



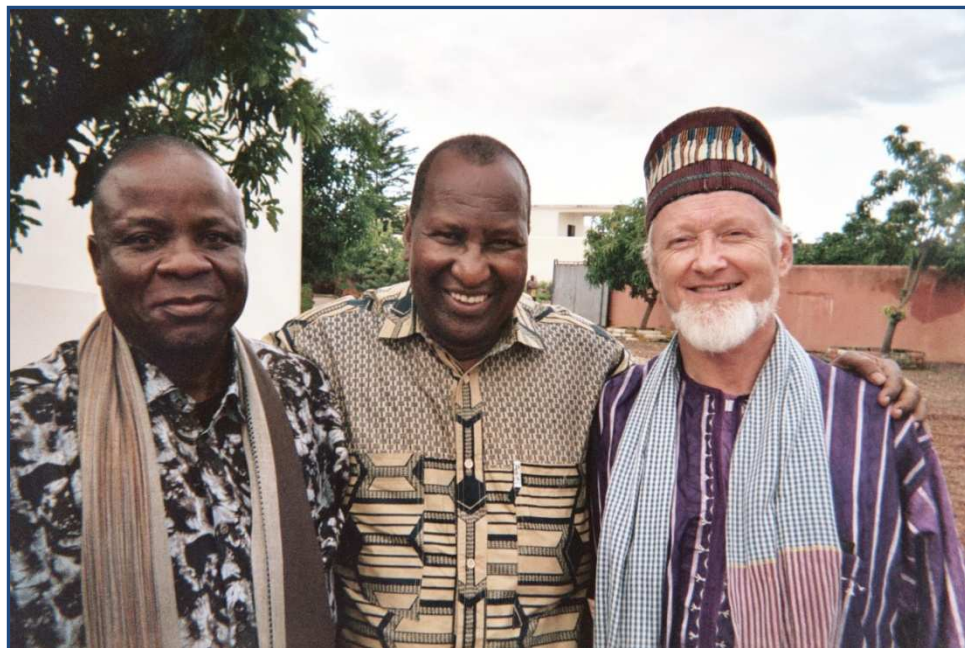
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Col Michel Salle (left) and Dr Robin Edward Poulton (right) with President Alpha Oumar Konaré, former Malian head of state, former President of the Commission of the African Union, who advised the EPES Mandala consulting team on political strategies for limiting the flow of illegal arms in West Africa.

Introduction

During 2008 EPES Mandala has further increased the scope of its commitments: a European office has been opened in Brussels, and new contracts took our consultants to several African and Asian countries (Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Somalia).



Botswana - Olivier Pêtre, EPES Mandala Representative in Brussels travels in style.

EPES Mandala – Brussels Office

The office in Brussels supports the development of activities towards the European Commission and other International donors based in Brussels. Brussels Office is staffed by two experts:

Olivier Pêtre is a senior professional with long experience with the EU. He monitored EU funded projects in Asia for years, which gives him an excellent knowledge of project cycle management and M&E methodologies.

Flavio Conti, Management and Marketing Officer, holds a Masters in International Relations and European Studies at the College of Europe. He has long worked with NGOs dealing with sustainable development in Africa.

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Lessons Learned: Remember that DDR success depends on the 'Rs'

The most dangerous parts of DDR are the 'Ds': disarming fighters and destroying explosives carry high risk. Yet DDR is never judged by the number of combatants demobilised, nor by the number of weapons collected. DDR is just one part of a complex process of peace building: its success or failure is always judged by the economic and social success of the 'Rs', especially whether the former fighters live peacefully and have jobs that allow them to support their families without resorting to armed violence. Who, in war-torn Afghanistan today, remembers the UN's successful DD of 65 000 ex-combatants in 2004-2206?

The 'R' of DDR must be planned before the 'D' begins: DDR is not a linear process. 'DDR' is a misleading acronym. In Afghanistan and Sierra Leone, important 'R' aspects were forgotten or neglected. Along the lines of UN recommendations, we propose a strategy of 3D4R, or RDRDRDR: Disarmament, Destruction of weapons, Demobilisation, Reinsertion and Reintegration of ex-combatants, but also Rehabilitation and Reconciliation of people and communities. If you miss one of the 7 steps, you may miss them all.

3D4R is not a military operation, and this is why the 'Rs' have too often neglected. The Programme Director should be a diplomat, supported by a Colonel as Deputy Director for DDD, and a development professional as Deputy Director for reinsertion, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconciliation.

“DDR is not a linear process. In Afghanistan and Sierra Leone, important 'R' aspects have been forgotten or neglected.”

Inadequate funding and erratic cash-flow have often hampered DDR, but this was not the case in Afghanistan, where donors (in particular the generous Japanese) provided adequate and timely funding. But frequently the UN is asked to handle impossible tasks without the funds and equipment to do the job. How can we persuade the international community to learn these lessons and act better next time around?

Destroying Weapons

How to burn weapons safely



How NOT to organise a 'Flame of Peace'



A 'Flame of Peace' is a great confidence-building action. Soak weapons, wood and charcoal overnight in diesel. In Bouaké they used gasoline, and the pool at the bottom of the container exploded. The explosion could have killed the guests of honour, including several Presidents. It is best to protect the pyre with 1 metre of sandbags, allowing air to circulate freely, and to place all rifles pointing away from the audience.

2008 Missions

Some Contracts Awarded

ECOSAP
UNDP Afghanistan
UNDP Somalia

ECOSAP - The ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme (ECOSAP) aims to provide a broad spectrum of technical and financial support to build the capacity of National Commissions and civil society organisations in ECOWAS Member States. In particular, ECOSAP seeks the implementation of the 1998 Moratorium and the ratification of the 2006 ECOWAS Convention on small arms.

At the request of the European Commission (on behalf of ECOWAS and donors), EPES Mandala consultants Michel Sallé and Robin-Edward Poulton undertook a mid-term evaluation of all aspects of the programme including design, management arrangement, programme delivery, human resources, reporting and finances. Our friend Mohammed Coulibaly has just been named as the new Director of ECOSAP and we wish him every success.

UNDP AFGHANISTAN Disarmament - In 2007, Dr RE Poulton led a team to evaluate the successes and weaknesses of the DDR process in Afghanistan of Afghan Military Forces that was carried out by the Afghan New Beginnings Programme of UNDP.

The ongoing follow-on programme is called Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG), Dr Poulton has been invited back to evaluate DIAG and this will take place around the end of the year and the start of 2009.

SOMALI PEACE PROCESS - In 2007 a team of EPES Mandala experts helped the United Nations to organise the Somali National Reconciliation Conference, and to train a team of Somali peace facilitators. We all know that the subsequent collapse of the Somali government has set the peace process back by several months.

But the UNDP is persistent, and our colleague Catherine Mariano (a Somali-Canadian) is back in Nairobi and Mogadishu helping to organise the next steps for peace, and implementation of the Djibouti Peace Agreement.



This photo from ECOSAP shows a symbolic weapon destruction ceremony in Benin, during a regional meeting of National Commissions on small arms.

Teaching Afghanistan

EPES Mandala senior consultants are often invited to teach at graduate level. General Henny van der Graaf has been teaching in Eindhoven Technical University for some years, and since 2000 Dr Robin Poulton has taught a number of terrorism and international courses in USA. This year Dr Michelle Elcoat and Dr Robin Poulton were asked to create an innovative 'peace and terrorism case study' at the European Centre for Peace Education in Austria, where they introduced Afghanistan.

“How can this beautiful country find peace? Was Afghanistan ever a 'nation' or a 'state'? Or simply a buffer zone between great empires?”

It is difficult to cover such a complex subject 'from scratch', since many participants had little knowledge beyond the name of the country. Lessons concerned the history and origins of war, the conflict between the gentle, musical Islam of Central Asia and the harsh desert Islam of Arabia, the influence of Pakistan and India and multiple other players in the new 'Great Game', the role of women victims in Afghan society both in peace and in war, human and civil rights, child rights and child victims, and the failure of reintegration for the 4 million Afghan refugees left over from the Cold War. Can this beautiful country find peace?

Robin Poulton also made presentations on Afghanistan at the United Nations in New York (Office of Disarmament Affairs and UNDP) and at the UNIDIR Geneva Forum in the Palais des Nations.



Schlaining (Austria)

Dr Michelle Elcoat and Dr Robin Poulton together with students of the International Civilian Peace-Keeping and Peace-Building Training Program, Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution