



FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT

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Research Institution: Berghof Stiftung für Konfliktforschung (Berghof Foundation – previously Berghof Conflict Research), Berlin, Germany

Project Director: Prof. Hans J. Giessmann

Research Team: Dr. Véronique Dudouet, Katrin Planta

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Author of the Report: Dr. Véronique Dudouet

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Summary

This report presents the genesis, implementation and outcomes of a 23-months project which aimed at analyzing the role and approaches of Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) in processes of security transition. The first phase (October 2009-October 2010) focused on gathering, analysing and discussing conceptual and empirical findings on post-war security transition processes, while the second phase (November 2010-February 2012) was primarily concerned with the evaluation, publication and dissemination of lessons learnt towards policy and academic audiences by the network of participants.

The project's main activities included:

- *establishing nine local research teams combining researchers and insider experts (former combatants), who have been involved in all phases of the research processes;*
- *producing 3 'Transition Series' case study reports, a edited book and a policy report (in 3 languages);*
- *conducting two network meetings (Bogota May 2010, Ottawa May 2011), two policy workshops (Ottawa May 2011, Brussels February 2012), a peer-advice meeting (Kathmandu February 2012) and an advisory committee meeting (November 2010).*

As a result, the project contributed to (a) our increased understanding of the dynamics of post-war security and political transitions from a unique actors' perspective; (b) the consolidation of a network of expertise able to engage in serious self-reflection and comparative research on the timing, components and ownership of peacebuilding processes, and (c) the provision of research-based peer-advice and policy recommendations towards conflict-affected or post-war governments as well as international mediators and peacebuilding agencies.

1. The Research Problem

The research assumptions underlying this project rest on the following findings from a preceding project (2006-9):

- 1) Non state armed groups are key stakeholders in contemporary conflicts. Very often, they build on the support of large layers of society who consider them as legitimate defenders of their interests and grievances. However, despite the increasing academic interest in the political and security governance roles of NSAGs, existing studies rest on scientific analysis by outside academics, failing to include the insider perspectives of the actors concerned.
- 2) Although empirical evidence shows that political conflicts can only be resolved through political means, in the past decade (since September 11th 2001 and the 'war on terror') hard security (i.e. military) approaches have taken precedence over 'soft power' engagement. Such trends have severely affected not only the dynamics of armed conflicts, but also the course of peace processes and post-war environments. There has indeed been an increasing tendency to view all armed actors as 'spoilers' to be fought at all costs or, at best, pacified through disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), rather than as agents of change who can play constructive roles in securing peace and building more legitimate states.
- 3) Security transitions are crucial components of peace processes, as there can be no sustained peace without restoring a legitimate state monopoly over the use of force.

However, from the perspective of (former) combatants, conventional approaches to post-war security transition tend to be externally-imposed, state-centred and short-sighted, leading to ‘counter-insurgency by other means’. While DDR has become a major component of international peacebuilding assistance, international support for SSR programmes to enhance the legitimacy, accountability and efficiency of the state’s security apparatus is still limited and minimal in scope. Moreover, post-war international support tends to concentrate on the dissolution of the structures from which ex-combatants are released, while there is little support available for their transformation into non-violent political organisations.

The purpose of this project was thus to undertake innovative research on the content, timing, sequencing and ownership of security transitions from the perspective and self-analysis of conflict stakeholders who have made the shift from state challengers to peace- and state-building agents. The overall research framework and scope of enquiry were collectively agreed in consultation with participants from the previous project during a preliminary network meeting in Bangkok (May 2009), based partly on the discussion of a background paper commissioned to a DDR/SSR senior expert. A list of research questions was drawn, clustered around five main themes:

1. Linkages and sequencing between political and security negotiations:
 - Should political and security negotiations be pursued simultaneously or sequentially?
 - Do power imbalances at the table impede fair and sustainable negotiation outcomes, and if yes, how can they be redressed?
 - Should peace agreements explicitly include all security transition provisions and define reciprocal actions and detailed implementation timelines?
2. Linkages and sequencing in the implementation of reciprocal commitments
 - How can inter-party fairness and equality be ensured during processes of state recovery of the monopoly over the legitimate use of force?
 - How to ensure a parallel or reciprocal implementation of demobilisation, arms management and state reform?
 - Do transitional security arrangements (e.g. cessation of hostilities, cantonment and weapons collection) represent a backbone to building trust?
 - Which interim mechanisms might enhance the physical safety of demobilised combatants?
3. Reconversion paths for former combatants
 - How can the creation of new, inclusive and democratic armed forces be facilitated as opposed to a mere absorption of insurgency combatants into unreformed statutory forces?
 - How to assist the transformation of militant structures into functioning and sustainable organisations, in the political and civil society spheres, which pursue the ‘struggle’ through non-violent means?
 - How can the complementarity between socio-economic reintegration, judicial normalisation (e.g. amnesty), transitional justice for war victims and reconciliation be enhanced?
4. Gender components of security transitions

- Do female combatants within NSAGs play military and leadership roles and are they actively involved in political and security negotiations with the government?
- Are their specific socio-economic and political demands addressed, do they receive different reintegration support from their male comrades and are they excluded or included in the new security apparatus?
- Are there implicit or explicit expectations that women will assume retrograde socio-economic roles on returning to civilian status?

5. Constructive support roles for the international community

- How can the inherent tensions between priorities and approaches by NSAGs, state leaders and international actors be resolved?
- Which forms of external support mechanisms might help promote, rather than impede, the national ownership of war-to-peace transitions across government and society?

The scope of the research enquiry remained quite consistent throughout the project, and no major revision was deemed necessary, given the fact that at least half of the participants had been directly involved in formulating the research questions and ensured that they were relevant and appropriate for their respective contexts.

2. Objectives

The project's overall objective was defined as thus: "To analyze and strengthen knowledge of constructive conflict transformation and non-violent social change, through participatory research within a network of non-state armed groups who have experienced various forms of transition to post-war conventional politics and local and international research partners."

The specific objectives of the project were identified as:

- 1.1 to produce innovative research on a crucial dimension of post-war peacebuilding, namely security transition processes (STP);
- 1.2 to build research capacity among insider experts in Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG)
- 1.3 to effectively disseminate project findings in the form of policy advice to key national and international stakeholders in conflict transformation processes

We can state confidently that these objectives have been fully achieved throughout the course of the project:

- With regards to the first objective, the network of project participants has produced original empirical research and comparative analysis that led to the elaboration of thematic lessons learnt on five crucial dimensions of post-war peacebuilding (transition management, arms management, holistic (re)integration, transitional justice and state-building), and spelt out key recommendations for inclusive, participatory and comprehensive security transitions.
- Concerning the second objective, the participants have enhanced their analytical skills and confidence by conducting some critical self-reflection on their own contexts and past experience, familiarising themselves with the conduct of scientific enquiry and various methods of data collection, exchanging comparative research with their peers on topics of mutual concern, and engaging confidently with international academic audiences.

- Finally, the research findings have been transferred towards relevant policy audiences, notably through the dissemination of a policy report and the conduct of two workshops and a peer-advice seminar attended by relevant national, international and non-governmental agencies.

More details on these project outcomes will be provided in section 6 below.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participatory research design

As stated above, this project aimed to analyse the successes and limitations of past or ongoing peacebuilding processes from the point of view of their ‘receiving end’, by integrating the voice of insurgency movements and their demobilised militants. In order to elicit self-analysis and lessons learnt ‘from inside out’, the project was inspired by the methodology of participatory action research, which allows the participants to bring their own experience and creative ideas into the research process, in order to ensure their full ownership of the process, and responsiveness to their needs and interests. This approach was selected in line with the project’s guiding assumption that inclusive and participatory approaches are the best choice for locally-owned and sustained conflict transformation. In practice, this meant that the project was designed, conducted and evaluated in close collaboration with local research teams for each country under study.

This specific methodology entails several caveats. Based on the premise that there is no single ‘truth’ in either conflict or peace, we consciously chose to prioritise authenticity and accuracy over scientific ‘objectivity’, by asking participants to reflect on these movements’ direct experiences as observed from their own unique point of view. Consequently, the project departs from the classical scholarly distinction between ‘objects’ and ‘subjects’ of research, by mutually implicating insider militants and outsider analysts in the process of data collection and analysis. Moreover, this project fully embraces the emancipatory ethos of ‘critical praxis’ by aiming simultaneously to observe social reality and support constructive processes of social change that tackle the direct, structural and cultural sources of violence.

3.2. Cases selection

The nine country cases, namely, Colombia, South Africa, El Salvador, Northern Ireland, Kosovo, Burundi, South Sudan, Nepal and Aceh, were selected according to a number of criteria. Firstly, they cover a wide spectrum of conflict types and geographic distribution. Secondly, and more importantly, the nine movements under study share a number of similarities, based on which we aimed to identify common patterns and generalisable insights. For instance, they have been centrally involved in the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements, resulting in sustainable conflict transformation outcomes, although they have currently reached various stages of post-war security and political transition. Thirdly, the nine movements have undergone successful shifts from armed insurrection towards post-war conventional politics, and most of them are presently in control of national (or regional) legislative or executive powers, or are participating in national or local power-sharing governments. Last but not least, the case studies benefitted from contacts established over the course of the preceding project, and took into account the level of interest expressed by the respective interlocutors.

Within each country, the research teams were comprised of one or several researchers (ideally combining experienced/recognised academics and junior assistant(s)), backed up by a solid research institution, and one or two former NSAG combatants as ‘insider experts’. The latter

were (in most cases) selected by the researchers, according to their thematic experience, as well as additional selection criteria such as gender considerations, diversity of opinions voiced, hierarchical/roles diversity, etc. The list of project participants is provided below in section 5.

3.3. *Methods of data collection and analysis*

At the onset of the project, a conceptual framework was written on the basis of a review of the literature on DDR and SSR and their political environment, an overview of existing peacebuilding mechanisms and their limitations, and extensive consultation within our network of project partners and participants, and the advisory committee. This common framework helped to refine the research questions and orientate the local teams for their fieldwork enquiry.

For their part, the case study papers addressed the most relevant research questions according to the context and timing of transition in the given country. They were compiled from empirical data collected through various methods, including semi-structured interviews with NSAG leaders and participants of DDR and SSR programs, the consultation of primary resources (peace accords, constitution, legislation, declarations, archival material) and local media sources, as well as the authors' personal recollections. Given the wide diversity in the identity of the researchers (from academic scholars to consultants or NGO/IO professionals) and their links to the NSAGs under investigation (some were former members, others are 'sympathetic' analysts), as well as the diverse scope of thematic questions covered by the papers, it was judged impossible to use a uniform methodological design, and instead the methods of enquiry were carefully selected on a case-by-case basis. Draft case study reports were presented and collectively discussed by their authors at a roundtable meeting in Bogotá (May 2010), and edited on a peer-review basis.

Subsequently, a comparative analysis exploring cross-country commonalities and local specificities was drafted by the project coordinators on the basis of preliminary discussions with the project advisory committee (November 2010), critically reviewed by the network members in Ottawa (May 2011) and subsequently edited and approved by all.

3.4. *Practical and ethical risks and precautions*

Throughout the project, we took into consideration the sensitive nature of the project and the security needs of its participants, while at the same time striving to comply with research documentation and dissemination requirements. Project meetings proceeded under Chatham House rules (opinions voiced were referred to without personal attribution) to elicit an atmosphere of trust and confidence. For their part, the project outputs were published under their authors' names, but when required, some sources of information were kept confidential to protect them from undue harm arising as a consequence of their participation.

The case studies and the network of insider experts were chosen in a sensible manner in order to abide by Canadian anti-terrorism legislation. This means, for instance, that no NSAG that is proscribed in Canada, or individual members of such a group, benefited from the IDRC grant or was invited to any IDRC-sponsored event or activity. Finally, in order to ensure that the project fosters, rather than impedes, constructive conflict transformation, we took all possible precautions to prevent our project from being used for detrimental purposes (i.e. as war propaganda or to support mobilization for militant activities), by facilitating and guiding the course of discussions during the meetings, and by engaging solely with movements and

individual participants believed to be genuinely interested in learning about peacebuilding and political/security transitions.

3.5. Gender sensitivity

It proved rather challenging to promote the participation of female researchers and ex-combatants as project participants in view of the particular theme of investigation, where women traditionally tend to play a marginal role. As a result, only three female 'insider experts' and one female researcher took part in the project. The project coordination team however was comprised of two females and one male.

However, we actively promoted discussions about the importance and opportunity of gender mainstreaming measures in peacebuilding processes during the project meetings, and as a result, three case study papers (two of which were published as book chapters) were specifically dedicated to the post-war trajectories and role of female ex-combatants in Aceh, Nepal and El Salvador, while three other chapters (on Colombia, Burundi and Sudan) include specific sections on gender considerations.

4. Activities

The project has been developed successfully, with no major obstacles or unforeseen events disrupting its course. However, we eventually asked for (and were generously granted) an extension of five months, in order to take into account the delayed publication schedule imposed by the publishers of the edited book, and to carry out additional policy dissemination activities. The project was carried out in two main phases: Data collection, analysis and discussion (October 2009 – October 2010); and Evaluation, publication and dissemination of lessons learnt (November 2010 – February 2012). This section presents the primary project activities, while additional external policy and academic events where staff members were invited to present the project and its outcomes will be mentioned under Project Outputs below.

Phase 1: Data collection, analysis and discussion

October – December 2009: Formation of the research team and network

- The *Berghof staff* recruited a research assistant who joined the team on December 1st, compiled an extensive literature review and bibliographical database on existing research on DDR and SSR, and prepared a draft paper conceptualising our analytical framework.
- All *project partners* (local researchers), participants (insider experts) and advisory committee members were identified; preliminary bilateral discussions on the research framework were held via internet (email, skype) or physical meetings (e.g. trip to Belfast in December).

January – April 2010: Field research and Roundtable Meeting preparation

- The *Berghof staff and the Colombian research partners* (CINEP) prepared the roundtable meeting (identifying and booking a conference location, booking flights, planning the program, inviting guest speakers, arranging courtesy visas, etc).

- The *local research teams* conducted data collection and drafted thematic reports in close consultation with the Berghof team.

April 29 – May 1, 2010: Bogota Roundtable Meeting

- *Purpose:* A major cornerstone in the project, this first meeting of project participants was convened in order to 1) discuss the overall STP framework and first drafts of the case study reports; 2) compare cross-country findings, explore commonalities and local specificities; 3) strengthen our network of experience, exchange peer-advice and inspire our collective learning about the modalities and timing of post-war security transition processes; and 4) initiate preliminary discussions on possible lessons learnt and recommendations towards research and policy communities.
- *Participants:* With the exception of Nepal, all nine project partners attended this meeting with a mix of scholars and ‘insider experts’ representing the different movements under investigation. The Nepali representatives had to cancel their participation at very short notice because the local researcher fell seriously ill. In the cases of Kosovo, Sudan and El Salvador, the insider experts also cancelled their participation shortly before the meeting due to security concerns and/or transit visa impediments. But all three cases were represented by researchers. IDRC was represented by its managing officer for this project, Markus Gottsbacher.
- *Program:* The presentations were organized around four main themes: 1) Post-war peacebuilding: Revisiting DDR and SSR; 2) Conceptualisation of security transition processes; 3) Political and security negotiations; 4) Former Combatants as Peacebuilding Agents. We also held two breakout sessions to engage in more detail on specific topics such as: inclusivity of new security institutions; re-skilling for post-war life; local ownership and the role of the international community; indigenous mechanisms of transitional justice; and female agency in peace processes.
- *Evaluation:* All participants agreed that the discussions had been very inspiring and had offered open-minded and critical self-reflective lessons on past and ongoing peace implementation processes. Although several participants cautioned against the formulation of overly all-encompassing generic research models or policy formulas, given the very different contexts and conflict types under investigation, it was also felt that there was enough common ground between the various experiences to make such a project meaningful. And all participants appreciated the opportunity for sharing knowledge, collective learning and conceptual brainstorming.

May – October 2010: Writing up of research findings

- The *Berghof staff* wrote an internal meeting report for the participants; finalised the concept paper on STP based on feedback and discussions at the roundtable meeting and bilateral feedback from advisory committee members; drafted the introductory section for the edited book; sent revision guidelines to all country teams and edited the revised drafts as they came in; edited the publication of two Berghof Transition Series reports on the FMLN and the KLA (on NSAG which had not been covered by the previous project); and prepared the advisory committee meeting.
- The *local research teams* revised and expanded their case study chapters based on discussions in Bogota and the Berghof staff’s editorial review. A couple of teams experienced some delays in the editing process, due to professional constraints

encountered by the researchers, one of whom (Mr Deng Deng) was managing the overall DDR process in South Sudan which infringed on his time availabilities, while another (Mr Nimubona) was appointed Burundian Minister for Education and Scientific Research in August 2010 and had to delegate his contribution to this project to his PhD student.

Phase 2: Evaluation, publication and dissemination of lessons learnt

November 25-26, 2010: Advisory Committee meeting

- *Purpose:* this meeting aimed at presenting and evaluating the first year of project activities and preliminary research findings; discussing the relevance and contribution of the project outputs to existing research on security and conflict transformation; discussing practical implications of the findings for international engagement and agreeing on possible policy recommendations; and discussing the project design for the second year of activities, as well as possible post-project follow-up and future research.
- *Participants:* It was attended by all members of the project's Advisory Committee (see list below in section 5), with the exception of Lucia Dammert (FLACSO Chile) who had to cancel at short notice due to work-related issues. The attending advisors brought extensive and complementary expertise in applied research, analytically-grounded practice and policy-making.
- *Program:* The meeting was organised into three main sessions: 1) Background and rationale of the project, expectations for the meeting, and possible risks and challenges for the project; 2) "Looking back" at the project's methodology, terminology, framework and preliminary findings; 3) "Looking ahead": policy implications (how to cross the bridge from research to practice, how to frame the policy report in such a way to maximise its impact, etc), and follow-up (purpose and agenda of the international conference, role of the advisory committee in the next few months, and possible future projects).
- *Evaluation:* The discussions were very engaged, with detailed feedback and recommendations. Some of the advisors even used the coffee breaks to browse through the case study chapters and offer advice on how to enhance further their quality/comparability where needed. We received very useful advice regarding the terminology and concepts used in the project, the methodology and in particular the need for some project outputs to maintain a critical distance between the participants' findings and their objective analysis by the project management team, as well as the framing of policy recommendations and their (non) applicability to different types of conflicts and NSAGs.

December 2010 – May 2011: Drafting of project outputs and conference preparation

- The *Berghof staff* wrote a short report on the advisory committee meeting highlights the main points of discussion and circulated it to all project participants and IDRC; drafted a synthesis chapter identifying cross-country commonalities and variations and formulating lessons learnt for research and practice; communicated with Routledge (and three anonymous reviewers) on the publication of the edited book; drafted several project ideas and funding applications for future follow-up research on topics such as former female combatants, local peace infrastructures, and post-war governance; and prepared the International Conference (including program, logistics and visa issues).

- The *local research teams* finalised their case study chapters based on editorial comments and suggestions by the project staff and the advisory committee; and prepared presentations of lessons learnt for the International Conference. Three insider experts (from Colombia and Aceh) were involved in drafting a funding proposal for a research project on former female combatants (which was unfortunately turned down).

May 20-22, 2011: International Conference (Ottawa)

- *Purpose:* The conference was organised around two internal project meetings and a policy workshop, with a dual purpose of 1) evaluating the project's development and preparing its final stage with all participants, and 2) eliciting an exchange of lessons learnt and recommendations between project participants, who bring in their local expertise and personal direct experience with negotiating and implementing post-war security transformation, and international policy experts on peacebuilding assistance.
- *Participants:* Six out of nine local researchers were able to attend – those from Southern Sudan, El Salvador and South African could not come because of schedule incompatibility or visa rejection. Moreover, three 'insider experts' had their visa refused by Canadian authorities, partly due to the impossibility of securing invitation letters from IDRC or another Canadian institution. The internal meeting, hosted by IDRC, was attended by 10 project participants, 3 project staff and 1 advisory committee member. For its part, the policy workshop was attended, in addition to the above, by 7 IDRC staff members and 18 external participants from Canadian institutions (Foreign Affairs department, Privy Council office, Security Intelligence Service, Public Safety Council, CIDA), Canadian research centers, EU External Action Service, UN mediation Support Unit, USAID and USIP.
- *Program:* The first internal meeting was used to prepare the policy workshop and review the book's draft synthesis chapter. The policy workshop itself was organised in four main sessions: three plenary discussions presenting the project's main findings on 1) A reciprocal approach to the restoration of the state's legitimate monopoly of force; 2) Dissolution or transformation of combatant organisations; 3) Former combatants as peacebuilding agents; and a roundtable discussion entitled "What Role for the International Community?" On Day 3, the second internal meeting focused on exchanging feedback on the workshop and planning ahead the remaining months and possible follow-up projects.
- *Evaluation:* Both the internal and the policy events contributed very fruitfully to the project's development. The frank, open and inspiring debate on the draft synthesis chapter helped us refine its structure and terminology, while the plenary, roundtable and informal discussions at the policy workshop helped to set the tone for the drafting of the book's conclusion and policy report. With hindsight, the mutual exchange of lessons learnt between conflict stakeholders and international practitioners could have been further enhanced by structuring the workshop differently. For instance, the session on international roles took place too late in the day, when many participants had already left (on the eve of a long holiday weekend), and as a result the discussions were not as intensely engaged as they could have been. But overall, we received positive feedback and strong encouragements to sustain further such dialogue between both sides (i.e. the 'giving' and 'receiving' ends of international peacebuilding assistance).

June 2011 – January 2012: Finalisation of project outputs

- The *Berghof staff* was primarily involved with the publication process: finalisation (including addition of a final conclusion), submission, indexing and revisions of the Routledge manuscript; writing up of the policy report and editing of its translation into Spanish and French; editing of a Transition Series issue on Burundi in French and English. Preparations were also made for a peer-advice meeting in Nepal, and dissemination/launch meetings in Brussels and New York. With regards to the latter, despite a preparatory meeting with UN DDR / SSR units in October 2011, the actual event in NY could not be organised within the timeframe of the project – it is due to take place in a more informal setting (e.g. ‘brown bag lunch’) in March/April 2012.
- The *local research teams* played varying (and for most, secondary) roles during this final phase. All network members were consulted during the drafting and translations of the policy report. Moreover, a Burundi scholar was contracted to write a Transition Series report on the CNDD-FDD (including by carrying out extensive interviews with former combatants). The Nepali researcher was invited for a one-month research fellowship in Berlin in October 2011 and was joined by two former combatants for a week, to conduct some research on national security strategy, and prepare a national workshop on this topic, together with the Berghof staff. Finally, research partners from Aceh and Kosovo were solicited to help prepare a report/book launch event in Brussels.

February 2012: Dissemination and policy advice

- Brussels Policy workshop, 10 February: The purpose of this half-day event was to present the policy report to the European peacebuilding community, and elicit discussion about its recommendations for effective third-party engagement with (former) armed groups during peace processes, with a specific focus on the actual and potential role of EU institutions in supporting inclusive negotiations and comprehensive peace implementation. The event was co-hosted by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO, based in Brussels) and co-funded by the EU’s scheme ‘Civil Society Dialogue Network’. Participants included 3 Berghof staff, 3 EPLO staff, 2 project participants (from Aceh and Kosovo) as resource persons and interveners, 16 representatives from the EU (EEAS, Council, Parliament, EU Special Representatives), 5 representatives from European embassies, and 20 staff members from various European conflict resolution NGOs and political movements. The discussion was very engaged and continued informally over lunch. We received very positive feedback from EU participants concerning the breath and relevance of the policy report, and the usefulness of such multi-stakeholder (and cross-EU institutions) discussions to inform the planning, conduct and evaluation of EU action in (post-) conflict areas.
- Nepal peer-advice seminar, 13-16 February: At the request of the Nepali researcher and ‘insider experts’ from the Maoist party, which is currently heading the government, we helped organise a Nepali multi-party seminar on one of the sub-topics of the project, namely, a comprehensive post-war national security strategy. In the spirit of the project, peer-learning and south-south cooperation were encouraged by inviting three thematic experts from South Africa, Kosovo and El Salvador as resource persons. Thanks to their inspiring lessons learnt from their own contexts, the workshop (which was held in a retreat site in the city of Pokhara) was deemed a success, as all parties agreed on a list of 8 principles on national security that should

(and hopefully will) be integrated into the new constitution that is currently being drafted. The event was co-funded by the Swiss MFA, who has agreed to support a follow-up meeting in coming weeks in order to sustain the participatory process of national security dialogue.

5. Project Management and participants

The **Berghof team** was comprised of a project director (Prof. Hans J. Giessmann), a project coordinator (Dr. Veronique Dudouet) and a research assistant (Katrin Planta). The team served as primary researchers in the initial phase of drafting a conceptual framework and in the latter stage of comparative analysis and compilation of policy and scholarly lessons learnt. In addition, its members took up the roles of network coordinators, meetings organisers and co-convenors, and editors for the empirical case study reports and the overall publication process.

The local research teams were led by independent **local researchers**. Their main role was to identify suitable former combatants able to contribute to the project as insider experts, carry out data collection and analysis on their own contexts, draft and revise case study papers (published as chapters), attend network meetings and policy workshops, and in some cases (Colombia and Nepal), help organise and host project meetings.

Finally, the '**insider experts**' were consulted as primary informers and co-researchers during the data compilation and report drafting process (and in some cases, co-authored the chapters or wrote separate chapters), and were invited to the project meetings as well.

Here is the list of participants to the various activities carried out over the course of the project:

Aceh:

- Researcher: Mr Aguswandi, Aceh Institute, Banda Aceh. During the project he was also postgraduate fellow at Harvard University (2009/10), and is working for UNDP Afghanistan since 2010.
- Insider expert: Ms Shadia Marhaban, former GAM negotiator, director of former female combatants association LINA. Currently postgraduate fellow at Harvard University.

Burundi:

- Researchers: Dr Julien Nimubona, Professor in Political Science, University of Burundi, Bujumbura, was initially the main researcher. He was replaced by his PhD student Gerard Birantamije in July 2010, after he was appointed Minister for Education and Research. The Transition Series report on Burundi was written by a third researcher, Willy Nindorera, analyst for International Crisis Group in Bujumbura.
- Insider expert: Gen. Joseph Nkurunziza. Former CNDD-FDD officer, he was Director General in charge of former combatants at the Ministry of Defence until November 2011, after which he was appointed military attaché at the Burundian embassy in Nairobi.

Colombia:

- Researcher: Dr Mauricio Garcia-Duran, Director, Center for Research and Popular Education (CINEP), Bogota.

- Insider experts: Ms Vera Grabe, former M19 officer and later Colombian senator, she is currently writing her PhD and working for the Peace Observatory, Bogota; Mr Otty Patino, former M19 officer and Parliament member, he is currently working for the municipality of Bogota.

El Salvador:

- Researchers: Mr Julio Martínez, former FMLN combatant, who currently teaches at the Universidad Tecnológica, San Salvador, was the main project researcher. The Transition Series paper on El Salvador was written by a second researcher, Dr Alberto Martin Alvarez from Colima University (Mexico). A third researcher, Dr Joaquin Chavez, former FMLN negotiator and currently lecturer at Trinity College (US), took part in the peer-advice seminar in Nepal.
- Insider experts: Ms Maria Marta Valladares, former FMLN officer and negotiator, currently Vice-President of the Central American Parliament; Ms Morena Herrera, former FMLN officer, who founded and leads a former female combatant association, Las Dignas.

Kosovo:

- Researchers: our local institutional partner, the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS), was represented by three researchers: Mr Armend Bekaj (now pursuing a PhD and working for OSCE in Pristina), Mr Florian Qehaja (now director of KCSS, also writing his PhD at Ljubljana university), and Mr Kosum Kosumi (head of research at KCSS).
- Insider expert: Gen. Ramadan Qehaja, former KLA officer and head of the Kosovo protection Corps academy, now security advisor for the Presidency.

Nepal:

- Researchers: Mr Khagendra Neupane, general secretary of the Nepali Institute for Contemporary Studies, Kathmandu, was the main project researcher. Ms Kiyoko Ogura, journalist based in Kathmandu, also contributed a chapter. The staff of the Nepal Transitions To Peace project (NTTP) also helped organise and host the peer-advice seminar in Pokhara.
- Insider expert: Mr Nanda Bahadur Pun (“Pasang”), central commander of the Maoist armed forces; Mr Barsha Man Pun (“Ananta”), deputy commander of the Maoist armed forces, and currently Finance Minister.

Northern Ireland:

- Researchers: Prof. Kieran McEvoy and Prof Peter Shirlow, Queens University, Belfast, were both principal researchers for the project.
- Insider experts: Mr Raymond McCartney, former IRA prisoner, member of the Northern Irish Assembly and Sinn Fein security expert; Ms Bairbre de Brun, former negotiator and Sinn Fein Member of the European Parliament.

South Africa:

- Researchers: Prof. Gavin Cawthra, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, was the main project researcher. Dr Laurie Nathan, Director of the Mediation Center at Pretoria University also took part in the Nepali peer-advice seminar.
- Insider expert: Mr Aboobaker Ismail (“Rashid”), former officer in the ANC armed forces and currently working for the South African Reserve Bank.

South Sudan:

- Researcher: Mr William Deng Deng, Director of the South Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, Juba, was the main project researcher. His team of assistants also supported his contribution to the project.
- Insider expert: Mr Michael Majur Aleer, former SPLA officer, currently at the Ministry of Agriculture of South Sudan.

An **advisory committee** was also established, comprised of experienced academics and practitioners, some of whom had already been involved in the previous IDRC-funded project. They have been consulted at various stages of the project's development, bilaterally or as a group (November 2010 advisory meeting), as an informal sounding board for advice, direction and guidance. Their consultation has been particularly useful during the stage of converting the research findings into scholarly-sound and policy-relevant conclusions and recommendations.

Advisory Committee Members:

- Dr Kamarulzaman Askandar: Coordinator, Research and Education for Peace, Universiti Sains (Malaysia) and Regional Coordinator of the Southeast Asian Conflict Studies Network
- Dr David Bloomfield: Director, Glencree Center for Peace and Reconciliation
- Dr Lucia Dammert: Director of the Global Consortium on Security Transformation, Program Director at FLACSO, Chile
- Dr Owen Greene: Chair of the Center for International Cooperation and Security, Department of Peace Studies, Bradford University, UK
- Mark Knight: DDR/SSR senior expert and analyst, Peace Nexus, Switzerland
- Roland Salvisberg: Deputy Head, Political Affairs Division IV, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland

6. Project Outputs

6.1. Publications

Edited Book:

Véronique Dudouet, Hans J. Giessmann and Katrin Planta (eds.). *Security Transition Processes: Participatory Peacebuilding after Asymmetric Conflicts*. Routledge: London. January 2012

- Introduction - Véronique Dudouet, Hans J. Giessmann and Katrin Planta
- DDR and SSR: Conventional Approaches to International Peacebuilding Assistance - Mark Knight
- Deficits and Blindspots in Existing Approaches to Post-War Security Promotion - Véronique Dudouet, Hans J. Giessmann and Katrin Planta
- The M19's Reinsertion Process: Challenges and Lessons Learnt - Otty Patiño, Vera Grabe and Mauricio García
- Political and Security Negotiations and Security Sector Transformation in South Africa - Gavin Cawthra

- South Africa's Experience of Military Integration Through Interactive Negotiation and Planning - Aboobaker Ismail
- The Guarantees of Security: The FMLN and the Salvadoran Peace Process - Julio Martínez
- Agents of Change: Ex-Prisoners, Ex-Combatants and Conflict Transformation in Northern Ireland - Kieran McEvoy
- Demobilising and Integrating a Liberation Army in the Context of State Formation: Kosovo's Perspective on Security Transition - Ramadan Qehaja
- The Process of Security Transition in Burundi: Challenges in Security Sector Reform and Combatant Integration - Julien Nimubona and Joseph Nkurunziza
- Linking DDR, Security Sector Development and Transitional Justice in Southern Sudan - William Deng Deng
- Guns, Soldiers and Votes: Lessons from the DDR Process in Aceh - Aguswandi
- The Reintegration of Ex-combatants in Post-War Aceh: Remaining Challenges to a Gender-blind Planning and Implementation Process - Shadia Marhaban
- The Challenges of Security Sector Restructuring in Nepal - Khagendra Neupane
- Challenges of Combatants' Rehabilitation and Army Integration: Perspectives from Maoist Cantonments in Nepal - Kiyoko Ogura
- Security Transitions in Perspective - Véronique Dudouet and Katrin Planta
- Conclusion - Véronique Dudouet, Hans J. Giessmann and Katrin Planta

Policy Report:

Véronique Dudouet, Hans. J. Giessmann and Katrin Planta. From Combatants to Peacebuilders. A case for inclusive, participatory and holistic security transitions. Berghof Foundation, January 2012.

Transition Series:

Willy Nindorera, The CNDD-FDD in Burundi: The path from armed to political struggle. Transition Series No. 10, Berghof Foundation. February 2012.

Alberto Martín Álvarez, From Revolutionary War to Democratic Revolution. The Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador. Berghof Transitions Series No. 9. November 2010.

Armend Bekaj, The KLA and the Kosovo War: From Intra-State Conflict to Independent Country. Berghof Transitions Series No. 8. September 2010.

Translations:

Willy Windorera, Le CNDD-FDD au Burundi: Le cheminement de la lutte armée au combat politique. Berghof Transitions Series No. 10. February 2012.

Véronique Dudouet, Hans. J. Giessmann and Katrin Planta. De combatientes a constructores de paz: Una defensa de las transiciones incluyentes, participativas y holísticas hacia la seguridad. Berghof Foundation. March 2012.

Véronique Dudouet, Hans. J. Giessmann and Katrin Planta. [Title to be confirmed] (French version of the policy report). Publication planned in March/April 2012.

External publications by staff members on the project findings (selected list):

Véronique Dudouet, Non-State Armed Groups and the Politics of Post-War Security Governance, in: Melanne A. Civic and Michael Miklaucic (eds.), *The Monopoly of Force: The Nexus of DDR and SSR*. Washington, DC: National Defence University Press, 2011, pp. 3-26.

Véronique Dudouet, Intra-Party Dynamics and the Political Transformation of Non-State Armed Groups, *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* (forthcoming, Vol 6, No2, 2012)

Véronique Dudouet, Developing Project in SST - From War to Politics: Non-State Armed Groups in Transition, in: Global Consortium on Security Transformation (GCST) E-Bulletin, March 2010.

Katrin Planta, SSR and Gender: Security for Whom?, Global Consortium on Security Transformation (GCST) E-Bulletin, June 2010.

6.2. Unpublished papers

We also produced additional reports or papers which have not been published online nor in print but were circulated to participants and relevant external audiences:

- Veronique Dudouet, Hans J. Giessmann and Katrin Planta. Security Transition Processes (STP): A Participatory Framework for Peacebuilding in Asymmetric Conflicts. Concept paper. February 2010.
- Roundtable Meeting Report “Security Transition Processes: Designing an Innovative Peacebuilding Framework” (Bogota, Colombia, April 29-May 1, 2010).
- Advisory Committee Meeting Report “Non State Armed Groups and Security Transition Processes” (Berlin, 25-26 November 2010).
- Constitutional Principles on Security for Nepal. Workshop Report, Pokhara, 13-15 February 2012
- Laurie Nathan, National Security Policy in South Africa. February 2012.
- Joaquin Chavez, Security Sector Reform in El Salvador’s Peace Process. February 2012.
- Florian Qehaja, Security Policies – The case of Kosovo. February 2012.

6.3. Dissemination of research findings

The project idea, framework, findings and conclusions were also presented orally at various external academic or policy events where the project staff was invited as panelist, keynote speaker or commentator. Here is a non-exhaustive list of such events:

27 October 2009: Public talk “Perspectives and Roles of Non-State Armed Groups in Post-War Security Transitions”, Institute for National Security and Counter Terrorism (INSCT), Syracuse University, USA.

29 October 2009: Public talk “Engaging with Non State Armed Groups in a Peace Process – Lessons Learned”, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, USA.

2-3 November 2009: Panelist at Conference “Governing Private Security: Perspectives on the Public/Private Divide”, Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Geneva.

4 November 2009: Panelist at Geneva Peacebuilding Platform Roundtable on “Practical Experiences with Engaging Armed Nonstate Actors in Peace Processes”, Geneva.

8-11 February 2010: Guest speaker on “transitions from liberation struggle to party politics” at the policy workshop “From a Liberation Movement to a Modern Democratic Party” convened by the Swedish Olof Palme International Center in Alexandria (Egypt), with participation from PUK – Iraq, ANC – South Africa, Fatah – Palestine.

4-5 March 2010: Commentator at the Conference “Opportunities and Limits of NGOs Engaging Non-State Armed Groups”, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin, Germany.

16-18 June 2010: Panelist on “Female combatants in security transition processes” at the academic conference “Conflict, Peace and Integration”, Bielefeld University, Germany.

6-10 July 2010: Panelist on “The challenges of implementing post-war security: Perspectives from resistance/liberation movements” at the International Peace Research Association Conference, Sydney, Australia.

14 September 2010: Panelist on “Security Transition Processes” at the policy seminar “Engagement with non-state armed groups in peace processes”, German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Berlin.

12-14 January 2011: Keynote speaker on “Armed Groups and Post-Conflict Governance: Concepts and Debates” at a workshop organised by Cambridge University on “Armed Groups and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding in Africa”, Kampala, Uganda.

19-21 January 2011: Panelists on “Factors of Transition from State Challengers to Statebuilding Agents” at a workshop on “Zum Umgang mit Nicht-Staatlichen Gewaltakteuren - Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung” at Osnabruck University, Germany.

16-19 March 2011: Panelist on “Non-state armed groups and the politics of DDR” at the International Studies Association annual convention, Montreal, Canada.

6-8 April 2011: Panelist on Organisational dynamics within NSAGs” at the Conference “Processes of Radicalization and De-Radicalization”, Bielefeld University, Germany.

3-6 August 2011: Panelist on “Where have all the women gone? Female members of non-state armed groups in peace negotiations” at the annual Congress of the Asociación de Colombianistas “Narrar Colombia, Colombia narrada”, Bucaramaga, Colombia.

31 August-2 September 2011: Panelist on “Ownership and right-timing of DDR: Combatants’ perspectives on post-war peacebuilding” at the Annual conference of the Association Française des Sciences Politiques, Strasbourg, France.

Upcoming:

14 March 2012: guest presenter at a workshop with UN agencies, the Libyan transitional government and several embassies staff in Tripoli planning a DDR programme for Libyan combatants, Tripoli, Libya

22 March 2012: Berghof will host a meeting with a delegation from the Iraqi government and the IOM planning a DDR programme for Iraqi NSAGs, Berlin.

7. Project Outcomes

The project outcomes will be ordered according to the general objectives described above, by successively assessing our effectiveness in producing innovative research, building research capacity among the network of participants, and disseminating policy advice to key national and international stakeholders in conflict transformation processes.

7.1. *Research Findings*

The activities conducted over the course of the project have effectively addressed the six thematic research areas identified in the project proposal and their sub-lists of research questions listed above in section 1. The research findings confirm the importance of addressing these overlapping components of security transitions in order to guarantee effective peacebuilding processes. The edited book's concluding chapter as well as the policy report highlight in particular three essential components of security transitions, namely:

- **Inclusivity:** Our findings highlight the need for multi-partial peacebuilding engagement with all key conflict stakeholders who have the effective capacity to either impede or promote constructive social change. This is all the more true for self-labelled 'resistance and liberation movements' who have large social or ethnic constituencies and represent legitimate socio-political interests, who embody an inclusive and participatory vision of society, and who have an interest in governance participation. An inclusive approach to war-to-peace transitions also underscores the need to adopt all-encompassing definitions and identification criteria for 'embedded insurgencies' and their combatants during DDR support programmes. Members of rebel movements often include men, women and youth who are immersed in their communities, and comprise fighters-in-arms as well as political cadres, logistical support personnel and a broader constituency of sympathisers and family. Consequently, socio-economic facilitation schemes should pay attention to the divergent needs and aspirations within and between armed groups, and should use community-based approaches to reintegration. Moreover, national stakeholders should be encouraged to build inclusive, accountable and democratic state institutions which integrate former contenders as well as marginalised social or ethnic groups.
- **Participation:** This second dimension calls for peacebuilding support strategies that place a strong emphasis on the empowerment of local stakeholders, based on the understanding that they will only feel genuinely committed to a transition process if they are centrally involved in driving it. Programmes driven by local needs, interests and practices have a much better chance of sustaining themselves once foreign assistance has dwindled and international missions have been completed. Resistance and liberation movements, in particular, should be acknowledged as proactive change drivers, and encouraged to design and implement self-managed transition management schemes. Our research offers various examples of constructive forms of light-handed international support that empowers local protagonists instead of bypassing their ownership of security transition processes, and that recognises (former) combatants as peacebuilding partners, rather than as mere recipients of reintegration assistance or as spoilers to be disarmed and demobilised as quickly as possible.
- **Comprehensiveness:** From the perspective of so-called 'non-state armed groups', challenging state authority through the use of force does not represent an end in itself, but is envisioned strictly as a means of achieving their broader socio-political objectives. In most cases, they are ready to accept – or might even be struggling for – a genuine integration into transformed state structures. Restoring a truly legitimate

monopoly for the state over the use of force is hence in their interest, as long as reliable security and political guarantees are met. Reflecting this, our findings rest on a “whole-of-transformation” approach, focusing on the interactions between the demobilisation and conversion/integration of rebel forces into conventional political or security entities, and the parallel planning and implementation of their reciprocal claims to broader structural (i.e. state and societal) change, including the transformation of the security, political, socio-economic and justice systems of governance. Peacebuilding should thus be understood as the interaction between reciprocal and mutually-dependent processes of building human security, justice and development for all citizens.

According to the project participants themselves as well as the advisory committee members and other experts, one of the most innovative components of the research findings consists in the introduction of context-appropriate terms and concepts (e.g. “arms management”, “security sector transformation/development”, “re-skilling”, “socio-economic facilitation”, “resistance and liberation movements”, “power contenders”, “whole of transformation”) that fits better conflict stakeholders’ priorities than the generic vocabulary around DDR and SSR promoted by peacebuilding agencies.

The methodology of participatory research has proven a creative tool of social research by offering a completely new perspective on the well-known challenges of post-war transitions, but it has represented a challenge as well. For instance, it proved easier to formulate common conclusions on consensual topics such as arms management or community-based reintegration, than on more sensitive issues around transitional justice for example, on which some local research teams chose to remain silent rather than admit policy failure or a lack of political will. For such reasons, the project staff sometimes had to take a more critical stance vis a vis our local colleagues’ findings, at the risk of damaging the level of trust and collective ownership of the overall research process within the network (although no such critics have been openly voiced by the participants).

7.2. *Capacity development: knowledge- and relationship-building*

With regards to the *second objective* (research capacity building), nine teams of researchers and insider experts from various post-war countries have been involved in all stages of research, by refining the project design and formulating context-specific research questions, compiling empirical data, exchanging and comparing preliminary findings, networking, writing up research papers, and presenting/disseminating their conclusions. They have thus increased their experience in conducting academic but also policy-relevant research and exchanging lessons learnt with their peers via a supportive network.

At the onset of the project, we specifically looked for, and selected, local research teams combining experienced and established scholars with junior colleagues and/or new institutions in order to enhance mutual learning and exchange of experience from the former to the latter. As a result, some individuals and research entities needed more support than others – especially those who were new to the network, and/or who were not familiar with academic research. These were offered additional advice and assistance in the stages of data collection and writing up, through tutoring and close supervision. For instance, one of the local researchers spent a one-month stay in Berlin for a research fellowship that included meetings with thematic experts and regular methodological discussions with Berghof’s research staff. Given the unequal levels of experiences with empirical research, the research teams progressed with their drafts at very different paces, and the Berghof team had to contribute substantially to several case study drafts in order to ‘fill the gaps’ where needed. But we believe that these junior researchers benefited most greatly from the process, and that

their increased confidence, experience and credibility will undoubtedly benefit their own society far beyond the remit of the project.

In order to increase their co-ownership of the project, the local research partners were encouraged to take an active part in our conceptual debates and where relevant (i.e. Colombia and Nepal), in preparing, hosting and documenting the various meetings and events. We also encouraged them to pursue further academic initiatives (for instance, the Acehnese researcher organised and moderated a talk during the visit of the project coordinator to Harvard university), and we facilitated several meetings between the project's junior researchers and Canadian scholars during their stay in Ottawa (May 2011).

With regards to the insider experts, their participation in the project simultaneously as 'objects' and 'subjects' of research gave them a unique opportunity to engage in a cooperative process of self-reflection and retrospection on their own collective experience, in a structured and academic way. The new analytical skills they have gained will undoubtedly benefit not only the participants themselves, but also their respective institutions or parties, since they will be able to make use of these enhanced capacities in their work. The increased self-confidence of some insider experts throughout the project was evidenced by the progress in their direct interactions with the rest of the network (the intermediary role of the local researchers progressively faded). An increased level of trust and respect among network members over the course of the project also enabled a meaningful and sincere exchange on sensitive topics, and even emboldened the participants to question and/or critically reflect on each other's experiences (as opposed to the overly polite and uninformed exchange that characterised the first encounters).

7.3. Influence on conflict transformation practice: peer-advice and policy recommendations

Finally, the *third objective* (dissemination of project findings in the form of research-based policy advice) was pursued by transferring the research findings into policy lessons learnt that were disseminated towards policy communities in order to support processes of constructive social change.

Two main policy audiences were targeted: local governments in post-war transition contexts on the one hand, and international (state, inter-state or non-governmental) peacebuilding practitioners on the other hand. With regards to the former, several insider experts (and one of the researchers) currently play central roles in their respective governments, and we strongly believe that they have taken advantage of their participation in the project (and especially the network meetings) to gain useful lessons learnt from similar or distinct experience elsewhere that they have been able to transfer into their policies. This might particularly be the case in contexts of recent or ongoing transitions where the peace process is yet to be concluded (Nepal) or where former conflict stakeholders are building their capacity to govern (Southern Sudan, Aceh, Burundi). One peer-advice seminar was held in Nepal at the demand of the Maoist government, and it is hoped that the outcomes of the discussion (which involved all major national parties) will make their way into the new constitution. Finally, in order to facilitate the dissemination of the policy findings towards the non-English-speaking world (especially Latin America and Africa), the policy report was translated into French and Spanish.

Regarding the peacebuilding community, two policy workshops were organised in Ottawa and Brussels, attended by relevant state, international/regional and non-governmental agencies involved in mediation, peace process support, DDR, security sector governance or development assistance. During these workshops, as well as in bilateral encounters and

external policy events where the project staff were invited (see list of project outputs above), the professional community has shown great interest in the project, recognising its unique standpoint and original contribution to the field of conflict transformation. The remaining challenge is to follow-up on these expressions of interest in order to ensure that the new learning is transferred into policy programming and implementation. This will require regular monitoring and sustained interactions over the next few months, beyond the strict timeline of this project.

7. Overall Assessment and Recommendations to IDRC

We are deeply grateful to IDRC for having dared to embark on this second project with the Berghof Foundation, given the unconventionality of our subject-matter, approach and methodology, and despite the initial reservations shared by some of its staff when we first submitted our project proposal. We have strived to take into account IDRC concerns and priorities throughout the project, emphasising the dimensions of strengthening ‘south-south cooperation’ and capacity-building by relying on a strong network of prominent and emerging scholars, analysts and ‘insider experts’ in post-war countries. We are also thankful for IDRC’s active involvement in the development of the project, and especially for having accepted to co-host one of the project meetings in Ottawa and contributed substantially to its success.

After more than two years of engagement with this project and its various participants, we can assert that the project design was sound and new knowledge could be generated which has been successfully disseminated amongst the academic community as well as policy makers and practitioners. The project outcomes have been assessed very positively in both the research world and policy circles, by contributing empirically and conceptually to the growing literature on NSAGs and post-war governance, and helping to refine peacebuilding models and ‘tool-kits’ according to the interests and priorities of those in the driving seat of transformation, with the underlying understanding that external intervention should support, rather than impede, national ownership of peace(building) processes. We have heard many times, when presenting the project to external audiences, that our empirical findings helped ‘confirm some general intuitions’ that people have about security transitions but that are still not reflected in mainstream research and policy guideline. The peacebuilding field is full with assumptions about what conflict stakeholders might think and how their interests might best be fulfilled, but this project has offered a first glimpse into their actual strategies, preferences and challenges, in their own words. Several interlocutors also noticed a certain convergence in the emerging discourses that can be found in the recent DDR, SSR, peacebuilding and (critical) state-building literatures, and the findings from this project; which is, in their opinion, both reassuring and encouraging.

This said, there are still important research gaps in understanding the transformation of (former) NSAGs, for example with regard to

- the drivers of their motivation, interests, and behaviour in post-war governance, state-building and reconciliation processes;
- the evolving relationships between former NSAGs, military commanders, rank-and-file-combatants and their ethnic, religious or social constituencies (with gender-related issues being a distinct challenge);
- the challenge of democratic governance in post-authoritarian social setting, with implications for both governance across society and impact on internal cohesion of former rebel movements and their constituencies; and

- the political, psychological and cultural implications of the abrupt or gradual role change from “power contenders” to “state runners” and the perceptions of this role change by (previous) state actors and their constituencies.

Confidence is a prerequisite for creating inclusive approaches to conflict transformation. Our collaborative project has demonstrated that participatory action research has the potential to support achieving this goal. The change of behaviour and relations in post-war constellations is, however, a difficult task and needs long-term commitment to make it sustained. But as the results of our research has shown the fruits of commitment seem to be worth the effort.

In terms of follow up, our extensive consultation with the network of project participants has led to many ideas for future projects, but we could not find a general direction that would satisfy all (or most) participants, who have shared similar or comparable transition processes, but currently find themselves with a very diverse set of challenges and priorities. We have thus tabled a couple of proposals for further research collaboration with IDRC, but none of which would involve the current network as a whole.

Based on our assessment of the past few years of collaboration with IDRC, our general recommendations would therefore be the following:

1. IDRC should continue to support projects that use unconventional research methods (such as participatory action research), that seek to strengthen north-south and south-south mutual learning and cooperation, and that seek to bridge the gap from analysis to the practical world; very few donors fund such work, and this unique orientation should thus be preserved and expanded in the future;
2. IDRC staff should maintain their practice of substantial involvement in all phases of development of the projects under their remit; the participants benefit greatly from the ideas, inspiration and support granted throughout the years, and inversely, it is hoped that IDRC also benefits from the new networking opportunities and ideas generated by these projects.
3. With regards to this particular project, IDRC should remain actively involved, even after the completion date, in the wider dissemination of its outputs, by making them available to its networks, and sharing the policy recommendations towards the Canadian government and other agencies and donors.