Comparative Perspectives on the Rehabilitation of Ex-Slaves and Former Child Soldiers with Special Reference to Sudan

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Abstract: Despite the January 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, reconstruction of southern Sudan remains a daunting task, which limited resources and unlimited suspicions may derail or delay. Among myriad issues facing agencies and their client communities are the problems of assisting children traumatized by the brutal legacies of Sudan's first half century of independence. Given the length of Sudan's conflicts, few have experienced a "normal" childhood. Furthermore, the psychological and social aspects of rehabilitation have only been examined recently. This article tabulates the successes and failures of governmental and non-governmental programs rehabilitating former slaves, many of whom were or are children, and child soldiers, many of whom are now adults. It compares activities in Sudan to programs in other parts of Africa (Angola, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Uganda) and beyond (Afghanistan, India, Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates). Applying these comparisons in the absence of long-term assessments, the author endeavors to determine pitfalls to be avoided and best practices to be followed.

Historical Context

Most ancient forms of forced servitude sought to absorb conquered peoples and avoid their reintegration into previous cultures. But the rise of profit-driven mass slavery in Imperial Rome, Ottoman Turkey, and later the Americas, raised new issues, as slaveholders had little desire to integrate chattels into their societies. The Trans-Atlantic slave trade created an easily distinguishable class to clarify socio-economic divisions. The removal of Africans from their homelands and the disruption of their cultural patterns without absorption into their masters' societies generated complex problems reflected in contemporary forms of slavery elsewhere. As defined in international conventions, all forms of slavery entail loss of control over one's labor and movement for non-criminal reasons to another without pay, usually involving ownership for permanent or unclear terms of service.[1]

In the two centuries following the abolition of slavery in the British Empire, legal emancipation and economic assistance, particularly the provision of land, jobs and other resources to allow the development of new livelihoods, were assumed to be all that was necessary for ex-slaves to adjust to their new status. These assumptions guided the workings of America's post-Civil War Freedmen's Bureau and the establishment of freed slave communities

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in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Fernando Po. However, problems were immediately evident. The American formula of "forty acres and a mule" proved unrealistic. Such approaches are still evident in Mauritania's El Hor movement which has campaigned for the enforcement of anti-slavery laws, land reform, and the formation of agricultural cooperatives since the 1970s.[2]

Over the past two hundred years, great attention has been placed on children's issues. Exactly what the numbers and roles of children were in early slavery and slave trading are sketchy. As anti-slavery crusades and anti-child labor campaigns emerged in the early 19th century, western societies also began to make distinctions between childhood and adulthood to an extent unknown in any other time or place. Children came to be perceived as requiring protection from exploitative labor practices, far beyond slavery. However, by the 21st century various forms of profit-driven bondage enslaved an estimated 27 million people worldwide, ranging from West African chocolate slaves to Thai sex slaves to Central Asian carpet slaves.[3] All of these practices involve the exploitation of children.

Following World War II, the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration's reintegration of Nazi Germany's 7 million slave laborers exposed the limits of focusing only on the legal and economic status of former slaves. The American civil rights movement emphasized slavery's profound long-term effects. British sociologist Kevin Bales would later argue the mental bonds of slavery are at least as strong as physical force.[4] Hence in the last sixty years, a variety of initiatives developed to address the unanswered psychological, social and cultural needs and complex dilemmas facing ex-slaves. These solutions differ from culture to culture and vary according to the proportion of a slave's life under servitude. Common to these programs is the emphasis on meeting ex-slaves' immediate needs for medical care, improved nutrition, and time to rest and define what their changed status means. For those who have known only slavery, this can take a long time. Former slaves require education and reorientation of their skills. Their one advantage is that they know how to work and given opportunities to work for themselves, often rapidly achieve a measure of economic stability.

THE SUDANESE SITUATION

Sudan has one of the longest known histories of human bondage.[5] Ancient Kush, medieval Nubia, and numerous periods of foreign rule bear witness to widespread slavery and slave trading. Unlike most forms of servitude outside of the Middle East, early Sudanese slaving included many destined for military service.[6] The ages of such slaves are seldom known. Undoubtedly many were ancient equivalents of child soldiers. Mass profit-driven slavery dates from Sudan's 1820 invasion by the Ottoman Turks who imposed heavy taxes, paid in slaves. Conquest by the British in 1898 ended this institutionalized slavery, but the replacement of forced labor with wage labor proved difficult.[7] Slavery or equivalent variations of bonded labor continued in isolated areas. When independence came in 1956, the memory of slavery was still recent and loomed large in the consciousness of both those who had benefited and those who had been victimized. Increasingly polarized ethnic and religious differences between north and south resulted. Centered on Khartoum, northern political dominance of Sudan was characterized by oppression and neglect.[8] Many northerners still refer to southerners as abeed (slaves).

Not surprisingly, a half-century of civil war promoted an upsurge in slavery as a tool of oppression. By the mid-1990s, more than two million people were displaced from the south and Nuba Mountains to the north. While most fled the conflict of their own accord, some were clearly abducted as slaves. Raids by government-backed muraheleen militias captured Nuba from South Kordofan and Dinka from the Bahr El Ghazal and Upper Nile. Held in bondage and often physically and sexually abused, abductees were forced to herd cattle, fetch water, work fields, dig wells or do housework. Some had their hamstring muscles cut to prevent their escape.

In the Sudanese context, distinctions between slaves, child soldiers and street children are fluid rather than mutually exclusive.[9] The government, SPLA and SSIA forcibly or deceptively recruited underage boys into their ranks. Many street children and others who were displaced found themselves exploited. Some demobilized child soldiers became street children as a result of poverty. Many became adults by the time of their demobilization. All totaled, tens of thousands were coerced into servitude and denied basic rights. Even more found soldiering, begging, prostitution and menial labor the only means to survive the oppressive poverty characterizing most of Sudan.

While Sudanese culture may conceptualize childhood differently than Western societies, the legal obligations of governments in Khartoum are clear. Sudan acceded to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on 18 March 1986, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on 18 March 1986, and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on 3 August 1990. Though Sudan's 1991 Criminal Code does not specifically prohibit trafficking in persons, its constitution prohibits slavery and forced labor. Sudan has ratified the Slavery Convention and other international instruments banning slavery. However, the Khartoum regime has not enforced its own laws against kidnapping, assault and forced labor. Dismissing criticism and claiming it has little control over hostage-taking by rival groups, Sudanese leaders have denied the findings of numerous reports documenting slavery, but acknowledged that abductions occurred.[10]

One important report was that of the International Eminent Persons Group, which emerged from the mediation efforts of former U.S. Senator and Special Envoy for Sudan John Danforth. Led by American Penn Kemble of Freedom House, this eight-person team included U.S. Ambassador George Moose and representatives from France, Italy, Norway and Britain, supported by Canadian, British and American technical experts. One of four confidence-building measures agreed by both sides was cooperation in studying the issues of "slavery, abductions and forced servitude."[11] The group interviewed scores of individuals in northern and southern Sudan and Kenya. Identifying slavery as "one of a series of continuing human rights abuses in Sudan," its 55-page report concluded that an upsurge in abductions and related human rights abuses since 1983 met the international definition of slavery. The report argued that the situation was not a continuation of traditional practices beyond government control, as explained by Sudanese officials, but a direct consequence of militia activities encouraged by successive governments in Khartoum. Most of the report's findings were aimed at Khartoum, but the group also expressed concern over abductions and other human rights abuses committed by SPLA forces, noting the absence of democratic institutions and practices in all parts of the country.

Another damning investigation was carried out by Jok Madut Jok and John Ryle of the Rift Valley Institute and resulted in the Sudan Abductee Database.[12] Following an eighteen-month field investigation in seven SPLA-controlled counties of Northern Bahr-el-Ghazal and contiguous parts of Abyei district, their survey produced an impressive record with the full names and identifying details of 12,000 people violently abducted in over 2,000 raids on Dinka, Luo and Fertit communities by militias operating out of government-controlled areas between 1983 and 2002. More than 5,000 people were reportedly killed in these raids. Over half of the recorded abductees were under 18. Most were males. Over 11,000 remain unaccounted for. The worst case was found in Aweil West County where 101 adults and children were abducted from the village of Ajok in a single week in 1999. However, one weakness of both the Sudan Abductee Database and the report of the International Eminent Persons Group are their geographical limitations. The total number impacted by slavery is much higher than the figures found in these reports, which though well-researched, detailed and important, deal only with the northwestern quarter of SPLM-controlled areas.

In June 2003, the UN Human Rights Commission's Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery issued a report, noting that "[s]lavery, otherwise referred to as abductions and forced labor, remains a reality in Sudan."[13] The UN Special Rapporteur on Sudan reported to the commission that "in spite of some new commitments, so far human rights abuses have not decreased neither in the north nor in southern Sudan and the overall human rights situation has not improved significantly." He added that raids and abductions were continuing and that the government had not clearly condemned abductions and forced labor. To the surprise and disappointment of many, the commission voted not to extend his mandate in 2004.

Numerous organizations have been involved in slave redemption in Sudan, which received a surge of press coverage at the very beginning of the 21st century. Accounts of ex-slaves' lives became best-selling books.[14] However, not as much attention was given to healing the wounds of bondage. Several church groups and Canadian Aid for Southern Sudan offer educational and vocational training for former slaves. Ongoing instability, insufficient resources and the scale of Sudanese slavery have made the effects of many programs unclear.

Nowhere is the complexity of slave reintegration more evident than in the workings of the Sudanese government's Commission for the Eradication of Abduction of Women and Children (CEAWC), which seeks to identify, retrieve and reintegrate abducted persons and train those involved in this process.[15] CEAWC was founded by the Sudanese government in May 1999 following widespread international criticism.[16] Its operations have been dogged by lack of agreed standardized procedures, coordination, planning and trained personnel. Its tracing, documentation and reunification activities have been insufficient due to limited access to affected areas and lack of resources, such as transport, food, water, medical care, tools for cultivation, shelter, and structures for exchanging information and messages. CEAWC's policy has been to return everyone identified as abducted to their places of origin without assessing individual circumstances. This has led to serious problems.

Based on interviews and casework, UNICEF and other agencies believe that a significant number of returned abductees were not voluntary.[17] Most slaves are of Dinka origin, abducted into the North's Arabic-speaking, Muslim culture. Some required counseling as a result of brutal treatment, while others were reluctant to leave their present situations for uncertain

futures. The offspring of women subjected to forced marriages or concubinage generated disputes over parental rights. Difficulties resulted as a consequence of female genital mutilation, practiced in northern Sudan, but not among the Dinka. Some abductees were encouraged to return by misinformation about destinations and available services. Separated from their families and homes for years, many have little or no recollection of their relatives, culture, language or place of origin. Highly vulnerable, unaccompanied children, some of whom made attachments to northern families who provided for their needs, were moved great distances. The assumption that children whose families cannot be traced will be cared for by their "community" was not adequately researched. Not surprisingly, some returnees protested with hunger strikes or by running away.

The International Eminent Persons Group acknowledged CEAWC's establishment, but raised questions about the government's commitment, as measured by its administrative and financial support and cooperation with international agencies. It also criticized the Sudanese government for not pursuing offenders. CEAWC's chairperson has the power to prosecute any person involved in the abduction of women and children, but had not. In fact, no prosecutions had been brought in the previous 16 years.[18] The UN Special Rapporteur's report also criticized CEAWC's slow progress. Noting that some sources described CEAWC as "massively dysfunctional," the rapporteur pointed out that "no public statements were made in support of CEAWC by the highest political levels" and that its claim that it could identify and reunite 11,500 cases in one year was "entirely unrealistic."[19]

Since 2003, fighting in Darfur has been reportedly accompanied by raids by government-supported janjaweed militias similar to earlier muraheleen activities in the south. Despite the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, reconstruction of the south, including the return and rehabilitation of former slaves and child soldiers, is certain to be long, hard and under-funded. CEAWC and the Dinka Chiefs Committee estimate the number of abducted women and children to be 14,000, while UNICEF and Save the Children put the total number between 10,000 and 17,000. Other estimates claim as high as 100,000 individuals are enslaved.[20] Given the issues facing Sudan, a comparative study of programs elsewhere and analysis of their successes and difficulties is necessary.

EX-SLAVE ISSUES

In 2005, the International Labour Organization reported that children represent a higher proportion of forced laborers in Africa than in other parts of the world.[21] However, other parts of the world have seen an upsurge in slavery and some Asian programs offer models and practices worth mention.

One of the most experienced rehabilitation agencies is the South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude-Bachpan Bachao Andolan (SACCS-BBA).[22] Founded in 1980 to oppose child labor, it pioneered slave rehabilitation in India. Its rescue operations freed over 55,000 children in a 25-year period. Its multi-faceted rehabilitation program includes social education to promote human rights, responsibility and accountability and to combat dowry abuse, child labor, child marriage and corruption; conventional education to provide reading, writing and mathematical skills, cultural pride and a sense of unity and to promote health, personal hygiene and etiquette;

and vocational training for those over age 14. Sensitizing parents, children, employers and educational, labor, political and religious groups about child labor issues, SACCS spearheaded campaigns to promote free, compulsory education and the child labor-free Rugmark carpet label.

In 2004, a unique rehabilitation center was established in Abu Dhabi as a result of laws eliminating the trafficking of underage boys as camel jockeys. Run by the United Arab Emirates' Ministry of Interior and Pakistan's Ansar Burney Welfare Trust International, the center can provide healthcare, counseling and education for up to 400 rescued children for four to eight weeks before repatriation to their home countries, mainly Pakistan and Bangladesh.[23]

Some African programs have also seen success. In isolated parts of western Ghana, trokosi, the illegal practice of giving virgin girls to traditional priests as slaves to atone for family sins, received international attention early in the 21st century.[24] Once freed, few have skills necessary for life outside the shrines where they had been held. Imparting skills like batik dyeing, sewing and palm oil processing, the Ative Vocational Centre, a vocational center and training program sponsored by the Women's Funding Network, has assisted thousands of liberated slaves, many now grown with children of their own.[25] Funded by the Australian Government, International Needs (IN) established a residential center providing trauma counseling and vocational training.[26]

In Ghana's Volta and Central regions, impoverished parents sold children to fishermen. The International Organization for Migration registered 1,002 cases trafficked in this manner. Boys aged 3 to 14 were forced to cast and draw fishing nets and dive to release tangled nets. Poorly fed and never paid, many drowned. Local leaders helped win the cooperation of fishermen, who abandoned slavery and received training and micro credits to improve fishing techniques or engage in other livelihoods, such as cattle rearing. A small grassroots NGO, the Association of People for Practical Life Education (APPLE) works with those freed.[27] An IOM transit center in Yeji gave 298 freed child slaves medical examinations and counseling before they were reunited with their parents and sent to school or vocational training programs. Prior to their release, the IOM identified the needs of parents and provided training and micro-credits in market trading, charcoal production and restaurant ownership to help them raise their incomes.[28]

However, African programs are typically limited by funding and government commitment. Around the world every year, some 1.2 million women and girls enter the sex trade, often involuntarily, generating US$1.5 billion annually for their exploiters. Between 30 and 35% of the victims are girls under 18 years old.[29] In Africa, efforts to rehabilitate sexually exploited juveniles have been paltry. In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the Addis Meraf Centre provides shelter, medical assistance, counseling, vocational training and family reunification support to women and children trafficked for sexual exploitation and forced domestic labor, mostly to the Arabian Peninsula. Initially, the centre accommodated only twelve clients at a time, though the estimated number of victims is 40,000.[30]

As with abolitionist movements, several Christian church organizations are in the forefront of slave rehabilitation efforts. Save the Children addresses the health and educational needs of impoverished and abused children worldwide, including former slaves. Others are more focused. World Vision has developed innovative programs for rehabilitating bonded child

laborers in India and supports thousands of ex-child soldiers at a rehabilitation center in Gulu, Uganda.[31] A nonprofit Catholic human rights organization, People's Recovery, Empowerment and Development Assistance focuses on Filipino women and children exploited by demeaning labor such as prostitution.[32] In September 2005, the Ukrainian government requested church assistance in dealing with thousands of victims of human trafficking.[33]

CHILD SOLDIER ISSUES

While anti-slavery activists campaigned to bring these issues to the attention of a world that often sees their cause as a thing of the past, a new set of humanitarian concerns emerged as conflicts brought younger and younger combatants onto the battlefield. Often accompanied by physical force or manipulation, child soldier use had mushroomed. Due to their emotional and physical immaturity, children are vulnerable.[34] As many as 300,000 between ages 8 and 18 serve in armed forces, both government and rebel, in 33 current or recent conflicts on four continents. This represents three-quarters of the world's armed conflicts.[35] Another 500,000 children worldwide may be in paramilitary organizations.[36] While the country with the most child soldiers is Burma (approx. 70,000), Africa's share of child soldiers totals over 120,000.[37] UNICEF defines a child soldier as a person under age 17 who has been, or still is, active in a military unit with a formal command structure.

Unlike the heavier, more complex weapons of the past, modern lightweight automatic rifles are useable by children. More than anything else, this technological development has contributed to the explosion of child soldier use in contemporary times.[38] Inevitably from poor or displaced backgrounds, child soldiers serve numerous roles as porters, cooks, guards, messengers and spies. Lacking education, threatened and often drugged, they have been used in suicide missions and sent into mine fields ahead of older troops. Girls are often raped and substance abuse is encouraged.

A ground-breaking 2004 study surveying some 300 former Ugandan child soldiers found that over half of those abducted at an average age of twelve had been seriously beaten, 77 percent had witnessed someone being killed, 39 percent had killed another person, and 39 percent had abducted other children. Over one third of the girls had been raped, while 18 percent had given birth while in captivity. Of 71 children who completed a questionnaire to assess post-traumatic reactions, 69 showed clinically significant symptoms. Almost all had experienced a number of traumatic events. About 6 percent had seen their mother, father, brother or sister being killed and 2 percent had participated in killing their father, brother or another relative. Over a third of the children had no mother; two thirds had no father.[39]

Child soldiers have brought new dilemmas to the conduct of war. The UNICEF standard, which defines childhood, is alien to many societies, particularly in poor countries. As with the issues of racism, female genital mutilation and terrorism, fundamental changes in attitudes are necessary to truly end the problem. Conversely, western views must also be revised. In August 2000, a patrol of the Royal Irish Regiment peacekeepers in Sierra Leone was taken prisoner when their squad commander refused to fire on child soldiers. Sixteen days later a special task force freed the prisoners in an operation that probably killed more child soldiers than if the unit had defended itself.[40] More recently, a compound suspected of housing El Qaeda militants in

eastern Afghanistan was bombed, killing seven boys, who with others were suspected of being held against their will.[41] The bombed site bore similarities to child soldier "recruitment" centers, both in Afghanistan's past and in other conflicts. Had the presence of children been known the attack would not have been authorized, but no alternatives were suggested. Pointing out that children bear disproportionately high consequences in Africa's armed conflicts where they are often deliberately targeted, Pearn argues for the inclusion of pediatricians in military medical units, particularly in peacekeeping operations.[42]

The 1998 Machel Study contributed greatly to understanding the myriad issues facing children in war. However, while it deals extensively with issues facing children as combatants, orphans, and landmine victims, it does not adequately address the problems of child slavery and forced labor as instruments of war.[43] Advocating national and international assistance to speed up the provision of health care and economic recovery, Albertyn identifies the severe negative affects of war on children, in terms of pediatric health, health care infrastructures and health education.[44] Cunneen notes the need to recognize the complexities of contemporary forced labor and the current restricted focus on immigration in most situations. She advocates greater support for those leaving forced labor and more thorough study of causal factors to reduce future vulnerability.[45] Examining the case of Sierra Leone, Faulkner criticizes the inadequacies of legal instruments to prevent military service by children and analyzes the conditions that create underage combatants and the difficulties of rehabilitating combat-traumatized children.[46] Approaching broader legal issues, Pask questions many assumptions about returning victims, in particular theories of habitual residents, the definition of "unaccompanied" children and notions of what lies in their "best interests." Recognizing the unique problems of refugees and displaced persons, she demonstrates the need to settle issues regarding jurisdiction, selection of decision makers, processes of decision making, and representation of children and their interests.[47]

As humanitarian agencies campaigned to halt the recruitment of children and demobilize and rehabilitate those forced to serve, they succeeded in altering the climate regarding child recruitment. As in the case of Sudan's slaves, testimony by victims proved to be powerful whether in writing or in appearances before world bodies.[48] Exacting pledges from various governments and armed groups, activists succeeded in developing new international legal standards where none has existed. Between 1998 and 2000, three important treaties were adopted, including the 1998 Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court, defining the military conscription, enlistment, or use of children under age of fifteen as a war crime; the 1999 Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention (Convention 182), which prohibits the forced recruitment of children; and the 2000 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which established eighteen as the minimum age for participation in armed conflict.[49] On 22 April 2004, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1539, calling on members to "end the impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other egregious crimes penetrated against children." It called on all to "prepare within three months concrete time-bound action plans to halt recruitment and use of children in violation of the international obligations applicable to them."[50] However, in practice child soldier use often fails to elicit action by the international community, beyond general statements of condemnation. Human Rights Watch found no evidence of sanctions imposed on any

government or armed group for using child soldiers.[51] In most situations, recruiters are rarely, if ever, prosecuted by governments. Given this pattern of impunity, many will continue to seek out children, who are easily lured or intimidated.[52]

DEMOBILIZATION, REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION

In the last two decades, the rehabilitation of child soldiers revealed dilemmas which are the subject of a growing body of scholarly and clinical literature. Child soldiers experience bizarre twists of slave-like powerlessness and armed empowerment. They have often been abducted and are subject to others but are armed, have committed violent acts, and usually form a high degree of camaraderie with others in their same predicament. Substance abuse and severe post-traumatic stress are more evident than in other types of exploited juveniles.[53] Slaves, on the other hand, are subject to others and feel little empowerment of any sort. In returning to their communities of origin, unfamiliarity may result with either the victim (sometimes in the case of ex-slaves) or the community (often in the case of ex-child soldiers) rejecting the other.

Two approaches emerged to what agency jargon dubbed "DDR" (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration). Those advocating programs that separate child soldiers from other exploited juveniles (the "segregate" position) note the unique psychological and social needs of child soldiers and their often violent nature which may present danger to others. Preferring programs for war-affected children in general (the "integrate" position), the UN and much of the NGO community believe that separation decreases the potential for successful reintegration. This position was expressed in the UN's 2001 Appeal.[54] "Child welfare agencies agreed to adopt a holistic approach to meeting the needs of child fighters by stressing psycho-social, physical and economic reintegration."[55]

Having supervised demobilization programs in several countries, Jean-Claude Legrand, senior UNICEF adviser on the protection of children in armed conflict, advocates going beyond "traditional demobilization programs." Legrand sees that creating a "rupture" with military life is essential. Hence churches, NGOs and local civil associations run centers, in which military staff is not present, such as the rehabilitation program run by the British Catholic aid agency CAFOD in Sierra Leone.[56] Legrand notes that stronger efforts must be made to monitor and prevent recruitment. Alternatives to military service are essential. Without access to education or vocational training, children are much more likely to return to military service. Reunifying separated children with family members also reduces recruitment risks and facilitates reintegration.[57] Effective programs also include sensitizing children, families and community leaders to international norms, the negative impacts of child soldiering and local risk factors encouraging recruitment.[58] Birth registration, to ensure that children can produce proof of age, is vital. Increased security around schools is needed to ensure the safe pursuit of education.[59]

By late 2003, UNICEF demobilization and rehabilitation programs for former child soldiers were operating in Colombia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda and the Congo.[60] In 2004, a total of 3,998 boys, mostly aged between 14 and 17 years old, were demobilized by UNICEF's Child Soldiers Demobilization and Reintegration Program in Afghanistan, where as many as 30 percent of males had participated in military activities as children over more than two decades of war.[61] Serving about half of Afghanistan's estimated 8,000 child soldiers, this

effort provided each demobilized child with a package of support, starting with registration in a database, receipt of a photo identity card, medical and psychosocial assessments and briefing sessions on mine risk education and reintegration options, including return to education, enrolment in vocational training programs or participation in income generation schemes like sheep or poultry farming. Other programs were begun in Burundi, Liberia, and Sri Lanka.[62]

With few exceptions, these programs were available to only a small percentage of the children who needed them. To make matters worse, assistance has often been delayed. The UNICEF program in Afghanistan was established almost two years after the conflict had ended. Between July 2001 and November 2002, only 280 child soldiers were released from government forces in the Congo, where insufficient resources precluded implementation of a demobilization decree issued in June 2000.[63] In Angola, a peace agreement was reached in April 2002, but 7,000 to 11,000 child soldiers were excluded from demobilization programs, perceived to be an adult concern, and no special rehabilitation services were set up. Programs were virtually nonexistent in some key countries, including Burma, Nepal and the Philippines.[64]

The best funded agencies are inevitably from the developed world. Much criticism has been leveled at their programs which involve foreign intervention in complex local conflicts.[65] Concerned with appealing more to donors than clients, international agencies are often under-scrutinized. Lacking local knowledge and seldom speaking the language of those they are trying to help, expensive foreign experts often bypass local concerns and wisdom. The naiveté of expatriate personnel can lead to misuse of resources earmarked for rehabilitation by warring parties, local elites or young men, who were never child soldiers but enlist in programs to get material goods or training. In the eastern Congo, parents sent children to armed groups for a few months to receive program support including school enrollment, vocational training and starter kits for income generation activities.[66] Hence assistance may actually encourage enlistment or corrupt use of programs. Problems like these could be reduced by closer ties between agencies and local communities. Where local conditions preclude community control, programs are best run by local NGOs with local expertise. However, they inevitably lack funding, organization, technology and recognition.

Rehabilitated child soldiers often face hostility from their communities of origin because of acts they have perpetrated. In its 20 year rebellion against the Ugandan government, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) abducted at least 30,000 children, some as young as eight years old, to work as soldiers and laborers.[67] Constituting 90 percent of its force, children are severely brutalized. Many have been forced to commit atrocities in their own communities which lead to their being stigmatized and unable to return home. "Since these former child soldiers are often blamed and stigmatized for the countless atrocities they committed--mostly against their own people--their psychological recovery and reintegration can be seriously complicated."[68]

Ruaudel and Timpson decry the insufficient attention given to the reconciliation of children abducted by LRA rebels. They claim that the process of integrating former fighters into their communities is proceeding poorly and that the willingness of communities to accept large numbers of fighters remains untested, especially for women returning with children born in captivity. Similarly, in Sierra Leone, half of 66 girls demobilized in 2001 had babies.[69] Ruaudel and Timpson emphasize the need to not only involve communities but provide programs to develop communities and avoid engendering resentment of the returnees.[70] In 2002, a British

charity, SOS Children established a children's program in Gulu, Uganda.[71] Former LRA child soldiers, abandoned children, and AIDS and war orphans are provided with basic necessities, food, and medical and psychological support. The program's goal is the re-unification of the children with their families, with community awareness education, reunification rituals and ongoing clinical support. However, large numbers of traumatized children have no communities to return to. Hence nine caregivers live with 117 children in a temporary "village" that is likely to become permanent. SOS Children runs similar communities in Kakiri and Entebbe. Different circumstances led to similar situations in Liberia, where programs saw numerous drop-outs and difficulties determining the status of self-defining unaccompanied children, 40% of whom were not reunified with families and remained transit shelters for long periods.[72]

Studies in Mozambique revealed problems with Western approaches to healing victims of psychological trauma.[73] In many cases, those involved want to start fresh after ritual procedures, which do not emphasize recalling the traumas suffered, as western-style counseling would. Immediately after the end of hostilities, a group of Mozambican child soldiers was placed in a recuperation centre where child psychologists worked with them. This proved unsuccessful because the children were removed from their communities. An exclusive focus on individual "clients" ignored family and community roles in the healing process. The ex-soldiers were asked to talk about painful memories as a way of healing. But recalling traumatic experiences verbally was not as effective as more experiential traditions of coping and reconciliation. Local society emphasizes the importance of ancestral spirits and other supernatural forces in the causation and healing of mental health problems. Therefore, the reintegration of child soldiers must begin with community rituals.

There are different types of rituals. Some are addresses to those who have participated in the war but did not kill; others are particularly directed to those who killed other people. The latter are more complex and require the expertise of a traditional healer. It is believed that the spirits of the dead can make the killer become insane. In all these rituals is the idea of pollution that the children bring to their homes and villages. They have to be cleansed as soon as possible to be able to socialize freely with relatives and friends.

Another important issue that comes out of these cases is the idea of symbolically breaking with the past: the washing of the body in the river so that the dirt of the war would go away; the burning of the hut and the clothes brought from the war. It is interesting to see the use of a chicken in the rituals (the blood for cleansing, and the meat for the sacrificial meal shared with the ancestors), and of herbal remedies to cleanse the body internally (inhaling and drinking) and externally (bathing and rubbing).[74]

In the case of Uganda, former LRA child soldiers have ritually broken with their violent pasts by stepping on eggs in public reintegration ceremonies.[75] Acholi society has several older but similar mechanisms.[76] Performed in public ceremonies after a mediated process has brought two parties together, mato oput is the consumption of a bitter drink by perpetrators and their victims or victims' families. Offenders accept responsibility, ask for forgiveness and make reparation to their victims. Another Acholi custom, gomo tong (the bending of spears) ritualizes the ending of hostilities between groups. Both of these rituals are preceded by discussion and "truth-telling." Similar ceremonies are found in Sierra Leone and elsewhere.[77] Honwana notes,

In these cases to separate body and mind does not work because individuals are seen as a whole body/mind composite and as part and parcel of a collective body (their wrongdoings can affect their families as well). This explains the direct involvement of the family (both the living and the dead, the ancestors) in the cleansing and healing process. The ancestors are believed to play a powerful role in protecting their relatives against evil and misfortune.

The performance of these rituals and the politics that precede them transcend the particular individual(s) concerned and involved the collective body. The family and friends are involved, and the ancestral spirits are also implicated in mediating for a good outcome. This shows how the living has to acknowledge the dead (the past), both the ancestors and the dead of the war, to carry on with their lives. The rituals were aimed at asking for forgiveness, appeasing the souls of the dead, and preventing any future afflictions (retaliations) from the spirits of the dead, in this way serving the links with that "bad" past.[78]

In all cases, those involved in reintegration ceremonies recognize that much needs to be done after the rituals. Some findings suggest that labor-intensive public works projects are extremely effective in reintegrating former combatants in general.[79] By contributing to local communities, child soldiers could reduce the stigma attached to their pasts through such projects. Advancing a number of issues regarding appropriate therapies for war-traumatized children, Parson sees Western models of intervention as useful but localized, culturally-appropriate community techniques as better.[80] Conducted by Columbia University and Save the Children, the Mozambique Child Soldier Life Outcome Study showed "that former child soldiers who are provided rehabilitative services and accepted back into their families and communities will become productive, responsible and caring adults."[81] This qualitative and quantitative study traced 39 captured or escaped child soldiers from their 1988 arrival at the Lhanguene Rehabilitation Center in Maputo, where they received six months of psychological and physical rehabilitation, through a two year period of additional assistance after they returned to their families/communities to a point when all were adults sixteen years after returning home. Again rehabilitation was linked to community acceptance.[82]

One weakness of most programs is the exclusion of girls from demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration processes. This is due to multiple factors. Girls who do not serve in combat roles are often overlooked. Some are reluctant to participate in demobilization programs because of the stigma of being associated with military forces, particularly when sexual abuse is common.[83] Furthermore, much evidence suggests that many, in some cases most, female abductees are never registered and continue to be held in captivity.[84]

The disruptive financial patterns of agencies dependent on donations and "soft money" grants for their funding also influence rehabilitation programs. For example, in May 2003 U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine Chao announced a $13-million initiative to help educate, rehabilitate and reintegrate ex-child soldiers worldwide.[85] Yet, despite the popularity of the cause and the fanfare accompanying it, the very next month, a UNICEF rehabilitation program in Sierra Leone was forced to suspend operations temporarily when it ran out of cash.[86] Such situations are not unique and the financial constraints of many agencies limit the scale of their operations.

What is required in the course of rehabilitation varies according to the nature of a child's experience. The needs of an Acholi child soldier brought to Kampala differ greatly from Ghana's trokosi slave girls whose families of origin might be in the immediate neighborhood of

the shrines where they are held. However, these cases still exhibit a clarity dividing child soldiers and slaves not found in Sudan, where discerning and treating the problems of different types of exploited children with different experiences is a prime concern.

Rehabilitation and Reintegration in Sudan

The current status of Sudanese child soldiers can best be described as dismal. According to a UN report, government armed forces, the Sudan People's Liberation Army, pro-government janjaweed militias and anti-government Darfuri rebels have all used child soldiers extensively.[87] Recruitment into Sudan's national army has taken forms indistinguishable from abduction.[88] UNICEF has proved to be the only agency capable of dealing with mass demobilizations. With the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, it expanded its child soldier rehabilitation activities in the south. However, little has happened in Darfur.[89]

Not surprisingly, the most significant reductions in child soldier use have accompanied the end of conflicts. From May 2001 through January 2002, the UN mission in Sierra Leone demobilized almost 48,000 combatants, including 6,845 child soldiers, from government and rebel forces. [90] However, re-recruitment of former child soldiers occurs frequently wherever demobilization is attempted during a continuing armed conflict. In Sri Lanka, the rebel Tamil Tigers pledged to UNICEF to cease recruitment of child soldiers. However, evidence suggests that abduction has continued.[91] Southern Sudan is another example. In 2000, the SPLA made a similar commitment to UNICEF. The following year, over 3,500 children were demobilized from SPLA forces and reunified with their families in high profile ceremonies.[92] Some accused the SPLA of window-dressing to gain international support. Indeed, by 2003, the demobilization process stagnated and 7,000-8,000 children remained with SPLA forces. Some recruitment continued and cases of re-recruitment of children previously demobilized emerged. Similar situations were reported in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and Uganda.[93] Since fighting ceased, the SPLA has more effectively demobilized child soldiers, 242 in Tonj and over a thousand in Akobo in July 2006.[94] According to UNICEF, between 2001 and 2006 more than 15,000 children have been disarmed, demobilized and returned to their communities from SPLA ranks.[95] Meanwhile, no efforts have been made to stem the use of child soldiers in Sudan's government forces.

One factor that makes the plight of exploited children in Sudan, Africa's largest country in area, much worse than what has occurred in Uganda, Ghana and Mozambique, are the vast distances over which slaves and child soldiers have been transported and therefore the vast distances and expense which must be dealt with in the course of their rehabilitation. In 2006, UNICEF's financial needs for reintegration operations in Sudan totaled US$22,000,000 of which $16,500,000 were designated for southern Sudan.[96] Its 2006 operations were aimed at the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of some 4,500 children remaining in the SPLA; up to 12,500 associated with government and other armed forces in southern Sudan, south Kordofan, Abyei and southern Blue Nile; and at least 500 children from regular and militia forces in Darfur.[97]

However, the Sudanese situation has some positive aspects when compared to others. In southern Sudan, returning child soldiers have seldom committed the atrocities associated with

conflicts in Uganda, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Indeed, many have returned as heroes. This places their situations closer to those of other exploited juveniles. On the other hand, child soldiers in the SPLA and other rebel groups often volunteered for service, either as the only option for survival or in response to propaganda, which permeates youth group songs, slogans and stick drills throughout the region.[98] On the government side, recruits have been inspired by the official Islamist agenda. Hence in many cases, child soldiers are not merely victims of abduction or economic circumstances. The fact that many were not conscripted makes them appear not exploited, and therefore not in need of rehabilitation.

The civil war in southern Sudan ended at a time when preliminary studies of child soldier rehabilitation programs elsewhere were available. As a result, the most serious pitfalls could be known if not avoided. Interviews with local NGOs in Equatoria and in refugee communities in Uganda show that some agencies have already moved away from orphanages and other models of rehabilitation separate from local communities.[99] Art and drama therapy, which have already been brought to southern Sudan, are perceived as beneficial to all categories of exploited children.[100] Rituals have been a part of child soldier demobilization events since 2001.[101] Unlike the Ugandan egg-breaking ceremony, demobilized children in these ceremonies simply lay down their arms and as a group move forward towards crowds of relatives and neighbors with their backs to the weapons. They are welcomed home, the weapons are often destroyed and rehabilitation begins.

Conclusions

The needs of 27 million slaves worldwide are much greater than those of 800,000 child soldiers. But ex-slave programs suffer from lack of recognition, while child soldier programs have had significant public exposure. One persistent problem is deep-seated attitudes in many donor countries that slavery is a historical issue only. Nowhere is this mindset more thoroughly debunked than in Sudan, which is currently experiencing both the freeing of slaves and demobilization of child soldiers, two processes which interlock, but have differing needs. Yet, while child soldier programs receive much attention, slave rehabilitation has languished.[102] Given the profound, long-term impacts of slavery and war, reintegration remains problematic.

The effectiveness of virtually all rehabilitation programs remains unclear as their development is very recent, their techniques are varied and little study has been devoted to evaluating them. Training, alternative sources of income and other poverty reduction measures remain important, for victims, perpetrators and their communities, as Ghanaian and Ugandan examples show. However, such economic solutions, rooted in ex-slave rehabilitation efforts, are only beginnings.

Training and the development of training materials are also critical. Those working with those traumatized children require a diverse range of professional skills and expertise in research, documentation, communication, child care, health care and social work. Yet specific training for those rehabilitating slaves and child-soldiers is not available anywhere beyond a handful of international agencies. One admirable attempt to remedy this problem is the development of manuals by Save the Children Federation.[103] However, local NGOs have few, if any, training resources. Drawing on psychological, psychiatric and social work with refugees

and torture and rape victims, even the most effective agencies, such as SACCS-BBA, admit that they are inventing and adapting techniques as they go.

Slave rehabilitation programs are older, but could borrow much from the more recent, but better funded and better documented child soldier programs. Given the severe psychological trauma which child soldiers, juvenile rape victims and other exploited children are known to have endured, programs seeking to rehabilitate them have tended to be therapeutic. Whereas, ex-slave rehabilitation, which predate these approaches, has emphasized the vocational. A broader view suggests that child soldier programs need to do more to address the vocational needs of their clients and ex-slave programs require greater therapeutic elements. Adult and child clients should not be mixed, even if victimization occurred when all were juveniles. Some techniques currently used to rehabilitate child soldiers and other exploited children could be applied to ex-slaves. Reintegrating rituals similar to those facilitating child soldier returns could be useful in reintegrating former slaves, as rites of recognition and welcome rather than as modes of dealing with wrongs to their communities, which ex-slaves did not commit.

Effective rehabilitation is an expensive, long-term undertaking and agencies' current dependence on donations and soft money grants is problematic. Graça Machel has argued that programs to assist former child soldiers should last at least three years.[104] Providing basic services to broader communities is often essential to avoid local resentment of the special support former child soldiers are given.[105] Typically of shorter duration and cheaper to run, ex-slave programs are still very expensive for the societies where they are needed. Preparation of affected persons and their families, particularly to promote awareness of the problems of reintegration, is essential. Communities need to be committed to ending these problems and dealing with their many consequences. However, comprehensive counseling of families and communities involves high transport and personnel costs, which few programs can meet. Multi-faceted education is also essential, as shown in the experience of SACCS-BBA.

In the best of worlds, programs working with traumatized children would differentiate their services on the basis of their clients' ages and the nature of their experiences. Compelling cultural and financial reasons have and will prevent this from being the reality in Sudan and much of the world. The "integrate" approach has become the norm by choice or by force of circumstances. Programs that deal with exploited children without distinguishing the type of victimization can be effective. However, they eventually need to deal with their ex-child soldier clients as perpetrators as well as victims.

Further research in many areas of this important field is sorely needed. We need to assess the long-term impact of programs and determine what measures "success". We need to explore culturally appropriate ways to insure that groups in conflict refrain from exploiting the weak in their ranks. We need to explore developmental alternatives that would provide non-violent options for children and their communities. However, numerous programs have already revealed good practices and avoidable pitfalls. Among the shortcomings of some programs is failure to understand local recruitment and enslavement circumstances which perpetuate exploitation. Hence the importance of community involvement ranks above all other findings. In most cases, local concerns are not given enough attention. Yet study after study shows that local acceptance is vital to successful demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration.

Activism, reconciliation and therapy for exploited children and their now adult counterparts cannot be delayed until assessments show a clear way. Nor can efforts wait for changes in relationships between adults and children, and citizens and the state, in poor countries. Any attempt to build peace in Sudan must incorporate child soldier and slave rehabilitation and the cessation of their recruitment. Inevitably, changes in attitudes will follow, even if slowly by Western standards. Attention to the needs of the world's children is already centuries late in coming. The problems are too great and the needs of millions in physical and emotional bondage are too compelling to wait.

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Electronic Sources

The most useful web source for humanitarian issues in Africa and beyond is Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Particularly important are "Sierra Leone: Child Soldier Rehabilitation Programme Runs Out of Cash." (22 July 2003), "Ethiopian Centre for Helping Victims of Trafficking Opens." (26 June 2004), "Afghanistan: UNICEF helps demobilise 4,000 child soldiers." (16 December 2004), "Afghanistan: Focus on Rehabilitation of Child Soldiers." (27 June 2005), "Sudan: SPLA child soldiers demobilised in the south." (26 July 2006) and "Sudan: Armed youth voluntarily disarm in Jonglei." (30 August 2006).

Important UNICEF web pages are www.unicef.org/emerg/index_childsoldiers.html, www.unicef.org/infobycountry/liberia_19055.html; *Country in Crisis*, www.unicef.org/emerg/liberia/index.html; www.unicef.org/infobycountry/liberia_19070.html; *Announcing the UNICEF Airlift of Child Soldiers from Sudan Combat Zones*. Geneva: 27 February 2001 (www.unicef.org/media/media_10829.html); "Hundreds of Ex-Child Soldiers Begin Rehabilitation in Rwanda: Newly Demobilized Children Get Trauma Counselling While Families Are Traced". *UNICEF Press Release*, New York: 20 August 2001. (www.unicef.org/newsline/01pr69.htm); *UN Security Council Meeting on Children and Armed Conflict*. New York: 20 November 2001. (www.unicef.org/media/media_10380.html)

Also useful is *Child Soldiers Newsletter*, an electronic newsletter produced by the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (www.child-soldiers.org), supported by the Human Security Programme at Foreign Affairs Canada. Members of the coalition include Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, International Federation Terre des Hommes, International Save the Children Alliance, Jesuit Refugee Service, and Quaker UN Office. Particularly important issues are numbers 8/June 2003 and 14/ Winter 2005/06.

Other important sources include Amoa, B.D., "The Role of Small Arms in African Civil Wars" message by the Chairman of the West Africa Action Network on Small Arms and President of the Africa Forum on Small Arms to www.pambazuka.org (21 September 2006); Anti-Slavery International (www.iAbolish.com, www.antislavery.org), Free the Slaves (www.freetheslaves.net), GlobeGiving (www.globalgiving.com/pr/200/proj169a.html)

International Needs (www.in-australia.org.au), International Organization for Migration (www.iom.int), PREDA (www.preda.org/home.htm), SACCS (www.indianngos.com/s/saccs) and SOS Child Soldier: Uganda project (www.soschildrensvillages.org.uk/), the UN-run ReliefWeb (www.reliefweb.int), Sudan Abduction & Slavery Project Abductee Database Report. Nairobi: Rift Valley Institute, 2003. (www.riftvalley.net/inside/projects.htm), Ukrainian Orthodox Church, "Government Asks Churches to Help Victims of Slave Trade," 2005. (www.orthodoxy.org.ua/News-R_ooua.php?id+6205), Women's Funding Network (www.wfnet.org) and World Vision (www.worldvision.org).

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