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Education for Livelihoods and Civic Participation in Post-Conflict Countries

Conceptualizing a Holistic Approach to TVET Planning and Programming in Sub-Saharan Africa

EDUCATION FOR LIVELIHOODS AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION IN POST-CONFLICT COUNTRIES

CONCEPTUALIZING A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO TVET PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

A DISCUSSION PAPER

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PREFACE

Estimates vary, but there are certainly more than 20 major armed conflicts continuing in the world today, with an additional 15 or so that have ceased since 2000. Living with conflict and coping with its aftermath is a daily reality in many societies.
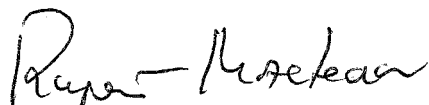
The impact of conflict on communities, families and economies is well documented but the effect on education and training systems is less considered. Conflict can lead to the almost total collapse of educational services. Re-establishing them is a slow process, and generations of learners can be denied the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Education and training services are often seen as "add-ons" outside of the central role of reconstruction.

This UNESCO-UNEVOC Discussion Paper takes a different view. This paper, from the Conflict and Education Research Group (CERG) at the University of Oxford, England, argues that providing education and training is in itself a part of the reconstruction process. It argues that a holistic approach to technical and vocational education and training (TVET), which takes into account the human and social dimensions of training as well as the economic dimensions, is necessary if TVET is to be integrated into the reconstruction of societies as well as economies.

The researchers identify some key questions deserving of detailed analysis, questions such as: what role can education play in the reconstruction process as communities recover and rebuild? How, specifically, can skills training, vocational education and technical learning contribute to this process? What role can TVET play in building civic participation as well as building economic livelihoods?

In the first half of this UNESCO-UNEVOC Discussion Paper, central themes regarding TVET, livelihoods and civic participation are explored, and contemporary literature cited. The second half of this Paper introduces the education and training arrangements in Liberia, Uganda and southern Sudan – the focus of ongoing case study research by CERG. The team of researchers involved are all post-graduate students, and the work contained in this Discussion Paper is related to their individual ongoing areas of inquiry. UNESCO-UNEVOC is delighted to be able to foster young researchers committed to investigating some of the neglected topics within TVET, and our thanks go to the Oxford team, led by Lyle Kane. Our thanks also go to Karina Veal, TVET consultant to UNESCO-UNEVOC, who provided advice to the project team on the overall shaping of the research as well as reviewing drafts as the Paper progressed.

I believe the research team have produced not only a thoughtful and considered Discussion Paper but, crucially, have provided the broader TVET community with evidence-backed arguments to assist in the early reconstruction of TVET in countries post-conflict.

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1.   INTRODUCTION

The nature of war has changed dramatically over the last half-century. As the "new wars" have shifted from the *inter*national to the *intra*-national arena, the line between civilian and combatant has blurred. Prior to World War I, the ratio of military to civilian casualties in conflict was 8 to 1. Today, that ratio has been turned on its head, as civilian casualties now outnumber military casualties in conflict by that same ratio, 8 to 1 (Kaldor, 1999). The economies of nations affected by civil and regional conflict have slowed or stalled while conflict has displaced entire communities, destroyed families and transformed social structures. Although the devastation of contemporary conflict is clear and well-known, important questions about post-conflict reconstruction remain largely unanswered as the international community, national governments and communities struggle to rebuild. How will social and economic communities recover and rebuild in modern post-conflict environments? What role can education play in the reconstruction process? How can skills training, vocational education and technical learning contribute to this process? This discussion paper is the first step in a larger, empirical research project investigating the potential role of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in building livelihoods and civic participation in post-conflict countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The goals of this initial phase of the project are to:

1.   Explore the literature surrounding:
    - Contemporary understandings of the role of TVET in supporting civic participation in rebuilding societies post-conflict
    - The challenges facing war-affected populations in terms of their integration into social, civil and economic life
    - The opportunities presented in early reconstruction phases for transforming education and training systems
    - The theories behind TVET programming as part of post-conflict recovery in Sub-Saharan Africa
    - The implementation of TVET post-conflict Sub-Saharan Africa with a concentration on our case-study countries (Liberia, Uganda and southern Sudan)

2.   Open up a set of informed questions to guide research and policy development around TVET in post-conflict contexts

3.   Develop a working definition of a holistic approach to TVET programming

In this paper, the working definition of *holistic* TVET is presented early on so that the reader may consider the findings within this document in the light of its principal recommendation: to approach TVET programming in post-conflict Sub-Saharan Africa holistically. This study thus begins by briefly introducing and defining TVET before turning to a consideration of this working definition of holistic TVET. Literature surrounding the various points raised above is then explored, followed by detailed case studies of TVET programming in the post-conflict contexts of Liberia, Uganda and southern Sudan. Finally, the paper raises a set of informed questions, based on the case studies and research presented.

Vocational education and training have remained a somewhat neglected area in post-conflict settings for most of the last century. This neglect was partly due to the rigid separation between *relief* and *development* assistance, with assistance to education being solidly identified with the latter. Assistance to education programming in general was therefore not a part of humanitarian or immediate post-conflict aid. In recent years an increased commitment to universal education, exemplified by the Education For All (EFA) movement and by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) directed towards achieving universal primary enrolment and gender parity, coincided with a surge in interest in the experiences and roles of children and youth in conflicts sparked by the Machel report (Machel, 1996). This study led to the inclusion of education as a fourth pillar of humanitarian response in emergency situations, arguably beginning to bridge the gap between relief and

development initiatives. As a result of these occurrences and of a growing commitment among researchers and practitioners, the interplay between education and conflict has emerged as an increasingly active area of research and policy development.

However, even within the "emerging field" (Tomlinson and Benefield, 2005) of education and conflict, TVET programming still remains a relatively neglected area despite the fact that many authors and practitioners acknowledge the importance of developing skills in communities emerging from conflict and the need to stimulate economic growth is certainly stressed. TVET programming is very often an integral component of the reintegration phases of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) processes (United Nations, 2000), as the provision of skills training to ex-combatants is seen as an important priority. Though there are high expectations for TVET, very little research exists on the actual TVET programming that occurs in post-conflict contexts, or, more broadly, on the role that TVET does, could and should have in such contexts. This research project is a first step that will combine in-depth case studies of existing TVET programmes in three case study countries – Liberia, Uganda and southern Sudan – with a theoretical consideration of TVET programming more generally and of its emerging role in post-conflict contexts.

2.   DEFINITIONS OF TVET

The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) defines TVET as "education which is mainly designed to lead participants to acquire the practical skills, know-how and understanding necessary for employment in a particular occupation, trade or group of occupations or trades" (UNESCO, 1997). This definition is too restrictive in the context of post-conflict reconstruction where, as will be argued below, TVET programming is often very tied to goals of reintegration, economic stimulation, physical reconstruction and recovery from trauma. UNESCO's Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training's (UNESCO-UNEVOC) definition is significantly broader in scope than the ISCED one, stating simply that: "TVET is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge and skills for the world of work" (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2007). Yet this definition also falls short of addressing the multifaceted set of challenges faced by learners in post-conflict contexts, wherein economies are often dysfunctional and livelihoods must be built alongside or before employability.

A broad, flexible and responsive understanding of TVET is essential in post-conflict settings given the multitude of challenges facing war-affected populations. This study argues that TVET programming, in a post-conflict context, could and often should act as a carrier for services that have not traditionally been considered to fall within the scope of TVET. This *holistic* approach to understanding TVET programming will guide the inquiry of this discussion paper, inform the questions that it raises and assist in developing a methodological approach for further empirical inquiry.

In this light, the Conflict and Education Research Group (CERG) has developed a working definition of a *holistic* approach to TVET that takes into account the number of challenges facing war-affected populations:

> TVET is a learning system in which both "soft" and "hard" skills are developed within a "joined-up", integrated development and delivery framework that seeks to improve livelihoods, promote inclusion into the world of work and that supports community and individual agency.

3.   CHALLENGES FACING WAR-AFFECTED POPULATIONS

Participation in conflict, whether active or passive, creates a set of challenges to (re)integration into post-conflict economic, social and civic life and likewise to rebuilding, reforming or re-creating economies and communities. It is TVET's potential to contribute to and facilitate this reintegration and reconstruction that this discussion paper explores. The question of potential cannot be posed, however, without accounting for the obstacles facing those meant to tap it. While the nature of these obstacles can and does vary greatly from one

conflict and context to another, some general themes can be drawn out. In broad terms, these themes can be broken into three categories: Psychological/Physical, Social and Economic. These categories will be explored below.

3.1 Psychological/physical factors

Post-traumatic stress disorder

The most common psychological problem associated with effects of conflict on psychological health is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which describes a host of symptoms associated with exposure to traumatic events. The effects of PTSD range from the psychological (depression, nightmares, panic attacks, and low-self esteem) to the physical (muscle pain, headaches, skin rashes and blistering, irregular heartbeat, and diarrhoea) (de Jong, et al. 2001). Aside from these aforementioned problems, there are a set of symptoms that can potentially have a direct, negative impact on the capability of sufferers to succeed in an education programme, including, but not limited to, impaired memory, limited concentration, and extreme lethargy (Summerfield, 1999).

Physical injury/handicap

The physical and physiological toll that violence takes on the body is widely recognised. Many war-affected youth will suffer some type of physical disability either from a wound or from exposure to the unhealthy conditions associated with prolonged conflict (Krug, et al. 2002). Health care institutions regularly break down, or simply become inaccessible in times of war, and treatable problems, such as malaria or diarrhoea, can have a devastating effect on the body. In addition, the prevalence of sexual violence during conflict contributes to the spread of HIV and other STDs, particularly in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa where HIV infection rates are already notably high. The health risks associated with sexual violence are especially distressing for women (UNIFEM, 2004).

Within many of the conflicts on the African continent, combatants are often given narcotics to inspire bravery in combat, or to numb them to their violent actions. There are a set of health implications related to both drug use and to the symptoms of withdrawal. In addition, the high use of drugs in combat poses a social dilemma, creating an illicit trade and supporting petty crime (Singer, 2001).

Girl-soldiers and gender-based violence

Special attention needs to be paid to the risk factors associated with the role of girls in combat as girls and women often make up a surprisingly high portion of those involved in conflict. In Mozambique, girls made up as much as 40 percent of RENAMO forces (Singer, 2001). The fact that these young people are taking part in the violence associated with conflict is problematic in and of itself, but there are other factors related to the role that girls often play in combat that necessitate special provisions be provided for girls in terms of recovery programming. The prevalence of sexual violence in present-day conflicts is disturbingly high. As an example, 60 to 70 percent of women in Liberia were victims of sexual violence during the nearly two decades of civil war (Amnesty International, 2004). Aside from the psychological damage associated with sexual abuse, this puts these women at a high risk for various STDs, including HIV.

3.2 Social factors

Lack of support structure

The nature of the conflicts being waged across Sub-Saharan Africa, which include problems of ethnic cleansing, forced migration, child-soldiering and sexual violence, are particularly destructive to the family unit. Many young people who manage to survive the war are often either orphaned or abandoned. Feelings of displacement, low self-worth and increased susceptibility to exploitation are only a few of the many obstacles faced by displaced youth (Modell, 1991). These problems are compounded by a dearth of secondary community

structures in post-conflict situations. Even when such community institutions (such as the extended or communal family) do still exist, they are often transformed to such an extent that they are unrecognizable and unfamiliar (Machel, 1996). It must also be noted, however, that communities often display remarkable resiliency in conflict situations. Innovation and commitment, particularly to maintaining education, have often been demonstrated during and following conflict (see for example Davies, 2004; Nicolai and Triplehorn, 2003).

Breakdown of social skills

Exposure to violence and conflict, particularly if such exposure is prolonged, can dramatically alter social skills (Machel, 1996). In numerous examples of long-standing conflicts, young people may never have known what life without war was like. For example, the "scavenger culture" of conflict, wherein combatants are either undeterred from or encouraged to forage or violently loot communities for food, arms and anything else of value, is pervasive in Liberia. Such activity is amplified by the "hand-out culture" associated with the influx of aid in the post-conflict context. The development of alternative value bases can undermine the cultural norms of war-affected populations (Modell, 1991).

Community stigmatization

War-affected populations often face a litany of prejudices. This stigmatization can limit the social and economic opportunities of ex-combatants in particular, but social stigmatization also often affects anyone simply perceived to have been affiliated with the conflict. In particular, youth ex-combatants are often relegated to the margins of society (Boyden and De Berry, 2004). This practice of turning war-affected youth into social pariahs and, subsequently, economically deprived outcasts, compounds the existing obstacles to reintegration.

3.3   Economic factors

Lack of prior education

Though not always the case, conflict often undermines or eliminates access to education for much of the population (Singer, 2001). In contexts where the educational sector is already limited, the system often entirely or partly collapses during conflict. In prolonged conflict, nations are left with a "lost generation" who have largely missed out on access to education and therefore have not developed basic literacy and numeracy skills, nor benefited from the other less tangible benefits of formal education. This severely damages the long term prospects for individual livelihoods as well as for broader economic development.

Lack of marketable skills

Along with undermining basic education, conflict also limits the opportunity for many to learn a trade. The lack of marketable skills is stunting both economically and socially for people recovering from conflict. Self-image and the ability to find a partner and support a family are deeply affected by a lack of ability to earn a living (Kronenberg, Simo Algado et al. 2005). While this problem has an impact on the individual, it also affects the ability of the nation to develop as a whole, hindering the livelihoods of the whole society.

Lack of economic opportunity

As one would expect, prolonged conflict slows or halts the economic productivity of under-developed nations. It is true that some consumer products have managed to continue to be profitable, as is the case with "conflict diamonds" and timber in Liberia and Sierra Leone. However, the military elite who have the ability to control these trades by force tend to be the only people who see any profit (Reno, 1998). Other sectors of the economy slow or halt during conflict, investments are low due to insecurity, markets close and prices can rise dramatically as consumables become scarce.

4. OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED IN EARLY RECONSTRUCTION PHASES FOR TRANSFORMING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

While the challenges facing war-affected populations are daunting, the post-conflict context is understood to hold considerable potential for transforming educational systems and for introducing reforms and new programmes, including new vocational, skills training and livelihoods schemes. A recent World Bank report on educational reconstruction states that "for education reform and transformation, the post-conflict reconstruction environment is the best of times and the worst of times, an opportunity and a constraint" (Buckland 2005). In focusing on opportunities, we certainly do not mean to belittle the extreme challenges present in post-conflict situations; several of these have been highlighted above. However, it is important to attempt to understand that opportunities do exist for developing responsive, effective and holistic programming.

4.1 "The best of times and the worst of times"

The World Bank lists several ways in which the post-conflict context can be understood as an optimal time for "policy reform and system change" (Buckland 2005). New political space can open up as old regimes are challenged and/or replaced; established bureaucratic resistance to change is often weakened; the public has high expectations for change and educational renewal; and new, more flexible resources become available. However, these resources generally come with the expertise, policy guidance and educational priorities of the international community, who have been historically slow to fund TVET programming.

In fact, the Bank includes the technical/vocational sector among the "neglected issues" in post-conflict situations (along with secondary and tertiary education and adult and non-formal education) finding very few examples of creative, responsive technical/vocational programmes with their review of 12 cases (Buckland 2005). The report does acknowledge the importance of addressing "youth development" arguing that marginalized youth represent at once a potential threat to security as well as a potentially massive resource to assist and direct social and economic reconstruction. Vocational and technical training could, the report argues, be an integral bridge between the often disparate sectoral approaches to address youth needs (education, health, employment, security and political participation). However, the report acknowledges that vocational and technical education is often left to NGOs or to the international community and ought to be more fully integrated into multi-sectoral approaches in order to take full advantage of the post-conflict context. This is a strong argument for the holistic approach advocated throughout this report.

4.2 Education as a "peace dividend"

It is argued that quick investment aimed at getting the education system functioning and allowing children and youth to return to school provides a considerable "peace dividend" in the post-conflict context. In other words, focusing "on the basics to get the system running" (Buckland 2005) can provide a demonstrable outcome of the peace process and create an incentive to maintain peace. It is important to note, however, that in the post-conflict context where demand for resources is high, expenditure on education in the year following conflict rarely increases to a higher share of GDP than it held prior to the conflict, meaning that expectations for the potential of education to serve as a peace dividend ought to be modest.

Within the peace dividend proposition, which can serve to support and legitimize the directing resources towards education in post-conflict situations, vocational and livelihoods training does figure highly. However, evidence from ex-combatants themselves would point to the fact that an inclusion of some sort of vocational or livelihoods training within the "basics" of speedily getting the system back running could in itself serve as a considerable peace dividend, particularly in the context of DDR. Providing vocational and livelihood opportunities that connect directly to opportunities either in employment or in community reconstruction could certainly also be seen as demonstrable outcomes of a peace process and provide incentive for continued peace

by providing alternatives to those previously involved in conflict. Thus, vocational and livelihoods training ought to enter more fully into the dialogue around the educational peace dividend opportunity provided by the post-conflict context.

4.3   Education as a "barometer" for the relationship between the state and its citizens

Education, it is argued, matters because it can act as a barometer of the relationship between the state and its citizens, not just in the post-conflict context but in general (Rose and Greeley, 2006). Thus, education in the post-conflict context, as a visible state service that affects almost everyone, can play an important (often symbolic) role in (re)establishing the legitimacy of the state, an argument very similar to the peace dividend effect of education discussed above.

Despite this potential, Rose and Greeley acknowledge that the vast bulk of educational reconstruction resources are mobilized around achieving EFA and MDG goals, which focus strongly on primary education as opposed to TVET. However, they argue, security and governance concerns – particularly with respect to the barometer idea whereby investment in youth training and livelihood creation could indicate a significant government commitment to a vulnerable, potentially unstable, marginalized and often quite large segment of the citizenry – ought to bring issues of vocational and livelihoods training into the agenda.

4.4   Justice initiatives and reparations programmes as an opportunity?

While efforts are being made to address the artificial "relief-development dichotomy" (Greeley and Rose, 2006) that often polarizes efforts in post-conflict contexts, transitional justice initiatives taken in response to conflict still largely exist apart from efforts at either relief or development. However, the recommendations for reform and the public outreach campaigns of trial-based and truth-based transitional justice initiatives do overlap with the goals and needs of reconstruction.

Reparations programmes in particular, which often accompany transitional justice initiatives, directly address the post-conflict needs of victims of human rights violations (DeGrieff, 2006). Skills training programmes have been included in reparations recommendations (see for example the recommended reparations package in Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SLTRC, 2004) and offer an opportunity, if well designed and well implemented, to compliment similar programmes offered through DDR and to address the criticism that ex-combatants receive a greater share of post-conflict resources than do civilians and victims.

4.5   Post-conflict "re-creation"?

Thus far we have explored opportunities for reform and reconstruction as seen, mainly, by multi-lateral practitioners in the business of educational reform and reconstruction. However, as educationalist Davies argues, "education for reconstruction should not be a restoration of equilibrium" but rather must "create new ways of learning and living which is not to reproduce the same causes of conflict" (2004). This idea of educational *re-creation* certainly represents an opportunity within the post-conflict context. Indeed it is crucial that reconstruction does not re-entrench structural inequalities that persisted prior to and fed into conflict. Creating livelihoods and providing meaningful skills and vocational training that contribute directly to employability (within a context where employment is an option) certainly provide opportunities for re-creation as well as for reconstruction. These opportunities for re-creation exist at personal, community and society levels and serious consideration ought to be given to the transformative potential of these programmes and how to access it.

The post-conflict context offers several opportunities for innovation and educational reconstruction as well as opportunities for other political and societal reforms. To date, it appears that efforts to develop TVET initiatives have not been central to dialogue around and efforts towards capitalizing upon these opportunities.

5.   TVET IN POST-CONFLICT SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

In many cases, as conflicts come to a close in Sub-Saharan Africa, the United Nations leads the implementation of a Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process - a set of programmes designed to support social and economic recovery. Imbedded within this process, and primarily targeting ex-combatants, TVET programming is implemented to achieve a number of ends.

First, TVET is intended to address the immediate need for income to insure ex-combatants are able to survive outside the military structure (Verhey, 2001). Without the requisite skills to earn an income or to generate an alternate livelihood, there is little incentive for youth to demobilize and give up their arms. In general, it is assumed that:

> If adolescents fail to gain vocational and life skills, they risk becoming caught in a cycle of dependency, delinquency, aggression and/or depression and hopelessness. They may turn to, or be forced into, military activities or prostitution either because they are in search of basic sustenance, or because they lack sufficient protection to avoid being pressed into such activities (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2000).

Moreover, TVET and livelihoods skills training programmes provide a psychosocial element to aid reintegration that cannot be overstressed.

> They give people a purpose, and a reason to believe that they have a future. They provide a means of reducing the psychosocial impact of trauma and displacement and allow people to begin to re-establish some sense of normalcy and security after being forced to leave their homes (Service, Undated).

It is important that TVET programming acknowledge this psychosocial role in the post-conflict context and develop this aspect in its planning and implementation phases, for instance by including appropriate forms of counselling alongside training.

Secondly, the hope is that TVET and skills training programmes included in the DDR process will build the human capital required for national reconstruction.   As mentioned, children and youth in conflict often comprise a "lost generation", remaining illiterate and lacking other marketable skills. In order to achieve sustainable peace, the citizens of post-conflict countries must be involved in the reconstruction of their own country.   The promise of skills training programmes is to create human capital locally, reducing reliance on imports of external experts.

Thirdly, TVET and other forms of skills training are seen to bridge the relief-to-development continuum. Humanitarian "hand-outs" are, unfortunately, often necessary during times of conflict. Once the reconstruction process is underway, skills training becomes a "development" intervention that leads into development programming and away from the "handouts" that perpetuate dependency. The theory is that, through skills acquisition, a given population will have the capacity to support itself (through agriculture and/or income-generating activities), paving the way for more robust socio-economic development programming.

Finally, Buckland's statement that skills training can provide a tangible " peace dividend" has already been cited above (Buckland, 2005). It is, however, important enough to underscore. Increased educational opportunities serve as a signal to communities that the war is over.   While many of the populations deprived of educational opportunities during the war years would agree that they would most want a formal education, TVET is an educational opportunity that was usually not available during the war years and that may now offer advantages over formal education. TVET programmes introduce shorter alternatives to the primary schooling cycle. While formal education still enjoys a more prestigious position than non-formal education, young men and women often do not have the time, due to current or future family obligations, to devote to completing a

primary or secondary schooling cycle, and even the rarely-available accelerated schooling programmes only cut the required time in half. Skills training programmes are shorter and, theoretically, provide an immediate return in terms of income.

In terms of implementation, TVET in Sub-Saharan Africa differs greatly in both form and quality. It is impossible to speak of an average or norm when discussing TVET offerings in the region. The TVET programming often delivered as a part of DDR processes varies greatly from country to country and even from DDR encampment location to location within a single country. In addition to TVET training as a part of DDR processes, various other types of TVET programming exist across the continent - from those offered by governments to those run by local and international NGOs to apprenticeships structure formally or informally - and these also differ greatly. However, there are some general trends in TVET programming that can be drawn out from a review of the grey literature available largely from those responsible for TVET programming. Overall, TVET programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa tend to service relatively few members of the population, and thus introduce problems of inequity in service delivery; they are rarely tied to market-demanded skills; and they suffer from sustainability problems (Gerhards, 2003).

5.1   Linking TVET to contextual economic opportunities

To date, TVET programmes have been designed primarily to improve the employability of their participants. Obviously, this is a complex outcome to measure, and a number of factors impact an individual's ability to work (as is discussed throughout this paper in our argument for a holistic approach to TVET.) Ultimately, however, the goal of TVET has been to support participant inclusion into the labour force. Given this fact, the need to link TVET programming to economic opportunities within the local context cannot be over-emphasized.

As mentioned, post-conflict economies, almost without exception, are fragile and poorly functioning. The *need* for skilled labour in these circumstances is huge, in that the reconstruction process is labour intensive and requires a skilled labour force. However, the *demand* for labour, in terms of paid employment opportunities, is usually small given the state of the economy.

Planned economies tend to have a much higher success rate in terms of linking needed-manpower estimates to employment opportunities than do market economies (Youdi and Hinchliffe, 1985). This is intuitive given that planned economies are able to predict labour demands in each sector to a greater degree given that the size and investment in these sectors are often predetermined and dictated by the state. Post-conflict scenarios offer an opportunity to take advantage of this same concept given that the post-conflict economy is often initially driven by planned projects funded by international aid. Unfortunately, these opportunities rarely seem to have a significant impact on long-term employment for war-affected populations. The disconnect between training and employment opportunities is perhaps the most significant failure of existing post-conflict TVET initiatives.

5.2   Delivery mechanisms

In general, TVET opportunities could be divided into three broad categories: public or national training sponsored by governments, training offered in private institutions, and training sponsored by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or international organizations such as UNHCR – the TVET programming included in DDR processes mentioned above falls into this final category. It is important to note that the bulk of vocational skills opportunities in the region are not offered through national, or government-sponsored, systems (Johanson, 2004). Traditional apprenticeships and training offered through employers, which are the most common medium for skills acquisition in Sub-Saharan Africa, occur on an individual basis and are rarely linked in formal TVET programmes; they are thus excluded from consideration in this overview.

Government-funded and/or -operated training programmes vary widely, usually depending on the relative development of the country. They also vary widely between urban and rural contexts. These public TVET

opportunities may or may not charge fees, but, if they do, these are usually nominal. However, even nominal fees can serve to limit accessibility to the most vulnerable. Such programmes usually require completion of a programme of primary education for admission; in this case, this can also limit access to programming for vulnerable populations and to those whose education has been adversely affected by conflict. Ziderman (2002) writes that national TVET systems must be effective, efficient, competitive, flexible, and responsive. However, this is frequently far from the case: national programmes as a rule are under-funded, less-prestigious than private TVET offerings, and are often outdated.

Private skills training institutions almost always charge fees. Due to limited space in nationally-operated institutions, these fill some of the gap between the supply and the demand for TVET programming, however, as mentioned above, the charging of fees limits access. Private systems are also largely-unregulated, with many operating illegally, outside the knowledge of the national government (Atchoarena, 2002).

Skills training programmes run by NGOs and international agencies almost never charge fees and often target vulnerable groups, such as the disabled. Many international non-governmental organizations are involved with TVET in Sub-Saharan Africa: World Vision International, GTZ, Save the Children, CARE, Don Bosco, and JICA, to name a few. In post-conflict contexts, external agencies usually offer the only existing formal TVET programmes.

5.3   Cost and sustainability

The cost to the provider of vocational training depends on the training offered. Literacy programming, for instance, entails few input expenses, while car mechanics or computer training entails considerable expenses both in terms of initial inputs and recurring costs. Vocational training programmes are thus much more costly than basic education programmes and are, therefore, much less common. They are also often seen as an add-on or a side project of educational reconstruction, while the reconstruction of basic education programming takes priority.

NGO-operated skills training programmes, in particular, suffer from sustainability problems. In a typical programme, an organization will construct one centre in a community of need, and, during the life of the project cycle, fund both material inputs and instructor salaries; the NGO will also attempt to establish an income-generating project to ensure sustainability of the centre. At project end, these centres are turned over to communities or, more often, to ministries of education. Don Bosco is a notable exception in that the organization usually continues to operate in perpetuity the centres founded by the organization. Centres that are turned over to communities or ministries of education rarely benefit from the income-generating activities sufficiently to be able to sustain themselves when external funding is discontinued, leading to the inception or increase of fees (Gerhards, 2003). Even government-sponsored institutions frequently experience budget cuts after the first few years, and are forced to minimize support to cover only instruction but not other input costs, thereby drastically reducing the efficacy of training.

Thus far this study has offered an exploration of both the theoretical underpinnings of TVET and the potentials that they point to for contributing to post-conflict reconstruction in Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as the very real practical obstacles currently facing existing TVET initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa. It has argued throughout for use of a holistic approach to TVET programming in post-conflict Sub-Saharan Africa. It turns now to three case studies in order to deepen the practical side of these explorations. The case studies, based on available literature, will inform the in-depth empirical investigation of each case that will take place as the next phase of this research.

6.   CASE STUDIES

While we have described some general trends in post-conflict TVET implementation, it is valuable to look at how TVET programming has been practically employed in a variety of contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa. The three cases presented here are very different in terms of the nature of the conflict experienced in each country as well as in the current stages of post-conflict recovery and TVET implementation. The first study concentrates on the West-African nation of Liberia, where a fourteen-year conflict ended in 2003 and TVET has been implemented as part of the recovery process for several years. The second study focuses on southern Sudan, where the longest running conflict on the continent has recently come to an end. The dynamics of this conflict, from ethnicity, to the potential for independence, to the physical climate make it a unique and daunting situation for recovery and TVET implementation. The third study looks at Uganda, or more specifically northern Uganda, where a recent peace agreement has hopefully brought an end to the fighting. Here, despite the fact that the war is not officially over, TVET has been employed with demobilized ex-combatants for several years

6.1   Liberia

On Christmas day in 1989, Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) entered Liberia, marking the beginning of the country's civil war. In 1990, after a year of brutal and intense fighting, a splinter group of the NPFL captured, tortured, and assassinated president Samuel Doe. The president's death set up a scramble for power between several armed factions that would continue for the next 14 years (Ellis, 2001).

After a 1994 ceasefire failed to hold, a negotiated truce in 1997 was followed by elections. With a campaign slogan of "He killed my ma, he killed my pa, but I will vote for him", Charles Taylor was elected head of state. President Taylor was accused of widespread corruption, of supporting the conflict in Sierra Leone and of engaging in hostilities with Guinea. In 2002, the simmering tension between Taylor and his opposition parties within the country boiled over, and the civil war resumed. Under increasing pressure from the most dominant opposition faction, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), Charles Taylor vacated the presidency and went into exile in Nigeria in August of 2003.

On September 11, 2003, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) was established. UNMIL and The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) supported an interim government until the country was prepared to hold democratic elections. This interim government was largely perceived by the international community as incompetent or as corrupt. A report to the General Secretary of the United Nations stated, "The financial administration of the National Transitional Government of Liberia continues to be weak with an archaic internal control system and a virtually non-existent external oversight system" (UN News Center, 2005). As a result of this poor governance structure, very little was accomplished in terms of reconstruction over the two years that the interim government was in power.

In November 2005, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was elected president of Liberia and became the first female head of state on the African continent. A former World Bank economist, President Johnson-Sirleaf is well-respected by the international community, and her policies to date have been widely regarded as transparent and sound (see for example World Bank, 2006a). While strong in terms of policy, the current government has faced a huge obstacle in terms of access to reliable funding.

Despite continuing economic problems, Liberia has made considerable gains since the democratic election. In 2006 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established; Charles Taylor was arrested by the Special Court for Sierra Leone and is in The Hague awaiting trial for war crimes; and Monrovia has electricity for the first time in over a decade.

Challenges to reconstruction

By the time it was over, the Liberian civil war had claimed the lives of over 250,000 people (USAID, 2006), mostly civilians, and had led to the collapse of social, legal and security services. The complete breakdown of

the educational system has left a "lost generation" of youth (World Bank, 2005). The destruction of infrastructure, and the psychological trauma associated with living in a country so steeped in violence for such an extended period of time, has had an impact on every Liberian. With over 850,000 externally displaced refugees and much of the remaining population internally displaced, the Liberian conflict was the primary humanitarian crisis in West Africa for much of the 1990s (UNMIL, 2006a). Displaced communities were either relocated to refugee camps, if they were fortunate, or fled to impromptu squatter camps, often in Liberia's capital, Monrovia. The pre-war population in the capital, somewhere in the region of 300,000-350,000, tripled during the conflict to approximately one million (UNMIL, 2006a). In hopes of escaping the war, those who fled to Monrovia ended up caught in the crossfire, as many of the later battles of the war were fought on the streets of the city.

The number of active combatants who fought during the war is estimated to be well over 100,000. The estimates of children who were actively involved in combat over the course of the war are as high as 50,000-70,000 (Singer, 2001). These young people are now facing a myriad of problems: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), debilitating injuries, drug addiction, alienation from the community, a lack of education and skills, and no stable community to return to.

Women were particularly brutalized during Liberia's civil war. Sexual violence was so prevalent that 60 to 80 percent of the women who remained in the country were victims of rape or sexual assault (Singer, 2001). This has added to the existence of extremely unhealthy gender dynamics in post-conflict Liberia, including widespread prostitution. The HIV rate is somewhere between 8 and 26 percent, birthrates are high at 6.8, infant mortality is almost 16 percent of live births, the literacy rate for women is at 39 percent (as opposed to 72 percent for men) and there is a 32 percent gap between primary school enrolment rates for boys and girls (UNMIL, 2006).

In terms of the continuing refugee problem, as of June 2006 there were still 163,880 Liberian refugees in camps in neighbouring countries. 100,000 refugees were expected to return by the end of 2006 (UNMIL, 2006a). In addition, there are currently over 10,000 refugees from other countries currently living in camps in Liberia. Most of these refugees are from Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone, but others come from as far away as Sudan and Iraq (UNMIL, 2006a).

The DDRR in Liberia

Liberia's most recent Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Rehabilitation (DDRR) process, began rapidly in December of 2003 and proceeded in three phases, the third and final of which continues in remote areas at the time of this writing (UNMIL, 2006b). According to UNMIL, who led the DDRR process, 100,000 former combatants have been disarmed, including 12,000 women and 11,780 children (UNMIL, 2006a). Of the demobilized ex-combatants, 94,000 were given access to rehabilitation and reintegration programmes funded by The UNDP DDRR Trust Fund and by USAID, the European Commission and UNICEF, which often included skills and/or vocational training components. This DDRR process was preceded by earlier attempts in 1994 and 1997, which collapsed when the conflict resumed. Many of the ex-combatants who were demobilized in these earlier processes were re-recruited into fighting forces (United Nations Office of the Special Advisor on Africa, 2005).

What role has TVET played in the recovery process?

Liberia has an incredibly young population with an average life span of 41.5 years (UNMIL, 2005) and 43% of the population under the age of 15 (World Bank, 2004). Of the 11,780 children demobilized through DDRR, 6,028 children have benefited from educational programmes (UNMIL 2006a). 48% of those accessed formal education, 30% were involved in agricultural vocational training, 29% enrolled in other vocational training, 6% joined apprenticeship programmes and 4% participated in public works (UNMIL, 2006a). That the majority of the "lost generation" is choosing to access vocational related training options rather than formal education demonstrates the need to develop sound and effective programming to meet this demand.

Much of the TVET programming that was part of the DDRR process in Liberia has exclusively targeted ex-combatants. This has caused a certain amount of resentment among the civilian population. In May 2006, UNMIL reported that 65,893 ex-combatants had completed or were currently participating in training and education programmes; approximately 13,000 of these were women. Much of the vocational training provided by the DDRR has been sub-contracted to local and international non-governmental organizations including Don Bosco, Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), Liberia Opportunities Industrialization Centres (LOIC) and United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). The training provided tended to focus on construction skills, including masonry, roof tiling, general construction, and plumbing, but also included agriculture and business skills. TVET programming geared towards women included cooking, domestic skills, and small business management; clearly such focus can potentially reinforce stereotypical gender roles.

Much of the DDRR TVET programming was implemented through an "Arms for Training" campaign wherein a collection site was set up and vouchers for training programmes were exchanged for arms. Unfortunately, there seems to have been inadequate planning in most of the phases of this initiative.

> "It was crazy, ten times as many people showed up at the collection site as were planned for so they were sending people away. They were sending people *with guns* away! And then, they had not warned the training centers that people were coming, and had not set up all the funding for them. It was an absolute mess. Even the training programs themselves were ridiculous. People simply can't find work in the fields they were trained in." (M., UNMIL employee, interview with author, April 18, 2006)

While the chaos related to the disarmament stage of the programme is disturbing, of particular concern here is the lack of positive outcomes to the TVET programmes. If participants are not able to employ their learned skills in the marketplace, earn a living or improve their livelihoods, then what is the point of the training? How can the "disconnect" so often present between training and opportunity be bridged? Before this difficult question can be addressed, it is important to understand the current dynamics of Liberia's fledging post-conflict economy.

The economy and reconstruction

According to the latest World Bank data (2005), agriculture makes up 63.6% of Liberia's $548.4 million national GDP, industry makes up 15.2%, and services make up the remaining 21.1% (World Bank, 2006b). The main products in the agricultural sector are coffee, cocoa, rice, cassava, palm oil, sugarcane, yams, and okra. While rice is the main staple of the Liberian diet, it is still being imported in most cases. There are continuing efforts to establish rice farms within the country.   Much of the industrial sector is based on the production of iron ore, rubber manufacturing and construction materials. Two of the major profitable exports, diamonds and timber, were sanctioned by the United Nations until they met with international standards of transparency. The sanctions put on the diamond sector remain in place, while reforms in the timber industry have recently allowed for the lifting of the sanctions in that sector. There is also a substantial shipping industry that takes advantage of Liberia's sizable port. Relaxed shipping regulations and low fees have made Liberia a popular destination for importers.   Despite a fair amount of economic potential in a number of sectors, unemployment is pervasive at 85% (World Bank 2006a).

There are several factors that must be considered in any discussion of the economy in Liberia. Much of the physical infrastructure of the country was destroyed during the war, including manufacturing plants, agricultural sites, many of the rubber plantations, and the road network. Secondly, the aid industry has deeply impacted the economy by driving up prices on housing and services. In a country where the per-capita income is less than $2 a day (World Bank, 2006b), a one-bedroom apartment in Monrovia can rent for upwards of $1,500 a month. Thirdly, there is a sizable immigrant community that has a strong influence across several sectors (including the lucrative rice trade), and at least some of these profits are being shipped abroad. Also, nearly a third of the national population has relocated into the capital and away from the agricultural lands, which will drastically affect the nature of the economy in the coming years. Lastly, there is an increasing population of Liberians who are returning home from Europe and the United States to set up businesses.

Until very recently, Liberia was seen as a pariah in terms of international economic assistance. In the midst of conflict through much of the 1990s, then with a former warlord as president, and recently with an interim government that was widely seen as incompetent, Liberia remains in dire financial circumstances, with over 2.7 billion dollars in international debt. However, with the election of President Johnson-Sirleaf, and her experience working at the World Bank, the international financial institutions are becoming more supportive.

> "During his visit to Liberia on 21 and 22 July, the President of the World Bank, Paul Wolfowitz, pledged the Bank's commitment to the economic development of Liberia and agreed to provide assistance for labour-intensive public works schemes aimed at building key infrastructure and generating employment." (UN Security Council, 2006)

In 2006, the Liberian Government and the World Bank agreed upon a $68 million grant focusing on emergency rehabilitation and repair of critical infrastructure, utilities maintenance (roads, water and sewage), and construction of new community facilities (schools and health clinics.) The secondary goal of the grant is to create employment opportunities for Liberians (World Bank, 2006c).

Attempts to link TVET training to employment

The initiative described above is not the first attempt by the Liberian government and the aid community to develop employment-generating projects. According to UNMIL, approximately 60,000 of the 65,893 ex-combatants who were trained in the DDRR TVET initiatives have participated in short-term employment schemes (World Bank, 2006c). Much of the TVET training that has been linked to employment initiatives is geared towards construction, inspired by a vision that the newly trained ex-combatants would be able to rebuild the physical infrastructure of the country destroyed during the war. However, this vision resulted in limited, very short-term opportunities upon completion of vocational training, and many of the participants struggled to employ the skills they learned in the marketplace. Ironically, despite a general lack of skilled labour, a problem that many ex-combatants face is an over-abundance of trained labour in their given field. This becomes particularly problematic when considering the vulnerable state of the trainees who cannot find work upon completion of their training;

> "See, many houses don't have toilet, don't have sink. So, it's not easy to find work in plumbing, you know? ..., because most of Liberia doesn't have plumbing." (K., former LURD child soldier, trained as a plumber during DDRR, interview with author, April 12, 2006)

UNMIL initiated some small-scale projects to address unemployment through its "quick-impact scheme", which commissioned minor building and infrastructure projects that temporarily employed 900 ex-combatants and community members (UNMIL, 2006a). USAID also implemented a public works project, primarily geared towards building roads, which temporarily employed 10,000 ex-combatants and other unemployed Liberians producing 500,000 days of paid work (USAID, 2006). Reception of this project was mixed, due to the low rate of pay offered and, again, because the project offered only short-term employment.

Recent initiatives by the new government appear to be attempting to bridge the gap between training and employment through several job creation strategies. In 2006 two major programmes were introduced with the support of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the government of the Netherlands: the Liberia Emergency Employment Programme (LEEP) designed to offer temporary employment in infrastructure development, and the Liberia Employment Action Programme (LEAP) aimed at capacity building with the goal of long-term employment.

Conclusions

There is no doubt that Liberia has been, and continues to be in, a tenuous situation in terms of development. The economy remains in disarray, there are hosts of lingering social problems, and there is a marked under-supply of skilled-labour, in spite of the flooding of certain sectors. Properly managed, TVET has the potential to increase the capacity of Liberia to address some of its economic and social woes. However, TVET programming needs to be designed for, and organized around, the contextual economic opportunities. Estimating these

prospective opportunities is no small task. Problems of data collection, assessing existing skills, and predicting the future capabilities of various sectors in terms of infrastructural capacity are just a few of the difficulties facing post-conflict societies in general and Liberia in particular. Nonetheless, the application of economic and manpower forecasting models has the potential of creating a framework for TVET programming to be designed in such a way as to maximize its contextual effectiveness.

There was very little diversity in the TVET programmes associated with the Liberian DDRR, as most had a strong focus on construction-related industries. This emphasis in construction skills, while well-intentioned, largely failed to improve the livelihoods of its participants, and often flooded particular labour markets while others remained under-represented. There are only so many plumbers and masons an economy can absorb. This problem is amplified by the fact that the aid system, which is responsible for much of the large-scale post-conflict construction projects, often imports specialized labour, leaving the recently trained workers with even fewer opportunities in an economy plagued by very high rates of unemployment.

6.2   Southern Sudan

Sudan is the largest country in Africa and is home to the longest-running conflict on the continent. The North and South of the country have been at war since even before the country gained independence from the British in 1956, due in part to differences in religion, race, and resource availability. After a decade of relative peace between 1972 and 1982, a second civil war broke out in 1983, instigated by the imposition of Shari'a law by the Khartoum-based Government of Sudan (GoS). The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and its splinter groups emerged as the main "rebel" force in opposition to the GoS. The area known as southern Sudan had historically been severely underdeveloped, but – since the fighting took place almost exclusively in the South – what little infrastructure was in place has been completely destroyed. Over the 22 years of civil war post-1983, southern Sudan was ravaged in terms of loss of human life, destruction of schools and roads, disruption of agricultural and business activities, as well as massive population displacement. An estimated 2 million people died during the war and approximately 4.5 million Southern Sudanese were displaced[1].

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) (GoS &SPLM/A, 2005) ending the second war was signed on January 9, 2005, by only two of the parties to the conflict: the GoS and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). This is significant because most Sudanese, from both the North and the South, did not participate in the peace process; even other key military groups such as the South Sudan Defence Force (SSDF) and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) were not represented during the two-year negotiations led by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which enjoyed strong support from the international community, including the so-called "troika" of the United States, Norway, and the United Kingdom (Young, 2005). Under the CPA, southern Sudan – comprising ten of Sudan's southernmost states with two additional states and one area administered jointly with the Khartoum government – became an autonomous region.   For all intents and purposes, however, southern Sudan still suffers from insecurity due to continuing occasional skirmishes between the GoS forces and southern armies.

The CPA's power-sharing protocol called for an autonomous Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) and a Government of National Unity (GoNU), the latter comprising representatives from both the North and the South. The appointed ministers and other executives of the GoSS are almost exclusively former military officials, many of whom lack the administration skills required to lead a civilian nation, resulting in a fledgling government of generally low capacity (International Crisis Group, 2006). Under the CPA, the South will hold a referendum in 2011 to vote on the status of the region, leaving to the Southern Sudanese to decide whether to continue power-sharing or whether to secede entirely and become their own nation-state. According to National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) focus group data (Cook, 2005) and other sources, the Southern Sudanese will almost certainly vote for the latter option, but the GoS will be reluctant to give up the oil wealth that the South represents. The CPA's wealth-sharing protocol had specified that almost 50% of

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[1] These figures are those cited in NSCSE (2004). However, these and other data available for southern Sudan are highly contested and generally considered unreliable.

Sudanese oil wealth would be allocated to the South. These funds were to comprise – for now – the sole source of non-donor GoSS revenue, as a tax system is currently unthinkable. Far fewer of these funds than expected have been released (Reeves, 2005). Thus, the southern Sudanese political environment – its "post-conflict context" - is characterized by an inexperienced government composed of former military officials, funding not commensurate with the region's needs, and a still-hostile relationship with the GoS.

Challenges to reconstruction

The area known as southern Sudan had been severely underdeveloped even prior to independence. This has been compounded by the fact that the fighting associated with the conflict took place almost exclusively in the South, and what little infrastructure was in place has been completely destroyed. Southern Sudan has been ravaged in terms of loss of human life, destruction of schools and roads, disruption of agricultural and business activities, as well as massive population displacement. In addition, most able-bodied men and youth, and a substantial number of women and girls, were active combatants at some point during the war years.

Half a million war-displaced people have sought refuge in the bordering countries of Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Congo, Central African Republic, and Egypt (Sommers, 2005). Another four million remained in Sudan, with approximately half in IDP camps located in the South, and half in camps near Khartoum. As is the case in most conflicts, the IDP camps suffered from overcrowding, insufficient resources, clashes between various groups, inadequate programmes to address the psycho-social needs of trauma victims, sexual violence, rampant disease, and malnutrition. While significant numbers of refugees and IDPs have returned to their home areas, the lack of services compared with international agency-supported camps have resulted in the return of many southern Sudanese to camps.

Finally, a significant challenge to reconstruction in post-conflict southern Sudan is lack of education and training. Southern Sudan's "lost generation" – those denied access to schooling during the war years due to insecurity, displacement, and/or lack of resources – comprises the majority of the population. The latest figures show that only 1 out of every 5 children attended school during the war, with only 2% of these finishing the primary school cycle (MoEST & UNICEF, 2006). Education and development funding has only been available in the region for the past several years; prior to this, the vast majority of donor funds were only available for humanitarian relief (Sommers, 2005). Although a few organizations[2], including UNICEF, offered school "materials and a little training" prior to 1993, not until then was the need for support for education recognized (Joyner, 1996). And, not until 2000 did long-term development programming in education begin (Sommers, 2005). Any and all educational opportunities in southern Sudan are thus still rare, although the demand for basic education and skills training is high and expected to rise (MoEST, 2007a).

Reconstruction in southern Sudan

Many NGOs had traditionally operated in southern Sudan to bring relief aid during the war years, but since the signing of the peace agreement more development programming has become possible and the number of NGOs in the region has multiplied. In particular, NGOs and international agencies have flooded Juba, the southern capital. Construction efforts for international agency housing seem to outweigh the monies spent on aid or development programming in the area. This practice breeds resentment since the local population is still waiting for the arrival of peace dividends but see great activity in Juba with few benefits for the Southern Sudanese.

Overall, services (e.g., drilling boreholes, running health clinics) in southern Sudan have been delivered in a haphazard fashion. Most NGOs operate only within a specific area and provide limited services (e.g. one organization will provide HIV/AIDS education and not food distribution). In very few areas, several NGOs provide different services (e.g. one operates a hospital, one provides teacher training, and one establishes waterpoints). However, the vast majority of southern Sudan remains underserved. In order to operate in a

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[2] The notable exceptions to 'hit-and-run' educational programming (Sommers, 2005) in the period prior to 2000 have been Christian organizations such as the Diocese of Torit (DoT).

given location, NGOs need a secure place to house workers, store supplies and establish communications. Constructing and maintaining field offices in this context are an enormous expense, and NGOs have been accused of "favoring" particular locations due to the relative ease of travel to and/or relative security of a given location. The GoSS is, of course, responsible for the planning and supervising reconstruction efforts and, ultimately, for service delivery. It is expected that, as governance capacity improves in southern Sudan, the region will enjoy a more equitable distribution of resources and more equitable service provision.

TVET and reconstruction in southern Sudan

Until 2007, the MoEST offered little guidance for TVET programming. The SPLM Secretariat of Education's (2002) *Education Policy of the New Sudan and Implementation Guidelines*, which is still in effect, only notes that vocational training should/will exist in southern Sudan. No further information is provided in the standing education policy as to what TVET will comprise, by whom it will be implemented, or how it will be financed. Only weeks before this writing, however, the MoEST published a new policy handbook that includes definitions for TVET and a firm commitment to developing both a TVET policy framework and a system of certification (MoEST, 2007a). In the Framework, the MoEST has identified their vision for TVET in southern Sudan and identified the many unmet needs. It is anticipated that this document will organize the fragmented TVET sector.

While TVET is understood to be an important part of the Demobilization, Disarmament, and Reconstruction (DDR) process in southern Sudan, little formal TVET training yet exists. The most common training programming involves livelihoods skills training at the community level. Vétérinaires sans frontières (VSF)-Belgium, for example, trains pastoralist groups in techniques that improve animal husbandry practices. Other NGOs work with farming communities to increase crop yields. These types of trainings are short, with trainings taking place over a period of weeks or several days per month during an entire year, as opposed to more formal training that requires daily attendance for months. Such livelihoods skills training programs build on local knowledge or introduce innovation in a skill that is already practiced.

Among the international NGOs involved in more formal skills training, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) operated six livelihood skills training centers[3] that were later turned over to the relevant ministries, and currently operates six vocational training centers[4]. Of the approximately two dozen training centers that currently exist in southern Sudan, CRS has thus established about half. Due to the high cost of inputs such as electricity (since all electricity in southern Sudan is run by generators, this input requires gasoline transported into the region at great cost), these skills training centers usually focus on skills that do not require heavy investment, such as carpentry or agriculture rather than computer training or car mechanics. Generally, there are no educational requirements for admittance to vocational training programs, although there are exceptions. At the moment, in the absence of a southern Sudanese vocational curriculum, NGOs typically establish their own training curriculum at each center or adapt Kenyan or Ugandan curricula.   The MoEST strongly opposes this practice and is firmly committed to developing a national curriculum in the near future (MoEST, 2007b).

Many of these training centers are nominally managed by boards (Boards of Governors, Management Boards, etc.) that are composed of community-elected representatives. Some NGOs suggest a minimum quota for female representation to dissuade communities from appointing all-male boards, as would otherwise be common.   The boards receive training in educational management and administration in order to build community capacity to make decisions on behalf of the centers, organize assistance in the construction efforts, and liaise with the NGOs. In practice, the boards have little or no power, save over the modest project funding that is channeled to them through the NGOs. The centers managed by boards are frequently expected to assume responsibility for the training at project end on behalf of the relevant ministry. Since 2006, ministries such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry; Ministry of Environment, Wildlife Conservation and Tourism;

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[3] These centers were financed through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded South Sudan Agriculture Revitalization Program (SSARP).
[4] These centers were financed through the European Community (EC)-funded Vocational and Adult Literacy Training Project (Vocal). Zuki Karpinska, one of the authors of this paper, helped design the Vocal Project.

and the Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries have begun to offer skills training, after having had assumed responsibility for several of the training centers formerly operated by NGOs. Due to the current low capacity of the GoSS, it is unlikely that many of these centers may continue to be operational without additional donor funding for inputs in the interim before the flow of GoSS resources into individual counties becomes more consistent.

As in Liberia, there is a general disconnect between training and economic opportunities. But, the situation is extremely dire in southern Sudan given the current economic possibilities.

Economic context

Muchomba and Sharp (2006) report, "livelihoods in southern Sudan are inextricably linked to both a relatively rich and abundant resource base and the terrible consequences of more than two decades of civil conflict" (p.18). The majority of Southern Sudanese seek livelihoods in animal husbandry, agriculture, fishing on the Nile River and its tributaries, wild food collection, and/or trade (Muchomba & Sharp, 2006). Livestock may represent the single greatest asset owned by Southern Sudanese; many of the ethnic groups in southern Sudan are pastoralist, owning vast herds of cattle and goats. The cattle herds, in particular, may sometimes number in the thousands, and are an integral part of both the region's livelihoods and its culture. Both pastoralist and non-pastoralist ethnic groups practice small-scale agriculture, for subsistence and/or as a means of currency (Muchomba & Sharp, 2006). However, crops are affected by the region's periodic droughts (including a recent drought that has lasted for three years) and the resultant low yields are often insufficient for subsistence. Trading and selling of goods from nearby Uganda, Kenya, or Ethiopia and even from Khartoum – due in part to improved transportation and demining of key access roads – is increasing rapidly during the time of fragile peace. The rudimentary markets are expanding, with more goods – e.g. plastic sandals, clothing, cigarettes – appearing in an increasing number of locations. The barter system is still widespread, with southern Sudan's three currencies – in addition to those of the neighboring countries – less commonly used than exchange for cattle, beer, or grain (Muchomba & Sharp, 2006).

Very few paid job opportunities exist in southern Sudan, outside of external aid agencies. NGOs and international agencies employ hundreds of Southern Sudanese as program managers, project staff, driver/mechanics, security guards, cooks, cleaners, etc. Due to continued government inability to pay salaries, teachers are usually unpaid volunteers. Select schools receive small incentives for teachers from NGOs like Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), but these are usually in the form of non-cash incentives like soap. Temporary work is sometimes available for semi-skilled laborers such as masons or carpenters on construction projects. As a result, many Southern Sudanese are still dependent on humanitarian aid (Marriage, 2006) from organizations such as the World Food Program.

All of these livelihoods are affected by the reality of the southern Sudanese environment. Lack of roads and periodic flooding mean no access to markets for the vast majority of the population. However, there are disparities within the region of southern Sudan. The southernmost Equatoria states are much less affected by the rains than the rest of the region. These states have better roads, are closer to the relatively-developed markets of Uganda and Kenya and do not have the swamps of Jonglei or other states. Security is also often an issue with market access, but in isolated cases rather than a region-wide phenomenon. LRA attacks, for instance, are limited to the southernmost states and can close down markets for weeks. It is important to note that that the most significant factor in the economy of southern Sudan is its sheer size. The region is massive and distances between points can be unmanageable. Transportation costs are thus staggering, and impact both southern Sudanese livelihoods and international agency programming.

Linking TVET to employment and the economic context

Given the tenuous nature of the southern Sudanese economy, innovative approaches to linking TVET to the economic context have been attempted. Many training centers incorporate business management training or entrepreneurial training into the curriculum, in order to prepare graduates to earn a living from their newly-acquired skills. Apprenticeship programs are very difficult to establish in southern Sudan because so few

people earn a living using a vocational skill. Those who do are located in one of only a handful of "urban" centers (which are essentially larger villages with some permanent structures.) The funding necessary for TVET graduates to obtain the tools of their trade and the requisite raw materials is sometimes provided on a cost-share basis, in which graduates pay a nominal amount for the minimum inputs essential to launching a business. Micro-credit schemes are rarer but equally important for these fledgling enterprises. As explained above, TVET graduates have few opportunities in the employment market and must themselves create a livelihood from the learned skills.

Conclusions

Assuming that the success of a programme is not measured by completion rates but rather by the number of graduates who use the skills learned in order to earn a living after programme end, there are not many successful training programmes in southern Sudan. Training programmes that focus on traditional skills – e.g., agriculture, fishing – are more successful than those that focus on trades such as carpentry or masonry. The truth is that there are few markets large enough in southern Sudan to absorb graduates with skills taught in the formal training centers. With time, demand for skills will increase, and these training programs will enjoy more success. At the moment, graduates are frequently frustrated.

6.3   Uganda

Since it gained independence in 1962, Uganda's development has been marked by deep social and political instability and civil war. In 1986, the National Resistance Movement (NRM), led by Yoweri Museveni, seized power. Museveni has remained President of Uganda for the last two decades. Rebels opposed to the NRM reorganized in southern Sudan and later became known as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) under the leadership of Joseph Kony. Disappointed both by the inability to present a credible military threat to the NRM regime and by the lack of popular support for the organization among the communities of northern Uganda, the LRA turned against the civilian population in the north, brutally terrorizing communities with acts of murder, torture and mutilation. The LRA's capacity was strengthened by gaining support from Sudan beginning in 1994 to engage in a proxy war against southern Sudanese rebels who were being supported by Uganda (Blattman, 2006).

A particular feature of the conflict in Northern Uganda is the wide-scale abduction and recruitment by the LRA of male and female children and youth, who are forced into labour, sexual slavery and combat roles. The estimated number of young people abducted during the war is 25,000, although recent evidence suggests the number is more likely to be 60,000 or higher (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2006). The widespread use of abductees and child soldiers by the LRA complicates the conflict as local communities continue to see these fighters as "their boys" and oppose a military solution to the conflict.

Facilitated by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement for southern Sudan, negotiations between the Ugandan government and the LRA have recently moved forward. Negotiations have led to a cease-fire agreement in August 2006 and the retreat of LRA fighters to assembly zones on the Sudanese side of the border (Annan et. al., 2006). For the first time in decades, an end to the conflict seems feasible, though by no means certain.

However, relations between the central government and communities in the North continue to be strained. This is largely due to the government's heavy-handed tactics against the LRA even where it was composed of forced recruits. The government's policy of forced resettlement into IDP camps has exacerbated the situation, as have tribal tensions. Conflict over land tenure upon the return of IDPs is a real risk in a post-LRA Northern Uganda.

Challenges to reconstruction

Until recently, very little reliable information was available on the effects of war in northern Uganda; data was particularly scarce regarding exposure to violence and community effects of conflict. The recent Survey of War Affected Youth (SWAY) has produced some important conclusions that run counter to popular perceptions. The

survey confirmed that essentially all youth, whether abducted or not, have suffered and witnessed tremendous violence. However, it also showed only modest levels of psychosocial trauma and low levels of aggression among war-affected populations. Moreover, even traumatized individuals exhibited a high level of social functioning. These findings appear to be related to strong support structures within the community and to cultural methods of spiritual cleansing that facilitate reintegration of former fighters (Annan et. al, 2006).

SWAY finds that "family acceptance is remarkably high. Only 1% of youth report that their family was unhappy or unwelcoming upon their return. Over 94% of the youth report being accepted by their families without insult, blame or physical aggression" (Annan et. al., 2006, p. 41). Reception from the community was "typically strong and welcoming". Insults and fear exist, but are not understood to be detrimental to reintegration. In fact, nearly all forced recruits who escaped from the LRA returned to their home communities. This is despite the fact that many were forced to commit atrocities against their neighbours, friends or even families. Acceptance of ex-combatants as regular members of the community, however, is coupled with resentment of programmes targeted specifically at them, essentially being perceived as a reward for violent activity.

A major source of concern for TVET and livelihood-based interventions are those disabled as a result of the conflict. Thirteen percent of youth in the SWAY sample were found to possess "an injury that impeded them from earning a living" (Annan et. al, 2006, p. 46). The unique SWAY study, therefore, seems to point to post-conflict challenges slightly different than those often assumed to characterize such situations. In northern Uganda the challenges appear to lie in best capitalizing upon the relative ease with which ex-combatants are able to reintegrate without alienating the communities into which allow this fluid process and to pay close attention to the needs of populations such as the disable, injured or traumatized.

The realities of mass displacement, and the loss of land access and entitlement associated with it, are also considerable challenges to reconstruction in northern Uganda. Since 1996, the threat of abduction by the LRA and pressure from the government has forced much of the population of northern Uganda to resettle in "protected villages", which are essentially IDP camps. These camps are not only crowded and unsanitary; they also often fail to offer protection. Their population continues to suffer from attacks, to the extent that large numbers of youth prefer to commute to larger towns at night to avoid forced recruitment (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2005). Moreover, curfews and a prohibition on travel far from the camps have meant that most have lost access to their land.

Reconstruction in northern Uganda

Unlike the cases of Liberia and southern Sudan, the Ugandan government has remained relatively stable, thus its regime differs from the newly established post-conflict ones often responsible for reconstruction. The current capacity and political will of the Ugandan government appear favourable to effective educational reconstruction. Several schemes for complementary basic education of target populations, such as the urban poor, nomads and conflict-affected children already exist. There is also a strong movement towards decentralization, allowing for some flexibility in addressing the needs created by a conflict that varied in its local intensity. Government investment in education has been high. In the financial year 2001/02, around 20 percent of the government budget was spent on education and training (Farstad, 2002).

This appears to go some way to meeting SWAY's concern that "there is an urgent and immediate need to support broad-based secondary and tertiary schooling" (Annan et. al, 2006, p. 71) for the most needy. However, as the following quotations show, there is much room for improving the provision of TVET as part of the reconstruction process in Northern Uganda:

> "Current programming has focused primarily on humanitarian needs and psychosocial support (broadly-defined) but has tended to neglect interventions to support war injuries, education, and economic activities" (Annan et. al., 2006, p. 72).

> "Technical/vocational training exists, but is far too limited in its scope. Apprenticeships and the provision of tools upon graduation would go far to assist graduating students in finding and being able to work." (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2005, p. 5).

To fully understand the needs for TVET in post-conflict northern Uganda, it is important to understanding TVET programming offered during the long conflict, as well as programmes initiated as a part of the reconstruction effort.

TVET and reconstruction in Uganda

The conflict or post-conflict context notwithstanding, in Uganda vocational training is fairly common.

> 20 percent of youth over the age of 16 have had some sort of vocational training, primarily in trades like construction, carpentry and joinery, and driving. Such programmes were generally paid for by the youth themselves or their families (Annan et al. 2006, p. 32).

This is despite the fact that - as is common in many nations - there is a cultural bias favouring formal education over TVET. Many students enrol in TVET because of their poor test results and failure to gain entry into an academic institution.

In addition to some formalized programming at the national level, there is some experience in Uganda with TVET as part of the DDR and reconstruction effort following the consolidation of NRM's power in the early 1990's. But the relevance of this for the current situation should not be overstated. The aim of that programming was the formal DDR of parts of a regularized guerrilla army. The challenge in Northern Uganda, by contrast, involves building sustainable livelihoods for whole communities. Even with regard to ex-combatants, there is little similarity between current realities and the DDR process of the early 1990s. As mentioned, abductions, and the trickling back of those escaping, have been a continuous process over the course of a decade. Only half of those returning from conflict have ever passed through any kind of reception centre.

Despite these important differences, which must be taken into account in programme design, some studies of past "Reintegration through Training" programmes can, and should, provide an important foundation to be and built upon. The Gulu Vocational and Community Centre, for example, gathered experience during the 1990s with the integration of vocational training for youth with community outreach, adult literacy and peace education (Muhumuza, 1997).

Formally, TVET is delivered by some 29 government Technical and Farm schools/institutes with a total intake of 3340 in 2000. At the same level, following national curricula, there are 187 registered private institutions and some 400 that have applied for registration. Industrial training is delivered by 4 public Vocational Training Institutes and some 400 private training providers. Both of these streams, in particular the former, have attracted criticism for being too academic. TVET also features prominently as Strategic Objective 2 in Uganda's National Action Plan on Youth, which likewise emphasises apprenticeship schemes over formal state provision of training (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2002). In Uganda, as is common across the continent and beyond, there is limited public financing for TVET and the main responsibility is placed on the private sector for both delivery and financing of programming. The private training providers deliver programming in a variety of areas and at different levels, and issue their own certificates. Private institutions are not obliged to register with the MoES, but are encouraged to do so.

Given the traditionally strong social cohesion in northern Uganda, in planning for TVET programming outside of that described above and interested in addressing the post-conflict needs in the North, community-based rather than individualistic projects appear most promising. An example of a community programme supported effectively by INGOs is GUSCO, the Gulu Support the Children Organization (Omona and Matheson, 1998). GUSCO runs reception centres for traumatised children, where they receive vocational training, trauma

counselling and family reintegration support. While children only stay in the centres for up to six weeks, reintegration follow-up is conducted regularly until a year after release.

Findings from the SWAY study align with a theme highlighted throughout this study, namely that skills training alone cannot create livelihoods, and must be aligned with labour market needs as well as with the realities of its participants. SWAY's findings suggests that "individuals themselves may be better judges of what skills and opportunities suit their own skill set, interests, and local demands" and that it might be more effective to provide vouchers which could be used towards NGO or private training programmes (Annan et. al., 2006). This, however, leaves open the question of which programmes NGOs should be supported in setting up.

Reforms in the general education sector also profoundly affect the question of appropriate training for post-conflict livelihoods in Northern Uganda, most notably the recent implementation of the Universal Post Primary Education and Training (UPPET) policy. It includes the provision of equipment to Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (BTVET) institutions, as well as introducing Community Polytechnics to all districts, including the conflict-affected North, where grants and bursaries are paid for students in secondary and technical schools (Okecho, 2006).   Recent initiatives include the plan to create the Uganda Vocational Education and Training Authority (UVETA) (Haan, 2001). The proposed UVETA is expected to stay away from basic training delivery but rather focus on promoting financing of and coordinating all formal and non-formal training activities.

In relation to the Community Polytechnics, however, it has been noted that there is a lack of demand for long term (2-3 years) training in traditional manual trades, and, secondly, that there are difficulties in making sure these training centres are equipped, staffed, and resourced. Results from a recent DFID study on educational reform in Uganda demonstrate that a parallel system of institution-based secondary level schooling was unaffordable and there was likely little demand for this type of training (Ward et. al., 2006).

Economic context

Violence, instability and displacement have challenged and transformed traditional livelihoods in Northern Uganda.

> "The traditional Acholi [the dominant tribe in Northern Uganda] livelihood is an agrarian one.
> Animal husbandry and cash crop production were the economic bases of the economy,
> supporting demand for other products and services" (Annan et. al., 2006, p. 75).

Despite its agrarian tradition, currently, few youth in the North have access to land. While this may change as the IDP camps dismantle, it is still a major factor hindering the development of livelihoods. The lack of opportunity for agriculture has meant that most youth that are economically active perform casual labour such as collecting firewood, carrying loads, quarrying, hawking and vending, construction, riding a boda boda (bicycle taxi), or making bricks and charcoal (Annan et. al, 2006). Formal employment is rare, "just fifteen percent of occupations represent more or less regular (and usually high-skilled) employment—operating a repair shop or small business (such as a kiosk), a vocation (including carpentry, tailoring, and driving), or a profession (a teacher, public employee, or health worker)" (Annan et. al., 2006, p. 37).

As a result, the median monthly income of youth in the conflict affected areas is less than five US dollars per month. Nevertheless, "few youth leave the region to look for work— primarily, it seems, because of few contacts, fewer resources, no language skills, and an emotional tie to their homes" (Annan et. al., 2007, p. 35). Given the problems associated with large scale urban migration and resettlement present in several post-conflict contexts (see for example the Liberian case study in this paper) the continued desire of youth to stay in the North should potentially be supported by TVET programming.

Linking TVET to employment and the economic context

Given the rural economy of Northern Uganda, TVET cannot generally be expected to result in wage employment. If the livelihood options for the majority consist at best of entrepreneurial self-employment, but more realistically of small-scale agriculture or petty self-employment, education and training for livelihoods has to reflect this fact (Stavrou and Stewart, 2000).

TVET in post-conflict northern Uganda must also take into account the realities of agricultural and land access changes as a result of the displacement of communities. A largely agricultural, non-wage system of livelihoods will have to be rebuilt or to adapt and change in the context of displacement. The prolonged absence and the destruction of traditional boundary markers during the conflict mean that the traditional tenure will be difficult to reinstate. There is also fear of losing land in the face of large-scale commercialisation of agriculture. Due to high population growth, there will also be many more people returning to the countryside than originally left it. Land insecurity therefore has serious implications both for local livelihoods and the sustainability of peace (Uganda Conflict Action Network, 2006). The promotion of sustainable livelihoods must therefore "include innovative strategies for increasing access to land in addition to … attention on other income-generating activities" (Annan et al., 2006, p. 71).

Conclusions

SWAY's results suggest that many youth are abducted for relatively short periods of time and that their education is only moderately affected. Those abducted lost an average of 1 year's schooling. In Northern Uganda, therefore, it seems particularly appropriate to aim educational interventions at all youth, because the experience of "episodic" education "due to financial pressures arising from poverty, insecurity and lack of family support" (Annan et. al., 2006, p. 42) does not differentiate former child soldiers from those never abducted.

While the majority of formerly abducted children and youth should be targeted through support aimed at communities or at youth as a whole, the long-term abductees who spent many years in the LRA and lost most or all of their schooling opportunities require particular attention, as do those who suffered from serious injury or have a disability. The relatively small number of children and youth who lost a significant amount of schooling makes it feasible in principle to offer intensive personal support to these hardship cases. A special school is being set up in Gulu for youth who were prevented by the conflict from attending school. It is not clear from the available information whether it will cover an accelerated course and/or involves any TVET.

As this case study has highlighted, the SWAY study can provide a uniquely detailed and nuanced needs assessment to help conceptualize the needs for and role of TVET programming in northern Uganda despite the fact that this was not among its explicit purposes. That it points to needs and roles different from those often assumed by programmers highlights the importance of needs assessments to designing programming; that it is so illuminative points to the incredible amount that could be learned from a needs assessment done explicitly around TVET needs and role; that studies like SWAY are so rare and that large TVET needs assessments are rarer still, highlights their difficulty.

7.   INFORMED QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

A primary goal of this discussion paper, based on literature review and research of available academic and grey literature surrounding TVET in Sub-Saharan Africa, is to open a set of informed questions to guide empirical research in each of the case study countries. It is imagined that these questions will shift and expand as empirical data is gathered and as feedback from other actors is received. The questions in their current form are as follows:

7.1   How can TVET programming best be structured to contribute to the broader post-conflict reconstruction context?

For TVET programming to contribute to broader post-conflict reconstruction, it must seek to build ties with broader reconstruction initiatives, take into account the obstacles facing the populations it seeks to serve and be consciously responsive to social and economic realities.

The challenges facing war-affected populations described in some detail in this study include the physical, psychological, social and economic factors. As has been discussed, holistic TVET needs to be incorporated into a holistic recovery programme. This approach to TVET would actually consist of two dimensions. First, TVET programming would be designed with what might be called "horizontal" structures, thus imbedding such important aspects as psychological counselling, occupational therapy, and programming geared towards the larger community to support reintegration. Secondly, TVET programming ought to incorporate "vertical" structures, related to long-term livelihood development. Thus TVET would be seen as one step in a progressive process that includes community-based labour market information systems and vocational counselling, upstream, and job placements, micro-credit projects and general economic integration, downstream.

In order to contribute to the civil reintegration of conflict-affected populations, TVET has to be seen as one piece of a puzzle that builds a comprehensive strategy to promote livelihoods. TVET by itself does not create jobs. Nor do jobs, by themselves, lead to civic participation. Thus, an integrative aspect has to be stressed to ensure a continuum between training, social cohesion, and employment creation. As with formal education, the post-conflict period offers an opportunity to ensure that the newly created education and training schemes have a democratising effect and do not exacerbate conflict.

7.2   How can TVET programming be designed and implemented in cooperation with participating communities?

To be effective and locally appropriate and to effectively address the needs of its beneficiaries, the target population needs to be an active participant in every stage of TVET programming, design and implementation. A host of contextual realities, from climate to cultural norms, should be taken into account to create a set of programmes that are appropriate and have real value in terms of improving livelihoods.

Aside from making programming more effective, community involvement can lead to a sense of local ownership of programming, thus supporting communities' investment in making *their* programme a success, both at the outset and at the project end. The hope is that community ownership and community investment will lead to increased sustainability and effective education.

Unfortunately, the combination of a truly local participatory approach that is at the same time grounded in solid evidence is rare indeed. In terms of achieving optimal outputs, a broad set of data on the contextual social, economic and cultural conditions needs to be easily available and local needs must be assessed.

7.3   What is the most effective way to assess TVET needs in post-conflict settings?

One of the major obstacles facing the implementation of TVET programming in post-conflict situations is a lack of data on the needs and skills of the target population. Regardless of location or situation this lack of data poses the problem of having a mismatch between TVET and the contextual economic opportunities, thus hindering TVET's ability to contribute in a meaningful way to employability and to building livelihoods. However, in the post-conflict context, where the implementation of a holistic approach to TVET is necessary, with an integrated set of programmes designed to address the challenges specific to a war-affected population, a lack of data poses a much more serious set of problems.

Inappropriate programming can exacerbate the challenges facing war-affected populations rather than support their recovery. Culturally insensitive psychological therapy exercises, unsuitable housing schemes for displaced persons, ignorance of the physical frailties of injured persons; it is not difficult to imagine the ways in which these mistakes could have a negative impact on the experience of programme participants.

The lack of reliable data is a complex problem to overcome. Post-conflict contexts are often defined by a collapsed or weak government and social service infrastructure. As a result, what data can be collected is often unreliable or potentially manipulated. In addition, in order to be truly effective and avoid lag time between the end of the conflict and the delivery of services, data should be collected during the conflict, posing risks to the safety of data collectors, and access to the potential target population is often tenuous at best in the midst of war, not to mention that it is difficult when to determine an appropriate time to begin collecting data with the assumption that the conflict will come to an end soon enough to keep the data relevant.

As is mentioned above, the target population needs to be involved in every step of the TVET programming cycle, from design to implementation. This involves consulting with communities, including representatives from community-based organizations, churches, traditional leaders, women, and, particularly, children and youth, in prioritizing and planning programming. What is the best way to get these groups involved in assessing training needs, market ability to absorb trainees, local availability of inputs, and in the recruitment of staff?

7.4   How can TVET programming be responsive to the local economic conditions and opportunities?

In general, the TVET programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa suffer from lack of relevance. By definition, TVET is fundamentally supposed to prepare participants for the world of work; however, curricula are frequently outdated in terms of industry and economic needs. Even when there is a market demand for a certain trade, too many TVET graduates who have learned that particular skill overtax the ability of their communities to absorb them all. Unfortunately, it is more cost-effective to train large groups of students in one trade.

An important first step in linking training to economic opportunities is a close examination of current and future market opportunities. While it seems relatively obvious that TVET should be geared towards integrating the target population into the labour force, it has been shown through our case studies that this often is simply not being achieved. There is traditionally very little diversity in post-conflict TVET programming with a strong focus on construction-related industries.

Planned economies tend to have a much higher success rate in terms of linking needed-manpower estimates to employment opportunities (Youdi & Hinchliffe, 1985). This is intuitive given that planned economies are able to predict labour demands in each sector to a greater degree given that the size and investment in these sectors are often predetermined and dictated by the state. Post-conflict scenarios offer an opportunity to take advantage of this same concept given that the post-conflict economy is often initially driven by planned projects funded by international aid.

7.5   How can enrolment in TVET programming be made feasible for participants?

The single greatest obstacle to access to TVET programming for war-affected populations is the time required for training. TVET programmes require daily attendance for months or years, during which time the participants are not earning income and – even when not paying fees – they are paying out the costs of supporting themselves and/or their families. Boarding programmes are prohibitively expensive and not many organizations attempt this programming variation. Yet, trainees who do not have to cover boarding costs are still absent from their families and unable to provide the support they would be expected to if at home.   Few members of vulnerable populations can afford the luxury of attending such programmes. Women, especially, usually have domestic duties, which prevent their absence from their families for extended periods.

Enrolment in educational programming can seem extraneous for many in a post-conflict situation, when access to food and shelter are often difficult to come by. Opportunity costs to education can be very high. Programmes in Mexico and Brazil have made significant progress in limiting opportunity costs to formal education. While expensive and heavy in bureaucracy, there are lessons to be learned from a programme like PROGRESA in Mexico.

8.   FUTURE RESEARCH

This discussion paper has reviewed relevant literature and elaborated the principal theoretical and practical issues shaping the current delivery of TVET programming in Sub-Saharan Africa and has provided in-depth literature based case studies of the contemporary situations of TVET programming in Liberia, Uganda and southern Sudan. This research has opened the above questions, the discussion around which will guide the next, empirical phase of this research. The next step of this project will be to conduct three field-based case study investigations, collecting empirical data to explore the informed questions that have come out of this study in the three case study countries. An in-depth, empirical evaluation of recent TVET programmes in Liberia, Uganda and southern Sudan, that takes into account efforts to assess the needs and skills of war-affected populations in those contexts, will hopefully lead to some insight into appropriate solutions to some of the challenges identified by this discussion paper.

The next stage of this study will make important contributions to existing knowledge and research about TVET programming in Sub-Saharan Africa by providing a typology of TVET and livelihood promotion activities in post-conflict settings, and, just as importantly, by developing benchmarks for evaluating their impact. The availability of such benchmarks could help to address a central issue to the understanding of TVET, livelihoods and civic participation in Sub-Saharan Africa, namely the lack of an effective assessment tool. Only recently have surveys of ex-combatants been attempted in Liberia and Sierra Leone to identify needs and assess the impact of already undertaken post-conflict programming. The Survey of War Affected Youth (SWAY) in Uganda has shown the importance of collecting such evidence (SWAY). Rather than reinforcing previous (often intuited) conclusions, it cast a new light on the educational needs of former child soldiers in Northern Uganda.

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