

Community action for reintegration and recovery of ex-combatants: Youth at risk



UN Trust Fund for Human Security



Fast Facts

Country: Republic of Congo

Duration: November 2005 to March 2008

Implementing UN Agencies: UNDP

Other Implementing Partners: Local authorities; community-based organizations

Budget: \$1,047,629

Key Words: Post-conflict peacebuilding; youth; ex-combatants; community reconciliation

BACKGROUND

The civil wars that afflicted the Republic of Congo during the 1990s had devastating consequences on the social and economic fabric of the country. One-third of the national population was displaced; 60 percent of the food infrastructure was destroyed; tens of thousands of women were raped or sexually assaulted; and half the country's medical and educational infrastructure was destroyed or damaged. Despite gradual recovery since the 2003 peace agreement, many challenges remained in the southern regions of

Pool, Bouenza, Lekoumou and Niari. A particularly high risk sector of the population was the roughly 15,000 ex-combatant youths who lacked the education and skills necessary to reintegrate into society. At the same time, the communities to which these ex-combatants were returning were faced with an already overburdened support system and had limited capacities to meet the increasing demands of the returning ex-combatants.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the project was to support the consolidation of peace and stability by empowering ex-combatant youths in the war-affected regions of Pool, Bouenza, Lekoumou and Niari. Specifically, the project aimed to reintegrate ex-combatant youths as productive members of society, while addressing various post-conflict challenges in their host

communities. To this end, the project (i) engaged ex-combatants in income-generating activities, such as agriculture, fisheries and manufacturing of agricultural products; (ii) rebuilt the infrastructure, including roads, schools and health clinics; and (iii) restored public water sources to ensure access to safe water and improved sanitation.

BENEFICIARIES

The project engaged over 10,000 ex-combatants in the most war-affected areas of the country. These participants received skills-training and employment in the improvement of infrastructure and the delivery

of services. Additionally, the restoration of basic social services, water and sanitation benefitted about 500,000 people.