its Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB). These funds are used in a wide variety of projects that cover a range of labor issues, including international child labor issues, and a wide geographical distribution.

In recent years, the work of the International Child Labor Program (ICLP), one part of ILAB, has expanded significantly to include research on international child labor; support for U.S. government policy on international child labor; administration of grants and contracts with organizations engaged in international efforts to eliminate exploitive child labor; and efforts to raise awareness within the United States and abroad about international child labor issues.

Since FY 1995, Congress has appropriated over \$300 million to ILAB, to administer international child labor projects. Of this amount, over \$200 million has been earmarked by the Congress to support the International Labor Organization's International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (ILO-IPEC); \$148 million has been appropriated to support efforts to address child labor through the promotion of educational opportunities for children (the basis for USDOL beginning its Child Labor Education Initiative); \$700,000 has been allocated to support other technical cooperation efforts; and \$2.4 million has been allocated to support research and awareness-raising activities.

In FY 2001, ICLP began funding the Child Labor Education Initiative (EI), which seeks to improve the access and quality of basic education for children who either have been involved in the worst forms of child labor or are at risk of becoming involved. EI projects are designed to ensure that children in areas of high child labor are withdrawn and integrated into educational settings, and that they persist in their education once enrolled. In parallel, the program seeks to keep at-risk children from leaving school and entering child labor.

EI projects nurture the development, health, and safety of children and enhance their future employability by increasing access to basic education for children removed from child labor or at risk of entering it. Preventing and reducing the incidence of the worst forms of child labor will depend in part on improving access to, quality of, and relevance of education. Without improvements in the quality and relevance of education, children withdrawn and prevented from child labor may not have viable alternatives and could become reengaged in forms of hazardous work. EI projects may focus on providing educational services to children removed from specific sectors of work and/or a specific region(s) or support a national Timebound Program (TBP) that aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in multiple sectors of work specific to a given country.

The EI has the following four main goals:

1. Raise awareness of the importance of education for all children and mobilize a wide array of actors to improve and expand education infrastructures;

2. Strengthen formal and transitional education systems that encourage working children and those at risk of working to attend school;
3. Strengthen national institutions and policies on education and child labor; and
4. Ensure the long-term sustainability of these efforts.

The goals of the mid-term evaluation of the Afghanistan Child Soldiers EI project are to:

1. Help UNICEF and its implementing partners/subcontractors identify areas of good performance, lessons learned, and areas where project implementation can be improved, particularly for delivering education services to children affected by armed conflict;
2. Assist ICLP to better understand and improve the conceptualization and design of EI projects, within ICLP's technical cooperation program framework;
3. Assess the degree to which the project objectives have been achieved, identify which program interventions were most successful, and identify areas in which project modifications could enhance performance; and
4. Assess progress in terms of children's working and educational status (i.e. withdrawal from the worst forms of child labor; enrollment, retention, completion of educational programs), and their social reintegration following exposure to a situation of armed conflict.

## **UNICEF**

In 2003, UNICEF was awarded a grant in the amount of 4 Million USD by USDOL to improve access to basic education for former child soldiers in Afghanistan. The project is intended to facilitate the demobilization of 8,000 child soldiers, and provide community-based reintegration support through the provision of formal and non-formal schooling and vocational training to school-aged children as well as employment support for those of legal working age. The project also seeks to promote the capacity of the Afghan government, local nongovernmental organizations, civil society organizations, or other organizations already working on the issues of basic education and/or child labor. UNICEF is one of many actors seeking to improve the education system in Afghanistan, and itself is involved in a broad range of education projects beyond this specific project. *See* Miwa, "Investing in Afghanistan's Future – A Strategy Note on the Education System in Afghanistan," World Bank Report No. 31563-AF (February 2005); *see also* <http://www.reliefweb.int/filter/rw/rwb.nsf/doc106?OpenForm&start=1&count=50&so=63&se=3&ct0&po=0&cc=afg&rc=3&fo=fol990d86A64D69A6D307B242DD101B7E6CA114&th=279>.

In the first year of project implementation, UNICEF conducted a nationwide survey to identify child soldiers; established a technical working group on child soldiers; developed guidelines for the demobilization of child soldiers which were shared with and being used by the Afghan

government's National Demobilization and Reintegration Commission; and established Local Demobilization and Reintegration Committees in two regions (north-east and central highlands) and five provinces (Kunduz, Takhar, Baglan, Badkshan and Bamiyan) where 5,000 child soldiers were to be formally demobilized in 2004.

UNICEF has determined that the former child soldiers targeted under the initial USDOL-funded program represent only a fraction of the at-risk children that would benefit from expanded rehabilitation and education services in Afghanistan. Child protection assessments conducted by UNICEF have found that household coping mechanisms brought on by increased economic hardship place children at high risk of child labor, as destitute parents send their children to the streets, factories, or into prostitution in search of income. These children are at risk of injury and illness, and their long, arduous hours in search of family income prevent them from obtaining the basic literacy and/or technical skills they will need for future employment.

UNICEF has also identified children who are being trafficked to neighboring countries for labor. For example, in the Nangarhar Province, an undetermined number of Afghan returnee and internally displaced children are crossing the border into Pakistan to work in the tourism industry. In 2003, anecdotal evidence from UNICEF indicated that children who had been trafficked to Saudi Arabia for work were being deported back to Afghanistan in large numbers by the Saudi Government. Since October 2003, 200 had been deported to Afghanistan, and UNICEF identified an additional 700 Afghan children to be deported in subsequent months. These trafficked children are not in school, and lack the household income to afford education upon their return to the country. The estimated gross enrollment rate in primary education in 1999 was 3 percent for girls and 38 percent for boys. For 2004, UNICEF identified 750,000 children for enrollment in school, the majority of who are girls, as well as 50,000 teachers who could benefit from training and new curricula.

### **Focus of UNICEF Program Activities**

Funds made available to UNICEF under this 4 million USD award would be used to support UNICEF's education program in order to address the outstanding needs of newly identified child laborers, including girls. UNICEF's comprehensive education strategy in Afghanistan will prevent hazardous child labor by promoting access to school and supporting families to develop alternative income sources through vocational and skills training.

Through the cooperative agreement with UNICEF, the USDOL is supporting a four-year Child Labor Education Initiative project designed to address the following strategic areas:

- **Enrollment and Retention:** By increasing access to education for children involved in hazardous activities through the provision of educational opportunities, this project contributes to the elimination of abusive and exploitative child labor. Strategies used to increase enrollment and improve retention in Afghanistan include the provision of basic educational supplies; the provision of temporary learning-spaces; the development of an Accelerated Learning Program for out-of-school children, particularly girls, so that they may enroll with their age cohort; the provision of community-based schools for girls linked to the formal educational system; the

- provision of water and sanitation facilities in schools; and the development of a database for use in program planning, monitoring and management.
- **Improvements in the Quality of Education:** Strategies to improve the quality of basic education include the provision of textbooks, curricula, and in-service training for teachers; capacity-building of Provincial and District educational staff; and technical assistance to the Ministry of Education.
  - **Prevention:** Developing child labor prevention activities, such as awareness raising and high-level advocacy are contributing to the prevention of abusive and exploitative child labor. In addition, UNICEF supports the families of working and out-of-school youth through the provision of vocational and skills training to parents, and provides psychosocial support and non-formal education alternatives to targeted children, as necessary.
  - **Data-Collection:** In order to address the gap in baseline data on the extent and nature of hazardous child labor in Afghanistan, the project includes mapping and data-collection components.

## **II. Scope and Purpose**

The scope of the evaluation includes a review and assessment of all activities carried out under the USDOL Cooperative Agreement with UNICEF for the purpose of improving quality of and access to basic education for children working, at-risk of working, or removed from working in the worst forms of child labor (and most specifically child soldiering). The evaluation should look at the project as a whole and assess its overall impact to date in relation to the objectives as outlined in the Cooperative Agreement and project documents, including an assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of these efforts.

For the purpose of conducting this evaluation, DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATES, INCORPORATED will provide a highly skilled, independent evaluator to conduct this evaluation to: a) determine if the project achieved its stated objectives at the midterm point, and explain why or why not, b) assess the outcome of the project in term of sustained improvements achieved, and c) identify lessons learned and good practices to inform future USDOL projects.

The contractor/evaluator will work with the staff of USDOL's International Child Labor Program (ICLP) and relevant UNICEF staff to evaluate the project in question.

The results of the evaluation will be used to assist USDOL and UNICEF to:

- monitor performance of the program and its progress in meeting its outputs, targets and objectives;
- identify any areas of concern in project implementation and possible corrective measures; and
- be advised of strategies for the second half of the project and on ways in which the project could develop in the future, building on and amplifying achievements of current and past activities.

### **The evaluation of this Child Labor Education Initiative project should seek to address the**

**following five subjects; the enumerated questions under each subject heading are intended to guide the evaluation but need not necessarily be separately addressed.**

Program Design Issues

1. Does the project's design fit into overall government programs to combat the worst forms of child labor and provide education for all?

Project Design/Implementation Issues

1. Does the project design support all four EI goals? Which EI goals are most and least supported and why?
2. At mid-term, is the project on track in terms of meeting its stated purpose and outputs in the project document? If not, what factors have contributed to delays?
3. Has the continuing unrest and violence in Afghanistan affected project implementation? Can project activities be implemented in all targeted districts as originally foreseen?
4. What project revisions, if any, are necessary to adapt the project to the conditions of continuing civil unrest?
5. In terms of project purpose, is the project able to accurately measure results in terms of USDOL common indicators (enrollment, persistence, and transition)? If not, why not?
6. Is the common indicators database the appropriate vehicle by which to measure and aggregate results?
7. Did USDOL technical assistance on project design and monitoring help the project staff enough to warrant its continued implementation in future projects?
8. Can improvements in educational quality be measured and can the impact, if any, of these improvements on project common indicators be assessed (enrollment, persistence, and completion)?
9. Evaluate the methods to raise national awareness and mobilize resources to improve school access, enrollment, attendance and retention for targeted children.
10. Evaluate the community outreach and similar approaches that were developed to meet the needs and requirement of targeted children. Did the children's status as former child soldiers present particular challenges with regard to community reintegration? If so, were these challenges effectively dealt with?
11. Evaluate the methods developed by the project to develop linkages between, e.g., the transitional, formal, and vocational education systems.
12. Evaluate the project's modules on teacher training.
13. Evaluate the support systems the project has developed to assist children to succeed in school.
14. Evaluate how the project approached gender issues that have limited the participation of girls in school.
15. What other major design/implementation issues should be brought to the attention of UNICEF and USDOL?
16. What have been the challenges for UNICEF to implement this project within the framework of the broader Afghan education reform initiative in which it is involved?

### Partnership and Coordination Issues

1. What have been the major issues and challenges of initiating partnerships in support of the program?
2. What have been the major challenges and opportunities, if any, of implementing coordination with the host country government, particularly Ministers of Education and Labor, as well as other government agencies active in addressing relating children's issues?
3. Evaluate the project's success in training and undertaking other activities with district, municipal and local level officials to improve local educational planning to address the educational needs of the target children. Have the educational needs of former child soldiers been adequately met?
4. Has the project successfully promoted policy dialogue in Afghanistan on how to make education and training responsive to the needs of former child soldiers?
5. What have been the principal challenges in working with local NGOs and other local organizations?
6. Evaluate the project's approaches to mobilize local communities and increase parental participation to raise demand for relevant quality education and community monitoring of education.

### Management and Budget Issues

1. What are the management strengths of this project?
2. What management areas, including technical and financial, could be improved?
3. Has the project successfully leveraged non-project resources?

### Sustainability and Impact

1. What steps have been taken so far to promote sustainability and continuation of education strategies for combating child labor beyond the life of the project?
2. Evaluate the project's approach for dissemination of lessons learned from its initial interventions.
3. What steps have been taken to promote sustainability of the project's common indicator database beyond the life of the project? Specifically, what methods have been employed to improve education data collection and analysis to support education policy and planning?
4. Was the project's initial strategy for sustainability adequate and appropriate?
5. What appears to be the project's impact to date, if any, on a) individual beneficiaries (children, parents, teachers, etc.), b) partner organizations (local NGOs, community groups, schools, etc.), and c) government and policy structures in terms of system-wide change on education and child labor issues?
6. What lessons could be learned to date in terms of the project's accomplishments and weaknesses in terms of sustainability of interventions?

In carrying out an evaluation of the *Demobilization, Social and Economic Reintegration of Child Soldiers/Minors Associated with the Fighting Forces in Afghanistan Program*,

the contractor-evaluator will conduct pre-evaluation consultations and meetings with USDOL and UNICEF; conduct the evaluation; and write a draft and final evaluation report.

### **III. Deliverables/Outputs of the evaluation**

The contractor will carry out the following activities as part of this evaluation:

- Conduct briefing meetings at the beginning of the process with ICLP staff.
- Review documents related to the project being evaluated.
- Conduct a planning meeting with all members of the evaluation team to develop evaluation design methodology.
- Conduct interviews with key staff at the headquarters of the implementing organization (UNICEF) and with key field staff.
- Plan and conduct a stakeholders' meeting in the county where the evaluation takes place at the end of the evaluation.
- Summarize findings of stakeholders meeting to insert into evaluation report.
- Conduct the evaluation in country with key informants to collect findings that answer the general questions of interest cited above and country specific questions provided in the evaluation terms of reference.
- Write a draft evaluation report.
- Conduct debriefing of findings of draft evaluation report with field staff of the implementing organization.
- Conduct debriefing of findings of draft evaluation report with ICLP staff and the implementing organization and provide draft report for ICLP written comments.
- Produce a final evaluation report based on ICLP and implementing organization feedback.

An evaluation report in the format prescribed by ILAB/ICLP, which includes at minimum the following sections, is to be submitted to ILAB/ICLP:

- a. Table of Contents
- b. Executive Summary
- c. List of acronyms
- d. Evaluation Objectives
- e. Methodology of Evaluation
- f. Findings
- g. Lessons learned and Good Practices
- h. Conclusions
- i. Recommendations
- j. Annexes, including lists of interviews, meetings, site visits, documents reviewed etc.

While the substantive content of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the report shall be determined by the independent evaluator, the report is subject to final approval by ILAB/ICLP in terms of whether or not the report meets the conditions of the TOR. A first draft is due no later than 10 working days after return from an evaluation mission, and a final draft is

due no later than 10 working days after receipt of comments from ILAB/ICLP. All reports including drafts will be written in English.

#### **IV. Evaluation Methodology**

The following is the proposed evaluation methodology. While the evaluation team can propose changes in the methodology, any such changes should be discussed with and approved by ILAB/ICLP provided that the indicated range of questions is addressed, the purpose maintained and the expected outputs produced at the required quality.

The evaluation will include a desk review, an evaluation mission to UNICEF project sites in Afghanistan, consultations with stakeholders (including ILAB/ICLP), and with beneficiaries if possible. It may be necessary to limit the evaluation mission to specific locations, depending on the security situation in Afghanistan during the time of the evaluation.

#### Timetable and Workplan

The total duration of the evaluation process including submission of the final report should be 32 days. The tentative timetable is as follows:

- Beginning the week of September 26, 2005: Desk review in Afghanistan of Cooperative Agreement, proposal materials, interviews via telephone with USDOL staff (Washington, D.C.) and UNICEF headquarters staff in New York, New York.
- During the week of October 3, 2005: Conduct interviews with project staff, and other stakeholders; site visits, and other in-country review exercises in Afghanistan.
- By October 21, 2005: Compile findings and work on initial draft of report; de-brief and presentation of initial results to UNICEF in Afghanistan. Conduct meetings to present initial findings and recommendations to key stakeholders.
- Additional days as provided within contract: finish drafting report; submit to ICLP; and revise report based on comments received from ICLP and UNICEF.

#### Sources of Information and Consultations/Meetings

- Project document
- Cooperative Agreement
- Solicitation of Grant Applications (under which Cooperative Agreement was awarded)
- Management Procedures and Guidelines
- Progress reports
- Technical and financial reports
- PMP
- Workplan
- Project files, as appropriate

#### Consultations and Meetings (Specifics to be provided by project management):

- UNICEF Project Staff engaged in Afghanistan Program;
- ILAB/ICLP Staff in Washington, D.C.;

- Project Stakeholders (see list provided by UNICEF staff); and
- Beneficiaries.

## V. Inputs

DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATES, INCORPORATED will provide all logistical and administrative support for their staff and sub-contractors, including travel arrangements (*e.g.*, plane and hotel reservations, purchasing plane tickets, providing *per diem*) and all materials (*e.g.*, access to computers, telecommunications, office supplies) needed to provide all deliverables. DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATES, INCORPORATED will also be responsible for providing the management and technical oversight necessary to ensure consistency of methods and technical standards.

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## ANNEX 2

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**ANNEX 7 A - B**  
**DOCUMENTATION ON RECRUITMENT AGE FOR AFGHAN**  
**NATIONAL ARMY**

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**ANNEX 7a**

**PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 20, DATED 25 MAY 2003**

**See separate pdf file, "Karzai decree"**

## ANNEX 7b

### Excerpt from ANA recruitment brochure

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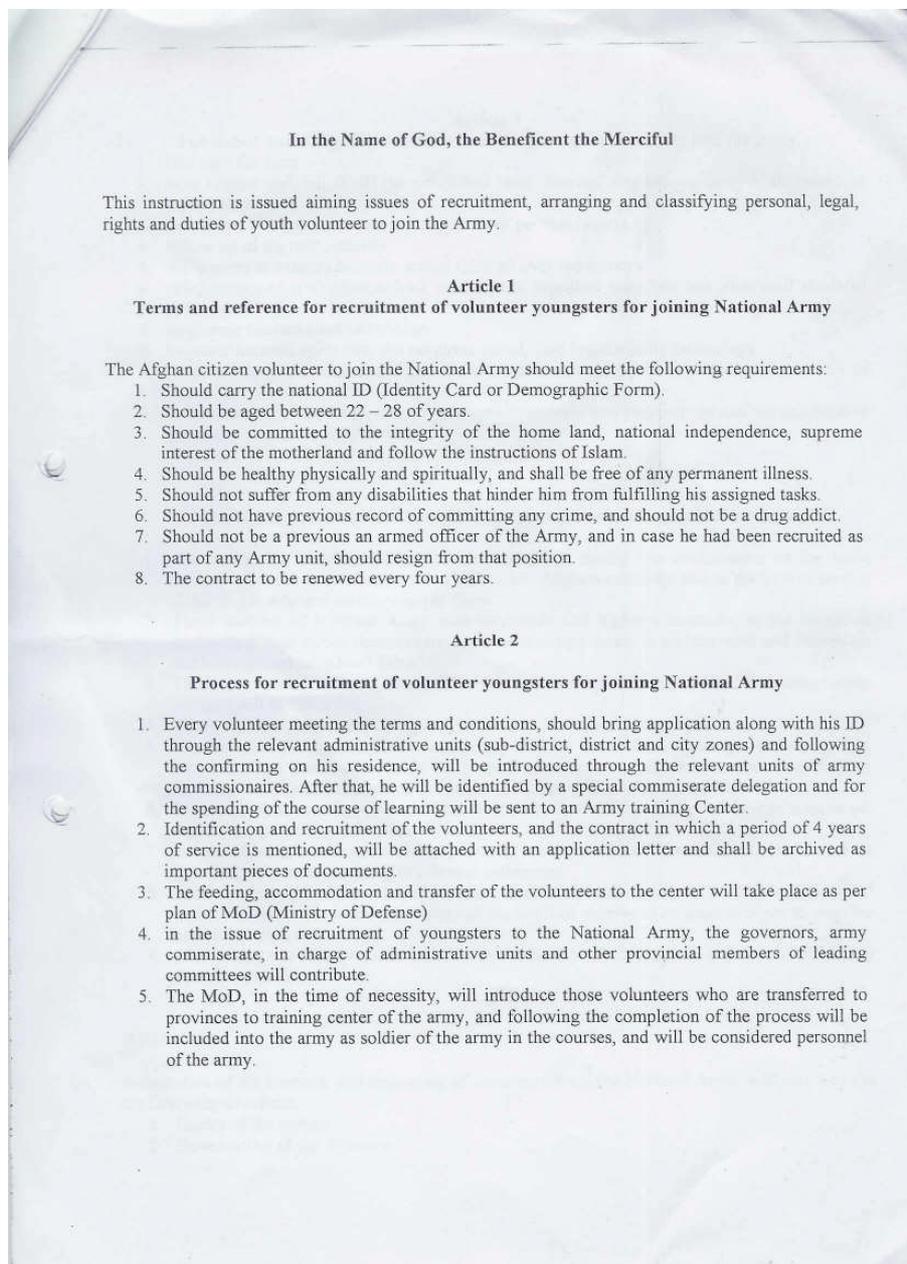
قومندان مرکز جلب و جذب با او موافقت میکنند زیرا عزیز به تمام معیارات برابر است او یک داوطلب بوده عمرش بین ۱۸ - ۲۸ میباشد صحت جسمی و دماغی خوب داشته و هیچ سابقه جرمی ندارد



دملی اردو د جلب او جذب د مرکز قومندان هغه سره موافقت کوی ځکه چه عزیز په ټولو معیارونو برابر دی. هغه یو داوطلب دی او د هغه عمر ۱۸ او ۲۸ کالو تر منځ دی او د هغه جسمی او دماغی روغتیا ښه دی او کوم جرمی سابقه نلری

## ANNEX 7c

### English translation of Presidential Decree No. 20 provided to Evaluator



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## ANNEX 8

# UNDP/ANBP SHORT- MEDIUM-TERM PHASE-OUT REINTEGRATION SUPPORT STRATEGY

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**Date: 27 September 05**

### **1. PROGRAM BACKGROUND**

Afghanistan's New Beginnings Program (ANBP) is a donor funded program which was established in 2003 under the auspices of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to support the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, now the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, in establishing and implementing a comprehensive, country-wide Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) program of Afghan Military Forces (AMF). The planned duration of the program is three years, with a completion date of June 2006.

The program is being implemented by UNDP on behalf of the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) and United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA). Contributions are channeled through the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery/DDR Trust Fund and then released to ANBP. While UNAMA provides overall policy guidance as part of its larger coordination function on behalf of the UN system, UNDP provides technical backstopping and operational support to ANBP. The principal government partners for this program are the DDR Forum and the Demobilization and Reintegration (D&R) Commission.

#### ***(a) Program goals and objectives:***

The goal of the DDR program has been to dismantle the AMF by collecting and storing weapons in possession of AMF personnel (approximately 63,000 members) and providing these AMF members with opportunities for reintegration into civilian society. This will promote the restoration of nationwide security by leaving the formally trained and ethnically balanced Afghan National Army (ANA) as the sole military force of the Afghan government and by creating an environment which enables political stability, economic recovery including major capital investments, personal security including free and safe access to all parts of the country and government reforms.

The immediate objective of this program has been to encourage former AMF forces to leave their military allegiance behind and look forward to a civilian life of gainful employment in community solidarity. In this context, ANBP has developed a comprehensive and targeted reintegration menu that offers each ex-combatant an opportunity to secure an economically sound and sustainable career or job opportunity which also equates with his standing and capabilities, and that will provide for the needs of his family.

Reintegration requires unleashing dynamics for change whereby economic capacities and diversifications stimulate private sector development and participation in the global economy, employment generation, and gender equity through family interventions and poverty alleviation through increased economical growth.

This said, UNDP, in the longer term, will continue to support the ex-combatants' reintegration process with monitoring and evaluation of beneficiaries beyond June 2006 to maintain program sustainability and facilitate initiatives which lead beneficiaries to sustainable livelihoods with occupational stability which earns them durable levels of income and food security to satisfy the basic needs of their households at levels above Minimum subsistence.

The ex-combatants should develop into respected citizens in their communities and where possible become an engine for growth, employing others, including less innovative ex-combatants and developing from small to medium sized enterprises, setting standards for progress, sending the message that reintegration works.

**(b) Program achievements**

Below are a summary of what has been achieved to date:

- A total number of 62,044 AMF members, which represents well over the estimated AMF personnel of 60,000, have been disarmed and demobilized and UNDP/ANBP expects to complete provision of reintegration support by end of June 2006.
- A total of 60,645 disarmed AMF commanders, officers and soldiers have been provided with reintegration support and finding alternative sources of income through one of many reintegration packages, including vocational training, agriculture, de-mining, small business, contracting teams, teacher training or joining the Afghan National Police (ANP) or the ANA.
- 36,000 weapons, including Kalashnikovs, rocket launchers, anti-aircraft guns and recoilless rifles have been collected and placed at a central storage site in Pol-e Charki, near Kabul, under the watch of the ANA and the international community.
- With the assistance of ANBP, the MOD stopped the salaries of over a 100,000 AMF personnel, many of whom were "ghost" members created by commanders who wanted to collect the salaries from the MOD. This has resulted in a savings of approximately \$120 million for the GOA.
- A nationwide survey of all heavy weapons in Afghanistan has been completed and over 11,000 heavy weapons have been cantoned in sites some of which are under the watch of the ANA.
- The unique capacity this program brought about additional responsibilities, namely the cantonment of heavy weapons, survey and destruction of ammunition stockpiles (AMPASD) and support to the government led Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) program.

As has been cited above, ANBP-DDR has been more output focused in the first two years of its life and has been successful in achieving its planned outputs through disarming, demobilizing and providing reintegration support to approximately 62,000 ex-combatants of the AMF. They have turned their backs to military life. Hopes for a new civilian life have been inspired and the individuals have invested in their futures, starting to work on their farms, learning new trades

and opening new businesses or reviving old occupations with new vigor. Currently, about 15,000 ex-combatants have graduated from reintegration with another approximately 47,000 ex-combatants still under the support of the program.

This affords ANBP the opportunity to retool its organizational structure, evaluate its initial successes and shortcoming, as well as focus resources towards sustainable reintegration. UNDP/ANBP can capitalize upon its institutional experience and capacity to tailor interventions shifting from measuring ‘outputs’ to ‘outcomes.’

## **2. REINTEGRATION SUPPORT STRATEGY**

As of August 2005 the Disarmament and Demobilization phases have rounded off allowing ANBP to focus the bulk of its resources, human and otherwise, on reintegration activities. With ANBP’s DDR mandate ending in June 2006, UNDP/ANBP is rethinking its strategic policy direction to ensure reintegration becomes a sustainable endeavor aimed at long term development goals. This strategic policy will be built in two stages:

*(a) Short- Medium-Term Phas- out Reintegration Support Strategy:* This paper specifically discusses a short- medium-term phase-out Reintegration Support Strategy, to commence immediately, which outlines how existing opportunities could be utilized by capitalizing on experience and institutional capacities, strengthening links and coordination between the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) programs and project, establishing links and coordination mechanism with other bilaterally funded programs/projects e.g. USAID funded Rehabilitation of Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP), and national priority programs such as the National Solidarity Program (NSP), in order to support sustainable reintegration of DDR beneficiaries, both graduated and those currently under the program support in various reintegration options and;

*(b) Long-term Reintegration Support Strategy:* Another comprehensive long-term Reintegration Strategy paper supporting the overarching goal of achieving sustainable reintegration with due consideration to the guidelines set forth in the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) by promoting private/public sector development aimed at general economic development and capacity building with the Government of Afghanistan (GOA), which will focus on longer mechanisms beyond June 2006. This paper will be developed in the coming 3–5 months and it will, therefore, not be discussed here.

## **3. SHORT– MEDIUM-TERM PHASE-OUT REINTEGRATION SUPPORT STRATEGY**

This support strategy will commence immediately and will continue during the life of the project and after and will be implemented by ANBP for the life of the project. UNDP will make sure backstop support is made available and that activities, as required, are continued and completed to ensure successful results.

There are approximately 62,000 beneficiaries in the DDR process under various reintegration support options. The reintegration options can be categorized into the following four sector areas:

- a) *Agriculture;*
- b) *Vocational Training;*
- c) *Business development; and*
- d) *De-mining.*

Below, we will discuss what potential opportunities exist within the UNCT programs, GOA and other donors in these particular sectors which could benefit ex-combatants' reintegration in the short-medium term.

**a) *Agriculture:***

Approximately 70 percent of Afghans are involved in agriculture as a way of life. However, instability, coupled with the country's multi-year drought devastated this sector.

ANBP monitoring reports indicate that approximately 40 percent of ANBP beneficiaries have opted for agriculture package as a reintegration option. The support provided in this sector includes distribution of various packages ranging from agricultural tools, improved wheat seed and fertilizer to fruit tree nurseries and livestock, all tailored to the profile and aspirations of ex-combatants. All agricultural packages come with a training component, package-specific technical and marketing training.

In order for these beneficiaries to seek sustainable livelihoods, avenues are needed that increase linkages to possible markets and exploit current and upcoming commercial opportunities for farmers and their families to produce and sell surplus produce. UNDP/ANBP seeks to furnish further support in order for beneficiaries to maintain skills and sustain XCs' income and livelihood improvement.

This could be achieved through the following programs such as the WFP administered Green Afghanistan Initiative (GAIN). This program, with a life span of three years towards 2008, could engage beneficiaries particularly those who opted for the agriculture option in many ways well beyond the end of ANBP mandate, by (a) purchasing high value saplings from XC farmers in cooperatives with other farmers to regenerate forestation, (b) providing assistance for expansion of existing tree nurseries (c) providing assistance for establishment of new nurseries. This encourages the involvement of beneficiaries in long term commercial agricultural opportunities.

Similarly, coordination with FAO's Dairy Production Outlets and Saffron Pilot Projects and USAID funded Surplus Wheat Procurement and Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP) aimed at rehabilitation of agricultural infrastructure, farm-to-market roads, increased on farm training and introduction of improved technology could assist beneficiaries in achieving the objective of earning increased on-farm income.

Although, many of these programs do not directly target our intended beneficiaries, coordination mechanisms could be worked out in which former combatants, who are able to display ANBP ID

cards, could be given priority in areas where these projects are implemented. As part of the joint programming of UNCT programs, UNDP/ANBP, UNOPS and FAO must coordinate further to take optimum advantage of existing opportunities to ensure the achievement of long term outcomes. UNDP will provide all necessary information on beneficiaries through the ANBP soldier and M&E databases, where necessary.

From the perspective of ex-combatants' potential, innovative beneficiaries may be considered as a spearhead for economic development in their communities. Ex-combatants, particularly commanders, must be provided an opportunity to engage in larger scale commercial ventures in the agricultural sector. The Promotion of Private Sector Development (PPSD) program could play an important role here by providing complementary business training and raising awareness on business opportunities in this sector. This program completed a Market Sector Assessment in horticulture (conducted by Altai Consulting) in June 2004 which could serve as a source of valuable information. As this PPSD develops, UNDP will further identify potential possibilities for strengthened relationship between the two programs.

It is also of importance that supporting these beneficiaries in achieving an increased on-farm income will also help stop cultivation and illegal trade of narcotics that has been a major source of income for a majority of farmers in this country. This could be done in close cooperation with GoA, donors and UNCT through provision of sustainable agricultural alternatives: training, demonstration and farm-related business training to XC farmers, to help them increase their income from legitimate crops.

Currently there are a number of interlinked problems which hinder beneficiaries' ability to accomplish sustainable reintegration, namely lack of knowledge on the part of XCs about marketing/selling, access to markets and poor market absorption capacity due to less than adequate economical activities.

ANBP is already addressing the issue of marketing knowledge through provision of training in marketing and sales which mostly focus on the basics of calculating costs, accessing markets and following market prices to identify the best time to sell production, negotiating prices and attracting new markets to its beneficiaries in the agricultural sector through its implementing partners. In the meanwhile, UNDP/ANBP will provide further support through establishing linkages to other existing opportunities with a stronger monitoring and evaluation to ensure better results.

However, such knowledge will mean very little if there are either no markets or markets with little or no absorption capacity. These issues have a wider scope, promotion and development of private sector and encouraging national and international investments, than what ANBP mandate allows, and need to be tackled by UNCT and other donor funded programs in close collaboration with line governmental ministries e.g. Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry (MAAH) and Ministry of Commerce.

**b) Vocational Training:**

Employment opportunities are instrumental for ex-combatants to maintain durable incomes. This must follow a two fold stream approach of increased 'on the job training' and access to job opportunities. Countrywide linkages to UNILO and USAID supported employment service

centers can serve this end. ANBP's database can be disseminated widely to private sector actors along with a directory of ex-combatants' services and skills base. Likewise, linkages could be established with the private sector to promote employment of beneficiaries in this sector area. ANBP can also seek secondary training opportunities through JICA training centers, and preferential contracts can be awarded to contractors that hire a certain percentage of skilled and semi-skilled XCs on construction sites.

The National Area-Based Program (NABDP), another high profile UNDP supported program, which aims to promote urgent recovery and long-term development priority areas in all provinces of the country, could provide employment not only to beneficiaries with skills in construction, but to those who have selected seasonal reintegration packages e.g. agriculture, across the country as well. This program does not target ANBP beneficiaries, but mechanisms could be worked out to employ a certain percentage of them on a priority basis. Again, ANBP databases could provide information on XCs' profiles and skills base right down to the district and village levels country wide.

Some constraints that XCs in this sector area are faced with are lack of adequate subsequent employment opportunities and support for business expansion. The first could be achieved through increased coordination with JICA, private sector and UNCT programs, while the latter could best be accomplished by seeking the support of MFIs to beneficiaries who wish to either setup or expand existing vocational businesses. (Details are discussed below under support to small business development.) In order to ensure (a) that entrepreneurial vocation training beneficiaries do succeed in setting up small businesses (b) that they manage to successfully run their businesses, it is also important to provide business development training to all beneficiaries under this category.

While efforts will be made in parallel on both areas, in cases where employment is not available, efforts will be made to provide training opportunities in order for beneficiaries to maintain and improve their skill levels. This needs to be ensured due to the fact that delays in providing secondary training or employment opportunities lead to loss of gained skills and subsequent frustration.

It is also noteworthy that lessons learned indicate that beneficiaries have not been interested in being employed on projects that provide wage labor opportunities (*not sector/skill related such as metal workers on a road gravelling project*). Probable reasons for these could be (a) ex-combatants, particularly officers, expect a sense of individual recognition and social status believe working on a wage labor project lowers that status (b) low wages offered by these projects. It is recommended that ex-combatants with particular skills be referred to already identified projects which offer work opportunities in that related trade/skill.

**c) *Support to Small Business Development:***

As many of these enterprises have already been assessed as sustainable by a mid-term external evaluation consultancy team, a key to durability is business expansion. This can best be accomplished through access to credit opportunities for ex-combatants. ANBP has already developed a countrywide survey of micro-credit schemes. ANBP monitoring and evaluation assistants can connect ex-combatants with micro-credit through MISFA programs, thus facilitating linkages between ex-combatants with small, but thriving businesses and micro-credit.

Linking ex-combatants to micro-credit institutions for business expansion purposes is the most viable alternative which will work best not only for ex-combatants in the small business sector, but could also support vocational training beneficiaries in setting up and expanding their businesses/trades.

The following are the two main constraints in the way of facilitating such an endeavor and how they can be overcome:

(a) MFIs require some sort of a guarantee before a loan can be provided to our beneficiaries. The D&R commission could be one alternative as a body to act as a guarantor. This needs to be discussed with the commission.

(b) Some beneficiaries do not show interest due to their uncertainty about their ability to pay back the loan. This is partly due to the lack of knowledge on how this whole mechanism of obtaining a loan and payback cycle works. For this, training on qualifying for, application for and managing loans should be incorporated into the training curricula for both vocational training and small businesses.

At a different level, commanders must be provided an opportunity to engage in larger scale commercial ventures. They can be linked with (USAID) 'macro-credit' schemes which provide significant financial capital that facilitates large scale private sector development. This is already being explored by ANBP through possibly facilitating and supporting the creation of a commercial de-mining company as cited below.

As mentioned under the agriculture sector area, the PPSD program could play a role in training and building capacities of potential ex-combatants along with raising their awareness on what opportunities exist with an aim to encourage potential beneficiaries to invest and setup businesses.

Also, development of the Baglan Sugar Factory and Nangahar Canal Project, as mentioned earlier, can serve as two possibilities for export production and subsequent domestic (XC) job and sustainable livelihood creation.

**d) *De-Mining:***

ANBP has conducted informal surveys with UNMACA and commercial de-mining companies confirming that demand will exceed supply for de-miners for the next 5-7 years. Utilizing ANBP's comprehensive database, ANBP can develop lists of employed and available de-miners (approx 1,200) countrywide for dissemination to USAID, NGOs such as HALO Trust, as well as commercial de-mining and munitions destruction companies. Already, a number of these de-miners have been recruited by RONCO and Halo Trust and it is estimated that before June 2006, 100 percent of DDR de-miners will be employed if they chose de-mining as a reintegration employment option.

Also, UNMACA will be supporting the capacity building of NGOs in this sector which will also result in further absorption of XC de-miners into mine clearance projects. These can focus on

'Direct Impact Projects' such as DIAG, GAIN and NABDP programs in support of the UN Joint Programming.

The concern that remains in this sector area, however, is whether these beneficiaries possess skills to earn durable levels of income once the job market in the de-mining sector ceases in 5-7 years time. This particular issue falls within the scope of the Long Term Strategy Support which will be developed towards June 2006.

#### **4. SOCIAL REINTEGRATION**

With the new M&E advisor and additional national M&E staff in both the HQ and regional offices, monitoring and evaluation processes have been strengthened to ensure the monitoring and evaluation needs of the DDR program are better addressed in terms of validity, reliability and measurability of data/information collected. Also, more qualitative indicators adapted to the socio-cultural situation of the country have been introduced with further information at the household and community level; however, there is still room for improvement on the social reintegration aspect of beneficiaries.

One potential opportunity is the National Solidarity Program (NSP) executed by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) countrywide at village and district levels. This program supports the establishment and strengthening of local community shuras at the village level and well as responding to urgent priority rehabilitation projects identified by these community structures. Coordination with NSP could serve our beneficiaries in two ways; (a) Community Shura will recognize that acceptance of these XCs and their long term reintegration are essential and contribute to the economic development and welfare of those communities, (b) these shuras will facilitate insertion of XCs into urgent recovery projects supported under the NSP on a priority basis.

This coordination will set an example of GoA involvement in support of sustainable reintegration of ex-combatants in the short to medium term and will set precedence for further involvement in the longer term, which will be discussed in the Longer term Reintegration Support Strategy to be developed.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

ANBP program beneficiaries (both graduated and currently under support) will be linked with presently ongoing programs/projects under government, UNCT and other entities that provide employment opportunities in an effort to establish a basis for a strengthened coordination mechanism on which the longer term sustainable reintegration strategy could be built with an aim to assist former combatants reach a state of sustainable reintegration back in their communities as well as contribute to the overall economic development/growth of the country.

Once this link has been established, UNDP/ANBP can use its database to track and monitor the beneficiaries within the life of the project and beyond. Utilizing its comprehensive database, UNDP can measure the impact of reintegration and gauge the success of its UN Joint Programming. This is also important due to the fact that beneficiaries are spread over a wide geographical area across the country which makes it difficult to reach and track them for follow up and support purposes and the databases; both soldier and M&E is a handy tool in finding and

tracking ex-combatants. This said, the project intelligence: experience, knowledge and information gained and maintained by project staff as well as implementing partners with regards to program implementation and beneficiaries need to be either capitalized upon or transferred to another entity such as the D&R commission or relevant sectoral ministries due to its importance towards the success of this process.

While UNDP can oversee, and can continually evaluate, interventions measuring reintegration ‘outcomes’ and modify programs as needed, the international community, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) stay committed to supporting the Afghan government and recognize that a successful DDR effort is essential to durable peace and stability.

UNDP and ANBP and in this agenda can be poised to break new ground and set precedence in reintegration activities for ex-combatants that greatly assist Afghanistan’s forward progress towards peace and economic development.

# ANNEX 9

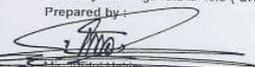
## AFGHAN AID, BUDGET REALIZATION SHEET, MAY 2005

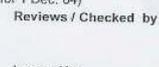
ActionAid Afghanistan  
Balkh Team Office  
et

### Budget realization sheet

1. Project Direct Cost		Cost (in US\$)				First Quarter Analyzes			
Items Description	Qty	Unit	Duration	Unit cost	Total cost	Period Budget	Expenses	Balance	
<b>1.00 Personnel</b>									
1.1	Project Supervisor	2	Person	12 months	500.00	12,000	70,350	50,399	19,951
1.2	Finance & Logistics	1	person	12 months	350.00	4,200	24,623	49,450	(24,827)
1.3	Skills/vocational trainers	24	Person	10 months	120.00	28,800	202,608		202,608
1.4	Literacy& Life skills trainers	20	Person	10 months	75.00	15,000	105,525		105,525
1.5	Medical Doctor	2	person	9 months	200.00	3,600	28,140		28,140
1.6	Data Base clerk	2	person	12 months	300.00	7,200	42,210		42,210
1.7	Agric. Instructor	2	person	10 months	250.00	5,000	35,175		35,175
1.8	Social/Field workers cum REFLECT Facilitator	20	Person	12 months	300.00	72,000	422,100	318,690	103,410
1.9	Guards	8	Person	12 months	150.00	14,400	84,420		84,420
<b>Sub-total of Personal</b>						162,200	1,015,751	418,539	596,612
<b>1.2 Supplies for SkillsTC</b>									
2.1	Skills Training Materials	8	kit	1 fixed	5,000.00	40,000	2,814,000		2,814,000
2.2	Recreation materials	14	kit	1 fixed	275.00	3,850	271,832		271,832
2.3	Literacy course materials	1000	person	1 fixed	2.30	2,300	168,840		168,840
2.4	Tool/Kits for graduated trainees	500	person	1 fixed	150.00	75,000	5,276,250		5,276,250
2.5	Heaters/Bukharies	30	Unit	1 fixed	25.00	750	52,763		52,763
2.6	Fuel for Bukharies	30	1.5 sinBukd	120 days	1.00	3,600	2,111		2,111
2.7	Medical supplies	4	kits						
2.8	Food for training	1000							
2.9	Generator for training centers	4	Unit	1 fixed	1,000.00	4,000	281,400	25,244	256,156
2.10	Fuel for generator	4	Unit	12 months	150.00	7,200	42,210	785	41,425
<b>Sub-total of Supplies for STC</b>						135,814		26,029	(26,029)
<b>1.30 Transportation and Vehicles</b>									
3.1	Domestic travel	16	10 days	12 months	10.00	1,920	11,256	3,100	8,156
3.2	Rental Vehicle (4x4) staff including driver	2	Vehicles	12 months	700.00	14,000	98,490	79,260	19,230
3.3	Transportation of equipments and tools to	5	trips	1 Fixed	150.00	900	63,315	4,900	58,415
3.4	Bicycles for social workers	20	unit	1 Fixed	60.00	1,200	84,420	12,125	72,295
<b>Sub-total of Transportation</b>						20,820		99,385	(99,385)
<b>1.40 Training</b>									
4.1	AA staff training on CRC, basic s/work,	4	unit	1 unit	150.00	600	42,210	100	42,110
4.2	Literacy and life skill staff training	4	unit	1 fixed	150.00	600	42,210	12,100	30,110
4.3	Local Re-integration Committee	20	unit	1 fixed	100.00	2,000	140,700		140,700
4.4	Agric. productive activities/Income generation								
4.5	Trainees	500	person	1 fixed	250.00	125,000	8,793,750		8,793,750
	Reflect	60	unit	1 fixed	40.00	2,400	225,120		225,120
<b>Sub total of Training</b>						128,200	9,243,990	12,200	9,231,790
<b>1.50 Telecommunication/IT/Office equipment</b>									
5.1	Computer and printer	2	systems	1 fixed	1,500.00	3,000	211,050	43,326	167,724
5.2	Communication cost - phone, e-mails,	2	Fixed	12 months	100.00	2,000	14,070	6,488	7,582
<b>Sub-total of Telecom.</b>						5,000	225,120	49,814	175,306
<b>Total Project Direct cost</b>						453,434			
<b>2.30 Other General Expenses</b>									
6.1	Training Centers rent	4	centre	12 months	300.00	14,400	84,420	30,500	53,920
6.2	Iranian Plastic floor mats for literacy class	40	Each	1 fixed	15.00	600	42,210	11,790	30,420
6.3	Stationary, office supplies including toner	2	fixed	12 months	400.00	800	56,280	4,065	52,215
6.4	Maintenance of utilities	4	sites	12 months	100.00	400	28,140	4,515	23,625
<b>Sub-total Other General Expenses</b>						15,600		50,870	160,180
<b>TOTAL 2. Project Support costs</b>						922,034		656,837	265,232
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM COST (Total 1 + Total 2)</b>						1,375,602	922,068	656,837	265,232

Currency exchange rate is 46.9 ( UNICEF rate for 1 Dec. 04)

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Hameed Nida  
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**UNICEF**  
**PAID**

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## ANNEX 10

# DETAILED RESPONSE TO EVALUATION GUIDING QUESTIONS POSED IN TOR

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### Program Design Issues

**Does the project's design fit into overall government programs to combat the worst forms of child labor and provide education for all?** *Yes, for the most part. Greater linkage of the subject program skills training to income generation and alternative livelihood opportunities relevant to the local communities should be considered.*

### Project Design/Implementation Issues

**Does the project design support all four EI goals? Which EI goals are most and least supported and why?** *Awareness-raising is adequately addressed; formal and transitional education systems-strengthening is adequately supported though some duplication of earlier literacy training efforts were discovered; national education institutions and policies strengthened is adequately supported, though greater coordination in implementing policies is needed; sustainability is being addressed at the policy level, while at this mid-term pointing time it is not clear if implementation is adequate to sustain the program results.*

**At mid-term, is the project on track in terms of meeting its stated purpose and outputs in the project document?** *It is mostly on target, though UNICEF's original estimate of some 8,000 child soldiers may have been overstated; as of 11 October 2005, the UNICEF child soldiers database listed a total of 8,288 beneficiaries enrolled in reintegration projects, of which 3,291 (near 40 percent) were categorized as demobilized child soldiers.*

**Has the continuing unrest and violence in Afghanistan affected project implementation? Can project activities be implemented in all targeted districts as originally foreseen?** *Since the evaluator's sample was limited due to security issues it is empirically difficult to answer this; opinion has it that activities that were inaccessible to the evaluator were mostly on track.*

**What project revisions, if any, are necessary to adapt the project to the conditions of continuing civil unrest?** *Conditions of unrest make it all the more imperative that program graduates are matched to viable employment opportunities.*

**In terms of project purpose, is the project able to accurately measure results in terms of USDOL common indicators (enrollment, persistence, and transition)? If not, why not?** *UNICEF's monitoring system effectively captures these indicators.*

**Is the common indicators database the appropriate vehicle by which to measure and aggregate results?** *Yes. Emphasis on output measures now needs to shift towards results*

*and impact data collection.*

**Did USDOL technical assistance on project design and monitoring help the project staff enough to warrant its continued implementation in future projects?** *Yes, but with the caveat that more assistance might be necessary to more closely align program skills training to income generation and alternative livelihood opportunities relevant to the local communities.*

**Can improvements in educational quality be measured and can the impact, if any, of these improvements on project common indicators be assessed (enrollment, persistence, and completion)?** *While enrollment, persistence and completion are easily measurable, quality itself is a bit more elusive and the evaluator found that either a direct measure or proxy measure for quality was not available.*

**Evaluate the methods to raise national awareness and mobilize resources to improve school access, enrollment, attendance and retention for targeted children.** *As noted, awareness-raising was adequately addressed.*

**Evaluate the community outreach and similar approaches that were developed to meet the needs and requirement of targeted children. Did the children's status as former child soldiers present particular challenges with regard to community reintegration? If so, were these challenges effectively dealt with?** *Child soldiers (as defined) were already fairly well integrated with their communities so this was not an overriding issue. Challenges have been adequately managed, perhaps with the exception that girls are in effect exposed to the added burden of helping at home after school hours.*

**Evaluate the methods developed by the project to develop linkages between, e.g., the transitional, formal, and vocational education systems.** *Market surveys need to be updated and perhaps expanded to incorporate more alternative livelihood opportunities relevant to the local communities.*

**Evaluate the project's modules on teacher training.** *These were found to be adequate.*

**Evaluate the support systems the project has developed to assist children to succeed in school.** *As already noted earlier, greater attention needs to be paid linking program skills training to income generation and alternative livelihood opportunities relevant to the local communities.*

**Evaluate how the project approached gender issues that have limited the participation of girls in school.** *UNICEF has appropriately targeted girls and their particular needs, though after school work in the home in addition to school homework represents a special burden for these girls.*

**What other major design/implementation issues should be brought to the attention of UNICEF and USDOL?** *It was recommended that UNICEF work with MoLSA more closely to better link the issue of child labor with national poverty reduction strategies.*

**What have been the challenges for UNICEF to implement this project within the framework of the broader Afghan education reform initiative in which it is involved?** *As noted earlier, a closer linkage of UNICEF with MoLSA to better link the issue of child labor with national poverty reduction strategies should be addressed.*

#### Partnership and Coordination Issues

**What have been the major issues and challenges of initiating partnerships in support of the program?** *There are relatively few, though coordination has had a few constraints (see below).*

**What have been the major challenges and opportunities, if any, of implementing coordination with the host country government, particularly Ministers of Education and Labor, as well as other government agencies active in addressing relating children's issues?** *It was noted that Afghan government, donors (including UNICEF and USDOL), NGO partners and local communities need closer coordination in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of previous reading and writing skills training programs. World Food Program food package delivery schedules do not match UNICEF's program schedule.*

**Evaluate the project's success in training and undertaking other activities with district, municipal and local level officials to improve local educational planning to address the educational needs of the target children.** *Coordination of UNICEF with local committees has been quite effective.*

**Have the educational needs of former child soldiers been adequately met?** *Literacy training has been generally effective to date; since this is a midterm evaluation it is not clear the extent to which there is a critical mass of graduates who have been placed in appropriate jobs.*

**Has the project successfully promoted policy dialogue in Afghanistan on how to make education and training responsive to the needs of former child soldiers?** *This appears to be the case in general; regarding vocational training, however, the link of policies on child labor with national poverty reduction strategies could use more dialogue. For literacy training, there is anecdotal evidence that some advanced students received training that was below their competency level and, furthermore, that the relatively short training period was not always adequate for some students to achieve competency.*

**What have been the principal challenges in working with local NGOs and other local organizations?** *Local NGOs have quite effectively coordinated with Afghan government representatives with donors and local communities*

**Evaluate the project's approaches to mobilize local communities and increase parental participation to raise demand for relevant quality education and community monitoring of education.** *Local communities have taken an active role in participating on LDCs and LRCs.*

## Management and Budget Issues

**What are the management strengths of this project?** *UNICEF management has been adequate, NGO management has been acceptable; local community participation has been well managed; noted is the absence of USDOL/ILAB oversight in the field.*

**What management areas, including technical and financial, could be improved?** *Oversight of budgets so as to account for expenditures in the area of local expenses could be made more transparent.*

**Has the project successfully leveraged non-project resources?** *Yes, especially in the case of communities providing facilities for training.*

## Sustainability and Impact

**What steps have been taken so far to promote sustainability and continuation of education strategies for combating child labor beyond the life of the project?** *The structure of local committees, NGOs, and provincial offices of MoLSA are in place to continue the institutional life of the project; whether funding is available on completion of the project can not be known at this point.*

**Evaluate the project's approach for dissemination of lessons learned from its initial interventions.** *The evaluator is not certain that such lessons have been developed.*

**What steps have been taken to promote sustainability of the project's common indicator database beyond the life of the project? Specifically, what methods have been employed to improve education data collection and analysis to support education policy and planning?** *UNICEF has applied its standard monitoring and evaluation (M & E) system in support of the D&R, a system that represents a model for the MOE policy and planning functions. The evaluator would like to see more attention given to application of M & E in the process of building on synergies of the D&R initiative with other UNICEF projects.*

**Was the project's initial strategy for sustainability adequate and appropriate?** *Yes, the pieces are in place with the exception of the unknowable availability of future funds.*

**What appears to be the project's impact to date, if any, on a) individual beneficiaries (children, parents, teachers, etc.), b) partner organizations (local NGOs, community groups, schools, etc.), and c) government and policy structures in terms of system-wide change on education and child labor issues?** *Young male soldiers are being demobilized effectively and are entering literacy programs that are supported by community leadership committees and NGOs. They are being trained in vocational areas in which there is a possibility for relevant work. Girls from worst forms of child labor are also being trained in literacy and vocational subjects. Changes effected in educational institutions and the policy arena are not yet visible.*

**What lessons could be learned to date in terms of the project's accomplishments and weaknesses in terms of sustainability of interventions?** *In aiming for program*

*sustainability, linkages of the child labor education initiative with national poverty reduction strategies is one way of enhancing opportunities for program continuity in the post-donor period. Another step would be for implementing agencies— in matching graduates to jobs—to identify a broad array of skills training options tied closely to income generation and alternative livelihood opportunities relevant to the local communities and based on up to date market surveys.*