

The Changing Identity of Child Soldiers

Best Practices of DDR and Peace Education



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“Their eyes tell silent stories.
Stories that would shock even the darkest of hearts.
These eyes have seen worse than some could even dream of.
They’ve seen killing and death, and pain and suffering to extents that can be
hard to imagine.
Eyes that should be learning how to read are instead being taught how to
fight.
Emotionless eyes are being forced to kill in gruesome ways.
Eyes that seem to have run out of tears, because crying never helped.
Their sobs are unheard, their tears are unseen.
Children who are innocent are being ruined by men who see no hope in
their government.
Men who are willing to take advantage of an irreplaceable innocence.
The eyes are deep brown.
A brown so deep you could get lost in it.
Eyes that catch attention for their beauty.
They silently tell of innocence lost and of silent tears cried.
These are the eyes of a child soldier”.

Courtney C.





Preface

You are reading my research on the way in which the identity of child soldiers, DDR and Peace education can best be aligned in theory and practice. This master thesis is the last part of the degree of Master of Science in 'Human Geography' for the specialization 'Conflicts, Territories and Identities' at the Radboud University in Nijmegen.

I would like to thank Dr. Bert Bomert, my thesis supervisor. I greatly appreciate his understanding during the difficult times for my family and I also want to thank him for his honesty, support and new insights.

Furthermore, I would like to thank Professor Berma Klein Goldewijk of the University for Peace Centre The Hague for all the help and ideas during the early stages of my research.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents for being there during my entire academic endeavours. They have been very encouraging over the entire duration of this research.

Enjoy,

Anouk

Executive Summary

The transition of former child soldiers from armed groups back to their villages requires an adaptation of their identity which may entail a number of societal problems. Through the use of DDR (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration) and peace education child soldiers get chances to transform their 'war mentality' into a 'peace mentality' whereby these societal problems can be reduced.

This study analyses the way in which the identity of child soldiers, DDR and peace education can be best aligned in theory and practice in a conflict context. With the purpose to explore, expand and enrich the conceptual interrelations about the impacts and best practices of peace education and DDR programs on the identity of former child soldiers in their process of reintegration into society. The scientific relevance of this research will be to refine the conceptual interrelations between DDR, peace education and the identity of child soldiers, using conflict studies (recurrent conflict, peace building and identity) and human geography (identity). The theoretical framework is formed by these two fields of study, with an emphasis on the topic of identity which plays an important role in both fields of study.

In order to reach the best alignment in theory and practice of the main concepts the research is divided into two parts. The first part is based on academic research by scholars and searches the conceptual interrelations between the identity of child soldiers, DDR and peace education. The second part of this research is based on INGO policy documents and documents of UN programs, funds and related organizations and explores what are considered best practices of DDR and peace education programs for former child soldiers.

This research started with the formulation of work definitions of the separate concepts. Throughout the research these work definitions are enriched and reformulated. Child soldiers are children who: are below 18 years of age; are associated with an armed force; in many cases recruited or to a lesser extend joined the armed force voluntarily through different push and pull factors; used violence and violence is committed against him/her; changed his/her identity from child to soldier; created new family out of group members; have identification with the armed force and participate in the corresponding socialization processes; thereby miss a normal transition from child to adulthood; are in need of DDR programs (also the girl soldiers); miss regular education; are used as a weapon of war and work as a fighter a cook, a porter, a messenger, a spy, human shield, mine tester, wives, look-outs or a sexual slave for the armed group.

Peace education is throughout this research defined as a form of education that attempts the reduction of violence; changes and forms perceptions, capabilities and identities; can be carried out before, during and after a conflict; handles a conflict in a nonviolent manner; can be formed through practical implications such as reconciliation, cooperation, the formation of values, dialogue and empathy. Perceptions of the enemy, historical memory, different goals and deep rooted believes of people can be difficulties peace education has to overcome. It is exercised in different forms (e.g. forgiveness education, conflict resolution, and human rights education) can be implemented through different approaches (narrow/broad, direct/indirect) and can be fulfilled in different places (e.g. schools, media, and community centers). From this study we gained that most policy papers speak about education and show much similarities with peace education or use/recommend specific forms of peace education. Education is an important influencing factor, it can prevent children from being recruited and the absence of it can serve as a push factor to join an armed group or schools can even become a place for recruitment. Basic educational needs such as school materials, food, water and a teacher should be provided in order to educate and support people and give them physical safety in

‘safe havens’. It learns children what peace is, a situation most of them never experienced and makes societies political, social and economical more stable.

Last, the reformulated work definition of the concept of DDR. Disarmament is the removal of arms whereby accessibility of illicit arms and the security dilemma should be taken into account. Demobilization is exclusion from the army units and the demolishing of the hierarchical structures within the group in order to prevent remobilization. Reintegration is the placement and inclusion in society, whereby broad community support, access to education, family reunification, traditional healing ceremonies and a reconstruction of identity and the place and role in society is needed.

We gained that family reunification, psychosocial support, education, vocational training and income generation projects are elements which are proved to be main points of focus of DDR for child soldiers. Furthermore, reunification with home communities (besides the own family), coordination between different organizations, attention for health issues and the need for logistics, humanitarian, financial and security resources play an important role in this definition.

This research shows different interrelations between the concepts. Examples of interrelations between the three concepts for both DDR and peace education, which are a result of this study, are that faith and hope for the future of the identity of the child soldier has to be restored so former child soldiers can establish new goals and find their purpose in life. If education programs can be adjusted to the motives and the identity of the child soldier, education can support their reintegration. Lessons child soldiers have learned during war (e.g. loyalty, tenacity, the wish to contribute to society, inner strength) and learned skills (e.g. leadership, communication, strategic thinking, dismantle arms, protect superiors, have knowledge about military tactics and strategies) can even be used in a positive way during and after their reintegration in order to stop and prevent recruitment of child soldiers.

Conceptual relations between DDR and the identity of child soldiers include the powerful feeling children had who carried a weapon or had other roles within the armed group. In the demobilization process child soldiers have to leave the armed group and all its socialization processes. Thereby the reintegration of these children is a great challenge. Issues that create this challenge are the fact that funding by governments and other organizations is rare, child soldiers often have no access to educational or vocational training, and family reintegration programs are hard to establish.

Education can help in changing the identity of the child soldier so they can learn to see themselves not as soldiers or as victims anymore. Besides identity adaption a rapid reconstruction of the education system is important in order to establish a place of hope and security for children and to change their thoughts for a more peaceful society. Former child soldiers should build up their self-worth (without wearing a gun) and education can “normalize” their life if they returned into society. If the push and pull factors to join an armed group have been removed, the likelihood for child combatants to voluntarily join an armed group decreases.

In the conclusion of this research working hypotheses which were formulated after the theory chapter are revisited with the gained knowledge from the policy chapter, best practices are shown and recommendations are made.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Armed recruitment of children (youth under 18) and their use in hostilities takes place in at least 86 countries and areas worldwide (Child Soldiers Global Report, 2008:12). This number takes into account “illegal recruitment by armed groups, forcible recruitment by government forces, recruitment or use of children into militias or other groups associated with armed forces, their use as spies, as well as legal recruitment into peacetime armies” (*idem*). As from 2011 there have been new reports of child soldier use in Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, India, Iraq, Israel, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen (<http://www.child-soldiers.org/faq.php>, 1-2014). This ‘new’ child soldier use was reported in national armies, elements of state security forces, state-allied armed groups and/or armed opposition groups (*idem*).



Figure 1. Child soldiers worldwide

Both UNICEF and The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers see today’s conflict as more and more fluid with a rising amount of involvement of non-state actors. This makes it increasingly difficult to measure not only the use of child soldiers, but also the impact of the conflict on children (UNICEF and The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2009:8).

The problem I studied is the reintegration of child soldiers in a conflict context. In this research I examined two concepts (DDR and peace education), which are strongly related to the identity of the child soldier. The scientific relevance of this research will be to refine conceptual interrelations between DDR, peace education and the identity of child soldiers, using conflict studies and human geography (with an emphasis on the topic of identity which plays an important role in conflict studies as well as in human geography). Peace education and DDR programs play an increasing role in all possible types of (post-) conflict situations. Knudsen (2004:498) states that the topic of child soldiers is new to peace agreements and DDR frameworks; a few years ago, little attention was given to the reintegration of child soldiers. This is why the scientific relevance of this research is gaining ground. This thesis will contribute to the existing scientific knowledge by combining these three concepts and by studying these in INGO policy documents and documents of UN programs, funds and related organizations.

The direct societal problem that triggered this research project was that 2,000 former child soldiers (between the ages of 12 and 18) of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), have been released from their ranks in March 2012, and will have to be reintegrated into the society of South Sudan within two years. This information has shaped my research. Especially the societal problem of these child soldiers has served as one of the triggers for this project. A former child soldier is characterized by the reformation of their identity and goals in life, in conjunction with the community around them. The societal relevance of this research is important because the transition

of former child soldiers from armed groups back to their villages requires an adaptation of their identity which may entail a number of societal problems. Examples of these are the establishment of the right education and DDR programs, the fear of exclusion and the need to find a goal in life and establish a better livelihood. More generally speaking, the overall societal problem is that child soldiers have to transform their 'war mentality' into a 'peace mentality'. Children are the future of a country, they will have to lead this country one day and they have the potential to establish peace and a better life for their own children. The thesis can contribute to solving these societal problems partly by providing insights into the way in which former child soldiers can optimally benefit from peace education and DDR programs in ongoing conflict¹. The enrichment of research on the topic of the identity of child soldiers will contribute to new insights on the reintegration of child soldiers in both theory and practice. The connection between theory and practice moreover increases the societal relevance of this research. Particularly researchers and policymakers will benefit from the results of this research, because they can apply the outcomes in order to advance the alignment of the identity of child soldiers, DDR and Peace education in theory and practice.

1.1 The main concepts

This research undertakes a study of three main concepts. The first concept is child soldiers and their identity; the second concept consists of a cluster, namely disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, often referred to as DDR. The last main concept is peace education. DDR is described as a process which detaches (child) soldiers from their units, removes their attachment to weapons and relocates them into society (Furley, May, 2006). This can cause a lot of problems as well as a changing identity, as they have had a variety of experiences, which include being traumatized during war. Peace education is a learning tool that attempts the reduction of violence (Betty Reardon, 2000, in Salomon, Cairns, 2010) and may be an effective way of reintegration. I chose to work with DDR and peace education as two separate concepts because peace education has existed much longer than the new DDR concept and because from my point of view, peace education is more comprehensive than DDR. Peace education can be necessary to realize DDR and DDR can provide unrest in society, which can in turn be reduced by peace education. These interrelations form three types of interaction that will play an important role in this research. The interactions are between the identity of child soldiers and DDR programs, between the identity of child soldiers and peace education, and between DDR programs and peace education programs. Only a few scholars have written about (one of) these interrelations. The contribution of my research lies in the study of conceptual and content relation to clarify the aforementioned interrelations.

In chapter 1, the nexus between these main concepts will be studied, in order to contribute to the conceptual interrelations in an innovative way, complemented by the best practices found by scholars. In the third chapter, this study examines programs and policy orientations as well as best practices indicated by international organizations working in the field of reintegration of child soldiers, DDR and peace education programs.

¹ An example of a peace education project with great societal relevance is the program of African Centers for Peace Education and Training (<http://www.peace.ca/africa.htm>). One of their programs called "The Human Right to Peace" raises awareness about human rights during conflicts.

Child soldiers and their changing identity

For the aim of this research I will use the following work definition of the concept child soldier: In many cases (s)he is recruited, (s)he has used violence and violence has been committed against him/her. The child is associated with armed force, so (s)he can be a fighter, a cook, a porter, a messenger, a spy or a sexual slave and is below 18 years of age. Reintegration into society is almost an impossible process, partly because child soldiers have to change their identity. Not only the question of why child soldiers have joined the fighting is important, moreover the question of how the army/ rebel group has affected the identity of the child soldier needs to be raised. Another issue is the place that these children have in society. How does the community act towards (former) child soldiers? Seen from an international perspective the question if and how child soldiers should be tried and the debate about who is a child soldier (regarding to their age) are important factors. From an individual perspective, rebels do not remember their identity from before the war and it is hard for them to imagine a situation without war and their place and their identity within a situation of peace. In the various chapters of this research this definition and the work definitions of DDR and peace education will be elaborated.

DDR: Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

The work definition of the concept DDR that will be used for the aim of this research is: Disarmament: the removal of arms. Demobilization: the removal from the Army units. Reintegration: placement and inclusion in society. Furley & May describe DDR as: disarmament is a process to “remove the means by which violence is perpetrated” (2006: 64), demobilization is to prepare soldiers for civilian life and remove them from their unit, and reintegration is the integration from the army back into society. Muggah (2005) states that “DDR is a process introduced following a conflict and directed primarily at ensuring the transition of combatants to civilian life” (2006: 242). In this research the DDR opportunities for child soldiers will play an important role in the change of their identity. DDR will also be linked to the third main concept of this research, peace education.

Peace education

Peace education has the following work definition; it is a form of education that attempts the reduction of violence and thereby changes and forms perceptions, capabilities, and identities.

The definition of peace education that will be used in this research is the definition of Betty Reardon (2000: 401 in Salomon, Cairns, 2010): “[Peace education is] planned and guided learning that attempts to comprehend and reduce the multiple forms of violence (physical, structure, institutional and cultural) used as instruments for the advancement or maintenance of cultural, social, or religious beliefs and practices or of political, economic or ideological institutions or practices”. In addition to this definition, the statement of Salomon & Cairns (2010: 6) will be kept in mind during this research: “the focus of peace education is on changed capabilities, perceptions, and dispositions, not on the conflict. For conflict resolution, changed abilities as such are an extra bonus; for peace education, transformed conflict is its extra bonus not its main concern”. In the case of peace education the same applies; the relations with the identity of child soldiers and DDR will be further elaborated. For the identity of child soldiers, peace education can help bridge the gap between competing principles, values and motivations. Important questions about these linkages are: What are the needs of most child soldiers during recurrent conflict? How can peace education contribute towards the creation of principles, values and motives for former child soldiers when they reintegrate into society and consequently help them think independently again?

1.2 Theoretical Framework: Human Geography and Conflict Studies

The concepts and interrelations between the identity of child soldiers, DDR and peace education programs will be studied in this research from two interdisciplinary areas. In my opinion, this is an innovative way to shine a different perspective on the interrelations. The first perspective is from the field of human geography. Human geography can make a contribution to this research with its theory on identity. The second (and main) perspective is from the field of conflict studies. The contribution of conflict studies towards this research deals with issues of recurrent conflict, identity and peace building. Several study results focus on DDR or peace education in post-conflict societies, today these concepts moreover need to be studied in the perspective of recurrent conflict. DDR and peace education are part of peace building programs, thereby peace building can also contribute to this study. These two focus points will be studied from two different interdisciplinary areas: conflict studies and human geography.

Conflict Studies

The basic concepts of conflict studies that will be used in this research are identity, recurrent conflict and peace building. Recurrent conflict seen through the eyes of Rouhana & Bar-Tal is “characterized by being violent, perceived as a zero sum game (where one gains only if the other loses), irreconcilable, central, and total in a society’s life” (in Kupermintz & Salomon 2005,1998: 293). This recurrent conflict plays a role in this research because this is the existing situation in many different conflict areas with the involvement of child soldiers and thereby must be taken into account. Because of this, prevention is needed in order to ensure that former child soldiers do not return to their fighting units. Another implication of recurrent conflict in this research is that it will seek out the possibilities of DDR programs and peace education *during* conflict instead of *after* conflict (the most studied form).

The second concept of conflict studies that will be used in this research is peace building. According to Barnett et al (2007: 37), a general understanding of peace building is the external intervention that has as goal the reduction of the risks of recurrent conflict. They also state that there exist a variety of terms, which are or can be related towards peace building. “Some programs focus on the production of stability and security in the early days of a peace agreement’s implementation, while others focus on building vibrant civil societies and furthering development, democracy, justice, and the rule of law” (Barnett, Kim, O’Donnel & Sitea, 2007: 36). The terms used in this research are also related to peace building. Peace education and DDR form a part of the larger peace building process. The relevance of the concept of peace building in this research is to get a better grip on peace building during DDR.

Human geography

Involving human geography in this research means the involvement of identity. Identity plays a major role in the lives of child soldiers. Initially, the military or armed group gives the children a certain identity. They belong to the group; child soldiers often wear a military uniform and a weapon. Their identity gets a boost as it transitions from being a normal child, to becoming a powerful soldier who has the ability or is forced to kill people. The Dictionary of Human Geography (2000: 365) states that identity creates a self-image of memories, consciousness and ways of representation (such as personal, social, cultural, national identity) and that identity will affect the actions of people. The dictionary also brings up that identity not only means that one can aspire to selfhood, but that one has “the assumption of a fictive otherness” (2000: 365). Kalyvas mentions in his research about identity in civil wars, that “identity labels should be handled with caution” (2003: 481). This is because from his point of view, people cannot be treated the same way during a civil war. If these

child soldiers have to reintegrate back into society, the search for their own identity, their own freedom of thoughts and their life as a child or as a young adult begins. The topic identity intersects both with human geography as with conflict studies.

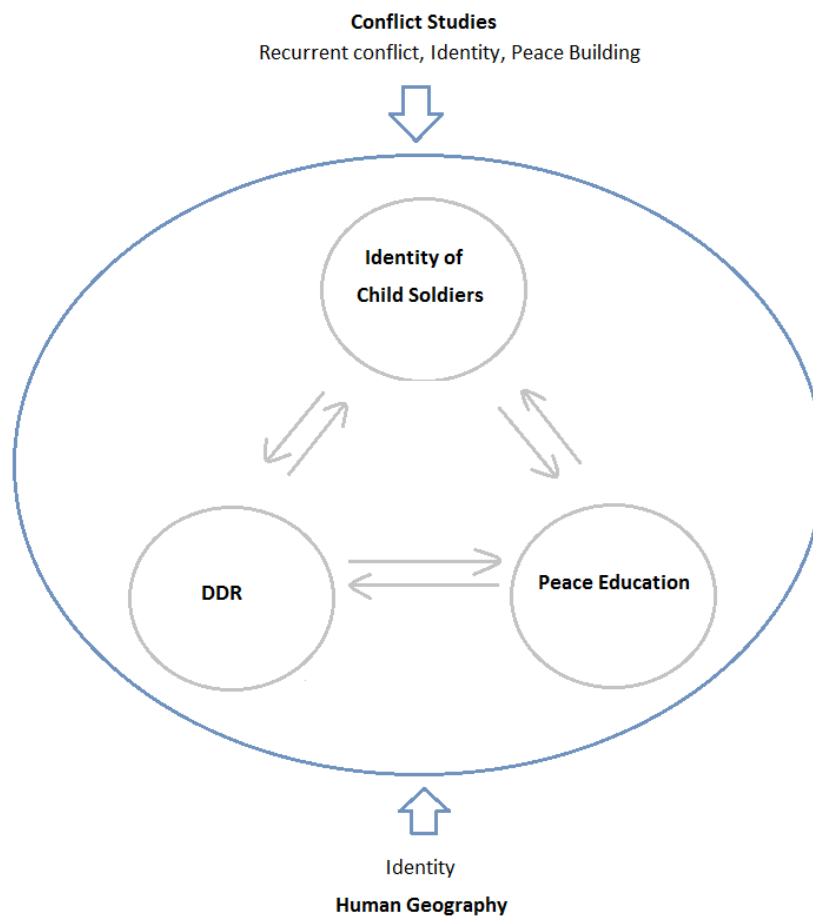


Figure 2. The schematic structure of the basic concepts. The three main concepts are connected to each other through arrows. These arrows represent connectedness and forms of influence/enrichment towards each other. The contributions from the fields of conflict studies and human geography will moreover contribute to the separate concepts as well as to the interrelations between the concepts.

1.3 Main Goals and Research Purpose

The research has two main goals, namely: (1) the exploration of the theoretical interrelations with the intention to enrich these conceptual interrelations and (2) to gain insight into the practical realization of DDR and peace education programs with the best practices for child soldiers. These goals will be achieved by an academic literature study and a study of policy papers of institutes in the field of child soldiers and DDR as well as peace education programs. The policy papers used in this research will be INGO policy documents and documents of UN programs, funds and related organizations. In order to enrich information about the above mentioned topics, this research will also contain examples of comparable situations in the field of child soldiers in Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (e.g. Malan, 2000; Bayer, Klasen, and Adam, 2007; Young, 2007; Muggah, 2007; McKnight, 2010; Veale, Stavrou, 2011). The intention is to try and advance the studies, draw conclusions and recommendations for further theoretical

research and for further practical implications of DDR and/or peace education programs, as well as to learn from these other countries.

The combination of the different concepts and interrelations of study has guided me to the formulation of the following research purpose:

The purpose of this study is to explore, expand and enrich the conceptual interrelations about the impacts and best practices of peace education and DDR programs on the identity of former child soldiers in their current process of reintegration into society. This will be realized through literature and policy based desk research of existing empirical research, with insights from the fields of Conflict Studies and Human Geography.

1.4 Research Question

This has led me to the formation of the main research question:

In which way can the identity of child soldiers, DDR and Peace education best be aligned in theory and practice?

This question consists of two components:

- a. *What are the conceptual interrelations between the identity of child soldiers, DDR and Peace education?*
- b. *What are considered to be the best practices of DDR and peace education programs for former child soldiers according to policy documents realized by international institutions including NGO's working in the field of child soldiers, DDR and peace education?*

1.5 Research Structure

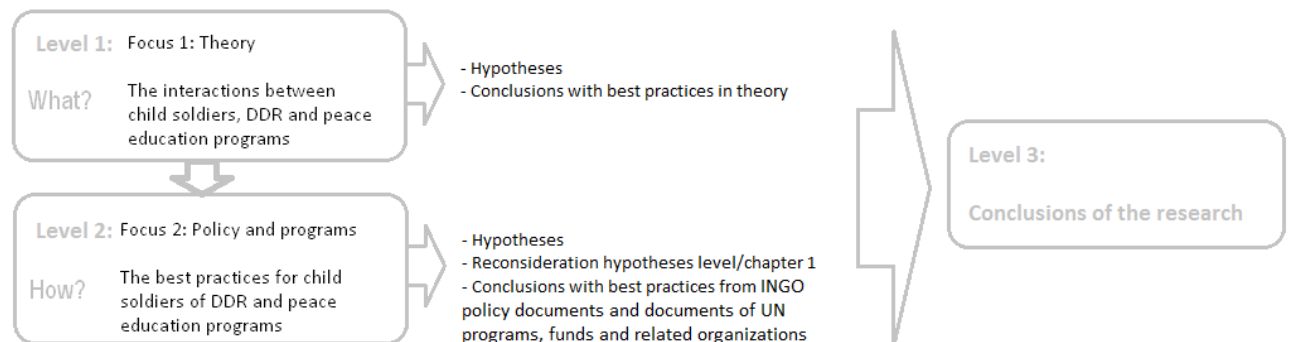


Figure 3. *The schematic structure of the research. This research consists of two levels of study. Every level forms one chapter in the thesis and has its own focus. The first focus area lies in the analysis of the theoretical, conceptual interrelations, in order to investigate the interactions between child soldiers, DDR and peace education programs and to make a contribution towards these conceptual interrelations. The second focus area is that of policy papers and programs and aims to investigate the best practices of these policy and programs for the reintegration of child soldiers. Level 1 represents the chapter two and its outcomes and level 2 stands for chapter 3. The conclusions on both chapters will be recapitulated in the last chapter (4), level 3.*

1.6 Methodology

The theoretical grounding of this research consists of academic studies about the identity of child soldiers, DDR, peace education and about the interrelations of these concepts. Other sources, which will mainly be used in the third chapter, are INGO policy documents and documents of UN programs, funds and related organizations. These sources and literature bring new insights to the field of child soldiers through a critical reflection and combination of studies. Verschuren and Doorewaard (2007:161) list five 'research strategies' that can be used when conducting research: questionnaire; experiment; case study; substantiating theoretical approach and desk research. For my research I have used the research strategy of desk research. This desk research includes the summary, collation and/or synthesis of existing and relevant research about the main concepts. I chose this research strategy because this way the different elements of DDR and peace education can be explained in relation to the identity of the child soldier. This in order to obtain enough relevant information to identify the way in which these concepts can best be aligned in theory and practice. Another reason for the choice of desk research, was to provide background information about the combination of concepts. This because the relation between DDR and peace education in relation to the identity of the child soldier has not much been studied by scholars. The goal of this desk research was to provide hypotheses and recommendations for both further theoretical research and further research in practice. Data collection and data analysis took place on the bases of the most recent and carefully chosen academic studies and through a combination and equation between these studies. Research on the identity of child soldiers conducted in African countries, such as Sierra Leone and the DRC will also be used to provide examples. Most of the literature research took place during the start of my research period. Furthermore, by being able to access the database of the Peace Palace Library, I was able to obtain scientific articles which I would have not have been able to access via other library systems. I started reading different literature about the three earlier mentioned concepts and worked from the general towards the specific, which brought me to the main question of this research. Subsequently, I combined the theory that I had obtained from literature, with information from additional academic articles and wrote the theoretical chapter. In this way I collected information from a variety of sources and tried to cross-reference. I then examined how these concepts relate to each other in practice, in the more policy-orientated chapter. Another part of the empirical sources that will be studied in chapter three, will consist of a carefully chosen documentation of successful and unsuccessful DDR and peace education programs and the experiences of former child soldiers with these programs. Researching the fields as presented above, gave me a better understanding of the current problems.

For the structure of this study I chose to start this research with the determination of work definitions for the three main concepts (see page 3). The knowledge I gained from academic literature about these separate concepts enriches the work definitions and is shown in the conclusion of the second chapter. These more detailed definitions are once again enriched with findings of the third chapter. The conclusion of this third chapter shows the completed work definitions and thereby the structure of the chapter with the enlargement of knowledge throughout the research process. Other elements to structure this study and to build up own obtained knowledge is the formulation of hypotheses in the conclusion of the second chapter. These hypotheses are reflected upon from the comprehensive knowledge of the third chapter in the final conclusion and forms in this way recommendations for further studies. Furthermore, policy recommendations and a critical reflection will be part of the final conclusion. A disadvantage of this data collection and analysis however, is that scholars served different goals with their research, as their research was directed at different problem statements. According to Verschuren and Doorewaard (2007), a unilateral point of view towards the research topic is a pitfall. This research will try to avoid this pitfall by combining different research topics and by using theoretical insights from the fields of conflict studies and human geography.



Chapter 2: Conceptual Interrelations between the Identity of Child Soldiers, DDR and Peace Education

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the three main concepts of this study. The first concept is child soldiers; the second concept consists of an established cluster, namely disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, often referred to as DDR. The last main concept is peace education. Subsequently, these three main concepts are clarified with the intention to focus on the possible *conceptual* interrelations between the concepts. Against these backgrounds, the setup of the next paragraph will be as follows: 2.2 will focus on the concept of child soldiers; in section 2.2.1 the focus will lie on a classification according to their ages; section 2.2.2 describes the reasons for children to join and stay in the armed group, and how this group creates a new identity and new roles for these children; 2.3 defines the DDR process that is divided into disarmament (2.3.1); demobilization (2.3.2); and reintegration (2.3.3). In 2.3.4 the difference between DDR for adults and children will be studied. 2.4 examines the different push and pull factors and the risk of re-recruitment. This section will be followed by the goals, forms and methods of peace education (2.5). After these three main concepts, the interactions between these concepts will be explained. Paragraph 2.6 studies the interaction between child soldiers and peace education, 2.7 peace education during recurrent conflict, and in 2.8 the interactions between DDR and peace education will be analyzed. This chapter ends with a conclusion in which working hypotheses are given for further studies about the nexus between the three main concepts (2.9).

The starting point in the discussion on the three concepts is the identity of child soldiers. The point of focus is the changing of this identity. This changing identity of the child soldier has – or should have – an impact on DDR and peace education. Vice versa, DDR and peace education can have an impact on the child soldier and thereby change its identity. Some examples will be shown in this chapter in order to illustrate the situation in armed groups, in particular the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA, originated in Uganda).

2.2 A definition of child soldiers

" 'Child soldier' [...] is defined as any person under 18 years of age, who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including, but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers, and anyone accompanying such groups, other than family members. The definition includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and for forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms". UNICEF, Cape Town Principles (1997:12).

According to the Paris Principles (2007:7, 2.1 and 2.2): *““Child” refers to any person less than 18 years of age in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. “A child associated with an armed force or armed group” refers to any person below 18 years of age who is or who has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys, and girls used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes. It does not only refer to a child who is taking or has taken a direct part in hostilities”.*

The provisions of these definitions of 1997 (UNICEF, Cape Town Principles) and 2007 (Paris Principles) show how the description and classification of child soldiers have developed over the years. These definitions have been chosen because they are the most comprehensive and authoritative ones. They are comprehensive because they involve elements such as the definition of

a child soldier, recruitment, their age, their belonging to an armed group and their functions. The definitions are authoritative because scholars widely use these definitions (or parts of it) in their own studies (e.g. Andving & Gates, 2007:2; McKnight, 2010:114-115; Williams, 2011:1076) and also since UNICEF is a well-respected organization with a wide support in many countries, has joint ventures, active programs with NGO's and INGO's, and a UN mandate. The Paris Principles (which will be further explained later on) are also seen as authoritative, as they have been originally defined by UNICEF and formally adopted by the UN (The Paris Principles, 2007).

2.2.1 Classification of child soldiers

Apart from defining child soldiers, the classification of child soldiers has various obstacles. One of the key problems in classifying child soldiers is that many children are not aware of their actual age. This makes it e.g. hard to keep children under the age of eighteen from voluntarily enlisting to armed conflict².

During the last century, provisions have been established that reflect the international law on the rights of the child. *The Declaration of the Rights of the Child* adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1959 stated that "The child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture and enable him, on a basis of equal opportunity, to develop his abilities, his individual judgment, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society." (Principle 7) "The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation. He shall not be the subject of traffic, in any form. The child shall not be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age; he shall in no case be caused or permitted to engage in any occupation or employment which would prejudice his health or education, or interfere with his physical, mental or moral development" (Principle 9). The conventions for the Declaration in 1959 were made by *The Declaration of the Rights of the Child* adopted in 1924, which was the first international treaty concerning the rights of children. It consists of five basic principles, such as: "The child must be the first to receive relief in times of distress" (Principle 3).

Thirty years later, in November 1989, *The Convention on the Rights of the Child* was adopted unanimously by the UN General Assembly. This convention is about the social, economic and cultural rights of children. This convention was followed by The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, adopted in 1999, and in 2000 by the Optional Protocol to the International Charter of the Child Rights regarding the participation of children in armed conflicts. This Protocol forbids children to participate in armed conflicts and requires that states have to demobilize and "States Parties shall, when necessary, accord to such persons all appropriate assistance for their physical and psychological recovery and their social reintegration" (Article 6). The Paris Principles seem to represent the latest international agreement on child soldiers and provide in-depth guidelines regarding the formation and implementation of anti-child soldier laws. The Principles also call for total release of children from armed conflict at all time (The Paris Principles, 2007:5), and state that the age limit has to be 18. Examples of principles are: "Child refers to any person less than 18 years of age in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child" (Principle 2.0) and "Measures must be taken to prevent propaganda or active recruitment taking place in or around schools and to protect children in the school environment (Principle 6.26.1) These are the general provisions of international law that mostly determine the discussion about the classification of the age of the child soldier.

² A source of this problem is the lack of universal birth registration (McKnight, 2010:115).

In literature, two competing approaches about children and armed conflict also address the problems about the age debate, and thereby the classification of the child soldier. The so-called humanitarian universalists discourse argues that “the 18-year norm is the internationally accepted benchmark around which [the] demarcation between children and adults has [have] come to be consecrated in the language of law, and accepted as a global norm” (Podder, 2011:143). On the other hand, so-called cultural relativists argue that childhood is a social construction and culture determines the transition from child to adult. The argument of Andvig & Gates (2007:4) seems to support the cultural relativists approach. They state that it would be wrong to lump together children younger than eighteen because children change during childhood and cannot be generalized as an under eighteen group. The breaking point is, according to them, when children have enough physical strength to do tasks or to make decisions adults would make. “In most countries, children must shoulder adult work responsibilities at an earlier age than is accepted in the West” (Andvig & Gates, 2007:4-5). In another study, Gates analyzes the definitions of *child* in order to define *child soldiers*: “From the perspective of a Brazilian urban gang member the child is any person too young to handle guns and contracts; sometime around 12-14 years, a child has become an adult. In other contexts, one is still a child until he marries and has a place of his own to live” (Gates, 2011:31). This example illustrates that opinions about age and adulthood of children may differ between cultures. From this perspective, every culture creates its own definition and classification of the child and the child soldier (Dore, 2008:1296³).

The discussion between the humanitarian universalists and cultural relativists is an important starting point for studies about the identity of (former) child soldiers. Do these (former) child soldiers have to be approached as children, as adults or as soldiers? It is hard to determine the minimum age at which a soldier can be legally recruited, and is thus considered to be an adult. Both approaches have their own way of dealing with the issue, a problem that has not been reconciled.

Although there are international laws on child soldiering, we have to be aware of the fact that there are numerous countries and armed groups that do not live up to these rules. Malan (2000) for example, conducted a study on the minimum age for recruitment in Sierra Leone, which is formally set at eighteen years, but concludes that this country is nevertheless on top of the list of countries that recruit children.

2.2.2 Recruitment and roles of child soldiers

The identity of child soldiers is not only formed by an age limit but most of all by the experiences undergone during the time they were active for the armed group. Lots of children are forced to join an armed group, others joined voluntarily. War Child estimates that currently 250,000 child soldiers are active (<http://www.warchild.org.uk/issues/child-soldiers>, 9-1-2014). It is widely argued that once children are part of an armed group, they have reasons to stay in this group. The armed group affects the identity of the children by forming them from a child into a child soldier, through socialization processes and roles and ranks they get (Vermeij, 2011:173). Peace education and DDR need to be adapted to the specific needs of the child soldier. They have to take into account the way in which children became part of the armed group, as well as the experiences they had while they were in the armed group (Vermeij, 2011:173).

This section provides the reasons why children join an armed group and why they stay in the armed group. Subsequently, the roles that child soldiers get in the armed group, as mentioned in the UNICEF, Cape Town Principles (1997) and the Paris Principles (2007) are further elaborated.

³ See also Children’s Rights Portal: <http://childrensrightsportal.org/childrens-rights-history/> Humanium

Firstly, one has to focus on the question of why child soldiers enter into an armed group. A large number of scholars have studied this particular question (e.g. Knudsen, 2004; Wessells, 2005; Andvig & Gates, 2007; Young, 2007; Williams, 2011). These scholars conducted studies in different conflict areas and most of them see similarities in the reasons why children enter an armed group; they have also expanded each other's list with reasons for joining the armed group. Wessells (2005:364) states that many children become soldiers because of forced recruitment (sometimes forced at gunpoint, Malan 2000:1). His study on the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) shows recruitment strategies "of isolation, physical beatings and intimidation to force children into complete obedience" (Wessells, 2005:364). In a later study (Wessells, 2006:37) these recruitment strategies are adjusted in three distinct most common methods. The first method is abduction. This illegal practice is performed by commanders of the armed group and is most common in refugee camps or camps for internally displaced persons (IDP) because of the high number of children. In addition to the abductions in camps, children get abducted if they are in the pathway of the armed group. Mostly the children have only two options; they either get killed or are taken by the armed group. The second method is press ganging. This is a form of mass recruitment in marketplaces, schools (often used by the LRA; Young, 2007:20), refugee camps or streets where children are driven together like 'fish in nets'. Press ganging in schools will usually take place by means of a raid. In comparison to abduction, press ganging recruits more children at once, usually by driving them together. The last forced recruitment method put forward by Wessells (2006:41) is recruitment by quota. This implies that local authorities are forced to act as combatants of the armed group and in this way recruit children. These local authorities have to force village leaders to 'offer' at least ten children from the village. If the village leaders do not offer these children, the village will be attacked by the armed force. Knudsen (2004:499) states that children who live near a conflict area are more likely to be recruited than others and that children can be easier recruited than adults. A quote by a younger adolescent male in Kono, who was part of the Revolutionary United Front (ROF) in Sierra Leone, might serve as an example of forced recruitment: "All of us were captured and marched to the barry. Some ran away; others were unable. Those who were marched to the barry were organized in [such] a way that the children were in one line and adults in the other. Then they began to cut the throats of the adults" (Betancourt, Simmons *et al.*, 2008:572).

In case children voluntarily join the armed group, we can distinguish different push and pull factors to join. Push factors are very diverse: from escaping forced marriages (for girls), enemy images, and escaping atrocities of the army (Hauge, 2011:101), to the lack of security, food and healthcare (Wessells, 2005:364) and high unemployment rates (Young, 2007:20). Other push factors, according to Wessells (2005:365), are that "children also join armed groups out of disaffection with a political, social, and economic system that has failed them. Lack of educational opportunities which children see as necessary for building a positive future, is one of the main sources of alienation". Young (2007:20) also states that a lack of education is a push factor for children to join armed groups. Halton (2011:272) expands this list of push factors with the lack of access to livelihoods, separation from care-givers and cultural expectations of manhood. Pull factors that can lead to the voluntary participation in armed groups are the food and healthcare they provide for the children, a desire for revenge, and the excitement to wear a gun (Wessells, 2005:364). One other pull factor is mentioned by Hauge (2011:101). In his study on child soldiers in Guatemala he states that children were recruited because family members were already in the armed group. Gates (2011:34) argues that children would only join a violent organization if this organization offers a better 'payoff' than what the child would receive in a normal situation. The payoff should resemble a huge amount to the child soldier, and is therefore an important pull factor. Rewards for child soldiers can be money, a function (satisfaction related with performing a task) and security. Gates further defines the latter into two parts. The first part is security for the child soldier,

(s)he would not be killed by the rebels because (s)he belongs to this group. The second part can be provided as security for the family of the child soldier.

In addition to the reasons to join the armed group, child soldiers also have reasons to stay in the armed group. Retention within the rebel troops has gained little attention by different scholars (Gates, 2011:29). A reason to stay in the armed group is that children feel powerful wearing a gun; it makes them feel big and gives great excitement. In contrast, Schmidt (2007:51) argues that the main reason for staying is that child soldiers joined the armed group voluntarily in the first place (this is, of course, only applicable for part of the soldiers). Other reasons are that they establish a sense of pride in belonging to the armed group and they realize that it will be hard if they leave the group (Schmidt, 2007:51). An additional reason might be that the family of the child soldier has been murdered, and he no longer has a family, except for his new 'family': the armed group (Wessells, 2005:364).

The next question that has to be asked is how the armed group affects the identity of the child soldier. Armed groups tend to change the identity of a child into the identity of a child soldier, so that children will be loyal to and part of the armed group. Children are separated from their family and friends and become part of the armed group that will form his/her own identity (Knudsen, 2004:499). *"When children are in the fighting forces, they enter a new stage in their development, take on new roles, forge new identities, and experience having a new kind of power they have not experienced before"* (Knudsen, 2004:500). In this respect, Özerdem & Podder (2011:3) argue that relationships within rebel groups are very important for child soldiers. These relationships can provide stability in the insecure situation of war. They also argue that through these relationships, children adopt a new identity with great respect for commanders, a strong group cohesion and unambiguous norms and beliefs. In this way, identification with the rebel group takes place. A great motivation can be the perception of "fighting for your brothers" (Gates, 2011:41). As an explanation of this, Gates argues that a strong bond between the soldiers exists because of the time they spend together in life-threatening circumstances. The leaders of rebel groups also create a shared identity by constructing a sense of membership and team spirit (Gates, 2011:42). Vermeij (2011:180) agrees with this and states that the child soldiers of the LRA, originally from Uganda, form a family with friendships, relationships and have children. Besides the shared identity of the child soldiers, a new identity is constructed by the commander. He often takes the role of the new father, according to Vermeij (2011:174), who conducted a study on the way socialization methods altered the reintegration of child soldiers in the LRA. Because of the high percentage of child soldiers in the LRA (60-80 per cent), socialization processes are important to keep them in the army. These socialization processes create reliability and dependence among the soldiers. Examples of socialization rituals in the LRA are the 'boot camp', a training that drills the newly abducted child soldiers, as well as the 'welcome ceremony', with the ritual of newcomers being beaten and smeared with butter to 'protect' them from bullets. These rituals lead to "the rebirth of abductees as group members" (Vermeij, 2011:177). If the children do not act like a 'good rebel' or do not live up to the new norms and values, they will be killed as a threat in front of the eyes of others. The indoctrination of children is based on fear and punishment. Children are often forced to use alcohol and drugs, so as to become emotionally numb (Betancourt, Simmons *et al.*, 2008:565). In this way, child soldiers of the LRA changed their identity, norms and values during the time they were in the army. Socialization melts the individual identity into a group identity (Vermeij, 2011:176).

The identity of child soldiers in the armed group is also formed by means of the role the child gets in this group. The quotes in section 1.1 already showed a couple of these roles. The UNICEF, Cape Town Principles (1997) include cooks, porters and messengers in addition to child soldiers who carry weapons. The Paris Principles (2007:7) add to this list the roles of spies and roles for sexual purposes. In addition, McKnight (2010:113) mentions the roles of human shield and mine tester. These roles form a clear infringement of human rights because child soldiers cannot oppose and have

to execute orders. Children who wear weapons feel empowered and are able to get the role of a soldier through the availability of light-weight weapons (Young, 2007:19). Another way in which a change in identity can be stimulated is by giving the child soldiers a rank. This allows them to feel more powerful than they have ever felt (Vermeij, 2011:180).

Through discussion about age, identity and roles of the concept of child soldiers, insight has been gained in the process by which the identity of a child changes into the identity of a child soldier. Based on this, two questions have attracted my attention for the rest of this study. The first question deals with the DDR process (which will be elaborated upon in section 1.3) in relation to changing identity: are the current DDR processes sufficient and do they offer enough handgrips to modify the identity of the child soldier into the identity of a child or a young adolescent? The second question is about the role of peace education: In which way can peace education help to achieve a sufficient change in identity in order to change a former child soldier into a child or young adolescent? Part of the outcome of these questions is the extent in which identity can change. It does not mean that the experiences, deeds and memories of children during the time they were part of the armed group can be erased. The identity of these children cannot change *back into* the romanticized identity of a carefree and happy child. Instead, identity has to change in order to avoid stigmatization of the child and help this child to rebuild his/her life as a civilian. Against this background the DDR process will be discussed in the next section (1.3).

2.3 Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs (DDR) and changing identity of the child soldier

DDR is described as a process which helps remove the attachment of (child) soldiers to weapons, to detach them from their units and to relocate them into society (Furley & May, 2006:64). Oliver Furley and Roy May describe the various elements of DDR as follows. According to them, disarmament is the process to “remove the means by which violence is perpetrated”, demobilization is to prepare soldiers for civilian life and remove them from their unit and reintegration is the integration from the army back into society (2006:64). In comparison, Muggah states that “DDR is a process introduced following a conflict and directed primarily at ensuring the transition of combatants to civilian life” (2007: 242). He also argues that one has to be aware of the limitations of DDR to create full potential. Therefore Knight (2004) questions the “need for a more comprehensive consideration of disarmament by acknowledging and responding to its social, economic and political implications” (Knight, 2004:499). With this focus on disarmament he states that the traditional forms of DDR programs involve many different degrees of success. His proposal for future DDR programs is to adjust these programs better to the situation and the “socio-political, economical and physical environment” (Knight, 2004:513). He also states that DDR programs need wide community support to avoid conflicts between the community and former soldiers. In this way it will provide a source of security for society; DDR is an attempt to offer an alternative existence to former soldiers. DDR can cause many problems, such as impacts on identity, since child soldiers have had to endure a variety of experiences, which include being traumatized during war.

After this more general introduction and initial statements about the DDR process, I will further elaborate its three separate elements in the next three sub-paragraphs (2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.3). These sections describe the interrelations between disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and the identity of child soldiers. In section (2.3.4) the ways in which child soldiers differ from adult soldiers in their DDR treatment is discussed. The central question of this section is what the opportunities

and obstacles of DDR are for former (child) soldiers and to which extent DDR as a process is capable to transform the identity of the child⁴.

2.3.1 Disarmament

Disarmament can be considered as the process of removing a (child) soldier's attachment to weapons (Furley & May, 2006: 64). This removal of the attachment to weapons is important according to Malan (2000:2), because weapons are the primary provider of armed conflict. Children are able to participate in this armed conflict because of the accessibility of light weight weapons (also called small arms). The relation between disarmament and child soldiers is solid because a gun transforms a child into a child soldier. Malan (2000:2) therefore states that the management of these arms is a high priority of peace missions. Psychological safety and economic desires will persist in the trade in weapons and numerous African countries have accessibility to illicit arms, even after various peacekeeping missions (Malan, 2000:2). Children can feel powerful and proud wearing a gun, this is why disarmament is not only about handing in the gun, but handing a part of child soldiers' identity.

2.3.2 Demobilization

Demobilization is the process whereby (child) soldiers are removed from their units (Furley & May, 2006:64). Demobilization has its opportunities for (child) soldiers as well as its difficulties. Important questions for the demobilization of child soldiers are: Who should be demobilized? How should we demobilize them? What are children's demobilization needs? What is the need for demobilization?

Pauletto and Patel (2010: 45) argue that the diverse roles that children had and the length of the time they were with the armed force should define the urgency under which children should be demobilized. The most traumatized children and the children who have been active in the armed group for the longest period of time, should be demobilized first⁵. In a complementary way, Malan (2000: 9) states that a key challenge of the demobilization process lies in reinstating children as individuals and give them a sense of hope and faith in a peaceful world. This because they lost the sense of pride that they had when they were part of the armed group (Schmidt, 2007: 51) and this sense has to be replaced. According to Knudsen (2004:37), the focus so far has been on formal demobilization processes of children who carried a weapon during the conflict, while these programs did not give attention to children who had other roles within the armed group. He states that it is important to draw every child soldier into demobilization (as in reintegration) programs. Additionally Knudsen argues that numerous girls who have participated in the armed group were not classified as child soldiers and thereby could not participate in the demobilization process; according to him, this is a great loss of the process. Other demobilization needs of children (if all resources are available) are shown in the list Malan (2000:10) provided: "Nutrition; medical treatment; respect and self-esteem; human dignity and confidentiality; consultation and participation in determining their fates; reintegration packages and benefits; community sensitization in advance and family reintegration; amnesty from prosecution and/or protection from retribution for acts committed during hostilities;

⁴ Be aware of the fact that DDR involves much more than only the focus on the identity of soldiers and child soldiers.

⁵ According to which criteria is one child more traumatized than another child? How can we measure the degree of traumatising? How does traumatising express itself? These questions need to be answered first, in order to test the reliability of this statement. They are however not the focus of this study and can be further elaborated in another research.

protection from repeat recruitment; mental 'disarmament'; education, peace education and vocational training; and employment creation".

Muggah (2007:241) conducted studies in Uganda en Sierra Leone. According to this research there is a variety in results regarding the reduction of crime rates after demobilization. His study in Uganda has shown that after their demobilization program, ex-combatants are one hundred times more likely to commit a crime than people who did not participate as a combatant. De Vries and Wiegink (2011:38) agree and state that ex-soldiers who followed a demobilization program can be a danger for fragile peace. "They are seen as a time bomb that is slowly ticking away". If only a few jobs are offered after the war, it is tempting for ex-combatants to commit crimes in order to make money (2011:40). To avoid this, De Vries and Wiegink argue that demobilization and reintegration programs should play a more central role in the current peace processes in e.g. the DRC and Sudan (2011:38). Zooming in on the demobilization aspect in the study of De Vries and Wiegink (2011:42), they state that the hierarchical structure of the armed group has to be broken and demolished. They emphasize that there is a chance that a group, even after disarmament and demobilization, will continue existing and remobilize. "With this bond between individuals enforced by the experience of war, it is not surprising that after demobilization many ex-combatants choose to stay together" therefore the C&C structure has to be demolished (de Vries and Wiegink, 2011:42).

2.3.3 Reintegration

After disarmament and demobilization, the interrelation between child soldiers and reintegration follow. Furley and May (2006:64) describe reintegration as the relocation of (child) soldiers into society. The fundamental question in this section is what the possibilities and complexities of reintegration for child soldiers are and the implications thereof for their identity. Issues that play a major role are: the need for reintegration; implementation of family reintegration programs; socialization processes in the army and in society; and the impact of healing ceremonies.

A problem that Young (2007:19) points out in respect to reintegration is that "governments and other organizations rarely provide adequate funding and services for the rehabilitation and reintegration of children into their communities. With low levels of material and human capital, children are unable to provide food and shelter for themselves. Former child soldiers often end up on the street, in gangs, or are drawn back into conflicts. While many soldiers do not have access to education or vocational training after the cessation of hostilities, children are particularly affected by the lack of these institutions". Özerdem and Podder (2011:4) therefore state that "prevailing reintegration discourses underline the need for conceptualizing or approaching the reintegration process as constituted by distinct social, economic, psychological, political, and security considerations". The reintegration process gets even more complex because it is hard for children to find their families without specific family reintegration programs, which are very rare, according to Young (2007:20). This statement shows the need for a program that helps children to reintegrate back into society although these processes are often complex.

Any form of reintegration (which will make the DDR process even more complex) will face issues about identity. Vermeij for example, emphasizes that child soldiers face reintegration problems because the socialization processes used in the army of Uganda, complicate the reintegration of child soldiers in society. She calls socialization "the 'glue' that keeps the LRA together as a comprehensive group" (Vermeij, 2011:175). "After years of being with the LRA, they do not remember how to be a civilian and people look upon them as dangerous troublemakers" (Vermeij, 2011:185). Vermeij also states that the child soldiers describe their army as their home; were they once came from has no meaning anymore. Her field study shows that child soldiers are often outsiders in society and that there are countless miscommunications between the former soldiers and others. The socialization

within the army and their changed identity ensures that the children will not be the same person when they reintegrate.

Reintegration experiences in Uganda show failing results and often a gap between the needs and the programs (Vermeij, 2011:175). The two examples of reintegration (as mentioned by Vermeij, 2011:185) mentioned hereafter, are experiences of former child soldiers of the LRA, that describe challenges faced in this reintegration process. These are two contradictory examples that have one common denominator: unsuccessful reintegration. "a girl soldier expressed: 'when I came home, people feared me. The children yelled at me, called me the rebel who destroyed the village. People told me to leave and not come back.' A boy soldier said: 'I was a rebel, I did not want to be in the village. The people are not good, they don't fight for our future and are not brave. They make me angry, I do not want to live with them in the village'". This illustrates that a reconstruction of the place and the role of the child in society is needed in the reintegration programs to give them a chance to resume a normal life. There has to be a point where former child soldiers have to break the bonds with their group members of the armed group, lay down their weapons and reintegrate back into society. Podder (2011:150) also emphasizes the complex role of the reintegration process of child soldiers with respect to their identity. Because of the empowerment and thereby the undermining of the role that was once important for the child as a soldier, she states that it is hard for the child to be separated from the other child soldiers and form a 'new' identity as a 'normal' child. In addition, Ashby (2002:11) who was a commando-trained officer of the British Royal Marines in Sierra Leone and worked with child soldiers, states that "most of the rebels were too young to remember life before the civil war". This means that the rebels do not remember their identity before the war and that it is hard for them to imagine the situation without war and their place and their identity within a situation of peace. As an additional fact, Ashby describes that these child soldiers have forgotten their own names through the amount of drugs they had to take, "let alone that there is a peace process" (2002:12).

The determination of the best conditions under which this transformation of identity can take place is a topic of debate between scholars. Family and ritualistic cleansing can be of great importance in forming a new identity within the reintegration process. Awodola (2009:8) argues that this ritual cleansing is an important psychosocial element of the reintegration process and that it is often carried out as a traditional healing ceremony. The activities of child soldiers during the war are seen as an ill spirit which has to be driven away during the ceremony⁶ (2009:8). Reintegration methods of child soldiers in different countries vary, but in general they consist of three main components/needs. These three components are: "family reunification; psychosocial support including traditional rituals and family and community mediation; and education and economic opportunity" (Awodola, 2009: 1)⁷. This is the prevailing view of the content of reintegration programs. In addition, Awodola (2009: 2) states that the effectiveness of these three components is debatable. This is because for the first component, family reunification, families of the former child soldiers have to be traced. Sometimes efforts to find the child's family fail. A solution can be to find other caregivers. But this does not mean, according to Awodola, that the reunification is successful and completed; it is only completed if former child soldiers can be reunified with their own family, their own home community. Pauletto and Patel (2010:42) disagree with this statement. They argue that the main goal of the DDR program is to remove children from the war areas and that it is not

⁶ The effects of these ceremonies on former child soldiers have to be further investigated.

⁷ Family reunification and family mediation are suggested as two different components. From my point of view, these two elements are strongly connected to each other and cannot be seen as two separate components because in order to succeed family reunification, mediation is needed.

necessary that children return to their own families. According to them, the priority for children is to be safe and that they can find this safety with alternative caregivers. They argue this, because it is hard to search for parents during an ongoing conflict (or the family might have been murdered (Wessells, 2005: 364) and a first concern has to be the safety of the children. Another interrelation between reintegration and DDR is found by Awodola (2009: 8). He argues that education and professional training can provide many opportunities and skills, which are important needs of former child soldiers. Skills help the former child soldier with economic reintegration. Awodola (2009: 3) advocates that immediate balance between the education and vocational training of child soldiers and opportunity to work and earn money has to be established. He advocates this because education is most often demanded by child soldiers, whereas economic reintegration often receives more attention (Awodola, 2009: 3). The main argument of Awodola about reintegration is that despite its weaknesses, it is essential for accomplishing durable peace in society. As a closure, Akello, Richters and Reis (2006: 241) argue that the best way of reintegration and rehabilitation is the way the former child combatants wish it to be. (S)He is the centre of attention, therefore DDR must comply with his/her wishes.

Other scholars find a rapid reconstruction of the education system important to transform a place of violence into a place of peace and establish hope for young people. This is, for example, mentioned by Denov (2011:195) in his study conducted in Sierra in a post-conflict context. Boothby (2011:240) on the other hand, described the reunification and education process. In his study on former child soldiers in Mozambique, he states that each former child soldier received the opportunity to complete high school as part of their reintegration back into society. Two years later, all the boys had dropped out of school and their vocational training because they had begun to work. According to Boothby, these people now feel hesitation and struggle with their experiences from the past. In order to make the reintegration program more applicable to child soldiers, Pauletto and Patel argue that the skills learned by former child combatants in the armed force, can be used during the reintegration program. "Rather than trying to magically eliminate children's experiences of war, it may be more useful to highlight the positive lessons of being a child soldier, such as loyalty, tenacity, inner strength and wish to contribute to their communities, without glorifying the experience" (Pauletto & Patel, 2010:50). The transformation of skills that have been learned in the army into usable skills in society, can be an effective way of reintegration. Effective systems of reintegration are (according to McKnight, 2010:134) very important⁸ (besides criminal punishment) to stop and prevent re-recruitment of child soldiers.

Through recruitment and the time spent in the army, the child soldiers lived in their own separate world; isolated and with their own set of rules, expectations, norms, values, and customs (caused by socialization processes). The reintegration of child soldiers back into society, back to the villages they came from, seems a great transition and a challenging task. A changing identity and access to education systems and family reunification programs form major obstacles for reintegration⁹. The next paragraph is about differences and similarities in DDR programs for adults and children.

⁸ However, he also points out the criminal punishment of former child soldiers, which is beyond the topic of this thesis.

⁹ This aspect of obstacles can only be mentioned here but will be further elaborated in chapter 2.

2.3.4 DDR for soldiers and child soldiers

Most scholars who combine the topics of DDR and soldiers speak about adults, such as Knight (2004) who states that the effectiveness of DDR programs and the ability to support former combatants and their families has “directly affected the level of violence prevalent within a post-conflict society and its future rate of development” (2004: 513). Pauletto and Patel (2010: 37), who speak about child soldiers, state that DDR programs for child combatants fundamentally differ from DDR programs for adults. According to them, child soldiers are a topic of human rights and therefore the process of enduring DDR after the conflict is necessary for this group of children. They also state that the goal of DDR for child soldiers is to re-establish the human rights for children affected by war and to let children have a joyful childhood. The three DDR components within disarmament, demobilization and reintegration that are the most important for child soldiers are, removing children from warfare, providing them with mental support and reuniting them with their families¹⁰. The procedure of transitional justice that held adults responsible for the crimes during war is not applicable to children, because they are seen as victims (2010:42). Malan (2000:7), who also conducted his studies in the field of child soldiers, states that a translation of the “principles, policy and practice” of DDR for children is needed. He argues that both the UN and the local peacekeepers noticed the inability to react properly to numerous situations concerning child soldiers within the international standards. A lesson learned from actions against the use of child soldiers in Liberia is that “it is difficult to focus with much empathy on the issue of children in armed conflict in a situation that involves ongoing combat against youthful warriors” (Malan, 2000: 7). In a later study, Malan (2000: 9) points to “a generally fallacious assumption that all children find disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs necessary or attractive”. Other issues that have to be taken into account according to Malan (2000: 12), are that children have to be transferred out of areas with ongoing conflict which are under the control of their former combatants, in order to reduce the likelihood of these children returning to the armed force; the establishment of special reintegration programs for children who became adults during their duties in the armed force; and to facilitate children in their special needs according to their role in the armed force (e.g. fighter, messenger, cook or sexual slave).

2.4 Push and Pull factors and the risk of re-recruitment of child soldiers

The interrelations in this section describe the push and pull factors as previously discussed in paragraph 1.2 and the risk of re-recruitment of children in conflict areas. Push and pull factors issued here are the age of the soldier, the social-economic, cultural, mental and political factors, their lack of security and the lack of education opportunities. For DDR (just as for peace education) an awareness of the age of the child is an important issue. This is because their age should be taken into account in order to know how to approach the former child soldier: as a child or as an adult (Podder, 2011, McKnight, 2010)

The child soldiers also have to become aware of their age because many children do not have a birth registration. According to McKnight (2010), the absence of this birth registration forms a risk for re-recruitment. According to Pauletto and Patel (2010: 38), the DDR process for child soldiers in ongoing conflict should be determine to avoid re-recruitment of child soldiers. The study of Pauletto and Patel (2010: 38) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) showed negative and ineffective DDR programs for child soldiers. The main reason for this ineffectiveness of was because the Western definition of childhood (with Western assumptions), was not relevant according to people in the

¹⁰ The removal of children from warfare can be described as demobilization, mental support can be an issue in all three aspects of DDR, and reuniting children with their families can be described as reintegration.

DRC. Another obstacle for DDR that has to be overcome is that former child soldiers are more at risk for re-recruitment than other children, because they already learned how to be a good soldier. Especially during ongoing conflict, the risk of re-recruitment is extremely high (Pauletto and Patel, 2010:44). Knudsen (2004:499) completes this picture of the risk of re-recruitment with two other statements. He argues that children who live near the conflict are more likely to be recruited than others and that children can be easier recruited than adults. The LRA in Uganda even abducted children from schools (Young, 2007:20). The importance of birth registration is thus important to be aware of the age of the child. Moreover, registration of children makes recruitment and re-recruitment more difficult. This is related to the discussion about the age of a child, a child soldier and an adult. The age of the child defines whether voluntary recruitment is illegal or not and if children should get demobilized out of the armed group.

This paragraph shows elements that are needed (according to Young, 2007:22) in relation to the push and pull factors, to prevent recruitment and re-recruitment of children. Young (2007: 22) conducted a study about the problems of child soldiers in Uganda with study cases in Angola, Mozambique and Sierra Leone. He argues that the most effective way to end child soldiering is to stop the conflict. His recommendations and lessons learned during conflict situations are: recruitment needs to be prevented (e.g. make safe areas for children, increase economic opportunities), especially in the case of ongoing conflict (1), identification methodology should be developed to recognize child soldiers among other soldiers (2), demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration: the international community should work with a bottom up approach, providing resources for the community and family of former child soldiers (3), the establishment of formal and informal education and training for former child soldiers (4). I see a correlation between these four recommendations and the push factors of children to join an armed force. When these recommendations are implemented, they can possibly ensure that the push factors (which are mentioned in paragraph 1.1.2 Reasons to join, stay, and the roles of child soldiers in the armed group) are removed. The push factors they correlate with are: lack of security (Wessells, 2005:264, correlation with 2), the awareness of age through the lack of birth registrations (McKnight 2010, correlation with 3), disaffection with the political, economic and social system (Wessells, 2005:365, correlation with 4), and the lack of education opportunities (Wessells, 2005:365, correlation with 5). Malan (2000) and Young (2007) make other recommendations and show other needs for DDR programs for child soldiers, but do not exclude each other's findings. In this way, the studies of Malan (2000) and Young (2007) complement each other and together they could provide a better picture of DDR issues in relation to child soldiers.

The interrelation of child soldiers and DDR can also be confirmed on the basis of the above-mentioned literature. DDR has been primarily established for adult soldiers who have to be taken from the armed force but can, as the scholars mentioned, be adjusted to deal with the problems child soldiers face if they leave the armed group. These studies have showed many possibilities for child soldiers, but also showed (just as with peace education) that a couple of obstacles have to be overcome in order to adjust DDR to these soldiers. An example of a constraint that has to be faced and dealt with is given in the statement of de Vries and Wiegink (2011:38) that ex-combatants can form a danger for fragile peace. The contribution of this study is that it raises questions about the applicability of DDR to child soldiers and to make recommendations for further research on these topics in order to adjust DDR in a most effective way to the former child soldiers (de Vries and Wiegink, 2011: 38). The next paragraph will set forth the interactions between the DDR and the peace education process.

2.5 Peace education

This section firstly explains what peace education entails, secondly it will discuss how peace education is applicable to (ex-) child soldiers and the possible (re-) forming of their identity and lastly it will dive into the situation of peace education during ongoing conflict.

“[Peace education is] planned and guided learning that attempts to comprehend and reduce the multiple forms of violence (physical, structure, institutional and cultural) used as instruments for the advancement or maintenance of cultural, social, or religious beliefs and practices or of political, economic or ideological institutions or practices” (Reardon, 1999: 10).

Most scholars who study peace education focus on the topic in a slightly different way. This formed the establishment of various different forms of peace education. The different forms of education I encountered while reading are: conflict resolution training; democracy education; human rights education; sustainable development education; education for development; education as anti-extremism; forgiveness education (e.g. Bar-Tal, Rosen 2009); health education; religion education and education for equality (Salomon, Cairns, 2010). Bar-Tal and Rosen (2009: 559) classify two approaches of these different applications of peace education. Firstly, the narrow approach focuses on peace education in schools; secondly, the broad approach is applicable to all society members in order to establish peace. Bodine and Crawford (1998) note that the narrow approach of peace education (in particular conflict resolution) in schools faces the main concern, which is the creation of a positive environment, where good communication is possible and issues that relate to the conflict can be discussed in the classroom. The materials, the teachers and the special ceremonies in schools can all serve the goal of peace education. Bar-Tal and Rosen (2009: 558) conducted a study about the possibilities of peace education to change the ‘sociopsychological infrastructure’ during intractable conflict. They state that besides many concerns, the classroom is very powerful and plays an important role for peace education because it reaches the entire younger generation (2009: 560).

As we switch from the narrow and small scale approach of the classroom to a broader approach on a larger scale, Daniel Bar-Tal and Yigal Rosen (2009: 559) argue that a broad approach of peace education that “the participation of political, societal, and cultural institutions, mass communication, leadership, and elites” is needed and can result in a more efficient approach. Besides their distinction of narrow and broad peace education, Bar-Tal and Rosen (2009: 563) make a distinction between direct and indirect peace education. According to them, indirect peace education is about broad peace making that will avoid clashes between people during ongoing conflict. Themes that play a role in indirect peace education are “identity, ecological security, violence, empathy, human rights, and conflict resolution skills”. Contrasting with this is direct peace education, which “directly presents themes that allow the construction of a new ethos of peace from which a culture of peace will evolve” about “all the themes of the intractable conflict that contributed to the development and maintenance of the culture of conflict and served as barriers to its peaceful resolution”¹¹. Direct peace education is about the theme(s) of the conflict and thereby creates a new collective memory. Combinations¹² of the two models are possible, depending on the type of conflict (Bar-Tal and Rosen, 2009: 563). Besides the wide array of forms of peace education, there are also different implementing methods of peace education. This is why Bar-Tal and Rosen (2009: 560) put forward

¹¹ Even though they present this distinction, it is not clear to me. The themes that are presented as indirect peace education are according to me also applicable for direct peace education. Themes for direct peace education are not explicitly mentioned.

¹² But how can you combine them when there is no clear distinction made?

the benefits of peace education in schools. According to them, the entire younger generation can be reached (for compulsory schools), schools are the only organisations that have the power, resources, authority and the environment to carry out peace education. Children attend schools during the most inquisitive years of their lives and accept what they learn as the truth. So we see proponents and opponents of education of former child soldiers in schools. On the one hand these children have fallen behind their classmates, who did not serve as child soldiers, on the other hand have schools resources and power to carry out peace education. According to Knudsen (2004: 503), education does not automatically mean education in a school. Examples of other methods¹³ of implementation besides schools, are provided by NGO's, in neighborhood centers, by media and through vocational training. All these different facets make peace education complex. The opinions of scholars about what is considered important vary, just as the great amount of forms of peace education. Abovementioned facets are, in my opinion, the key pillars of peace education.

Another key pillar in both the broad and narrow approaches and within the different forms of peace education is reconciliation, which is usually processed in peace education. Many scholars point to reconciliation as one of the main focus points of peace education and vice versa; "A prominent and efficient method for promoting reconciliation is peace education" (Aall, Helsing, & Tidwell, 2007; Abu-Nimer, 2004; Kriesberg, 1998a, Bar-Tal and Rosen 2009:559). My conclusion from these studies is that reconciliation can be studied in two ways: Reconciliation between the two conflicting parties in war and reconciliation between former child soldiers and their home communities. One example of overlap between these two forms of reconciliation can be derived from the study of Toh (2002: 92). According to him there are four key principles of peace education: (1) holism, a multidimensional approach to peace education; (2) values formation, learning to have compassion, respect, and to forgive others; (3) dialogue, between both sides of conflict in a trustful setting, e.g. by means of NGO workshops; and (4) critical empowerment, with the goal to equalize power relations between people'. Principles 1, 2 and 4 can be directly applicable to reconciliation between child soldiers and society and between the different parties in conflict. Bar-Tal and Rosen (2009: 559) also consider peace education an effective method of promoting reconciliation and argue that peace education during an intractable conflict has to make reconciliation and peacemaking possible. According to them (2009: 558) reconciliation consists during an ongoing conflict "of mutual recognition and acceptance, investing in the development of peaceful relations, mutual trust, and positive attitudes, and fostering sensitivity and consideration of the other party's needs and interests" besides the traditional goals to change motivations, thoughts and feelings. An example of the traditional goal of changing thoughts is that the thoughts of people fuel the war and that education can change these thoughts in a positive way in order to create a more peaceful society (2009: 559). Reconciliation between child soldiers and their home communities is an important element that peace education needs to carry out. The four key principles (according to Toh) deepen the reconciliation process. This reconciliation process is further included in this chapter.

Because of the arrearage former child soldiers have regarding their educational level, they are often placed with younger children so they can catch up. As a solution for this, Knudsen states that basics such as math, writing and reading can be integrated in a skills training in addition to the regular school program, as they lag behind other children their age. She emphasizes that it is important that aid workers align their help to former child soldiers.

¹³ Methods can also be seen as forms: as mentioned before as the distinction between the narrow and broad approach.

2.6 Interactions between child soldiers and peace education

“The focus of peace education is on changed capabilities, perceptions, and dispositions, not on the conflict. For conflict resolution, changed abilities as such are an extra bonus; for peace education, transformed conflict is its extra bonus not its main concern” (Salomon and Cairns, 2010:6). In the previous paragraph, the discussion between scholars who would probably not agree with this quote was shown. In this paragraph, the interactions between child soldiers and peace education are the “changed capabilities, perceptions and dispositions”, as the quote suggests.

The topic of child soldiers and peace education are not often combined by scholars. Wessells (2005: 368) focuses on these topics and illustrates this with the example of Sierra Leone “that peace education in a post conflict setting is a collective, practical project that aids the reintegration of former child soldiers by stimulating empathy, cooperation, reconciliation, and community processes for handling conflict in a nonviolent manner”. This statement shows the applicability of peace education to former child soldiers. It also shows similarities with DDR programs, e.g. the purpose of reintegration and the stimulation of characteristics such as empathy and cooperation in a post conflict setting. This post conflict setting differs from a setting of intractable conflict. Different from Wessells, Salomon and Kupermintz (2005:294) conducted a study about peace education during intractable conflict. They state that peace education (which may relate to child soldiers) faces four major challenges during recurrent conflicts; the first challenge is the creation of the societal “ripple effect”. This is when wider social circles undergo the effect of peace education. The increasing endurance as well as the diversity of programs that deal with different groups are the second and third challenge of peace education. As a last point he mentions that “they need to find ways to bridge the gap” between competing principles, values and motivations of different people to overlook both sides of a conflict. These are all important challenges from his study, which can have an effect on the lives of former child soldiers. So is the ripple effect needed to inform societies in which former child soldiers have to reintegrate about peace education. The peace education programs that have to be offered to former child soldiers, should provide good content and endurance, especially in case of an ongoing conflict. A special program for former child soldiers, well attuned to their needs, could be established. Lastly, because the identity of the child soldier has to change, they are struggling with opposite values and principles, peace education can provide tools to overcome these struggles.

Bar-Tal and Rosen (2009: 569) state that there is not one single way to fulfill peace education. The form of peace education has to be adjusted to the needs of the specific society and the capabilities of the people (the pedagogues and educators) who will carry it out (Bar-Tal, Rosen 2009: 569). In this case we have to adjust peace education towards the needs of former child soldiers and towards the needs of the society in which they have to reintegrate. Paragraph 2.3 showed these needs and paragraph 2.5 pictured the forms and implications of peace education. This part of the paragraph will show two needs (the age of children and the treatment of traumas) in relation to peace education. One need of a child soldier is that they have to become aware of their age (Podder, 2011, McKnight, 2010). In relation to peace education this is required because educators and society have to know if they have to treat the former child soldier as a child or as an adult. Betancourt and Simmons (*et al.* 2008: 575) state in their study on Sierra Leone that 55% of the key informants (260 former RUF youth) were concerned about their higher level of age during education. An example in their study showed how a female former child soldier from Kenema (Sierra Leone) felt: “I also feel sad when I see my peers in senior secondary school and I am still in junior secondary school. If it was not for the war, I would also have been [there]”. Another need for former child soldiers is to heal the traumas. Children are mostly traumatized by the way of abduction (Wessells, 2004: 4), the time they have spent in the armed group with the forthcoming hostilities, and the way they have to be

extracted from the armed group. The interrelation between these traumas and education is that education can provide lots of possibilities for the healing of traumas and for the prevention of further conflict (Betancourt, Simmons *et al.* 2008: 578). This interrelation is only possible as children stay in schools for a certain time so they can “gain skills to make them economically productive and to receive the social and emotional supports they need” (Betancourt, Simmons *et al.* 2008: 578). On the other hand Marisa O. Ensor (2012: 281-282), who wrote an article about child soldiers in the armed conflict in South Sudan, states that we cannot generalize all child soldiers as being traumatized. She argues this because “Child soldiers are often represented as passive victims of violence and exploitation. These one-sided accounts have shaped popular representations of child soldiers’ lives. Child advocacy groups have contributed to this process by invoking discourses of trauma in order to attract attention and funding for rehabilitation programs. While these efforts serve an important purpose, they also confound the issue by singling out the most dramatic and sensationalistic cases, rather than investigating the more mundane but far more representative experiences of the majority of children affected by conflict. The tendency to describe entire populations as traumatized, simply because they have lived through episodes of conflict and displacement, is not supported by research” (Ensor, 2012: 281-282). These two insights form on the one hand a contrasting statement, in arguing that former child soldiers have a lot of trauma’s that need to be healed (Betancourt, Simmons *et al.* 2008: 578) and arguing that these traumas are often exaggerated (Ensor, 2012: 281-282). On the other hand form the two insights a complementary view in stating that children are traumatized and need help to heal these traumas, but that the way in which a child is traumatized can differ from child to child.

Children who voluntary joined the armed group were driven by push and pull factors. Something has to be opposed to these factors in order to ‘resolve’ them and to avoid re-recruitment. The first main push factor is the lack of educational opportunities (Wessells, 2005: 365). Besides the fact that children cannot pay the school fee, schools are destroyed by war, education is of a bad quality and there is a lack of professional education peer support therefore of great value for children who grow up. Additionally, Betancourt and Simmons (*et al.* 2008: 574) state that “for many children in Sierra Leone, the war destroyed friendships and peer networks through migration as well as death. Peer support appeared to be a powerful force in the reintegration process, and schools provided an important place for youth to interact”. The absence of peer support goes together with the separation from caregivers. Many children have lost their caregivers (parents, other family members, friends and neighbors) during war. These caregivers provided support and a sense of home for children. This support can be continued by schools if children return to their home communities. “Schools naturally create peer groups for young people outside of their extended families and, for former child soldiers, the groups they may have lived within the bush. In some contexts, this new peer group may be composed of other former child soldiers in an accelerated education program, and in other contexts peers may be local children, who may or may not have been affected by the war, in a traditional school” (Betancourt, Simmons *et al.* 2008: 578). According to Betancourt and Simmons (*et al.* 2008: 568), education can help in changing the identity of the child soldier so they can learn to see themselves not as soldiers or as victims anymore. These former child soldiers should build up their self-worth (without wearing a gun) and education can “normalize” their life if they returned into society. The powerful feeling of wearing a gun is another pull factor for children to join the armed group (Wessells 2005: 364). In order to oppose to this pull factor education can be an important form of socialization that constructs youth for peace instead of for war and in this way creates positive life prospects that decrease youth violence (Wessells, 2005: 365). During the time child soldiers were in the armed group, socialization processes made the strong bonds between the children who were wearing weapons (Özerdem and Podder, 2011:3, Vermeij, 2011:174). During reintegration processes the socialization of former child soldiers has to be established in a different form. There has to become new group cohesion with new norms and values during the reintegration

period. Education changes the identity and perspectives of children and can thereby reduce the will to carry a weapon.

Push factors such as the escapement for atrocities by the army (Hague 2011: 101) and a lack of security (Wessells 2005: 364) may decrease through (peace) education. According to Betancourt and Simmons (*et al.* 2008: 568) school attendance and training programs can create a sense of safety and bring normalcy in the lives of war-affected children. Schools can be seen as a secure place where children can feel protected from violence and war. Other push factors for children to join the armed group are high unemployment rates (Young 2007: 20) and the lack of access to livelihoods (Halton, 2011: 272). Machel (1996) emphasizes the relation between literacy and expertise learning and the prospect of a job for ex child combatants. This literacy and expertise training often create successful reintegration and prevent the re-recruitment of the former child combatants (Machel, 1996, Annan, Blattman, 2006, Verhey, 2001). In order to decrease the lack of access to livelihoods education can create new goals in the lives of former child soldiers and give them a sense of hope and purpose in life (Kline and Mone, 2003: 326, Betancourt and Simmons *et al.* 2008: 568). These goals are not only goals for the future of the child but also short term achievable goals such as making homework and attending the classes (Betancourt and Simmons *et al.* 2008: 568). "Education and training can help former child soldiers to define goals for the future and redevelop a sense of purpose in life" (Betancourt, Simmons *et al.* 2008: 578). Another push factor to join armed forces that needs to be countered for former child soldiers is the (disaffection) with the political, social, and economic system (Wessells, 2005:365). By this he means e.g. joblessness and the lack of educational opportunities. Brown (2011: 191) describes that the interactions (economic, political and cultural) between education and conflicts are important. Economically, education can create jobs and social satisfaction. A condition for the creation of jobs is that the education should be tailored to the work or vice versa. Former child soldiers in Sierra Leone are working in diamond mines (for little pay or even as unpaid work) because of the lack of other working opportunities (Young, 2007: 22). Besides disaffection attention should be paid to possibilities for the future of the child soldier. Knudsen (2004:503) therefore states that it is also important to know that child soldiers developed skills while they were in the armed group and that these skills can be used in a positive way in daily life. The skills she describes in her study are: leadership, communication, strategic thinking, etc. Vermeij (2011: 117) complements this with her study in Uganda. She argues that child soldiers learned skills that can be useful after their integration such as dismantling arms, protecting superiors, having knowledge about military tactics and strategies, nursing, cooking, and taking care of babies. These learned skills can reduce feelings about push and pull factors, or even take these factors away because children can find a job or a higher education because they now possess these skills. They then do not feel the temptation or the urge anymore to join the armed group.

This section sought the interrelation between child soldiers and peace education. This interrelation can be confirmed on the basis of the literature I read on this specific issue. Besides this confirmation the insight is gained that not all the interrelations exist of positive elements. Some elements showed obstacles that impede the interaction between peace education and child soldiers (e.g. the removal of push and pull factors). My contribution to the study of this interaction is the proposition that these obstacles have to be taken up in further studies and to tackle and solve the constraints. The contribution this thesis makes to the development of this interaction is that I am signaling the problem and constructing working hypotheses from my conclusions (in paragraph 2.9) for further research. The next paragraph (2.7) shows and explains peace education during re-current conflict.

2.7 Peace education during re-current conflict

Toh (2002: 88) emphasizes the importance of peace education. He states that peace education in a holistic framework can resolve conflicts and build peace and that wars cannot be ended through peace accords only. He also states that “educating for a culture of peace plays a crucial role even before the fighting ceases” (2002: 89). Because of many ongoing conflicts it is also hard to understand the current perception of the enemy. Therefore Kupermintz and Salomon (2005: 294) established peace education which has to deal with during intractable conflict. The first character of peace education during ongoing and recurring conflict is established by Coleman (2003). He conducted a study in Northern Ireland, Kosovo and in Israel and Palestine. His main finding was that conflict resolution skills need to be developed for collectives instead of for individuals and the conflict must be treated entirely. The second characteristic is found by Bruner (1990) and Salomon (2004: 273). They state that people have a collective narrative on both sides of the conflict. This collective narrative consists of the identity of the people, their goals for the future and their own history. The third characteristic Kupermintz and Salomon carry out are the deep-rooted beliefs people have about their selves on each side of the conflict. E.g. that they are right and that God approves their beliefs and acts. According to these deep rooted beliefs, Kupermintz and Salomon (2005: 293) state that a point of focus of peace education during intractable conflict has to be the historical memory that often is deeply-rooted in the ideas of society. These historical memories contribute to the attitudes, thoughts and feelings of ex-combatants. Complementary, Staub (2000: 377) argues that collective forgiveness is important in reconciliation besides the acknowledgement of history. Education about forgiveness is important because in this way people can learn more about themselves and about the other (Bar-Tal, Rosen, 2009: 558).

This paragraph showed the different forms and implementation methods of peace education together with advantages, challenges and the most recent discussions about this form of education. It has been found that peace education, according to the mentioned authors, is an effective method for the promotion of reconciliation during ongoing conflict through the ways in which education can change thoughts, attitudes and skills. Education about forgiveness can for instance work as a form of education against stigmatization of former child soldiers. The next paragraph will explain the relation between peace education as described in this paragraph and child soldiers.

2.8 Interactions between DDR and Peace Education

This paragraph explains the interrelations between DDR and peace education in order to find overlaps and ways in which these two processes can complement each other. The previous paragraphs showed the interactions between child soldiers and DDR and between child soldiers and peace education. The point of focus in these two paragraphs was the change of identity of the child soldiers. This paragraph will search for, and explain, the interactions between the two concepts DDR and peace education. Identity of child soldiers urged DDR and Peace education to adopt to their specific situation. Theory on these two concepts emerged in order to be more applicable for the group of child soldiers¹⁴. I stated earlier that theory about the concepts and (possibly) about their interrelations needs to be studied. The goal of this paragraph therefore is to find ways in which DDR and peace education for child soldiers can complement each other and to discuss theory about these interrelations.

¹⁴ Firstly, scholars mainly studied DDR for adults and peace education for adults and children. Practical implementations of the interrelations will be further elaborated in the next chapter.

For both DDR and peace education, one of the key challenges for former child soldiers is to restore their faith and hope for the future (Malan, 2000: 9), establish new goals, and find their purpose in life (Kline and Mone, 2003:326, Betancourt and Simmons *et al.* 2008: 568). The recommendations in the study of Young (2007:22), in order to restore this faith and hope, showed that there is both need for both DDR and for peace education. DDR (also for adults) plays besides its other aims an important role in the ending of the (ongoing) conflict (Knudsen, 2004: 37). For peace education this is not its main goal, but if it can contribute to peace, this is an additional effect (Salomon and Cairns 2010: 6). Another recommendation of Young (2007: 22) is a bottom up¹⁵ approach of demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration, resources for this approach should be offered to society and former child soldiers. Peace education can also function as a bottom up approach, where the needs and wishes of individuals, the child soldiers, are the starting point. Peace education can provide support for these resources and work together with the DDR processes. This recommendation can form together with his last recommendation, the creation of formal and informal education and training, a bridge between DDR and peace education that needs to be further studied.

The connection between disarmament and peace education is twofold. A part of the peace enforcement of the UN is to provide an alternative source of security by encouraging people to give up their arms (Daniel, 1996:79). Education can possibly play a role in this by teaching people that there can be peace if they lay down and give up their weapons and to show people the advantages of peace. If the UN is not able to play a coercive role in the disarmament process, it could create cooperation among people who are tired of the rule of the gun and war, and to offer people money as replacement for their arms (Daniel, 1996:81). Peace education can play a role in both these intervention methods. It can offer people who are already willing to lay down their weapons a chance to learn their rights and their possibilities. It can also offer knowledge to people who are willing to exchange their weapon for money of the possibilities and advantages of this money over arms.

According to Malan (2000: 10) is peace education needed during demobilization for former child soldiers. The study of Anderlini, Pampell Conaway (2011: 7) shows that former child soldiers in Mozambique who are demobilized work together with ProPaz. This is an organization which provides peace education for society. The peace education they offer consists interventions against violence at a local level and the encouragement of reintegration of female ex-combatants.

The connection between reintegration and education is made by Betancourt and Simmons (*et al.* 2008: 568): "In a broad sense, education, both traditional and alternative, supports the reintegration of former child soldiers in a number of ways". These scholars (2008: 573) conducted a study on reintegration methods in Sierra Leone. They interviewed 120 care-givers of former child soldiers and 260 former RUF (Revolutionary United Front) youth. They emphasize that these caregivers and former RUF youth strongly agreed that education is of a great importance in reintegration programs. 75 percent of the interviewed care-givers would make education a central point if they could design the DDR program. A quote from one of the care-givers in their study is: "I know if he [a former child soldier] learns a trade, his future will be just as bright as any other child who was not captured". Besides education in order to learn a trade, education can also provide social cohesion. Social cohesion in schools creates a place for interaction and peer support, which is seen as an influential force during reintegration (Betancourt and Simmons *et al.* 2008: 573). Another quote in the study of Betancourt and Simmons (*et al.* 2008: 574) shows the importance of education: "Through the help from NGOs, we continued school so I could interact with my friends ... so I would not be depressed

¹⁵ Young (2007:22) does not further elaborate the meaning of a bottom up approach.

and discouraged". A study that also takes the combination of DDR and peace education into account is the study of Ginifer (2003) about the reintegration of ex-combatants in Sierra Leone. While reintegration is proceeding, he states that the duration of the training is too short, the economic stagnation and the lack of infrastructure constitute barriers for the programs, and the reconciliation is not deep-rooted. "In an unstable Sierra Leone these could be worrying factors for peace in the country" (2003: 51). In this statement is peace education part of the reintegration and reconciliation of the DDR program. Ginifer shows with this statement that, in addition to the need for peace education and DDR (compare Wessells, 2005), there is also a need for improvement of these programs. The interlinkages can in that way complement and improve each other in specific areas, such as in the area of child soldiers. Reardon, (2000: 10) also agrees that peace education is a learning tool that attempts the reduction of violence and may be an effective way of reintegration.

The best practices for peace education during demobilization need more attention in further studies just as the possible role of peace education during disarmament. This section showed the different interactions between peace education and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. In some ways DDR and peace education can complement each other, nevertheless scholars argue that points of improvement are needed especially of education in reintegration programs.

Özerdem and Podder (2011:9) argue that "it has to be conceded that in post conflict settings youth face a dual and complex transition, while life-stages preceding adulthood are characterized by complex and challenging transitions, conflict exacerbates the transition to adulthood by breaking down social norms and cultural practices, disrupting education systems and employment opportunities for many youth, promoting a sense of identity based on the exertion of power through violence". [...] "Youth combatants in this framework need to be contained, reformed, disarmed and rehabilitated with economic, educational choices and vocational training opportunities". These quotes show the interdependence of elements of DDR and education. The relation between DDR and peace education is according to Knudsen (2004:501) more specific and focused because of the wishes and needs of young people, of one group. Their needs in e.g. sociology, biology and psychology differ from the needs of adults.

This study shows an overlap and a way in which DDR and peace education can complement each other. This complementation can be found in the way in which DDR and peace education together can end the conflict, the formal and informal ways of education they have in common and the recreation of the social cohesion by both processes. A constraint in both the DDR and peace program is that these programs need some improvement, this can maybe be the moment to create a better coordination between both processes. Education is mentioned as a central point of focus in the DDR program by one scholar. Other scholars saw peace education as an effective way of reintegration and demobilization, but the relation with disarmament is not mentioned and needs from my point of view (seen from the possibilities of peace education) be studied. These relations need more attention in further studies in this field in order to improve both programs, separate from each other and maybe in order to create a bridge between the programs.

2.9 Conclusion and hypotheses

The main goal of this chapter was to explain the three main concepts: the identity of child soldiers, DDR and peace education. The nexus between the concepts was studied which contributed to the conceptual interrelations. These interrelations showed how the concepts relate and complement each other. They also showed in which way further studies are needed and what the effective forms of implementation are through the relations between the concepts. This paragraph is divided into conclusions and three hypotheses. Conclusions are made if at least two scholars share the same statement. A hypothesis represents a statement of a scholar from which links can be drawn towards other statements but which has to be studied further.

In order to conclude this chapter I will enrich the work definitions of the introductory chapter.

The work definition of the concept child soldier was: *In many cases (s) he is recruited, (s) he has used violence and violence is committed against him/her. The child is associated with armed force, so (s) he can be a fighter, a cook, a porter, a messenger, a spy or a sexual slave and is below 18 years of age. Reintegration into society is almost an impossible process; this is partly because the child soldiers have to change their identity.* This work definition assumes that most of the children are recruited. Different recruitment methods such as isolation, physical beatings (Wessells, 2005), abduction, press ganging or recruitment by quota (Wessells, 2006) exist. A significant number of children join the armed group voluntarily through different push and pull factors in their environment. The work definition does not define the time in the armed group that shaped the child into a child soldier (besides mentioning the different roles). In the armed group, children felt powerful and proud wearing a gun, the upcoming of light-weight weapons empowered children, new family was created out of group members, and identification with the rebel group and socialization took place and changed the identity of the children. The issue about the age of child soldiers is determined in international law (e.g. in the Paris Principles, 2007, and accepted by the humanitarian discourse) on an age below 18. On the other hand the opinion of the cultural relativists has to be kept in mind. They argue that age is a social construction. According to these cultural relativists each culture can determine its own definition of the child and thereby of the child soldier. Another conclusion is that DDR programs fundamentally differ of DDR programs for adults and that a translation of the “principles, policy and practice” in order to adjust DDR to children is needed (Malan 2000: 7, Pauletto and Patel 2010: 37). The main goal of DDR is according to Pauletto and Patel (2010: 37) the re-establishment of the human rights for children who are affected by war in order to let children have a joyful childhood. Roles that have to be added to the work definition are the roles of human shield and mine tester. The Cape Town Principles (1997) extend the roles further in stating that “anyone accompanying such group other than family members” is part of the armed group.

The work definition in the introductory chapter of the concept of DDR was: *Disarmament: the removal of the arms. Demobilization: the removal from the army units. Reintegration: placement and inclusion in society.* This chapter showed us that this definition includes the core principles, but that DDR contents much more than this definition describes. It entails the transition of soldiers back into civilian life whereby broad community support is needed in order to avoid clashes between the former soldiers and society. Disarmament has become more difficult by the accessibility to illicit arms and the security dilemma should be taken into account. Demobilization should (besides the removal of militants from the armed group) demolish the hierarchical structures within this group in order to prevent remobilization and the thereby increasing level of violence after disarmament. Reintegration contains more obstacles then the work definition suggests. There is not enough funding to implement reintegration programs, children can end up on the streets, they often have no access to education, family reunion programs are rare and parents are often missing or murdered, identity issues play a role, their home was with the armed force and not with their parents, a reconstruction of the place and role in society is needed and a ‘healing ceremony’ is often part of the reintegration

process. Traditional DDR programs know considerable different degrees of success; this shows us that more research in theory and practice is needed in order to improve the programs.

Peace education had the following work definition: *it is a form of education that attempts the reduction of violence and thereby changes and forms perceptions, capabilities, and identities*. This definition can be enriched by the findings of this chapter. The reduction of violence can be split into different forms of violence such as physical, institutional, cultural and structural violence. Peace education can be carried out before, during and after a conflict and handles a conflict in a nonviolent manner. The changes in perceptions, capabilities and identities (mentioned in the work definition) can be formed through practical implications of peace education such as reconciliation, cooperation, the formation of values, dialogue and empathy. Perceptions of the enemy, historical memory, different goals and deep rooted believes of people can be difficulties that peace education has to overcome. Peace education is exercised in different forms (e.g. forgiveness education, conflict resolution, and human rights education) can be implemented through different approaches (narrow/broad, direct/indirect) and can be fulfilled in different places (e.g. schools, media, and community centers).

It can be confirmed that the relations between these main concepts showed us that the concepts are interrelated and mutually influence each other. The key challenges for former child soldiers are both in DDR and peace education to restore their faith and hope for the future and to establish new goals and find their purpose in life (Malan, 2000:9, Kline and Mone 2003:326, Betancourt and Simmons *et all.* 2008: 568). Other Conclusions that can be made on the basis of these interrelations are that the management of light-weight weapons in disarmament processes should be a high priority because it empowers children to serve as combatants (Young, 2007:19; Malan, 2000:2), and that the demobilization of former child soldiers is important for all the children, not only for the children who actually had to fight (Knudsen, 2004:497; Furley and May, 2006:64). Another conclusion is that reintegration of child soldiers is a great challenge (Ashby 2002:12; Young 2007: 19; Özerdem and Podder, 2011: 4; Podder, 2011: 150). Issues that create this challenge are the fact that funding of governments and other organizations is rare, the fact that child soldiers often have no access to educational or vocational training, and that family reintegration programs are rare (etc). A further conclusion is that any form of reintegration will face issues about identity (Ashby, 2002: 11; Awodola, 2009: 8; Podder, 2011: 150; Vermeij, 2011: 175). This is stated because of new and old socialization processes, the empowerment of former child soldiers, the former child soldiers are too young to remember their life and identity before the war and because the armed group formed its own identity where the child soldiers were part of. Betancourt and Simmons (*et all.* 2008: 568) state that education can help in changing the identity of the child soldier so they can learn to see themselves not as soldiers or as victims anymore. Besides these identity issues a rapid reconstruction of the education system is important in order to establish a place of hope and security for children and to change their thoughts in order to create a more peaceful society. Former child soldiers should build up their self-worth (without wearing a gun) and education can “normalize” their life if they returned into society. This can be concluded because of the statements of Kupermintz and Salomon (2005: 294); Betancourt, Simmons (*et all.* 2008: 568); Bar-Tal and Rosen (2009: 559); and Denov (2011: 195). Betancourt and Simmons (*et all.* 2008: 568) extend this statement by arguing that “In a broad sense, education, both traditional and alternative, supports the reintegration of former child soldiers in a number of ways”. But before peace education and DDR can be adjusted to child soldiers it is important to know the motives and the identity of the child soldiers in order to adjust the programs to them. McKnight (2010) and Pauletto and Patel (2010: 50) agree that the lessons child soldiers have learned during war can be used in a positive way during and after their reintegration in order to stop and prevent recruitment of child soldiers. These lessons can be loyalty, tenacity, the wish to contribute to society an inner strength. Knudsen (2004: 503) and Vermeij (2011: 117) agree with this

statement and see the positive potential of these skills and lessons for child soldiers in daily life. Skills Knudsen (2004: 503) describes in here study are: leadership, communication, and strategic thinking. Vermeij (2011: 117) complements these list of skills with skills as dismantle arms, protect superiors, have knowledge about military tactics and strategies, nursing, cooking, and to take care of babies.

If the push and pull factors to join an armed group have been removed, the likelihood for child combatants to voluntarily join an armed group decreases. Because not all interrelations between peace education, DDR and former child soldiers have been studied I will make recommendations on the basis of assumptions for further studies on these topics:

1. Concluding statement and working hypothesis: Economic perspectives (payment) have to be created for children in order to assemble a peace divided that prevents the search for payment in rebel groups. Hypothesis: Former child soldiers should earn more financial rewards if they have a job than the payoff and rewards they earned in the armed group. Education has economic advantages for ex-combatants and after their education they can find a job where they get paid to build up a new life (Brown, 2011: 191). So the question remains how former child soldiers experienced this paid work in relation to the payoffs and the rewards (Gates, 2011: 34) they got during the time they spend in the armed group.
2. Concluding statement and working hypothesis: Because schools are positive environments that serve as caregivers this environment is a good location for peace education. Hypothesis: The best way in which peace education during ongoing conflict can be implemented is through education in schools. Bodine and Crawford (1998) note the positive environment of the school as a place where good communication is possible. Betancourt and Simmons (*et all.* 2008: 578) state that schools also get roles of the caregivers and thereby provide support and a sense of home. Bar-Tal and Rosen (2009: 558) emphasize the scope of peace education in the classroom to the whole younger generation and the presence of teachers and materials. They state that schools have the power as only organization to carry peace education out. But what if the school is destroyed by the war, schools and school environments are unsafe and children get abducted from schools, and what if children are not able to pay the school fee.
3. Concluding statement and working hypothesis: The relation between peace education, disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and thereby human security should be further studied in order to optimize these programs. Hypothesis: Ex-combatants who followed a demobilization program can be a danger for fragile peace. This is why peace education should become an integrated part of the disarmament and demobilization process. If there are no jobs it is tempting for ex-combatants to commit crimes in order to survive and get the things they desire in live. According to Daniel (1996: 81) is a part of the peace enforcement of the UN a creation of a sources of security and the encouragement of people to give up their arms. He also states that in certain cases weapons can be replaced for rewards. But what will people do with these rewards, and are they enough to keep these people away from the war? This is a question that has to be asked is if peace education can play a significant role in the disarmament process.

These conclusions are formed by an academic literary research. The next chapter will show the implications of the different concepts and its interrelations in practice through a study of policy papers. These policy papers will be up to date papers about child soldiers, DDR and peace education.



Chapter 3: Best Practices of DDR and Peace Education Programs for Former Child Soldiers According to Policy Documents

3.1 Introduction

Dealing with the issue of child soldiers, the transition from theory into practice is of a great importance. The outcome of studies by scholars often show recommendations for certain implementations in practice, the practice child soldiers have to deal with every day. Therefore it is important to adjust the established theories about child soldiers, DDR and peace education in the best possible way in this everyday life in order to create the best practices for these child soldiers. The main question of this chapter will for that reason be: "What are considered to be the best practices of DDR and peace education programs for former child soldiers according to policy documents realized by international institutions including INGO's working in the field of child soldiers, DDR and peace education?". To answer this question different policy documents are studied and presented in this chapter.

The policy documents that are used are divided into two categories: INGO policy documents and documents of UN programs, funds and related organizations. The INGO policy documents are represented by The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (supplemented by the German Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers/KinderNotHilfe), Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and a small contribution of the Department For International Development (DFID). The UN programs, funds and related organizations will be represented by the United Nations Security Council, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the United Nations General Assembly Security Council, The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The documents used in this chapter are carefully chosen, it are documents of international broad accepted organizations and institutions. The next section (3.2) will underpin and explain my choice to use these INGO policy documents and documents of UN programs, funds and related organizations, in order to answer the main question of this chapter. Subsequently, the identity of the child soldier in practice will be further elaborated (3.3). As a next key issue we will find the topic of recruitment (3.4). This topic plays a major role in the policy of INGO's and UN programs. If these institutions can prevent recruitment and re-recruitment than the majority of problems around child soldiers can be solved. The issue of recruitment in the policy documents is closely interwoven with education, peace education and DDR. Then, the topics of peace education and education (3.5 and 3.6) and DDR (3.7) from a policy perspective will be further involved. Their interrelation is studied in 3.8. The identity of the child soldiers continues to be the red thread throughout the different sessions in order to answer the sub question of this chapter and to formulate conclusions and policy recommendations (3.9). The sub question of this chapter is:

What are considered to be the best practices of DDR and peace education programs for former child soldiers according to policy documents realized by international institutions including NGO's working in the field of child soldiers, DDR and peace education?

3.2 Introduction of the INGO and UN programs and funds

The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers acts as an 'umbrella' organization of many affiliated organizations (Amnesty International, Defence for Children International, Human Rights Watch, International Federation Terre des Hommes, International Save the Children Alliance, Jesuit Refugee Service, and the Quaker United Nations Office). The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers sees it as their challenge to get a maximum effect out of the rich body of international organizations and instruments that exist in order to return child soldiers and other children who are affected by war to their communities. Their *Child Soldiers Global Report* of 2008 shows the need to better the situation of child soldiers, stop recruitment and improve DDR programs. These topics are studied from an international perspective and the report sets benchmarks in order to judge and follow the process. The report states the "urgent need to increase all our efforts to prevent and eradicate the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict" (Child Soldiers Global Report, 2008:7). It also shows information about 21 countries that make use of child soldiers. This Global Report shows obstacles that have to be overcome in order to implement international instruments with maximum effect (Child Soldiers Global Report, 2008:9-10). The German Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers/KinderNotHilfe is part of The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. The standards of this German Coalition are drawn from the *UN-Convention on the Rights of the Child*, from which they are actively involved in national and international campaigns and alliances with as one of their main points of focus child soldiers. The implementation of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and its Optional Protocols is supervised by the UN Committee. NGO's such as KinderNotHilfe and Terre des Hommes can submit a supplementary report to the UN Committee, wherefrom final recommendations are made by the Committee. The document that is used in this chapter is a supplementary report to the United Nations concerning the *Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts*. Their reports complement the *Child Soldiers Global Report* on topics as the description of the child soldier, law and legal regulations in Germany, the question of age, and gives a practical example of a project on child soldiers in Burundi. Through this close cooperation with other INGO's and UN programs, funds and related organizations The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers is a good starting point and umbrella to show best practices out of policy documents.

The work of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) will be further elaborated in the section about education. This network is an world-wide open network "of practitioners and policymakers working together to ensure all persons the right to quality education and a safe learning environment in emergencies through to recovery". Group members of this network work e.g. for INGO's such as CARE and Save the Children as for UN programs such as UNICEF and UNESCO. INEE also works closely together with these organizations (INEE, 2010:5).

The report of Amnesty International (2011) that will be discussed in this chapter is based on a case study. It gives a detailed overview of the situation of child soldiers in Chad on the basis of a review of UN reports (Amnesty International, 2011:8), interviews and observations and shows which goals already have been reached. Subjects in this report are ways of recruitment and the effectiveness of DDR (its lessons learned from the past). The detailed overview of the situation in Chad forms the basis for recommendations to the government, the armed groups, UNHCR and UNICEF, members of the UN Security Council, to donors such as the EU, the World Bank and UNDP. Amnesty International is a global movement and is represented and dedicated in more than 150 countries and territories to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and thereby the rights of the child. Because this is their main goal they are independent of governments, economical interests, religions and political ideologies and is as a result an interesting and valuable organization to include in this chapter.

Another organization that is dedicated to defend and protect human rights is Human Rights Watch. Their main goal is to raise attention for the abuse of human rights in order to give, in this case the child soldiers, a voice and to hold suppressors accountable for their crimes. The reports which are shown in this chapter mainly consist out of interviews conducted in Somalia and Chad. They describe the conflicts in these countries and the experiences of former child soldiers in the armies. They also make recommendations for governments, different countries, institutes, organizations and donors which are involved. These recommendations are very practical and add value to other policy documents. They will be used to create a comprehensive overview in order to find best practices.

An organization that forms a bridge between INGO's and the UN, and in this way works together with all stakeholders, is the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The ICRC uses an 'all victims approach'. Despite the acknowledges that children are more vulnerable and often represent a large part of society (ICRC in 2009, guidelines were established for staff to work with children who were allied with armed groups and separated children (2012:36)), they will help all victims of the conflict and make no use of age limitations. In dealing with child soldiers, the ICRC uses different stages: "before and during the conflict, to prevent the recruitment of children into armed forces or groups and to protect child soldiers in detention; after the conflict, to support the rehabilitation of former child soldiers; at any time, to reunite children with their families" (ICRC, 2003:3). The main goal of this organization is to limit peoples suffering and to expand the legal protection of war victims (war law). The annual report of 2012 which is used in this chapter shows a practical policy program (which is not divided by countries). The different departments of the ICRC show their policies which consist out of a broader point of focus than only the child soldier. For child soldiers the need for reunitement of children with their families, first aid, and psychological rehabilitation are seen as important.

The previous sections described INGO's and their policy. The next section will explain which UN programs, funds and related organizations will be represented in this chapter. I have chosen to involve these programs, funds and organizations because the UN advises and binds organizations who work with child soldiers. It provides reports, guides and protocols which are used and co-designed by other organizations. The main task of the United Nations Security Council is to maintain international peace and security. The Security Council can send UN Peace Keeping Forces, who are able to impose economic sanctions and military measures. Its main goal is a cease fire between the conflicting parties. This makes the Security Council of a great influence. Another body of the UN with great authority is the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. The Special Representative signed in March 2012 an action plan between the UN and the SPLA in South Sudan in order to ensure that no children will participate in the ranks of the SPLA and that the recruitment of children will be stopped. The SPLA has to release their child soldiers and work together with UNMISS (United Nations Mission In South Sudan), UNICEF and the South Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission. Especially the Working Paper of the Office of the Special Representative (2011:10) on the access to justice for ex-child combatants, their degree of responsibility for their criminal acts, and different reintegration methods is of a great importance and value for this study.

The rights of children are central in the policy of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). UNICEF operates both top-down and bottom-up and endeavors peace and security. This organization works on the Millennium Development Goals and on the progress assured in the United Nations Charter. Just as mentioned in the overall introduction of this research, UNICEF and the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers confirm that contemporary armed conflicts have a great impact on children. Today's armed groups "seek to bring the battle more immediately, more systematically, and more massively to the core of the civilian population and into the lives of millions of children". Both

UNICEF and the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers see today's conflict as more and more fluid with a rising amount of involvement of non-state actors which makes it also more and more difficult to measure the impact of the conflict on children (UNICEF and the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2009:8).

The design of this chapter is linked to the design and the topics mentioned in the second chapter. Topics as child soldiers and their age, the recruitment of children, their roles in the armed group and their position as a former child soldier will be discussed from the perspective of INGO's, UN programs and funds and UN related organizations in the next section.

3.3 How INGO's and UN policy documents identify the child soldier

Just as the scholars, INGO's and UN programs, funds and related organizations and funds define the child soldier in order to determine their working field. This definition of the International Committee of the Red Cross goes a step further than the definitions given in chapter two. It assumes that DDR programs are needed for child soldiers and that child soldiers are all the children who are associated with armed forces: *"A child associated with an armed force or armed group is any person below 18 years of age who is or has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including, but not limited to, fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes. This category does not only refer to a child who is taking, or has taken, direct part in hostilities. Rather, by broadening the definition from that of 'child soldier', it aims to promote the idea that all children associated with armed forces and groups should cease to be so associated, and should benefit from disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, regardless of their role with the armed actor"* (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2012:36). Also UNICEF (2005:15) sees the need to define the child soldier. According to them are many girl child soldiers frequently not involved in DDR and rehabilitation, because they are often not considered as the child soldier who fought or who needs to contribute in a DDR program, which is according to UNICEF a wrong consideration. This deepens the definition of the child soldier.

As seen in the previous chapter and in the definitions above is the determination of age question of the child soldier important for classification. The central demand of the Coalition To Stop The Use Of Child Soldiers also takes this age question into account: "No one under 18 years of age is to be enlisted, recruited or used in hostilities whether by national armed forces or by armed groups that are distinct from the armed groups of a state" (2008:24). Cremer questions in his rapport for KinderNotHilfe and Terre des Hommes the statement of the Coalition To Stop The Use Of Child Soldiers by arguing that the recruitment of volunteers over the age of 15 is still possible and state parties have to decide whether they raise this age limit. As an example Cremer argues that volunteers of the German Federal Armed Forces are accepted to begin their military training (including dealing with weapons) after they finished secondary education regardless of their age (Cremer 2007:6-7). This shows us that rules for military recruitment differ from country to country. The Child Soldiers Global Report stated that nearly two third of the states (e.g. "Chile, Italy, Jordan, the Maldives, Sierra Leone, Slovenia and South Korea") that confirmed the Protocol rose the minimum age for children in armed conflict to 18. Still some states maintain their recruitment under 18 and are thereby placing the role of the armed group ahead of the rights of the child. Countries who also refused to accept the minimum age of 18 are Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The main reason for this recruitment is because these countries think that it would have a negative impact on the availability of soldiers (Child Soldiers Global report, 2008:19). The recruitment of children younger than 18 is prohibited by the international legal framework for non-state armed groups, just as the recruitment of children younger than 15 by forces of the state (Child Soldiers Global report, 2008:24). The Child Soldiers Global Report (2008:16) describes that many state parties undermined the Optional Protocol (while certain have raised the age), because they are still

recruiting children for military purposes. According to The Child Soldiers Global Report (2008:16) 63 countries allowed voluntarily recruitment of children under the age of 18 in 2008. This report showed that in a few countries very young children were introduced to military training and the cadet corps. This is a way to infiltrate children into the military culture. A reaction of the organizations involved in the Child Soldiers Global Report (2008:16) is: "Placing children's rights ahead of military needs requires far-reaching shifts in values and attitudes. Until it is accepted that childhood extends to 18, and that the spirit of the Protocol expects more of states than just amending the age of conscription, children will continue to be at risk of becoming soldiers, especially in times of crisis". Besides the legal element the culture of a country plays a part in this. The Report of Amnesty International (2011:17) shows an example of the humanitarian universalists approach on the age question. They argue that a boy in eastern Chad between the age of 13 and 18 is seen as adult. Human Rights Watch (2007:19) argues that soldiers under that age of 18 were encouraged to lie about their age and had to pretend that they were older. This example shows that people are aware of the age regulations, however the advantages of using child soldiers outweigh upholding the law.

The roles children have in armed conflict vary according to the policy papers from combatants, messengers, porters, cooks, 'wives' who provide sexual services (such as gang-raping) and cure the wounded soldiers, spies, and children who are used as look-outs (UNICEF, 2005:14 and Office of the Special Representative, 2011:27 and Human Rights Watch, 2007:19). UNESCO (2010:60) sees rape and sexual abuse of women and girls as a "weapon of war" which is an extensive problem. The International Committee of the Red Cross (2003:4) states that no matter what the circumstances of children in the armed group were, children are traumatized because they are deprived of their parents, had no schooling and know no normal preparation for adulthood.

3.4 Recruitment

Recruitment strategies mentioned by scholars were discussed in chapter two. Several policy documents show similarities in these strategies while others show new recruitment strategies which have not been specified yet by scholars. Recruitment plays an important role in this chapter because INGO's and their policies are focused on solutions from a more practical basis. That is why they start addressing the cause of the problem, the recruitment. First it is important to know what the risks of recruitment are. Amnesty International (2011:14) states that recruitment of boys who live in IDP sites or refugee camps and find no job after they finished primary school together with very poor children or children with family members in an armed group are the ones who are most likely will be recruited. Child Soldiers Global Report (2008:26) shares these findings and adds that poor children both in rural areas as in urban slums are as well most likely to be recruited. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) children who lost their parents are more vulnerable for recruitment than children who live together with their families. The ICRC strives to reunite families who are separated by the conflict. There also will be taken care of children whose parents are sought in temporary custody (ICRC, 2003:10).

Second, the different forms of recruitment have to be discussed in order to find best practices to stop the recruitment of children. Complementary to the information that was provided in chapter two about forced recruitment, the conclusions of Amnesty International in their report emphasize other ways of recruitment which are underexposed by the work of scholars. Amnesty International namely emphasizes the use of family networks as a powerful recruitment strategy, families are suppressed or family members who are already with the armed group serve as a magnet for other members of the family. Amnesty International also argues that people in the IDP sites or refugee camps are paid in order to smooth the progress of recruitment (2011:14). Just as in the second

chapter I will distinguish push and pull factors for children who joined the armed group without being abducted. A pull factor for children to join an armed force can be the access to first live needs such as food and clothing. As children once belong to an armed group they are forced to show others the prosperity of this group, by going to the villages and camps to show e.g. their nice clothes, cigarettes, and cash. Push factors that were already mentioned in chapter two but are once again emphasized here are the lack of jobs, the protection of their own families against new attacks of the armed group, a feeling of revenge because family members or cattle of their family was murdered and the lack of education (Amnesty International, 2011:14). Because of this lack of education, children can think that their only option is to join the armed group. The factor education in relation to recruitment of children will be further elaborated in paragraph 3.5.1. Child Soldiers Global Report (2008:26) emphasizes that during ongoing conflict push factors such as poverty and social dislocation make children even more weak for recruitment. Another push factor is argued by Amnesty International who worked in camps in eastern Chad. One of their findings was that people from Darfur who lived in the camps encouraged children to join the armed force (e.g. the JEM and the SLA, Sudan Liberation Army) and fight for their home country (Amnesty International, 2011: 16). The Child Soldiers Global Report (2008:26) expands this list of push factors with the ineffectiveness of the government, the lack of legal protections for children and a shortage of institutions to implement them, knowledge of human rights infraction (or other types of violence), discrimination, political and social exclusion, the lack of access to vocational training and restricted livelihood expectations.

Children who ones joined an armed group are besides recruitment at risk of re-recruitment. Human Rights Watch (2007:25) writes in their report about “older children whose self-conception has been altered by their participation in hostilities” who most likely can be the prone of re-recruitment. These children often push boundaries of power which became a standard in the armed group, e.g.; smoking, drinking and drive uncontrolled (Human Rights Watch, 2007:25). The limitations of power outside the armed group can contribute as a pull factor for re-recruitment because children were used to have more power than in their normal daily life. Another main reason for re-recruitment is the continued existence of push factors that one’s before drove the kids in the arms of an armed force. A practical example, from Amnesty International (2011:30) in Eastern Chad, is that the lack of education, security, work and the extreme poverty still exist. Prevention of recruitment and re-recruitment can be of a great importance. The three main elements which need to change in order to achieve this goal are to work on the self-conception of children, adjust children’s power limits and other pull factors, and remove push factors such as a lack of education.

Besides voluntary, forced recruitment and re-recruitment, UNICEF (2005:18) reports about the trafficking of child soldiers. This trafficking can be a form of re-recruitment, so children are not only at risk of recruitment but also of trafficking. Child soldiers are transported from one war theatre to another. Orphans or children who are separated from their parents through the conflict situation, death of one or both parents, poverty, migration or hostilities live under an increased risk of trafficking (UNICEF,2005:18). UNICEF (2005:18-19) states that because of porous borders during conflict, the trafficking of people can be boosted. The crisis that arises during conflict results in a law breakdown which will reduce the chances of legal consequences for traffickers (UNICEF, 2005:18-19). A recommendation from UNICEF to parliamentarians is to understand the threats of child trafficking and to act without any delay and put action plans into practice (UNICEF, 2005:31).

After this description about which children are most likely to be recruited, the different forms of recruitment, the risk of re-recruitment and the trafficking of children, ways of changing recruitment from policy will be discussed.

3.4.1 INGO's about recruitment

Amnesty International states in their rapport that they believe that recruitment (both enforced and voluntary) and partaking in an armed conflict is harmful for the physical and mental conditions of children under the age of 18. This is the reason why Amnesty International (2011:34), just as other organizations, is committed against recruitment and participation of children below the age of 18 years in all armed conflicts.

Amnesty International emphasizes in their report about the situation in Chad the need to counter impunity for those who use and recruit and make use of child soldiers. Amnesty advises to make use of independent investigators in order to address this problem. Challenges they encounter are "a lack of political will on the part of Chadian authorities, weaknesses in the justice system and an absence of basic judicial infrastructure such as courtrooms, police stations and prisons" thereby an absence of confidence by the people in the legal structure lacks. Amnesty advises to make use of the ICC (International Criminal Court) in order to have fair trials for the army and opposition leaders (Amnesty International 2011:33). Human Rights Watch also has a clear focus on this item. They state that those who are accountable for war crimes should be prosecuted and recruiters should be brought to trial (HRW, 2012:95). A recommendation in this case for about the circumstances in Chad that brings these practical advice to a higher level is to ensure that "respect for and protection of human rights, including children's rights, are at the core of all attempts to resolve the current armed conflict and political crisis in Chad, and that any peace or other agreements entered into by the Chadian government and armed opposition groups do not contradict international human rights standards and in particular do not provide any amnesty for human rights violations or war crimes, including the recruitment and use of children" (Amnesty International, 2011:44) Forced recruitment and the usage of child combatants under the 18 become also knows a criminal offense. Besides these changes in law a national action plan should be established, that includes "a halt to all child recruitment; access to bases, camps, training facilities, recruitment centers, and other relevant installations for ongoing monitoring and verification of compliance; provision of verifiable information regarding measures taken to ensure the accountability of perpetrators; and implementation of an agreed prevention strategy to address violations" (Amnesty International, 2011:100). Amnesty International (2011:34) provides an example of Chad. The Chadian government made commitments in order to end recruitment and stop the use of child soldiers. The outcome of this report, Amnesty International wrote (2011:44), is a list of recommendations to the government of Chad in order to end the recruitment and participation of children in the armed group. These recommendations may be generally seen as an example of the problem in other countries. Practical recommendations in the field of recruitment are that all commanders hear the orders that they should not recruit and use any child soldiers any more. They have to immediately stop recruitment, re-recruitment and the utilization of child combatants. Besides this should the General Statute of the army or armed group be adjusted so that only those over 18 could be included in the armed group. This document has to be translated in the local languages and be distributed to the local commanders so that they become aware of this fact. Because IDP sites and refugee camps are a place for massive recruitment, should these places better be secured. There also have to become screening procedures in order to ensure children's age (HRW, 2012:101). Amnesty International (2011:44) also puts foreword that investigations should be launched about the members and commanders of the armed group and that they, according to the study outcome should be suspended. Human Rights, The Rights of the Child, and refugee and humanitarian law made appointments and rules to strive for the same goal, to stop the recruitment of children. According to Amnesty International are the "laws, policies and international commitments" in Chad well regulated but there remains a large gap between laws and practice. So therefore, other measures to prevent recruitment and protect children should be taken into account.

3.4.2 Protection and prevention

The Child Soldiers Global Report reports that through a change in conflict dynamics the threat of e.g. recruitment of children may increase. Large numbers were recruited in countries such as South Sudan, Burundi and Nepal just before agreements were signed about disarmament or a ceasefire. The Child Soldiers Global Report states that children who live in danger of recruitment should be protected. This prevention should not only be carried out because of the threat of mass recruitment before disarmament agreements, but should according to The Optional Protocol be achieved at any time during a conflict for children under the age of 18. In order to fulfill this need of protection and to establish “durable protection” the circumstances that enable recruitment have to be changed. The Report states that “governments and societies that fail to prioritize the promotion and protection of children’s rights – economic, social and cultural, as well as civil and political – share responsibility for driving children into the ranks of armed groups” (Child Soldiers Global report, 2008:26-27).

A specific point of attention about child soldiers is to start a mechanism to monitor the recruitment of children from IDP sites and refugee camps and to find a pattern in the voluntary participation of children within the armed group in order to reduce child’s recruitment. To start this “mechanism”¹⁶ parents and relatives, who live together with their children in an IDP site or refugee camp, should be able to report when their children are missing or when they see an attempt of abduction (Amnesty International, 2011:44-45). Human Rights Watch (2012:95) makes an additional remark about this monitoring. They want to map and thereby protect civilian infrastructure, including schools.

All these recommendations and statements show that we are working to prevent recruitment, but recruitment remains a threat. The International Committee of the Red Cross (2003:4) confirms that children can be easily manipulated and therefore targeted for recruitment. They also confirm that children have to take alcohol and drugs and become “unable or too fearful to find a way out, [children] become loose cannons, a danger to themselves and others” (ICRC, 2003:4). So ones children are at risk or are actually recruited, another dilemma and ‘fight’ of many organizations starts to get these children out of the war and out of the armed group.

3.4.3 UN programs and funds about recruitment

The accessibility of light weight weapons and small arms has according to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (2011:9) led to the recruitment of children. Through this recruitment many children lost their parents, their chances to further enjoy their childhood, their educational prospects and they lost their ability to be part of their home town communities (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2011:9). Another statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (2011:28) is that the division that is made between children who voluntary join the armed group and children who are forced to join the armed group, is without any meaning. This because children are already limited in their options, this makes the line between voluntary participation and involuntary recruitment legally not relevant. The Office of the Special Representative reported complementary push- and pull factors for children to join the armed group. New insights are that factors as “displacement, sense of identity, ideological attraction, lack of

¹⁶ The author calls it a mechanism, from my point of view would procedure better describe the proposed situation.

opportunities, lack of choice, and defending the community” can increase the risk of recruitment. Intimidation and indoctrination (which is easier with children than adults) plays, according to this report, also a role in recruitment. ‘Push factors¹⁷’ for recruitment are “poverty, ideological attraction, revenge, a sense of duty to protect the family or survival”. The report also shows that children can be forced to take alcohol and drugs before they have to murder or torture others during the recruitment process (Office of the Special Representative, 2011:9-10). Factors that stimulate children to ‘voluntary’ join the armed group are according to the Office Of the Special Representative witnessing close relatives being murdered, humiliated, attacked, or raped (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2011:27). The report of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict acknowledged some accountability of the atrocities children committed but puts foreword that their commanders need to be prosecuted for their actions. The report also confirms that reintegration¹⁸ of children has to be encouraged because this is in the best interest of the child (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2011:9-10).

“While governments have primary responsibility for ensuring child protection and preventing their recruitment into armed groups, it should be a priority for all those engaged in human rights protection, humanitarian work, development, conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building. It should feature explicitly in the mandates of all involved. It is only through collective endeavor that robust and durable barriers will be erected that effectively protect children from being recruited into armed groups” (Child Soldiers Global report, 2008:26-27). Here we see that the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict gives more general guidelines and orders and INGO's more practically feasible recommendations, but the sources together, complement each other and work towards a common goal.

3.5 (Peace) Education and Recruitment of Child Soldiers

Most policy papers speak about education and show much similarities with peace education or use/recommend specific forms of peace education. This section also shows the obstacles for (peace) education and recruitment of child soldiers, but also best practices in order to work on the front site of the process and try to prevent recruitment. Education can serve both as a push and as a pull factor for recruitment, but in contrast it can also prevent children from being recruited. Education and thereby schools are according to INGO's and important influencing factor for recruitment. Education plays, according to The Child Soldiers Global report (2008:26-27), a major role in the problem as well as in the solution of recruitment and therefore needs special attention.

¹⁷ As I called them in the theoretical chapter. This term is not used in the document of the Office of the Special Representative 2011:9-10)

¹⁸ The Report of the Office of the Special Representative Refers, in contrast to de discussion between scholars on this topic in the theoretical chapter, to recommended reintegration into the family, community and society of the child.

3.5.1 Problems with education; the school as push factor and a place for recruitment

The accessibility of education is thereby a significant factor. According to Amnesty International (2011:15) primary education is accessible in almost all refugee camps and IDP sites. In these sites there is need for vocational training and secondary education because these forms of education are hardly ever offered due to lack of funding. By having stated this Amnesty International (2011:15) emphasizes that through this shortage of education children are more vulnerable for recruitment. An example from the DRC shows that “The war has also affected government spending on education, putting a strain on schools and teachers as average yearly government expenditure on education dropped by five percentage points, from 17% of total government spending to 12% during some of the most intense conflict periods” (Nicolai, 2008:41, UNESCO, 2010:32). The schools that persist during war become in this way inefficient. Another practical example of the education system in Chad provided by Amnesty International (2011:15) shows that primary and secondary education are free by Chadian law. A disadvantage is that the number of schools and teachers are low and thereby inadequate. A rising problem is that most of these teachers are not paid the state, however they have to be paid by the parents of their pupils. Because of this restricted accessibility and inadequate schooling a lot of children are under-equipped to find a job and are therefore often defenseless for recruitment by people of armed groups (The Child Soldiers Global report, 2008:26-27). UNESCO states that conflict can have a negative impact on the attendance of children in schools, as also on the quality of education. There can be a lack of basic needs such as school materials or even food and water (UNESCO, 2010:5-6). The International Committee of the Red Cross (2003:4) emphasizes that family and education in a normal situation gets children ready for their adulthood. Child soldiers miss this preparation and gradual transition from child to adult. Besides the shortage in education is recognition of school certificates important for children to build their lives, and find a job. One example of the importance of these certificates is shown by Amnesty International where Sudanese refugees who stayed in the camps of Chad have the problem that their school certificates (from primary and secondary school) which are registered by UNICEF are not recognized in Sudan. The UN is currently busy with solving this problem; eighty refugee students have received the recognition and can apply for further study in Sudan (Amnesty International, 2011:15).

Besides indirect influence towards recruitment, schools can serve as a place for recruitment¹⁹. The Child Soldiers Global Report (2008:26-27) confirms the usage of schools as mass recruitment places, which corresponds with the findings in the second chapter. Also UNICEF states that besides the streets and homes of children, schools are an important place for recruitment (UNICEF, 2003: 5). However Human Rights Watch positions that however “students, teachers, and school buildings are protected under international humanitarian law” schools sometimes (Human Rights Watch uses an example from Somalia) are used for military operations (Human Rights Watch, 2012:92-93). Another new insight that was not mentioned before is the way in which schools can be

¹⁹ What has to be kept in mind is that schools are important recruitment places, but not the only places for (mass) recruitment of children. The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict of the UN states that children can be forcibly recruited through abduction on streets, schools and in towns (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict 2011:9-10) An activity by armed groups outside the school is arranged in Lebanon where youth camps are started by these groups in order to make children devoted to the group (Child Soldiers Global report, 2008:26-27).

used by violent groups. The schools are used as indoctrination locations of children (Child Soldiers Global report, 2008:26-27). This may happen when school systems are inadequate and groups can teach their beliefs through this system. Children are triggered to volunteer in the armed group and this group is in this way able to recruit the children with the highest potential and train them²⁰. A new approach to stop these inadequate school systems is tested in Indonesia where children are encouraged to stay away from radical schools in order to decrease recruitment by religious militant groups²¹. Children are also at risk of recruitment on the main roads that lead to the school. This is why UNESCO adds abduction of children when they were on their way to school, as one of the risk factors to the list and states in their report about the DRC that “schools are no safe haven for children in conflict-affected DRC” (UNESCO, 2010b:61).

Human Rights Watch (2012:4) gives another example of indoctrination of groups in schools. They reported that Al-Shabaab forced a really strict implementation of Islam into the education system. Instructors who were not teaching according to the implemented rules of Al-Shabaab were endangered or murdered and most of the teachers were replaced by members of Al-Shabaab (Human Rights Watch, 2012:62). These members of Al-Shabaab used teaching as a recruitment method, the consequences were that “lessons have been left devoid of substance, teachers have fled, and, where schools have not shut down entirely, children, deprived of any meaningful education and afraid for their safety, have dropped out in large numbers. Girls have dropped out disproportionately” (Human Rights Watch, 2012:4). Besides this indoctrination, Al-Shabaab also used schools sites as battle grounds. They attacked them and their pupils or used schools to attack conflicting armed forces. Result of these actions is that lots of pupils were killed during attacks and school buildings were destroyed. Schools were also used for weapon training and storage space (Human Rights Watch, 2012:64).

Recapitulatory, without education children are more vulnerable for recruitment, but during conflict schools can serve as a place for recruitment and the quality of education reduces. Children miss a normal transition from child to adulthood. So, are schools still a good place for PE and DDR of former child soldiers? Two best practices in order to prevent recruitment at schools are given by Human Rights Watch.

According to Human Rights Watch, The UN Security Council calls on armed groups to abstain from using schools because the accessibility of schools should remain for children. International humanitarian law also states that children’s access to education and schools should persist. If this is not the case and if a school is occupied for a military reason this can be called a violation of the right of the child to education (Human Rights Watch, 2012:92). According to Human Rights Watch (2012:88) a school is normally a secluded area from attacks unless it is in used by armed group and serves as a base camp for this group. “It would be unlawful to use a school simultaneously as an armed stronghold and an education center, since it places children, teachers, education personnel, and other civilians at unnecessary risk. In such instances, military forces occupying a school have an obligation to take all feasible precautions to protect civilians from attack and to remove them from the vicinity” (Human Rights Watch, 2012:88). Child protection at schools should be established through mapping of the schools and other civilian infrastructure. These maps can be used to protect these schools and thereby “Ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which, among other things, prohibits as a war crime intentionally directing attacks against buildings

²⁰ This is reported from schools in Bangladesh and Pakistan

²¹ There are no results of this approach yet.

dedicated to education, provided they are not military objectives, during armed conflicts. (Human Rights Watch, 2012:95)".

3.6 Education

Most INGO's see peace education as a part of the broader education system. For this reason will this paragraph first focus on the education system as a whole before its focus will shift to one form of education in particular, peace education.

Children have the right to education. In order to achieve this right Amnesty International states that four essential elements are fundamental in order to fulfill this right to education. These elements are: "availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability". For availability of education trained instructors are needed as also a good infrastructure and free admission²². A non-discriminatory environment is needed for accessibility. Refugees, displaced children, girls and former child soldiers should not be ruled out of education programs. The third element, acceptability can be fulfilled if schools are able to provide qualified teachers, quality of their education program and can serve as "safe havens"²³ for their students and teachers. The last element, adaptability, describes the flexible role of education in order to fulfill specific needs of society (Amnesty International, 2011:39).

These four essential elements can be found in the recommendations made by other organizations about schooling in conflict areas.

Human Rights Watch (2012:5) describes that a lot of children (in this report in Somalia) are born during the war and therefore do not know what peace is, they know nothing but the conflict situation. A plan of action is therefore of great importance to protect and educate children: "The risks of continuing to fail to protect and provide safe and accessible education to [in this case] Somalia's children will result in yet another generation lost to conflict, with few options for the future" (Human Rights Watch, 2012:5). A recommendation from Human Rights Watch (2012:101) towards UNICEF and further Child Protection Agencies (in Somalia) therefore is to still expand DDR activities that include "education and vocational training programs, alternative livelihood programs, and medical and psychosocial support both to the extent possible, inside Somalia and in refugee receiving countries" (HRW, 2012:101). UNICEF also emphasizes the need for education. They experienced in Sierra Leone that young people see education as a requirement for the creation of peace. Some former child soldiers (in 2002) even threatened to return and fight in the army if no proper education and skill training was established. UNICEF also experienced during their stay in Sierra Leone that gender discrimination made it hard for girls to enter and stay in schools. This gender discrimination created by the priority setting of education to boys over girls. Results of UNICEF showed that 60 per cent of the girls did not attend a primary school and 88 per cent was not allowed to attend secondary school. As a result were many girls unable to find a job and ended in poverty or had to work for an armed group or in the sex industry (UNICEF, 2005:23).

A form of education carried out by INEE (2012:2) is education in emergencies. INEE carries with their education in emergencies quality education out which they define as available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable. Just as the four essential elements which are fundamental in order to

²² even with free admission, some children cannot go to school because they have to work or have to take care of their parents

²³ Amnesty International (2011:39) does not use the terminology "safe haven", but one of the elements of acceptability they describe is that schools need to be safe places for their students.

achieve the right to education according to Amnesty International. This form of education practiced by INEE shows these elements in practice. The education is provided for all ages and “encompasses early childhood development, primary, secondary, non-formal, technical, vocational, higher and adult education”. It offers safe learning spaces the so called “safe havens”, where people can be supported, educated and get physical safety from danger. “Coordination between workers in the education, protection, shelter, water and sanitation, health and psychosocial sectors is important in establishing learner-friendly, safe spaces” (INEE, 2012:2). INEE states that if people have a safe learning environment they are less at risk of being recruited²⁴. The goal of education in emergencies is to share “life-saving information” and to train skills that are needed to survive. An example INEE gives is to learn how to stay away from landmines. INEE also emphasizes that education provides structures, stability, strength and trust that people need, because of the psychosocial impact a conflict can have on them. One other example to create “safe havens” comes from The ICRC, who provides mine-risk education sessions especially for children in schools, churches/mosques and community buildings. Besides this mine-risk schooling are communities educated on the subject of safe play grounds for their kids (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2012:37).

INGO’s such as INEE emphasize that education can have both a positive as a negative impact on peace and stability, it can be seen as an opportunity and as a challenge. Positive because through social cohesion conflict resolution and peace-building is supported (INEE, 2012:2-3). INEE also states that with a good quality of education societies get political, social and economical more stable (INEE, 2012:2-3). A negative impact on peace and stability through education is created by inequalities. Some may be denied the right of entry which can cause social injustice. Another negative impact is that schools, their pupils and teachers can be attacked during a conflict (INEE, 2012:2-3). Murder of displacement of these people is also a risk in schools or on the roads towards the school (UNESCO, 2010:5). The last negative point UNESCO puts forward in its report is that schools and the educational infrastructure can be damaged because they are often a target during armed conflict. This statement is reinforced by the quote that “education has been attacked in at least 31 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America over the past three years” (UNESCO, 2010:5).

To conclude this section we can state that also child soldiers have the right to education and need availability of education, in safe havens with trained instructors. They need accessibility of education, so they can all enter schools regardless of the period they missed their education because of their stay with the armed group. Acceptability is also needed where ex child soldiers have quality education about peace. And last they need adaptable education in order to heal their traumas and helps them reintegrate. Schooling in conflict areas is instable but with initiatives such as education in emergencies it is achievable.

3.7 DDR and the identity of child soldiers in practice

After discussing the role of (peace) education this section will dive into policy about DDR and child soldiers in practice. The Child Soldiers Global Report states that there exists a great amount of information about the identity of child soldiers who are in the armed groups as also about the first needs and main concerns of the children when they have to reintegrate back into society. The Child Soldiers Global Report hereby shows the need for applied DDR and the complete application of all the lessons learned (Child Soldiers Global report, 2008:27). UNICEF states: “Despite growing knowledge of best practices for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of child

²⁴ Education in emergencies is also carried out in places where people are at risk of being sexually or economically oppressed, organized crime or forced marriages.

soldiers, lessons learned from past efforts have continued to be overlooked in the implementation of official programs. In many DDR processes the needs of child soldiers were not prioritized and in some were entirely overlooked. Reintegration programs were frequently not tailored to their specific needs and have suffered from chronic under-funding” (Child Soldiers Global report, 2008:16). That is why the needs of the child soldier (specified on the topic of their identity), as described in the theoretical chapter, are further elaborated within implementation methods of DDR in this paragraph. Organizations all have their own and complementary problems and solutions. Challenges of DDR for child soldiers entail insecurity; the lack of resources such as logistics, humanitarian and financial resources and the lack of comprehensible development towards peace (Amnesty International, 2011:28). A specific group who has problems with the implementation of DDR are girl child soldier. They have an extra problem when it comes to their participants in DDR and education programs. UNICEF suggests that these girls and women combatants should contribute in demobilization and reintegration programs with specific attention to their health problems and psychosocial effects of their experiences during the time they were with the armed group. UNICEF also emphasizes that in some cases the girl child soldiers were not willing to take part in the DDR program because they were afraid to be rejected by their home communities and family (UNICEF, 2005:16). In order to harden these young children to violence and to break their ties with the communities they came from they are often forced to commit atrocities against family members (UNICEF, 2005:2). Not only for girls it is hard to participate in DDR programs, but according to Amnesty International (2011:27) it is also a problem to find and involve child soldiers who escaped from the armed force into DDR programs.

Opportunities for DDR are mostly drawn from lessons learned. According to Child Soldiers Global Report (2008:30) an important lesson learned is that programs for formal boy and girl child soldiers can be best placed in communities which will support war affected children. According to this report can these programs contribute not only to recovery reduction of the stigmatization of the child soldier but also to the exhibition of the family and the community. One task of the International Committee of the Red Cross besides the medical measures is the documentation of abuse of children including forced recruitment and sexual violence by armed groups. Discussions with the involved parties are about measures to stop this abuse may also for new opportunities for DDR (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2012:36).

A recommendation made by Amnesty International for governments in order to guarantee effective demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers is to provide funding for an effective and clear DDR policy (Amnesty International 2011:43). After the funding is arranged good coordination between national and international organizations is according to Amnesty International needed. Together with knowledge about the number of children who need to be enrolled in the DDR program (Amnesty International, 2011:29). A challenge but also an opportunity lies in the fact that commanders also have to work together with for instance UNICEF to get involved in DDR programs (Amnesty International, 2011:44). Furthermore, the government is an actor who should be involved. According to Human Rights Watch (2012:95) should the government work together with child protection agencies such as UNICEF to demobilize, rehabilitate and reintegrate child soldiers. These programs should “include educational and vocational training as well as counseling, in accordance with the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (“Paris Principles”) of 2007”. (HRW, 2012:94/95).

The next sessions are specified on the separate stages of DDR: disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, which also have their separate and related challenges and opportunities.

3.7.1 Disarmament and demobilization

An example of the failure of demobilization could be seen in the DRC. The recruitment of children into the LRA and FDLR was officially ended in 2004, but the recruitment of children continued after 2004. For these children no demobilization program was available because organization thought that the recruitment had stopped and ended their DDR programs for child soldiers (Amnesty International, 2012:127-128). Another example provided by Amnesty International is the situation of Child Soldiers in Somalia, where recruitment continued and reintegration failed (Amnesty International, 2012:304). A different problem with demobilization expressed by The Child Soldiers Global Report of 2008 (:28) describes demobilization during armed conflicts and thereby the lack of security as one of the greatest challenges. According to them “large-scale releases of children from armed forces or groups have rarely taken place before hostilities end”. The statement of the Child Soldiers Global Report is that “difficulties should not prevent efforts to release children from armed groups or to deploy international human rights monitors if no other protection is likely to be effective. However, reality dictates that an end to the conflict will produce the most concrete results, reinforcing the urgent need for peaceful settlements and the inclusion of specific DDR provisions for child soldiers in peace agreements” (Child Soldiers Global report, 2008:28). Militants can also counteract the demobilization of child soldiers. An obstacle reported by Human Rights Watch (2007:21) in Chad is that the Chadian militaries refused to work together with UNICEF on demobilization programs and even hid child soldiers from UNICEF. These hidden children had to continue in the fighting. An opportunity lies in the work of the ICRC because they want to provide former child soldiers with sufficient care it strives for an immediately release out of the armed group, even if there is no signed peace agreement or DDR program started (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2012:37).

According to The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict It is of great importance to cut off links from child soldiers to the military. In order to succeed this there has to be an alternative offered to the child. This alternative can be reunion with its family or its home community, education training in self sustenance and psycho social support. It is best to assist the community as a whole, instead of helping child soldiers separately and risk stigmatization. Offering of material benefits for former child soldiers could cost pensions within the community because it can be seen as a payment for the harm they have done (The Office of The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2011:46).

3.7.2 Reintegration

Last we dive into the connection between reintegration and child soldiers in practice. A very practical example of the reintegration of child soldiers can be seen in the documentary ‘Soldier Child’. This documentary shows daily life in rehabilitation center ‘Gusco’ and hospital ‘Gulu’ in Uganda. The former child soldiers who enter the center are firstly brought into safety, the second day they stay in the center they get a health checkup and of the third day the rehabilitation process begins. Children then have to draw their experiences from the time they spent in the armed group, in this case the LRA. These drawings form the starting point for discussions which helps the children to process their trauma’s and to unlock their experiences from the LRA. A lot of children had to murder their family and friends during their recruitment. Joseph Koney was supported by Sudan, he trained his recruited children there and after their training they were send back to Uganda to kill. According to the documentary consisted 90 percent of the LRA out of children. Children were afraid to escape from the LRA because they thought that all the houses of their village would burn down if they did. Children who tried to escape and were found by the LRA were tortured and killed (stoning, knifing or by cutting off their private parts) by new abductees. A child soldier who died by one bullet of a

weapon is a rarity in Uganda. Former child soldiers would like to go back to school but their parents can often not pay the school fees. The most common problems former child soldiers have are nightmares and regular day time images. Sometimes child soldiers have to kill others by knocking on the head of the other until this person dies, if the person is dead then the child soldier has to cut out their intestine and wear it around their neck. Child soldiers are also forced to drink the blood of the dead or to smear their bodies with the blood of the person they have killed, as another form to show that they have killed. Some children are so embarrassed of their actions that they see suicide as an only option. As children are stable, further plans for their future are discussed, most of the time the first step is to re-enter primary school. The rehabilitation center helps children with this step to provide them with scholastic materials and uniforms. Children who stayed too long out of school get skills training, instead of returning to school. Through this training they can earn a living and become full members of society again. The people who work in the rehabilitation center call the former child soldiers 'our' children instead of 'traumatized', 'rebels' or 'disturbed' children. And in order to mingle former child soldiers with other children join children who were never in the LRA the sports activities of the program. In this way these former child soldiers will have less difficulties and will be less stigmatized if they return to their village. The rehabilitation center planned activities all day so children would never feel alone. Child soldiers in Uganda may think that only if they are part of traditional cleansing they can be a healthy and happy person again. The main goal of the rehabilitation center is to reunite children with their parents. The majority of the parents welcomes their children with open arms, while others reject their children because of all the bad things they have done or because they cannot pay for the child. (Soldier Child, 2012)

The Child Soldiers Global Report (2008:30) describes the reintegration of child combatants as a long-term procedure that includes "family reunification (or alternative living arrangements if reunification is not possible), psychosocial support, education, vocational training and income-generation projects". Factors that impede reintegration are poor preparations and just as with demobilization a lack of funding. The biggest problem with reintegration indicated by the Child Soldiers Global Report (2008:31) is that community based programs for children who are affected by the conflict need more resources to adjust to the specific needs of former child soldiers during their reintegration. An example of opportunities in this case is to take care of the babies of former girl soldiers and to provide enough financial support and funding to foresee the special needs (physically, economically and psychosocial).

Other problems that occur by reintegration of child soldiers are mainly about difficulties with family reunification, acceptance and stigmatization. Amnesty International (2011:17) reports that the continued insecurity in Chad barred family reunification of child soldiers and their families. A consequence of this is that children have to stay more than one year in the transit center. During the normal situation children in Chad stay for maximum of three months in these centers. The fear of stigmatization is also a problem for children. Child Soldiers Global Report (2008:29) appoints the fact that a lot of child soldiers not want to disclose that they are or were a child soldier because of this fear. In order to make reintegration programs work there has to be good communication with the children, their parents and community and traditional healing ceremonies have to be included in the healing process (The Office of The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict 2011:47). This in order to overcome isolation or stigmatization. "Family reunifications are organized according to the best interests of the child and only if all parties – the child and the family – want to be reunited" (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2012:37). The Office of The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict states that the main objective of DDR for children is reintegration, reunion and acceptance of the child from their family and community. This is important in order to regard local feelings and values. The family should be informed about the suffering the child has undergone and in some cases has caused.

Acknowledgment of these facts is often achieved through traditional healing means. It is best to assist the community as a whole, instead of helping child soldiers separately and risk stigmatization (The Office of The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict 2011:46). The ICRC registers children (ex-child combatants included) and families in order to restore family bounds. They also arrange protection of the separate children during the time the process of family reunification takes. If family reunification is established with a foster family the ICRC monitors and offers help to this family in order to provide in basic needs and ensure safety (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2012:36). The ICRC monitors how the children readapt to family life: they are often checked on a number of months after being brought back together with their relatives to ensure that they do not face new problems with the armed group (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2012:37). This organization also establishes economic recovery programs for families in emergencies. Elements of these programs are the delivery of tools, seeds, cattle and cash-for-work projects (e.g. deliver sewing machinery) to establish a better livelihood for former child soldiers and their families (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2012:38).

3.8 The need for Peace Education and DDR in practice and their interrelation

The sections about peace education and DDR already showed their opportunities and possible problems for former child soldiers. In this section the need for these programs is further discussed and the links, interrelations, between the programs in practice are put at a glance.

A problem that arose in both peace education and DDR programs was the lack of funding. Recommendations from Amnesty International in the case of Chad state that The World Bank, UNDP, EU and individual donor governments are asked to support the government in a financial way with the aim to support the “National Programme for the Release, Transitional Support and Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Groups” and to support reintegration activities, including education, vocational training, income-generating activities, for children formerly associated with armed forces or armed groups” (Amnesty International, 2011:46). Besides the financial aspect Amnesty International advises to UNICEF and the UNHCR, in this same case, to support the Chadian government with the establishment and implementation of an operational demobilization and reintegration program for children together with improved access to secondary education, vocational training and the job market. Another advice towards the two organizations is to monitor children after reunification with their parents. The ICRC points out that during reintegration the child soldier should be reintroduced in schools, in order to continue their education, or to get vocational training to find work (ICRC, 2003:12). Another recommendation to the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia and the TFG forces is to work together with UNICEF in order to demobilize children and bring them to rehabilitation and reintegration sites where they get education and vocational training, children should not be detained (Human Rights Watch, 2012:94).

3.9 Conclusions and policy recommendations

The main goal of this chapter was to answer the question: *What are considered to be the best practices of DDR and peace education programs for former child soldiers according to policy documents realized by international institutions including NGO's working in the field of child soldiers, DDR and peace education?* In order to find an answer to the main question of this research: *What are*

the conceptual interrelations between the identity of child soldiers, DDR and Peace education? INGO policy documents and documents of UN programs, funds and related organizations were studied which contributed to the conceptual interrelations in practice. By the implementation of these concepts by the different organizations a lot of problems but also opportunities are revealed. The different policy documents showed in which way further research and experience is needed. This concluding session is divided into conclusion and thirteen short policy recommendations.

With the aim of concluding this chapter I will enrich the work definitions of chapter two with the gained knowledge out of the policy documents in this third chapter.

The work definition of the concept child soldier in chapter two was formed with the following elements: (s)he is below 18 years of age; associated with an armed force; in many cases recruited or to a lesser extent joined the armed force voluntarily through different push and pull factors; has used violence and violence is committed against him/her; changed her/his identity from child to soldier; created new family out of group members; identifies with the armed force and participates in the corresponding socialization processes. Roles of the child soldier can be to work as a fighter, a cook, a porter, a messenger, a spy, human shield, mine tester or a sexual slave. What should be added to this definition and what we gained from this chapter that: child soldiers miss a normal transition from child to adulthood; children used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity are considered to be a child soldier; child soldiers are in need of DDR programs (also the girl soldiers); miss regular education and are used as a weapon of war. Roles that have to be added to the definition are the roles of 'wives' who provide sexual services and cure the wounded soldiers and the role of look-outs.

Peace education consisted out of the following elements in its work definition in the conclusion of the theoretical chapter: A form of education that attempts the reduction of violence; it changes and forms perceptions, capabilities, and identities; it can be carried out before, during and after a conflict; it handles a conflict in a nonviolent manner; can be formed through practical implications such as reconciliation, cooperation, the formation of values, dialogue and empathy. Perceptions of the enemy, historical memory, different goals and deep rooted beliefs of people can be difficulties that peace education has to overcome. Peace education is exercised in different forms (e.g. forgiveness education, conflict resolution, and human rights education) can be implemented through different approaches (narrow/broad, direct/indirect) and can be fulfilled in different places (e.g. schools, media, and community centers). From this chapter we gained that most policy papers speak about education and show much similarities with peace education or use/recommend specific forms of peace education. This education is an important influencing factor, it can prevent children from being recruited and the absence of it can serve as a push factor to join an armed group. Schools can even become a place for recruitment. Basic education needs such as school materials, food, water and a teacher should be provided in order to educate and support people and give them physical safety in 'safe havens'. Peace education learns children what peace is, a situation most of them who are born during a conflict never experience. Education can also make societies political, social and economical more stable and should be coupled to the job market through vocational and skill training. For fulfillment of the right of education availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability are needed.

The work definition after the second chapter of the concept of DDR was: for disarmament the removal of the arms is the main point of focus whereby the accessibility of illicit arms and the security dilemma should be taken into account. Demobilization is the removal from the army units and the demolishing of the hierarchical structures within the group in order to prevent remobilization. Reintegration entails placement and inclusion in society, whereby broad community support, access to education, family reunification, traditional healing ceremonies and a

reconstruction of identity and the place and role in society is needed. From this chapter we gained that family reunification, psychosocial support, education, vocational training and income generation projects are elements which are proved in practice as main points of focus for DDR for child soldiers. Furthermore, reunification with home communities (besides the own family), coordination between different organizations, attention for health issues and the need for logistics, humanitarian, financial and security resources should be added to this definition.

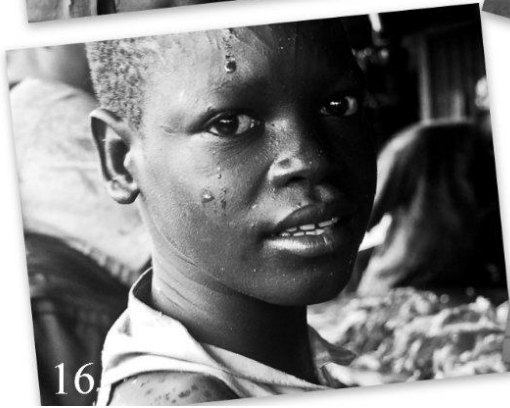
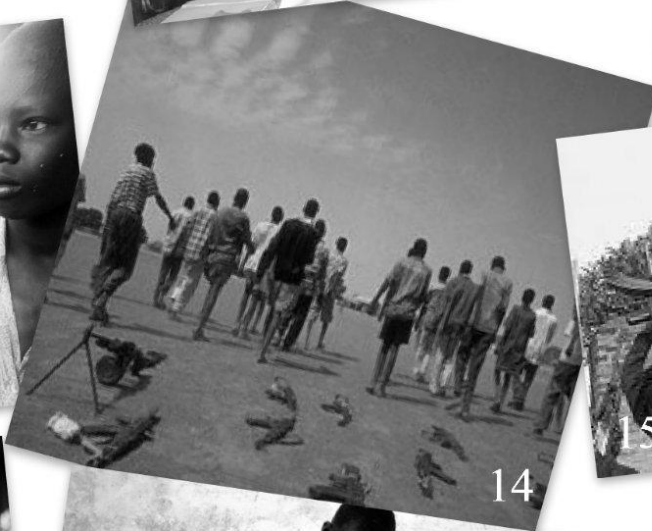
The purpose of this chapter was to find the best practices within DDR and peace education for (ex) child soldiers. The best practices of this chapter consist out of gained knowledge and actual actions and deeds. In terms of knowledge, there are plenty of best practices, but many organizations do not show their actions in their policy documents and in most cases only carry out recommendations to others. The best practices within DDR and (peace) education for child soldiers are:

- The placement of children rights ahead of military needs. The organizations discussed in this chapter work together in order to protect children with the aim to give them a better future.
- The placement of the age limit to join an armed group at 18 years. There are discussions about this age limit between organizations and institutions. This age limit is defined by law and is needed to define the child soldier.
- To have a screening procedure in order to ensure the age of child soldiers.
- To have knowledge about the identity of child soldiers in the armed group and their needs.
- To see rape and sexual use of women as a weapon of war and write policy to counter this extensive problem.
- To start addressing the cause of the problem of child soldiers: recruitment, re-recruitment and trafficking by analyzing which children are most recruited, what the different push and pull factors are, and which forms of recruitment exist.
- To have knowledge about the situation of child soldiers during ongoing and recurring conflict. The monitoring of recruitment, in order to find a pattern in voluntary participation and thereby protect civilian infrastructure
- The establishment of “durable protection methods” in national action plans (translated in the local languages and distributed to the commanders) that include: “a halt to all child recruitment; access to bases, camps, training facilities, recruitment centers, and other relevant installations for ongoing monitoring and verification of compliance; provision of verifiable information regarding measures taken to ensure the accountability of perpetrators; and implementation of an agreed prevention strategy to address violations” (Amnesty International, 2011:100).
- To see how education can prevent children from being recruited but also see that education can serve as a push and pull factor for recruitment.
- To have independent investigators to counter impunity for those who recruit and use child soldiers, and their trial in the ICC.
- To have and strive for the protection of human rights, children’s rights, the right of education, the right of healthcare, the right of exclusion of torture, and the right for children to be with their families.
- To better secure IDP sites and refugee camps, because these are places of mass recruitment.
- Solving the problem of recognition of school certificates obtained in other countries.
- Education in emergencies: to share life saving information and train skills to survive.
- The importance and success of family reunification and reunion with the home community of the child in order to overcome isolation and stigmatization. And the monitoring of how children readapt to family life.
- The existence of programs that deal with their trauma’s. Including traditional cleansing ceremonies.

- Offering former child soldiers education and income generating projects. In this way they have better prospects for the future and become less dependent of the armed group.

The policy recommendations which are established from the findings of this chapter are:

- Establish more national action plans that include: “a halt to all child recruitment; access to bases, camps, training facilities, recruitment centers, and other relevant installations for ongoing monitoring and verification of compliance; provision of verifiable information regarding measures taken to ensure the accountability of perpetrators; and implementation of an agreed prevention strategy to address violations” (Amnesty International, 2011:100).
- To further close the gap between law and practice about the situation of child soldiers in conflict situations.
- For organizations to work as a collective endeavor and set durable barriers in order to protect children from being recruited.
- Establish more vocational training, peace education and secondary education in refugee camps and IDP sites and provide funding for it.
- Better the protection of schools as safe havens from recruitment, military operations and indoctrination through mapping of schools and civilian infrastructure.
- Infiltrate peace education in the educational system.
- Children who are born during war should learn what peace is.
- For DDR purposes, use lessons learned from the past.
- Give extra attention to the reintegration of girl child soldiers.
- Develop a standard procedure for reintegration and rehabilitation, so children can immediately start.
- Ensure the existence of DDR programs as long as recruitment of soldiers continues.
- To address the security problem during (peace) education and DDR.
- To detect child soldiers who have run away from the armed group and involve them in DDR and (peace) education programs.



Chapter 4: Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 A memory refreshment

The problem I studied in this research is the reintegration of child soldiers in a conflict context. In this study I examined two concepts (DDR and peace education) which are strongly related to the identity of the child soldier. This was important because the transition of these children from armed groups back to their villages require an adaptation of their identity. Through the use of DDR and peace education child soldiers have to transform their 'war mentality' into a 'peace mentality'. The scientific relevance of this research was to refine conceptual interrelations between DDR, Peace education and the identity of child soldiers using conflict studies and human geography with as main question: *"What are the conceptual interrelations between the identity of child soldiers, DDR and Peace education?"*

In chapter 1, this nexus between these main concepts was studied in order to contribute in an innovative way towards the conceptual interrelations. This chapter resulted in conclusions and work hypothesis. The third chapter, examined programs and policy orientations and the best practices indicated by international organizations working in the field of reintegration of child soldiers, DDR and peace education programs. This chapter was strongly focused on information about and the prevention on the front site of the problem; the recruitment of child soldiers in ongoing and recurrent conflict.

4.2 Theory building

The theoretical grounding of this research consisted of academic studies about the identity of child soldiers, DDR, peace education and about the interrelations of these concepts. Other sources, which were used in the third chapter, are INGO policy documents and documents of UN programs, funds and related organizations. These sources and literature brought new insights to the field of child soldiers through a critical reflection and combination of studies. This research was a desk research including the summary, collation and/or synthesis of existing relevant research about the main concepts. Research on the identity of child soldiers conducted in African countries, such as Sierra Leone and the DRC will also be used to provide examples.

The combination of the different concepts and interrelations of this study has been guided from the following research purpose. This purpose of study was to explore, expand and enrich the conceptual interrelations about the impacts and best practices of peace education and DDR programs on the identity of former child soldiers in their current process of reintegration into society. This was realized through literature and policy based desk research of existing empirical research, with insights from the fields of Conflict Studies, Human Geography. The basic concepts of conflict studies that were used in this research are identity, recurrent conflict and peace building. Recurrent conflict plays a role in this research because this is the existing situation in many different conflict areas with the involvement of child soldiers and thereby must be taken into account. Because of this, prevention is needed in order to ensure that former child soldiers do not go back to the armed group they ones were part of. Another implication of recurrent conflict in this research examined the possibilities of DDR programs and peace education *during* conflict instead of *after* conflict (the most studied form). DDR and peace education both contribute to peace building, the changing of the 'war mentality into the peace mentality' plays an important role. Involving human geography meant also the involvement of identity. Identity plays a major role in the lives of child soldiers. In the first place the military or armed group gives the children a certain identity. Identity creates a self-image of memories, consciousness and ways of representation (such as personal,

social, cultural, national identity) and identity will affect the actions of people (The Dictionary of Human Geography 2000: 365). During DDR processes the child soldier searched again for their own identity as a child or a young adult, children are often traumatized and it is hard for them to return to their families and villages. The topic identity intersects both with human geography as with conflict studies. This theory formed the leading thread throughout this research.

4.3 Overall conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore, expand and enrich the conceptual interrelations about the impacts and best practices of peace education and DDR programs on the identity of former child soldiers in their current process of reintegration into society. This was realized through literature and policy based desk research of existing empirical research, with insights from the fields of Conflict Studies, Human Geography. Which led me to the formation of the main research question:

In which way can the identity of child soldiers, DDR and Peace education best be aligned in theory and practice?

This question consists out of two components:

- a. *What are the conceptual interrelations between the identity of child soldiers, DDR and Peace education?*
- b. *What are considered to be the best practices of DDR and peace education programs for former child soldiers according to policy documents realized by international institutions including NGO's working in the field of child soldiers, DDR and peace education?*

First I will answer question a. *"What are the conceptual interrelations between the identity of child soldiers, DDR and Peace education?"*

The conceptual interrelations between the three concepts is that in both DDR and peace education, faith and hope for the future of the identity of the child soldier have to be restored so they can establish new goals and find their purpose in life. If education programs can be adjusted to the motives and the identity of the child soldier, education can support their reintegration. Lessons child soldiers have learned during war (e.g. loyalty, tenacity, the wish to contribute to society, inner strength) and learned skills (e.g. leadership, communication, strategic thinking, dismantle arms, protect superiors, have knowledge about military tactics and strategies) can even be used in a positive way during and after their reintegration in order to stop and prevent recruitment of child soldiers.

An conceptual relation between disarmament and the identity of child soldiers is caused by the empowerment of children who carried a weapon the armed group. During disarmament they have to lay down their weapons and thereby lose a piece of their 'empowered' identity. Within demobilization processes child soldiers have to leave the armed group and all the socialization processes they were used to in that group which formed part of their identity. Thereby the reintegration of these children knows great challenges. Issues that create this challenge are the fact that funding by governments and other organizations is rare, child soldiers often have no access to educational or vocational training, and family reintegration programs are hard to establish. Children are often too young to remember their life and identity before they were part of the armed group which also can cause problems in the search for an own identity.

Education can help in changing the identity of the child soldier so they can learn to see themselves not as soldiers or as victims anymore. Besides this identity adaption a rapid reconstruction of the education system is important in order to establish a place of hope and security for children and to change their thoughts to create a more peaceful society. Former child soldiers should build up self-worth (without wearing a gun) and education can “normalize” their life if they returned into society. If the push and pull factors to join an armed group have been removed, the likelihood for child combatants to voluntarily join an armed group decreases.

Secondly, I will answer question b. *“What are considered to be the best practices of DDR and peace education programs for former child soldiers according to policy documents realized by international institutions including NGO’s working in the field of child soldiers, DDR and peace education?”*

The best practices of the third chapter consist out of knowledge gaining and actual actions and deeds. In terms of knowledge, there are plenty of best practices, but many organizations do not show their actions in their policy documents and in most cases only carry out recommendations to others. The best practices within DDR and (peace) education for child soldiers are:

- The placement of children rights ahead of military needs. The organizations discussed in this chapter work together in order to protect children with the aim to give them a better future.
- The placement of the age limit to join an armed group at 18 years. There are discussions about this age limit between organizations and institutions. This age limit is defined by law and is needed to define the child soldier.
- To have a screening procedure in order to ensure the age of child soldiers.
- To have knowledge about the identity of child soldiers in the armed group and their needs.
- To see rape and sexual use of women as a weapon of war and write policy to counter this extensive problem.
- To start addressing the cause of the problem of child soldiers: recruitment, re-recruitment and trafficking by analyzing which children are most recruited, what the different push and pull factors are, and which forms of recruitment exist.
- To have knowledge about the situation of child soldiers during ongoing and recurring conflict. The monitoring of recruitment, in order to find a pattern in voluntary participation and thereby protect civilian infrastructure
- The establishment of “durable protection methods” in national action plans (translated in the local languages and distributed to the commanders) that include: “a halt to all child recruitment; access to bases, camps, training facilities, recruitment centers, and other relevant installations for ongoing monitoring and verification of compliance; provision of verifiable information regarding measures taken to ensure the accountability of perpetrators; and implementation of an agreed prevention strategy to address violations” (Amnesty International, 2011:100).
- To see how education can prevent children from being recruited but also see that education can serve as a push and pull factor for recruitment.
- To have independent investigators to counter impunity for those who recruit and use child soldiers, ad their trial in the ICC.
- To have and strive for the protection of human rights, children’s rights, the right of education, the right of healthcare, the right of exclusion of torture, and the right for children to be with their families.
- To better secure IDP sites and refugee camps, because these are places of mass recruitment.
- Solving the problem of recognition of school certificates obtained in other countries.
- Education in emergencies: to share life saving information and train skills to survive.

- The importance and success of family reunification and reunion with the home community of the child in order to overcome isolation and stigmatization. And the monitoring of how children readapt to family life.
- The existence of programs that deal with their trauma's. Including traditional cleansing ceremonies.
- Offering former child soldiers education and income generating projects. In this way they have better prospects for the future and become less dependent of the armed group.

4.4 Revisited working hypotheses

In the conclusions of the theoretical chapter (chapter 2) concluding statements with working hypotheses were made. In this section the information gathered in the third chapter will reflect upon these statements and hypotheses.

The first concluding statement and working hypothesis is: Economic perspectives (payment) have to be created for children in order to assemble a peace dividend that prevents the search for payment in rebel groups. Hypothesis: Former child soldiers should earn more financial rewards if they have a job than the payoff and rewards they earned in the armed group. Education has economic advantages for ex-combatants and after their education they can find a job where they get paid to build up a new life (Brown, 2011:191). So the question remains how former child soldiers experienced this paid work in relation to the payoffs and the rewards (Gates, 2011:34) they got during the time they spend in the armed group. The policy documents from the third chapter confirm and substantiate these findings. Children without a job are the ones who are most likely will be recruited (together with children who live in IDP sites or refugee camps, very poor children and children with family members in an armed group) The lack of jobs and education can serve as one of the push factors for children to enter an armed group (Amnesty International, 2011:14). Because of restricted accessibility and inadequate schooling a lot of children are under-equipped to find a job, have restricted livelihood expectations and are therefore often defenseless for recruitment by people of armed groups (The Child Soldiers Global report, 2008:26-27). Not only for boys but also for girls it is hard to find a job. If they have no job they have a chance to end in poverty, work for an armed group or in the sex industry (UNICEF, 2005:23). In trying to overcome this problem Amnesty International advises to UNICEF and the UNHCR, in the case of Chad, to support the government with the establishment and implementation of an operational demobilization and reintegration program for children together with improved access to secondary education, vocational training and to the job market.

The second concluding statement and working hypothesis is: Because schools are positive environments that serve as caregivers this environment is a good location for peace education. Hypothesis: The best way in which peace education during ongoing conflict can be implemented is through education in schools. Bodine and Crawford (1998) note the positive environment of the school as a place where good communication is possible. Betancourt and Simmons (*et al.* 2008: 578) state that schools also get roles of the caregivers and thereby provide support and a sense of home. Bar-Tal and Rosen (2009: 558) emphasize the scope of peace education in the classroom to the whole younger generation and the presence of teachers and materials. They state that schools have the power as only organization to carry out peace education. The organizations and institutions of the third chapter share a different point of view, they see the provision of safe and accessible education in schools as a challenge. This challenge is mainly about making schools 'safe havens' whereas "coordination between workers in the education, protection, shelter, water and sanitation, health and psychosocial sectors is important in establishing learner-friendly, safe spaces" (INEE, 2012:2). Lots of school buildings are damaged during war and most of the schools that persist become insufficient. The school is besides its positive elements also seen as a push factor through

indoctrination and military operations and schools can be seen as a place for recruitment. This recruitment takes place in the school buildings and on the roadways to school. So, are schools still a good place for peace education and DDR of former child soldiers? The laws already exist but more research needs to be conducted about a solution for this dilemma in practice.

The third concluding statement and working hypothesis is: The relation between peace education, disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and thereby human security should be further studied in order to optimize these programs. Hypothesis: Ex-combatants who followed a demobilization program can be a danger for fragile peace. This is why peace education should become an integrated part of the disarmament and demobilization process. If there are no jobs it is tempting for ex-combatants to commit crimes in order to survive and get the things they desire in live. According to Daniel (1996: 81) is a part of the peace enforcement of the UN a creation of sources of security and the encouragement of people to give up their arms. He also states that in certain cases weapons can be replaced for rewards. But what will people do with these rewards, and are these rewards enough to keep these people away from the war? The INGO policy documents and documents of UN programs, funds and related organizations also recognize the problem of the lack of a good livelihood for former child soldiers. Their advice is to couple DDR and education with vocational and skill training in order to prepare the former child soldiers for a job outside of the armed force and in this way protect children for re-recruitment. The hard hypothesis made in the theory chapter is not explicitly mentioned in the policy documents. Within the third chapter problems and challenges of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration were studied but this hypothesis needs to be studied more extensively, in order to support or refute this position and to find possible solutions to this problem.

4.5 Policy Recommendations

Overall policy recommendations consist out of advices to: further close the gap between law and practice about the situation of child soldiers in conflict situations; address the security problem during (peace) education and DDR; detect child soldiers who have run away from the armed group and involve them in DDR and (peace) education programs.

Policy recommendations about recruitment are to: establish more national action plans that include: “a halt to all child recruitment; access to bases, camps, training facilities, recruitment centers, and other relevant installations for ongoing monitoring and verification of compliance; provision of verifiable information regarding measures taken to ensure the accountability of perpetrators; and “implementation of an agreed prevention strategy to address violations” (Amnesty International, 2011:100); for organizations to work as a collective endeavor and set durable barriers in order to protect children from being recruited.

In the field of (peace) education the following recommendations are made: establish more vocational training, peace education and secondary education in refugee camps and IDP sites and provide funding for it; better the protection of schools as ‘safe havens’ from recruitment, military operations and indoctrination through mapping of schools and civilian infrastructure; infiltrate peace education in the educational system; learn children who are born during war what peace entails.

The DDR recommendations drawn from this research are: use lessons learned from the past; give extra attention to the reintegration of girl child soldiers; develop a standard procedure for reintegration and rehabilitation, so children can immediately start; ensure the existence of DDR programs as long as recruitment of soldiers continues.

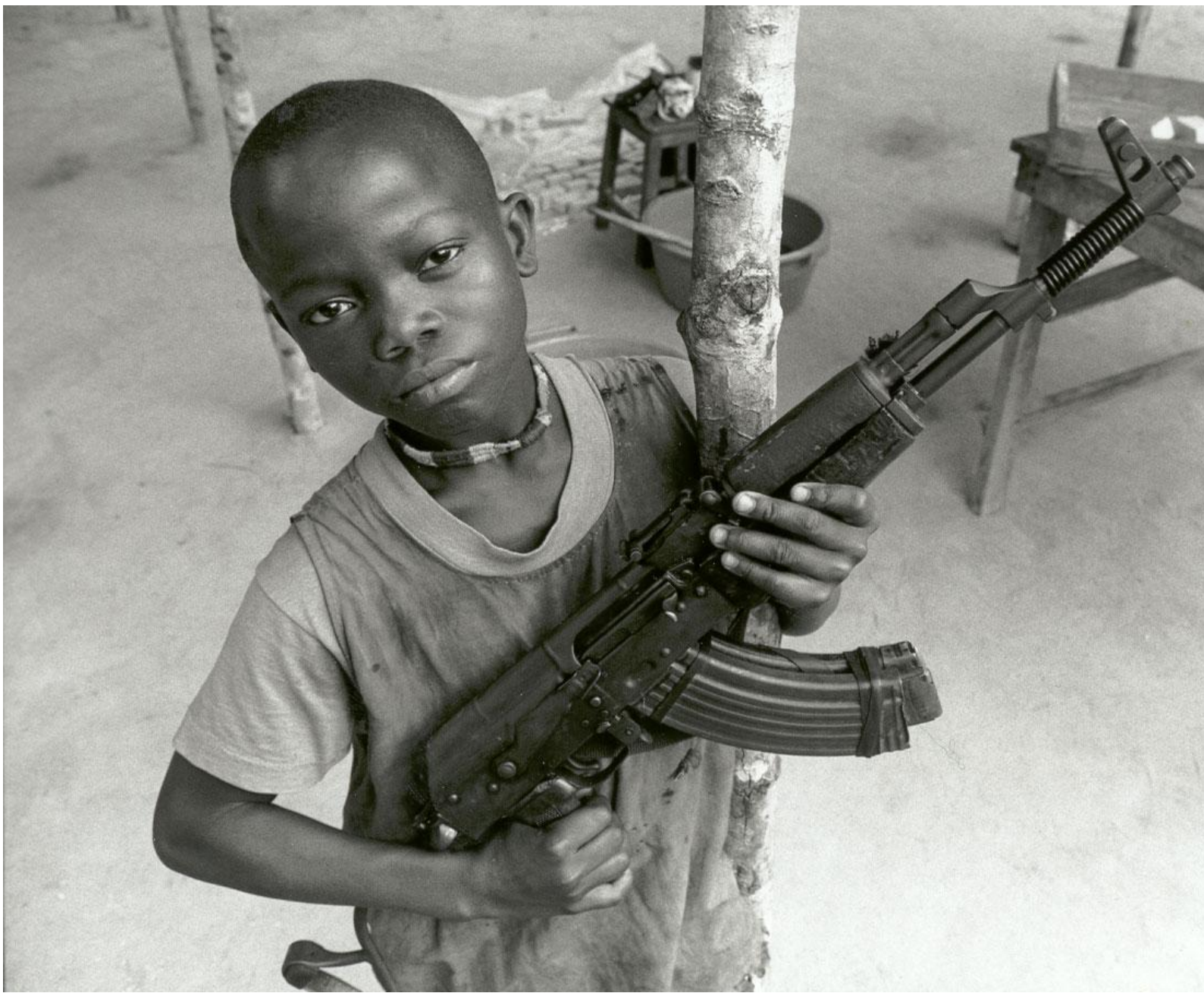
4.6 Critical reflection

When taking a closer look at this study, I have to identify several points which need critical reflection.

First, it was hard to unite diverse experiences of INGOs. The third chapter is more focused on recruitment in relation to other best practices. This was because policy documents provided most of their information about recruitment in relation to my studied topics. What I would have done if I had had more time, was visiting organizations and interviewing employees who work with child soldiers in the field of DDR and peace education. In many policy papers lots of recommendations to other organizations or bodies are written, but it is hard to get to know the best practices of these organizations. Adding interviews to the existing knowledge of this research could have prevented the occurrence of this information gap.

Secondly, I did not choose for the application of the three concepts in a particular country or region. In first instance the intention was to write a case study about the relation of the three concepts focused on the reintegration of former SPLA child soldiers in South Sudan. Because this trip could not be realized in combination with my internship I decided on a desk research instead. In this way I have tried to unify the concepts and filter out the different best practices which are applicable in a more general way. With a focus on one specific area my research would have been more usable in the field.

That brings me on to my third and last point of this critical reflection. If I had studied my research topics in a specific country or area it would have been interesting to know how the DDR and peace education opportunities would look like from the point of view of the child soldier. This is the target group that needs to be helped and it would have been interesting to include their opinions and experiences in the study. This point I personally want to take up in a future research.



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