

The Weapons for Development Project: Monitoring and Evaluating Weapons for Development Experiences

At the end of many violent conflicts, enormous numbers of small arms and light weapons remain in circulation. These weapons jeopardize reconstruction efforts, as they can contribute to crime, continuing insecurity, and even to the re-emergence of conflict.

Voluntary weapons collection efforts have been a popular measure to remove weapons from circulation in the post-conflict period. The first weapons collection programmes targeted *individuals* by offering incentives such as cash, agricultural tools, toys and so forth in exchange for weapons. These efforts have evolved with the realization that working with a group, rather than individuals, offers a better chance of a successful outcome. Today, collection programmes known as ‘weapons for development’ offer the *whole community* (rather than a single owner) goods and/or services in exchange for weapons.

Collection efforts have been traditionally evaluated in quantitative terms, such as how many weapons have been collected in total. While certainly meeting the objective of removing weapons from circulation, these programmes do not offer an understanding of the social, political, economic and environmental contexts that feed the desire to obtain or retain weapons once a conflict has ended. Additionally, most programmes include little or no feedback from the stakeholders. For example what kinds of incentives do the communities themselves consider most appropriate? What implementation strategies should be pursued to ensure that the benefits of the project reach all of the intended beneficiaries? How do donors assess the return on their money?

It is with a view of answering these questions that UNIDIR has launched the *Weapons for Development Project: Lessons Learned from Weapons Collection Programmes*. Through evaluation of a number of weapons for development projects, the project will compile lessons learned and help to identify best practices. This information will make a valuable contribution to policy-makers, donor countries, United Nations agencies and NGOs, helping them to devise better strategies and incentives for weapons for development projects.

In each issue of *Disarmament Forum*, UNIDIR Focus highlights one activity of the Institute, outlining the project’s methodology, recent developments in the research or its outcomes. UNIDIR Focus will also present a detailed description of a new UNIDIR publication. You can find summaries and contact information for all of the Institute’s present and past activities, as well as sample chapters of publications and ordering information, online at www.unidir.org

This project is based on a participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) approach. PM&E places the stakeholders themselves at the centre of the assessment and oversight process, enabling shared ownership of the project and its results. Community involvement in the process also serves a valuable awareness-raising function.

The project will monitor and evaluate weapons collection programmes in a range of countries, including Albania, Angola, Brazil, Cambodia, Mali, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka. The results of meetings, workshops and fieldwork will be synthesized into policy-relevant findings that can lead to better targeted and more successful weapons for development programmes.

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Project Coast: Apartheid's Chemical and Biological Warfare Programme

In the early 1990s, acknowledging publicly (and dismantling) its nuclear weapons programme allowed South Africa to take a moral lead in the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation and in pursuit of global nuclear disarmament. Perhaps in much the same way, the revelations over South Africa's covert chemical and biological warfare (CBW) programme and the transparency with which the government has dealt with them, have enabled South Africa to vigorously pursue the global effort to ban biological weapons and take a lead role in the negotiations for strengthening the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Openness concerning its experience during the apartheid years lends real credibility to South Africa's ethical and practical stance on international disarmament. South Africa went to the edge and beyond and then—under a new, enlightened regime—came back.

South Africa's covert CBW programme, code-named Project Coast, began in 1981 under the apartheid regime and ended formally in 1995. Ostensibly motivated by the need to develop better crowd calming agents for use by the police forces and defensive CBW capabilities for the armed forces, in practice the programme focused on the production of toxins intended for the assassination of state enemies within and outside the country and of chemical agents that lacked any calming properties whatsoever.

Conceived and operated beyond ordinary political, military and financial controls, Project Coast functioned on the basis of a myriad of personal relationships and invisible power structures. Project work was conducted at a number of front companies and supported by illicit foreign transactions. Its management was placed in the hands of Dr Wouter Basson, who was given enormous latitude in running the programme. Although in principle subject to formal controls, Basson worked through informal channels that explicitly evaded the normal chain of command.

Based on the evidence presented at the criminal trial of Dr Basson, the testimony and documents submitted to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and interviews with other major figures associated with the programme, *Project Coast: Apartheid's Chemical and Biological Warfare Programme* by Chandré Gould and Peter Folb offers a meticulous account of South Africa's clandestine CBW programme under apartheid. Preceded by a vibrant foreword by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the book makes a major contribution to our knowledge of South Africa's apartheid CBW programme and serves as a reminder of the perennial dangers of proliferation in the absence of adequate international controls.

Project Coast: Apartheid's Chemical and Biological Warfare Programme

Chandré Gould and Peter Folb

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