



SALW Control Training Manual for West Africa

Photo: UNDP Liberia

Preface

The purpose of this Manual is to help strengthen the capacity of the West African community to deal with the devastating consequences of the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW). It is intended as a primer for those with little or no experience in SALW action, and as an *aide memoire* for those well versed in these issues.

This Manual evolved from the need to adopt a more practical approach towards realizing the objectives set out in the *ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials*, which was signed on 14 June 2006. It is the result of a collaborative effort between the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), the ECOWAS Small Arms Unit, the German Development Cooperation (GTZ) and the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), and was validated at an expert workshop on SALW at the KAIPTC in April 2008. The workshop was attended by representatives of ECOWAS, civil society organizations and government agencies from across West Africa and beyond.

Each of the eight Sections of this Manual can be read on its own or in a different order than presented here. For organizations and individuals new to the small arms issue, we recommend reading the entire Manual. For those well versed in small arms issues, we recommend using the Manual as a resource and selecting only those sections most relevant for your work. The manual is designed to be used by a diverse audience and easily adaptable to a variety of contexts.

The initial target group for this Manual was civil society actors and organizations engaged in the SALW issue. However, the expert workshop made clear the need to build capacity, trust and confidence between all key actors involved in this issue. Each section was therefore written with all three actors in mind. More specifically, Sections 6 and 7 discuss the interaction between civil society, security service personnel and government agencies on SALW control issues, and identify entry points for better coordination and cooperation.

The goal of this Manual is not only to serve as a backgrounder for SALW issues in West Africa, but also as a capacity-building tool. With this in mind, several features appear throughout the Manual to facilitate education and training on the SALW issue. For example, readers are provided with reminders, additional resources, tables and checklists to facilitate action and understanding. Boxes describe cases of SALW control in various West African countries. Finally, trainer notes are included where they can facilitate the structure and delivery of the issue at hand. The result is a highly practical, modifiable and flexible Manual on SALW Control for West African practitioners, policymakers and researchers alike.

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Foreword

ECOWAS has long faced the devastating consequences of the uncontrolled and illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the sub-region. Recognizing the need for a more definitive approach to reducing the threat posed by these weapons, the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials was signed on 14 June 2006.

The Convention is a legally-binding instrument that provides a comprehensive framework to effectively address the problem of SALW, their ammunition and other materials in West Africa. Subsequent to its signature, the ECOWAS Small Arms Programme (ECOSAP) was established for a period of five years to build the capacity of member states to implement the Convention to its fullest.

In April 2008, an expert workshop was held in Accra, Ghana at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) to exchange good practices and priorities for SALW control in West Africa. This KAIPTC workshop was supported by the ECOWAS Small Arms Unit, the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC). It was attended by members of civil society organizations, government agencies and regional organizations from across the sub-region and beyond.

The SALW Control Training Manual for West Africa was validated at this workshop and reflects those issues considered the most pertinent for practitioners, policymakers and researchers on this issue. The authors have sought to effectively capture West African realities and experiences with SALW control and have produced a publication that is relevant to a broad spectrum of actors.

We are convinced that this Manual represents an important contribution to realizing the goal of the ECOWAS Convention. We hope it will be adopted as a standard manual for capacity-building in SALW control across ECOWAS member states and civil society.

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Sincere thanks go to all participants of the SALW workshop at the KA IPTC in April 2008 who validated the purpose and structure of this publication, and whose invaluable comments helped make this a truly West African manual.

A final thanks to all contributors at BICC and the Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution Department at KA IPTC for their hard work and dedication to finalizing this publication. With that said, only the authors are responsible for its contents.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AU	African Union
BICC	Bonn International Center for Conversion
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CCSL	Council of Churches in Sierra Leone
CIMIC	Civil–Military Cooperation
CPMRD	Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution Department
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DD&R	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
EC	ECOWAS Convention
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOSAP	ECOWAS Small Arms Program
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FOSDA	Foundation for Security and Development in Africa
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HERD	Humanitarian Emergency Response and Development
KA IPTC	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre
MALAO	Mouvement contre les Armes Légères en Afrique de l'Ouest
NATCOM	National Committees / Commissions on SALW
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PMC	Project Management Committee
PoA	UN Programme of Action on Small Arms
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SAS	Small Arms Survey
SEESAC	South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons
SLANSA	Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms
SSR	Security Sector/System Reform
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TRESA	Training and Education on Small Arms
UN	United Nations
WAANSA	West Africa Action Network on Small Arms
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
WIPNET	Women in Peacebuilding Network

Introduction

Welcome! By reading this training manual you are taking an interest in creating a West African community, which is safe from small arms.

Small arms and light weapons (SALW) are a threat to communities and regions all over the world. Be it a large war or a village argument, the presence of SALW will make the situation worse and lead to more people dying. In West Africa, the proliferation of small arms has contributed towards instability, violence and war in the subregion.

This training manual will give you some background information on SALW. The *goals* of this manual are:

- To provide an overview of the SALW issue and issues specific to West Africa;
- To promote action on SALW control in West Africa through the sharing of resources, good practice, case studies and tips from across the sub-region;
- To provide future trainers with sound background material to engage in training or capacity-building on SALW control.

This manual is intended for a variety of different audiences, most notably Civil Society Organizations (CSO) interested or engaged in issues of SALW control.

This manual is also relevant to members of the *security services*. While they may share the goal of SALW control, the relationship between CSOs and security services is often difficult. This manual offers suggestions of the types and limitations of cooperation to promote SALW control.

This manual is also useful for *decision-makers* in West Africa. Often decision-makers, while they subscribe to the idea of SALW control, are not terribly familiar with the details. This manual should help in educating decision-makers about the real and concrete problems of SALW, as well as specific potential solutions for West Africa and its people.

This manual is the *start* of the journey, not its *end*. We hope it will help strengthen the capacity of the West African community—CSOs, security services, and decision-makers alike—to deal with the SALW problem. This can only be achieved if willpower is translated to action by:

- Using this manual as an in-house training tool;
- Developing the capacity of organizations to cooperate;
- Demanding and developing training courses to strengthen capacity across the region;
- Providing us with feedback to keep the manual current and on-target.

We wish you every success in your endeavors.

Section 1: Introduction to SALW

What are SALW?

SALW is short for **S**mall
Arms and
Light
Weapons

SALW typically refer to military weapons and commercial firearms. Even though the term is frequently used, there is no universal definition of SALW. The most common definition was first put forth by the United Nations (UN) in 1997 and makes a distinction between 'small arms' and 'light weapons'. Broadly speaking, *small arms* are defined as "those weapons designed for personal use" and *light weapons* as "those weapons designed for use by several persons serving as a crew"¹. The UN definition puts forth a list of weapons within each category to identify those weapons that are considered to be SALW.

Excluded from this list are weapons such as machetes, knives, spears, arrows, and other implements that can be used as weapons (sticks, clubs). While these weapons are equally deadly when misused, they are also common tools and household items and therefore need to be controlled in a different way. The UN definition of SALW refers only to weapons that use *explosive ammunition*.

The most comprehensive description of SALW is included in the ECOWAS "Convention on Small arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition and other Related Material" (ECOWAS Convention), which was signed in 2006. It covers a broad range of objects within its description of SALW, including ammunition, ammunition cartridges, and "all components, parts or spare parts for small arms or light weapons or ammunition necessary for its functioning; or any chemical substance serving as active material used as propelling or explosive agent; (...)"

How many SALW are there?

It is estimated that there are over 600 million SALW in circulation around the world, one for every ten people on earth. Approximately 380 million of this is believed to be in civilian hands. It is assumed that 100 million are found in Africa. These weapons kill tens of thousands, possibly hundreds of thousands of people every year.

¹ You will find the UN definition of SALW in Annex I. Throughout this manual, the terms 'SALW', 'small arms' and 'guns' are used interchangeably.

Case Study: SALW proliferation in West Africa

In West Africa alone, it is estimated that there are seven to eight million pistols, rifles and other small arms in circulation—about the same number as people living in Benin. However, the real quantity might be much lower (Vines, 2005).

How did so many small arms end up in West Africa? There are a number of factors that contributed to the proliferation of SALW in the subregion:

- Anti-colonial struggles;
- Superpower competition for allies and the massive flow of weapons into Africa from Central and Eastern Europe following the end of the Cold War;
- Military regimes and dictatorships;
- Local craft production of guns (gunsmiths);
- Lost or stolen weapons from state security services and leakage from government armories; and
- Returning peacekeepers.

A great deal of SALW and their ammunition are locally manufactured. One-third of African states factory-produce small arms or their ammunition. The number of countries producing SALW on a non-industrial scale is believed to be significantly higher. Different sources indicate that local production occurs in Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Senegal and Guinea, with Ghana being the most prominent case (Aning, 2005; Berman, 2007).

See Section 5 for more on the problem of local production.

Why are SALW used?

The end of the Cold War in the early 1990s saw the emergence of new kinds of conflict, those characterized by ethnic, tribal or religious fighting that occurred within, as opposed to between states. Many of these wars were fought with SALW, which had become readily available through the downsizing and demilitarization of national armies. SALW are currently the weapons of choice of warring parties for a variety of reasons, including:

- SALW are cheaper than other conventional weapons;
- SALW are widely available;
- SALW are lethal;
- SALW are simple to use;
- SALW are durable;
- SALW are easily portable;
- SALW are easily concealed and transported across borders;
- SALW have legitimate military, police and civilian uses.

What is the danger of SALW?

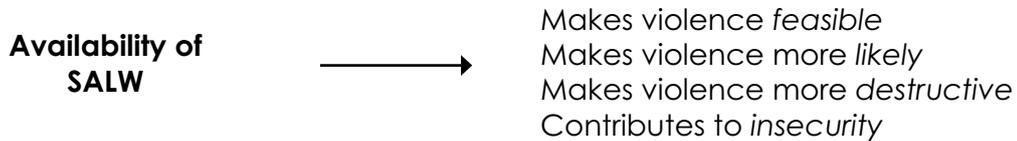
SALW have irrevocably shaped the landscape of modern conflict and daily life by presenting a threat to peace and security in every community.

Threats include:

- More deaths and injuries;
- Lack of development;
- No personal or community security;
- Destruction of property;

- Breakdown of law and order;
- Prolongation of conflicts.

SALW do not cause violence, but they can *contribute* to the escalation of violence. There is no automatic or causal relationship between SALW and violence, but one can say that:



The impact of the availability and proliferation of SALW varies in each country and conflict situation. In some (post-conflict) cases, the presence of SALW often perpetuates a 'culture of violence' where guns are used as problem-solving tools or are used to exert power and influence over others. Their presence and misuse can lead to a cycle of violence in which people acquire guns out of fear, which increases the likelihood of more SALW violence and insecurity. This, in turn, causes people to arm further.

In post-conflict situations, SALW violence can also hinder peacekeeping and peace-building efforts. It limits access to food, water, and livelihoods and also impedes humanitarian assistance. In resource-rich areas, SALW violence can drain away or divert these resources from rebuilding the community or country, causing continued economic hardship and a lack of economic opportunities.²

In other words, SALW violence affects everyone, from the individual to whole countries, regions and even the entire international community.

Case Study: Problems related to SALW in Ghana

For the greater part of history, guns have been used in West Africa as part of tradition, especially during ceremonies such as burials and festivals. However, the problems of SALW, underdevelopment, violent conflict and human rights abuses in West Africa are interwoven. The spread and misuse of small arms helps fuel conflict, and conflict generates a market for more weapons.

Ghana, like many other countries in the region, has been affected by violent ethnic conflicts in the past. In the northern part of Ghana, ethnic violence in the mid-1990s caused over 1,000 deaths and more than 150,000 internally displaced persons. Various SALW, both imported and locally-produced, are reported to have been used in most of these conflicts.

Ghana also suffers from land disputes similar to many of its regional counterparts. There are multiple claims to land, and this problem has led to the use of youth as land guards. The function of these guards is to enforce the land claims of their employers, which is often done with the use of small arms.

Another manifestation of small arms violence is reflected by the consistent increase of armed robberies in Ghana. While the reason for this increase is subject to debate, it is argued that the availability of small arms is a major factor.

For more on the SALW problem in Ghana, refer to the selected bibliography for this section.

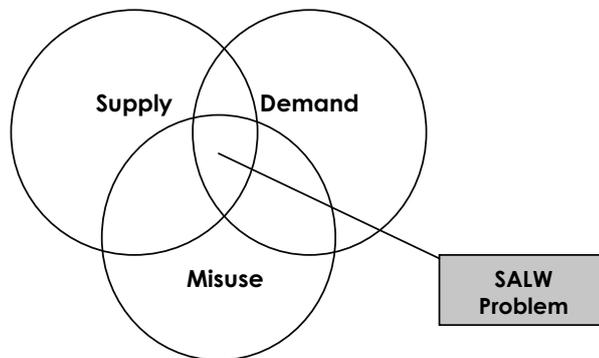
Source: Agboton-Johnson, Christiane, Adedeji Ebo and Laura Mazal. 2004. "Small Arms Control in Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal." *West Africa Series* No. 2. International Alert. Security and Peacebuilding Programme.

² See Section 4 for more on the relationship between SALW and development.

Dimensions of the SALW issue

There are three inter-related dimensions of the small arms issue: supply, demand, and misuse.

Figure 1: Dimensions of the SALW issue



Demand is the reason *why* guns are acquired, owned and/or used. These can be:

- For income and/or part of a livelihood option;
- To extort money in criminal activities;
- To enhance personal security in places where the capacity of the state to do so is limited;
- For status, power and prestige;
- For traditional uses in celebrations, burials, and other ceremonies;
- Self-protection and defense in the absence of the state and/or during conflict situations;
- The protection of one's assets, including crops or cattle, against theft;
- National defense and security.

Supply is *where* guns come from and *how* they proliferate within a community, country or region. Sources are:

- Industrial production by licensed national and international producers;
- Illegal production by manufacturers without a license;
- Legal and illicit trade in SALW by sea and across borders;
- Diversion from state stockpiles;
- Migration of weapons from one conflict situation to another.

Misuse involves the use of guns to commit crimes and atrocities, such as:

- Murder, manslaughter, attempted murder, intimidation, or robbery;
- The settling of private scores and causing harm;
- Inter-ethnic violence, rivalry between clans, armed conflicts and civil wars;
- Land conflicts;
- Intimidation of political opponents during elections;
- Use by land-guards and armed robbers, and in 'contract killings';
- Domestic violence.

In order to combat the problem of SALW, all three dimensions of the problem must be addressed in a sustainable and effective manner.

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Section 2: What is SALW control?

SALW control refers to the implementation, or a combination of measures, which aim to reduce and prevent their negative impact on people, communities, and countries.

The proliferation and misuse of SALW devastates countries at war, but these weapons also harm countries at peace, taking tens of thousands of lives and draining community resources. SALW violence has long-term consequences for the whole of society, including the economy and the functioning of state services.

We therefore need SALW control to:

- Reduce and prevent the illegal flow of SALW around the world, especially from conflict to conflict, and
- Reduce and prevent their irresponsible use and diversion into the wrong hands.

SALW control involves measures that address the three dimensions of *supply*, *demand*, and *misuse*. You can see from Table 1 below that a clear distinction between the activities is not always possible. As the dimensions are interlinked, so are control schemes. Moreover, successful attempts at control need to be able to identify these various activities, and deal with all three dimensions simultaneously.

Table 1: SALW control measures

SUPPLY	DEMAND	MISUSE
Brokering controls Transfer controls Marking and tracing Stockpile management SALW collection and destruction	Livelihood programming Understanding and targeting attitudes Education Awareness-raising	Regulation of civilian ownership Legislation and enforcement Awareness-raising Education Security sector reform (SSR) Community controls (social and technical)

Keep in mind that controlling only one of these dimensions will not lead to success. A broad approach encompassing elements of all three is necessary to tackle the problem of SALW.

Controlling the supply of SALW

SALW spread through different channels. Almost all states participate in this proliferation, via:

- *Production* = the manufacture of weapons. This includes industrial or small-scale production of weapons;
- *Transfer / trade* = the import and export of SALW;
- *Transit* = the movement of SALW through a country's borders to reach a final destination;
- *Diversion* = the movement of SALW from the legal to the illegal sphere.

There are a number of entry points at the national level to control the supply of SALW through legal, political, or civic action. Table 2 below identifies some of these entry-points along with their relevant control mechanisms that can and should be applied at the national level. Not all States have done so despite having agreed to them in the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (PoA) and other regional agreements, such as the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials (see Section 3). It is therefore critical to identify these entry points in order to put in place the necessary control measures.

Table 2: Entrypoints for controlling SALW supply

Entry point	Control mechanism	Purpose	Challenge	Relevant provisions
Export	National guidelines and legislation to determine eligible countries for SALW export; End-user certificates issued by importing States to confirm the weapons' final destination.	To prevent irresponsible arms transfers; To confirm the legality of the transfer and assure that the weapons are not destined for unauthorized users.	States use different formats of end-user certificates. Without an internationally standardized form, they are easily forged.	UN PoA : Preamble, Section II, para. 2, 11–13 ECOWAS Convention (EC) : Articles 1, 3–6, 19, 20
Transit	National guidelines and criteria to monitor the movement of weapons through a territory, such as controlling end-user certificates, as well as respecting transport safety standards.	To prevent diversion and illicit transfers.	Risk of diversion due to a lack of appropriate regulation, personnel, and resources to apply existing laws and guidelines.	UN PoA : Preamble, Section II, para. 2, 11, 12 EC : Articles 1, 3–6, 9, 19, 20
Import	National guidelines and criteria to assess the need for and risk of misuse of the weapons imported, and to monitor the end-use of the weapons.	To ensure that the imported arms do not have a negative impact on security or development.	Lack of capacity, resources and political will of the importing state to effectively apply its national guidelines and criteria.	UN PoA : Preamble, Section II, para. 2, 11 EC : Articles 1–6, 9, 15, 18, 19
Circulation	SALW collection and destruction	To remove weapons from circulation and make communities safer. SALW collection programs are targeted at civilians and are typically organized after a conflict has ended or within SALW-saturated communities. Destroying weapons permanently removes them from circulation and, consequently, the threat of diversion and misuse.	Continuing insecurity and/or lack of confidence in the peace process, which limits the willingness of people to give up their guns voluntarily, and which can create more insecurity. Lack of legislation and political will to define and destroy surplus weapons.	UN PoA : Section II, para. 4, 16, 18, 21, 34, Section III, para. 6, 14 EC : Articles 11, 16, 17, 19
	Stockpile management , which involves the safe and secure handling of small arms and ammunition stocks.	To prevent diversion and safety hazards such as ammunition explosions.	Lack of adequate facilities, personnel, resources, and awareness of international standards.	UN PoA : Section II, para. 3, 6, 8, 17, 18, 29, Section III, para. 6, 8, 14 EC : Articles 16, 19

Entry point	Control mechanism	Purpose	Challenge	Relevant provisions
Cross-cutting	Arms embargoes at the international or regional level, which prohibit the transfer of arms to certain recipients.	To limit the availability of arms to certain actors in a particular conflict situation or to areas with persistent human rights abuses.	Arms embargoes are rarely respected by all Member States. Small arms are easily concealed and moved across borders, which makes monitoring and enforcement of embargoes difficult.	UN PoA: Preamble, para. 12, Section II, para. 15, 32 EC: Articles 1, 6, 21
	Marking, record-keeping and tracing ⁴	To identify the point(s) of diversion of small arms from the legal to the illicit sphere in order to prevent such diversion in the future.	Poor implementation of international marking standards. Inadequate and/or inconsistent record-keeping. Lack of central registries. Lack of international cooperation on marking and tracing. Lack of political will.	UN PoA: Preamble, Article 1, 19, Section II, para. 4, 7, 8–11, 14–17, 21, 36, Section III, para. 6, 9–12, 14, Section IV, para. 1. EC : Articles 1, 5, 6, 8, 9, 15, 17–19
	Regulation of the activities of international arms brokers through licensing, the establishment of penalties, and information-sharing between countries.	To reduce the incidence of illegal arms transfers.	Lack of awareness and political will to enact legislation to regulate brokering activities. Lack of capacity to monitor brokering activities. Lack of international cooperation. ⁵	UN PoA: Section II, para.4, 14, 39, Section IV, para.1 EC : Articles 1, 6, 20

⁴ See Section 4 for more on the relationship between SALW and development.

⁵ A Report of the Group of Governmental Experts, established pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 60/81, considers further steps to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons, p. 9. A/62/163, 30 August 2007. It is available online via <<http://disarmament.un.org/Library.nsf/>>.

To date, SALW production has not been a key entry point for controlling the supply of weapons. This is because inadequate national controls on production have not proven to be a major source of illegal SALW. However, this is changing—local craft production is increasingly a source of illicit proliferation and use of SALW, particularly in the West African subregion.³

Controlling the demand for SALW

In order to reduce and prevent the demand for SALW, we need to answer the following questions:

- Why do SALW enter a particular community?
- What are the means used to acquire them?
- Who are the main weapons-holders?
- What do they do with the weapons?

Efforts to control the demand for SALW not only have to address the motivations for acquiring a weapon, but also the social, behavioral, environmental and economic conditions that make it possible. All of these are long-term solutions that cross-cut with many other development and security issues.

Unlike the supply of SALW, not enough attention has been paid to the issue of SALW demand in theory and in practice. Global and regional agreements on SALW focus more on supply-side measures (see Section 3). This is largely because addressing demand does not easily lend itself to clear-cut control mechanisms. Indeed, the reasons and ways in which SALW are acquired vary across individuals, communities and countries.

Nevertheless, patterns of SALW demand exist and should be considered carefully before engaging in any control activity. Table 3 provides some examples of these patterns and key ways in which they can be addressed.

Table 3: Activities to control the demand for SALW

Motivations for acquiring SALW	Issues to address
Livelihood, lack of alternatives	Livelihood programming, development projects, micro-credit programs, alternative skills training
Insecurity	Law enforcement, reform of the national security sector
Enhancing social status, image, power	Social and cultural substitutes for status, targeting attitudes and behaviors toward weapons
Economic investment	Micro-credit projects, lowering the value and raising the cost of keeping guns

A number of different activities can be used to address the motivations for acquiring SALW, which include awareness-raising, capacity-building, education and information dissemination. These activities must be carefully designed, targeted and appropriate to the audience at hand. A good place to start is a baseline survey on the reasons for SALW demand, upon which control activities can be carried out more systematically and effectively.

³ For more on the issue of local production, see Section 5.

Controlling the misuse of SALW

If we want to control and ultimately end the misuse of SALW, it is important to consider:

- Who is misusing SALW?
- Why are SALW being misused?
- In what way are SALW being misused?

These questions are closely linked to issues of supply and demand. The easy availability of SALW can increase misuse, particularly if these weapons are in civilian hands. However, a weak or poorly trained security sector also contributes to the misuse of SALW by the security forces themselves. In addition, a lack of adequate laws on SALW ownership and the enforcement of existing laws create a culture of impunity whereby there are no legal consequences or punishment for SALW misuse. This behavior therefore becomes harder to deter.

The key to controlling the misuse of SALW therefore lies in the establishment and enforcement of appropriate national legislation. These rules and procedures should include provisions on:

- **Civilian ownership and use:** This includes laws on who should be allowed to own and/or carry a weapon, the procedure for issuing licenses to these individuals, which type of weapons are eligible for civilian ownership and which are prohibited, and legal consequences for illegal ownership.
- **National ownership and use:** among other things, this includes laws regulating the production and transfer of SALW, coordination between national law enforcement and security agencies, the creation of national SALW registries, marking and tracing regulations, and capacity-building of responsible law enforcement agencies.

In a number of countries, national law enforcement agencies such as the police are unable to provide for the security of their people due to a lack of capacity, resources, training, or legislation. In some cases, these agencies may even contribute to or perpetuate insecurity through the abuse of power, corruption or the misuse of SALW. It is therefore critical that these agencies be properly trained and equipped so that they can be accountable to the security needs of their citizens. For more on the security sector, see Section 7.

Remember: The supply, demand, and misuse of SALW are inextricably linked. So are control schemes. Successful attempts at SALW control therefore need to identify relevant activities within all three dimensions and deal with them simultaneously.

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United Nations. 2005. "International instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons." New York: UN DDA. Available at <<http://disarmament.un.org/cab/docs/International%20instrument%20English.pdf>>.

Section 3: Agreements on SALW control

Many governments in the world have recognized that the small arms problem is not confined to their own countries and therefore cannot be tackled by them alone. Indeed, the SALW problem is a global one which requires global attention and the creation of solutions at all levels of political and social organization. As a result, many governments have signed a number of agreements at the global and regional levels to stop the illegal spread of SALW across borders.

The development of global and regional initiatives to curb the illegal trade in SALW emerged alongside a number of important global political events in the 1990s. These include the outbreak of civil wars in Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Rwanda, all of which were fought primarily with small arms. The realization by the international community that small arms can cause mass destruction was one of the main motivations for attempting to diminish and control their proliferation.

There are two different types of global and regional agreements on SALW: legal and political. The most important difference between these two types of agreement is that a legal agreement is legally binding. By signing the agreement, states commit themselves to abide by and comply with its requirements. A political agreement is an expression of will and intent to behave in accordance with certain norms and principles.

There are two key international agreements dealing with the illicit proliferation and trade of SALW:

1. The UN Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components, and Ammunition (UN Firearms Protocol);
2. The UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (UN PoA).

Both agreements are mutually reinforcing.

UN Firearms Protocol⁴

The UN Firearms Protocol is the only legally binding document at the global level. It aims specifically at combating the illegal spread of commercial firearms and their use in criminal activities such as terrorism, drug trafficking and theft. The Protocol requires states to introduce legislation that criminalizes the illegal production of firearms, to strengthen national gun licensing procedures and to establish effective marking and tracing measures to prevent and reduce the diversion of these weapons into the black market.

The UN Firearms Protocol does not attempt to limit civilian possession of guns nor government-to-government transfers of weapons. Rather, it commits states to establish national regulations, which prevent the use of guns in crime. It does not deal with the global SALW trade nor the use and impact of guns in inter- or intra-state conflict.

To check whether your government has signed and/or ratified the UN Firearms Protocol, see <http://www.iansa.org/un/firearms-protocol.htm>. The full text of the Protocol is available at <http://www.iansa.org/un/un-firearms-protocol.pdf>.

⁴ The UN Firearms Protocol was agreed in May 2001 and entered into force in July 2005. Members of ECOWAS that have signed the Protocol are Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sierra Leone (as of the date of publication of this Manual).

UN Programme of Action (PoA)

The UN Programme of Action (PoA) is the first international agreement that deals with the problem of SALW more comprehensively. Agreed in 2001, the UN PoA establishes a set of norms and principles to address and prevent the *illicit trade* in SALW. It is not a legally binding document. Its effectiveness and impact on the ground therefore depends on the political will of states to fulfill its commitments.

Among other things, the PoA aims to:

- Develop agreed international measures to prevent illicit SALW manufacture and trafficking;
- Promote responsibility by states in the import, export, transit and retransfer of SALW;
- Raise awareness of the threat and international problems posed by illicit SALW.

The table below lists and explains the *key commitment areas* of the UN PoA. In most areas, the agreement requests governments to establish and/or enforce adequate national laws to ensure that the commitment is fulfilled.

Table 4: Key commitment areas of the PoA

Commitment Area	Explanation
Transfers	Transfer controls refer to the import, export, transit and retransfer of SALW across and within national borders. The PoA commits governments to regulate all transfers under their jurisdiction by establishing proper standards, and checks and balances.
Brokering	Arms brokers are individuals who coordinate the transfer of arms between two or more parties. The PoA commits governments to regulate the activity of brokers through registration, authorization and international coordination, among others, to prevent SALW from being used in illegal activities.
Stockpile management & destruction	The PoA commits governments to establish adequate standards and procedures for stockpile management and destruction. These standards are needed to prevent the diversion and theft of weapons from government stocks into the illegal market.
Disarmament	The PoA commits governments to disarm soldiers and civilians after a war has ended through disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DD&R) and voluntary civilian disarmament programs.
Marking & tracing	The PoA calls on governments to ensure the adequate marking and record-keeping of SALW and to cooperate with other states in tracing weapons found in the illegal sphere. This measure is meant to help identify the point of diversion of a weapon in order to prevent future diversion.
Cooperation, assistance and transparency	The PoA calls on governments to assist other countries in implementing the provisions of the PoA. Transparency is also encouraged through the submission of <i>annual progress reports</i> to the UN on the implementation of the agreement.

The UN PoA calls for a biennial meeting of states to monitor progress and identify needs and challenges in implementing the agreement. To date, implementation has been inconsistent both within and across states and requires continued will and political engagement. At the same time, the UN PoA has contributed to greater awareness, understanding and policymaking on SALW control and has led to the formation of other global initiatives, such as the UN Marking & Tracing Instrument (see Section 2 for supply-side control mechanisms).

To check whether your government has submitted its annual report to the UN on the implementation of the PoA, visit <http://disarmament.un.org/cab/salw-nationalreports.html>. The full text of the UN PoA is available at <http://disarmament.un.org/cab/poa.html>.

ECOWAS Convention

The ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Related Material (ECOWAS Convention) was adopted in 2006. It succeeded the ECOWAS Moratorium of 1998, the first political agreement on SALW in the sub-region that bans the illicit import, export and manufacture of SALW. Similarly, the ECOWAS Convention prohibits the illegal import, export, or manufacture of SALW, and is legally binding for its members.

The ECOWAS Convention reaffirms the basic principles of the Moratorium and includes a number of the same key provisions, including:

- The establishment of National Commissions;
- A regional arms register and database;
- The training of security personnel;
- The harmonization of laws;
- The enhancement of border controls;
- Arms collection and destruction.

Since the Convention is a *legally binding* agreement, States that have agreed to it must implement its provisions and can be sanctioned if they fail to do so through the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council or the ECOWAS Court of Justice. The Convention enters into force following ratification by the ninth Member State. To date, Niger, Mali, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Senegal have ratified the Convention.⁵

An overview of key provisions of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Related Material can be found in Annex II. A copy of the Convention can also be downloaded from <http://www.unrec-satcra.org>.

What is unique about the ECOWAS Convention?

To their great credit, ECOWAS members have succeeded to add several new elements to already existing measures. Among the most salient of these are:

- Inclusion of ammunition and other related material;
- Reference to non-state actors;
- Provision of a sanctions mechanism in the case of non-compliance.

⁵ Ratifications as of June 2008.

The Convention seeks to achieve its mandate by:

- Enhancing the capacity of the ECOWAS member states through their respective National Committees on SALW, commonly called NATCOM;
- Obliging member states to undertake revisions of existing legislation.

Remember: The ECOWAS Convention is the most modern instrument on SALW control. The international community can take this as an example and should adopt a similar, legally binding agreement on an international scale.⁶

Case Study: National legislation in Ghana

Most of the national legislations on weapons are outdated. Ghana's main legislation on the subject dates back to 1962. Over time and due to subsequent developments in the security sector, most of these legislations have become obsolete.

Existing regulations, which address issues of SALW in Ghana include the following:

- Arms and Ammunition Act (of 1962 amended in 1996 and 2001)
- Arms and Ammunition Regulations (1962)
- Arms and Ammunition Decree (1972)

These regulations address issues of 'arms' and 'ammunition' and their export and import, depositing and safekeeping, ownership conditions and penal provisions, while the ECOWAS Convention seeks to regulate all issues connected to SALW, ammunition and related materials. Ghana's national legislation also does not take into consideration illegal trans-border movements or transfers of such weapons.

Source: Kunbuor, 2007.

Is the Convention binding for your government?

Before international or regional agreements become legally binding for a particular government, they need to enter into force. This usually happens automatically, once a certain number of states have ratified the respective agreement. In the case of the ECOWAS Convention, it will only enter into force after the ninth ratification by a member state. Ratification means that ECOWAS member states that signed the Convention in 2006 need to pass it through Parliament and then deposit an 'instrument of ratification'—this is most often in the form of a signed document by the Head of State.

Even after ratification, there remains a gap between what West African governments have committed to and the actual process of implementing these commitments at home. A treaty or convention which exists purely on paper does not have an effect on the ground if its provisions are not turned into laws, policies or any other action.

The implementation of the ECOWAS Convention and other international agreements may therefore suffer from a number of obstacles, such as:

- Lack of awareness and / or understanding of the issue;
- Lack of political will;
- Lack of resources;
- Cultural barriers.

⁶ A Group of Governmental Experts is currently deliberating the feasibility of an international, legally binding Arms Trade Treaty. It will submit its report the Secretary General of the United Nations in Autumn 2008.

For example, in some countries, the use of firearms in celebrations, such as funerals or weddings, as well as the production of SALW by local blacksmiths has traditionally been part of the society. These deeply entrenched features cannot be changed overnight.

The ECOWAS Convention makes licensing of firearms obligatory. Civilians owning a gun will need to declare it to the authorities and undergo safety training in order to obtain a license and make possession legal. This process may be hindered by fear of being prosecuted, mistrust of the authorities and ignorance of the provision. A complicating factor is a dilemma encountered by confidants of weapons holders: While they might be legally obligated to expose family and community members in the possession of SALW, their culture and community ties might prevent them from doing so.

What can civil society organizations do?

Civil society organizations can help overcome some of these challenges by:

- Creating awareness among the public and authorities of the problem of SALW and the need to implement the Convention (see Section 6 for more on awareness-raising);
- Organizing consultative meetings for communities and authorities on implementation processes;
- Enhancing ownership of SALW control programs;
- Offering consultancy and capacity development programs for implementing agencies;
- Creating awareness among potential donors helping to fund these activities.

What is the added value of the ECOWAS Convention?

It is too early to evaluate the effects of the ECOWAS Convention. Nevertheless, if properly and comprehensively implemented, the Convention promotes the destruction of surplus or seized illegal weapons, ammunition and other related materials; reducing transfers of illegal SALW to non-state actors; and limiting civilian possession of SALW. However, these benefits can only be realized if member states have the necessary will and resources to comply with the Convention's provisions.

Remember: It is relatively easy for governments to sign an agreement on SALW, but much more difficult to transmit those words into actions. Civil society actors and local authorities have a key role to play in making sure that the government lives up to its word.

Useful resources

For an analysis of the ECOWAS Convention and a review of the ECOWAS Moratorium, see:

- Berkol, Ilhan. 2006. "Analysis of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons and recommendations for the development of an Action Plan." Note d'Analyse. Brussels: GRIP.
- Bah, Alhaji. 2004. "Implementing the ECOWAS Small Arms Moratorium in Post-War Sierra Leone." *Project Ploughshares Working Paper* 04-1. Waterloo: Project Ploughshares. Available at <www.ploughshares.ca/libraries/WorkingPapers/wp041eng.pdf>.
- Bah, Alhaji. 2004. "Micro-Disarmament in West Africa: The ECOWAS Moratorium on small arms and light weapons." *African Security Review*, 13(3). Pretoria: ISS. Available at <www.iss.co.za/pubs/ASR/13No3/FBah.htm>.

For more information on the issue of SALW marking and tracing, see:

- Ashkenazi, Michael, Christine Beeck and Elvan Isikozlu. 2008. *Marking and Tracing Small Arms and Light Weapons*. Bonn: BICC. Available at <<http://www.tresa-online.org/modules/module.php?id=15>>.
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. 2003. "Best Practice Guide on Marking, Record-keeping and Traceability of Small Arms and Light Weapons." *Handbook of Best Practices on Small Arms and Light Weapons*. Vienna: OSCE. Available at <http://www.osce.org/publications/fsc/2003/12/13550_31_en.pdf>.

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Section 4: SALW and other cross-cutting Issues

Youth and SALW

Trainer Note

It is important to begin this section with a definition of youth. According to the United Nations, youth is anyone between the ages of 15 and 24. By contrast, ECOWAS defines youth as anyone between the ages of 18 and 35. It is up to you or your participants to define youth in your own setting. In some cases, the definition you choose may have direct implications for whether you can access youth program funding or not.

In the last decade, two million children died as a result of armed conflict and at least six million were permanently disabled or seriously injured. Estimates have put the number of child soldiers, (children under the age of 18) at 300,000 and their involvement has been documented in more than 30 conflicts worldwide (UNICEF, n.d). The roles of children in conflict situations range from actual combatants to messengers, cooks, porters and providers of sexual services. Children tend to be predominantly the victims of small arms use. Even when they are perpetrators of SALW violence, this is almost always at the instigation of (ir)responsible adults.

SALW violence also destroys infrastructure and generates insecurity. In this context, children and youth may not go to school for fear of abduction or death, or they may not have a school to attend. This impedes their overall development and provides a more fertile recruiting ground for paramilitaries and criminals, who may step in and provide their own type of education. For example, during the war in Sierra Leone, functional schooling broke down, which allowed the rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), to take over and provide their own education for children in revolutionary principles and bush warfare (McIntyre, 2003).

Youth, on the other hand, may have been recruited into violence as children, or may have chosen to engage in armed violence. They are equally as vulnerable as children to the threat of recruitment and the negative consequences of armed violence, but must be targeted as a separate group.

Why do youth get involved with SALW?

Broadly speaking, youth get involved with SALW for four reasons:

- Economics;
- Prestige;
- Display;
- Opportunities.

Economics: At the core of the youth and small arms problem is the struggle to survive. Economic incentives are the main reasons why youth get involved in SALW violence and crime. In order to address this problem, economic rewards, incentives and resources must be available to youth to turn them away from SALW violence. This can be in the form of small credits, honorariums, start-up grants, subsidies, scholarships, or facilities in 'gun-free' environments. Negative incentives for SALW violence should also be established in the form of law enforcement and punishment. Indeed, the cost of engaging in SALW violence needs to be greater than the benefits if the problem is to be combated effectively.

Prestige: The ready access to SALW can provide a feeling of empowerment to disenfranchised youth. As one South African youth explains, “When you carry a gun, you feel like you are a human being” (Taylor, 2002). SALW possession provides youth with the illusion of having reached adulthood, which is used to demand/gain attention and respect. Armed with weapons, youth are able to exert power and influence over others and acquire things—material or non-material—that would otherwise be unattainable.

Display: Much of what motivates young people is the need for establishing and maintaining social relationships with peers and with the opposite sex. The way to do so for most youth is to engage in social displays. These range from clothing and behaviors, to the consumption of liquor and consumer goods. Guns are also elements of display, marking hierarchies and exhibiting access to power, particularly for young men. Guns demonstrate masculinity directly, as instruments of force, and indirectly, as male peers react to the presence of guns. These display features are often felt to provide greater access to young women, as well as to prestige and power.

Opportunities: The lack of employment opportunities in the formal sector may provide an incentive for youth to enter the informal sector or black market to earn a living, educated or not. Unemployed youth tend to be idle youth that are easy targets for any group that is the first to approach them and use them. Youth, by nature, like to be the center of attention, so whoever grabs them first and uses them wins their loyalty and attention, particularly if they have no other options. These idle youth create a fertile basis for the recruitment into armed groups, gangs, or for political manipulation.

Case Study: Youth as victims of power politics in Nigeria

In Nigeria, youth are victims of political manipulation and perpetrators of political violence. They are often recruited by local politicians to manipulate the electoral process in their favor through intimidation, violence, kidnapping, theft and other criminal acts. Youth are lured into these activities with cash and weapons, as well as a promise of impunity for their actions. As one interviewee told Human Rights Watch in a 2007 report, “The youth have no money—if you show them the bag of money or the bag of guns, they will work for you.” Apart for material incentives, participation in political violence offers otherwise disenfranchised youth a sense of purpose, excitement, power and relief from boredom.

While unemployed youth and criminal gangs are the primary targets, employed and educated youth are also vulnerable to recruitment. For example, another youth in the same 2007 report readily admits, “I earn money through my civil engineering and through politics. I get more money in politics.” The possibility of earning fast cash is often incentive enough to commit criminal acts, particularly under the shield of impunity. There appears to be no recourse for any crimes committed by youth on behalf of these public officials, and thus no negative incentives.

But these public officials are not working alone. Behind them are rich and powerful men, often referred to as political ‘Godfathers’, with the capacity to manipulate political systems at all levels of the government in Nigeria in favor of the politicians they sponsor. These Godfathers provide the resources necessary for public officials to run successful campaigns. In return, they exercise a degree of control over the government they helped put into place so they can continue to reap its benefits.

Godfathers therefore serve as mediators of violence perpetrated by youth in Nigeria. It is ultimately through them that many youth acquire weapons, which last far longer than any political campaign. In fact, several Nigerian states have suffered from lasting violence after politicians “either abandon or lose control over the gangs they initially employed”. A sustainable solution to the problem of youth in Nigeria requires not only the promotion of social and economic security for youth and their communities, but also the elimination of corruption and impunity in the Nigerian political system.

Source: Human Rights Watch, 2007, pp. 35–36. Available at <<http://hrw.org/reports/2007/nigeria1007/nigeria1007web.pdf>>.

Entry points for targeting youth

Within any given culture or context, youth are not a homogenous group. For example, there is a difference between educated youth and idle youth—those who are not employed, enrolled in any formal education and whose opportunities to earn a living are limited. Both groups are vulnerable to the above reasons and other incentives of taking up weapons, but must be targeted in different ways. The same goes for youth within different cultural groups and geographical areas.

Entry points are those points in space or time where a particular group can be effectively targeted. Identifying them is critical for any activity which aims to reduce and prevent the impact of SALW on youth in a sustainable way.

Entry points for educated youth include school curricula, social and political events (in the school or the community at large), sports events, academic clubs, and school campuses. The messages delivered will focus predominantly on the risk of gun violence to one’s education and future, and on the progress of one’s community and culture in general.

Entry points for idle youth include popular youth hang-outs, shelters, and community centers particularly during an election year. Organized sporting activities or the use of popular figures

to deliver anti-SALW violence messages—whether through song, performance or print—are also important entrypoints for these groups.

In both cases, an important entry point is the family itself. Rather than targeting the attitudes and behavior of youth alone, the attitudes and behavior of the family as a whole must be targeted so that any positive change is sustainable. A major challenge, therefore, is the breakdown of family structures. For example, in Sierra Leone, many youth migrated to urban centers to find work as a result of the civil war, and are now refusing to return to rural settings. Not only has agricultural production decreased, but traditional social structures have also broken down—many youth no longer respect the authority of their parents or elders. Strengthening these structures may therefore be another important entry point to prevent SALW violence by youth.

Perhaps the most important point is to start early. This means limiting children's exposure to violence and small arms, or educating them on the dangers of these weapons. Here again, the family unit and community is critical. Children already exposed to armed violence must be treated with priority.

What can you do?

Keep in mind that there is no single or easy approach to the problem of youth and SALW. Sustainable solutions require a multitude of efforts that need to be undertaken simultaneously. Prevention is the key to success over the long-term. However, youth already involved in SALW violence must be dealt with as a priority.

Analyze and advocate

If youth and small arms is a problem in your country, find out what your government is doing about the problem. Do they have any dedicated programming or funding? Who is running the programs and what are the results to date? What more can and needs to be done? Are the needs and experiences of both young men and women being taken into account? If possible, partner with existing youth organizations and provide recommendations to the Ministry in charge of youth affairs, or turn these recommendations into a funding proposal (see Section 8) that your organization would like to implement. Whatever you suggest, keep in mind that your impact should be *replicable* and *sustainable*—the value added of your activities should be long-term and aim to last well after the funds have run dry.

Get youth involved

Youth are also part of the solution to armed violence. Getting youth involved as agents of change will help them become responsible citizens, make new friends, feel proud of themselves, develop new skills and choose a more peaceful way of life. They can help to:

- **Reach other youth.** Youth can set a good example for their peers;
- **Provide expertise.** Youth affected by small arms and violence are the experts. They know how best to influence their friends to get involved;
- **Ensure sustainability.** Youth are the future of any society and country. Investing in them is investing in the future; and
- **Generate new ideas, energy, and capacity.** Young people bring new skills, ideas and knowledge to the table, and this energy should be put to good use.

Case Study: Ride for peace in Ghana

In March 2002, Yendi witnessed one of the worst chieftaincy conflicts in the history of the Dagbon state which resulted in the death of the King of Dagbon, Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II and forty of his elders. This clash has induced a break-up among the people along clan, chieftaincy and partisan lines leading to a high level of suspicion among the people as well as a mass exodus of productive labor out of the district. Small arms are the most sought-after commodity. Armed violence among youth is high.

The Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA) initiated a conflict management program in the region in a bid to restore peace and reduce the negative effect of illicit small arms in the area. To achieve this aim, FOSDA and its partners embarked on various activities including workshops for youth, women's groups, opinion leaders, and other stakeholders. It was during one such workshop with the youth that participants suggested a cycling competition as a visible and practical means of sustaining the fragile peace which was beginning to manifest in the area.

Not only are bicycles a popular means of transport, but they also represent youth endurance and agility, which is measured by the distance one can cover non-stop on a bicycle. It is also a challenge of one's masculinity among young men. "Our energies and stamina would be stretched to the limit but no blood would be drawn," they stated. This was the main reason for choosing this sport to call for peace.

The first 'Ride for Peace' among the six Area Councils that constitute the Yendi Municipal Assembly was organized on 30 November 2004, a week to the 7 December 2004 general elections. Both men and women participated in the competition and it covered a distance of 15 kilometers from Adibo to Yendi. It was an event which brought together thousands of people without regard to chieftaincy or political affiliations. Ride for Peace has successfully become an annual event, and 30 November 2007 marked the fourth anniversary of this remarkable initiative. At this event, 715 students representing six junior secondary schools went on a peace march along the principal streets of the district capital holding placards with peace messages and came together at the 'Ride for Peace' durbar grounds. Some of the peace messages included 'Dagbon Needs Peace Now More Than Before', 'Bullets Do Not Discriminate', 'Chieftaincy and Politics Should Not Divide Us Unity is Dignity', 'War is Evil, Join the Peace Train' and 'Control Arms Now.'

For more information on FOSDA's work with youth, see www.fosda.net.

Contributed by Afi Yakubu, FOSDA

As adults, community members, educators or authorities, it is our responsibility to ensure that all children and youth are protected and have the choice to live a life free of guns and violence.

Remember: Even if they are involved in armed violence as perpetrators, children and youth are always victims. There is always an adult responsible for making them use these weapons. The decision to join armed groups is often based on a lack of alternatives. Children and youth need support from the government and their community to find their way back to a peaceful life.

Gender and SALW

Men, women, boys and girls, the elderly and the young feel and experience violence and conflict in different ways.

Men are the highest percentage of both *perpetrators* and *victims* of SALW violence. Often, society expects men to defend and protect their pride, reputation, families, country or property. Men frequently see weapons as symbols of 'courage', 'masculinity' and/or 'honor'. This helps to explain why men often perceive guns as generally positive and necessary for their survival.

Women are often targets of rape and killing in armed conflict situations, and victims of crime and violence in their homes. During armed conflict, women are responsible for the survival of their families and have to take over all kinds of responsibilities. They may also be forced to act as wives to combatants, cooks, spies, or messengers, and endure sexual violence.

But sometimes, women may play a role in encouraging small arms violence. For example, some women collaborate with armed groups to conceal and transport weapons. Also, if women view guns as symbols of masculinity, men may be more likely to carry and use guns. Therefore, women can play an important part in changing the image of gun ownership by showing that the use of weapons does not impress them.

Understanding the different ways men and women experience SALW violence is critical to designing actions that meet the needs of the whole population. Consulting community leaders, elders or government officials on the problem of SALW may provide only half of the story if these individuals are all men, which is the case in a number of male-dominated societies. Women may present an entirely different or new picture of the problem and therefore may need to be targeted specifically if their participation in social fora is limited.

Keep in mind the goal of gender equality. Every planned activity should consider the implications for both men and women to ensure that neither one is marginalized.

Trainer Note

Since the mid-1980s, the United Nations has been promoting the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all areas and levels of policy and programming. 'Gender mainstreaming' has become a catch phrase for the donor and development communities, and is often measured in practice by the percentage of female participation in any given process. It is therefore important to clarify to trainees the following two points:

- 1) Gender or gender +mainstreaming is not synonymous with women. Gender refers to socially constructed identities of women and men, while mainstreaming refers to the regular and consistent analysis of the different impact of any given activity on men and women.
- 2) Gender mainstreaming does not preclude activities that target women exclusively. If analysis reveals that women are on the whole marginalized and lack capacity to participate, then targeted action to remedy this situation is necessary. The ultimate goal is gender equality—not equality in numbers, but rather in opportunity.

In your training courses, we recommend that you integrate gender issues within each exercise, as appropriate. Trainees will then be able to practice the meaning of 'mainstreaming' rather than simply providing lip service.

Case Study: The Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET)

Background

During the formative stage of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), women were invited to attend workshops along with men but it was soon discovered that a separate forum was required for women to fully express themselves. WANEP therefore created a deliberate space for women's capacities to be built to participate in peace and security issues: The Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET).

WIPNET focuses on enhancing the role of organized women's groups and women-based civil society organizations in peace processes at various sectors and levels within communities. It is deeply rooted in WANEP's concept of "Women Building Peace" and highlights its gender mainstreaming approach to capacity-building, one that ensures skills transfer and experiential learning without negating traditional value systems and social realities.

Among other things, WIPNET has:

- Improved access for women to basic skills and knowledge of community peacebuilding by translating existing training methodology into indigenous languages;
- Established a community radio program for women, ensuring their voice is heard at the grassroots level in conflict-prone rural communities.

The experience of WIPNET has shown the importance of women's traditional roles as *peacebuilders*. Women are highly skilled in mediation and conflict management. Their roles within nuclear families and local communities to intercede and encourage alternative dispute resolution mechanisms have reduced the deterioration of existing tension into violent conflict in most communities. A prevalent normative value across all communities in Nigeria, for example, is the use of advice from mothers, wives and elderly women. This has often served to minimize worst case scenarios in the face of emerging intra- and inter-group conflicts.

WIPNET's experience has further shown that *women's groups are informal sources of conflict prevention, management and resolution*. Most community-based women's groups across Nigeria have made a positive impact on promoting peace, particularly in preserving social order. They have often engaged in different forms of peace education and reconciliatory efforts with the support of formal institutions. Because of their sensitivities and keen approach to issues, women's groups have also been informal sources for early warning information on potential violent conflicts within communities. Furthermore, they play critical roles in conflict prevention because of their non-violent approach to addressing structural conflicts.

WIPNET was initiated by WANEP in 2001 to help women play key roles alongside men in building peace. For more information, see www.wanepnigeria.org

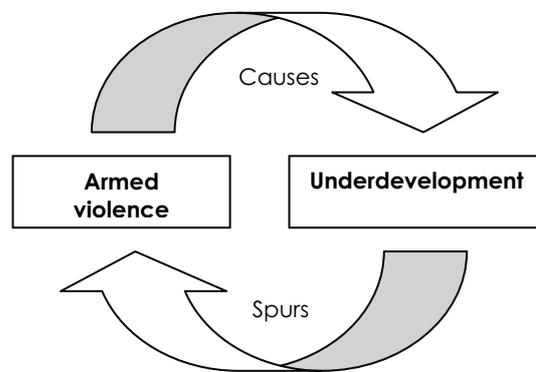
Contributed by Bridget Osakwe, WANEP-Nigeria

SALW and development

Development is a long-term process which aims to improve the quality of life of all people in a country in order to satisfy the basic needs of the population.

Many efforts have been made to understand the effects of armed conflict on development. Far fewer studies have attempted to understand the precise effects of SALW on development. As a result, the effects of SALW are conflated with those of armed conflict and thus, either exaggerated or underestimated. Distinguishing between the two is critical to understanding the precise problem of SALW in a particular society.

There is a clear relationship between armed conflict and development. Evidence from conflicts over the last decades has shown that armed conflict reverses development, and that underdevelopment spurs conflict. This creates a mutually reinforcing cycle of violence and poverty that is broadly referred to as the 'conflict trap'.



As we noted in Section 1, SALW do not cause violence, but their availability and misuse makes armed conflict more likely, feasible and destructive. If armed conflict reverses development, then by extension, the availability and misuse of small arms are a contributing factor to underdevelopment.

More specifically, there are a number of direct and indirect effects of small arms on development which can be measured and analyzed.

Direct effects of the threat and misuse of SALW include:

- Deaths;
- Injuries, accidental wounding;
- Psychological consequences, such as trauma;
- Damage to property.

Each of these direct effects has short- and long-term consequences. In the short-term, individual lives are disrupted, whole communities are uprooted and social and political processes often break down. In the long-term, individuals are forced to change their overall lifestyle—for example, they may no longer be able to engage in productive activity, or they may divert their resources away from productive activity and into self-protection. The same is true for the delivery of services and the diversion of resources at the municipal or national levels.

Indirect effects of the threat and misuse of SALW include:

- Insecurity;
- Prolongation of armed conflicts;
- Greater likelihood of violence and armed criminality;
- Fragmentation of communities and loss of trust;
- Decreased willingness of foreign and local investors to invest;
- Decline in the economy and social services;
- Difficulty in implementing development projects or delivering humanitarian aid;
- Increase in the number of forced migrations and internally displaced persons;
- Prolonged dependency on international NGOs for relief services.

Once again, it is critical that a proper assessment of the effects of SALW on the development of a particular community, society or country take place. Removing small arms because they are generally associated with negative consequences is not a sufficient reason—doing so may in fact place people at more risk or do more harm than good. We need to understand in what ways small arms availability and misuse are affecting development, and design interventions accordingly.

Remember: Always consult local communities before designing a small arms activity. Often, humanitarian agencies and targeted communities have a different perspective of the needs and priorities for small arms action and why it is necessary for development. It is critical to first understand the effects of small arms availability before understanding whether their removal is a development priority or not.

Nevertheless, it is clear that controlling SALW is good for development. It is therefore up to you, your community and your government to control these weapons and minimize their negative effects—this manual can only give you some ideas and tools to do so.

Useful resources

For more on the relationship between SALW and development, see:

- Bourne, Mike, Michael Ashkenazi, Christine Beeck, Julie Brethfeld and Elvan Isikozlu. 2006. *SALW and Development*. Bonn: BICC. Available at <<http://www.tresa-online.org/database/files/SAD-06A02.pdf>>.
- BICC and GTZ. 2005. *Organizing Civil Society Campaigns for Small Arms Action: A Manual for NGOs*. Eschborn: GTZ.
- Faltas, Sami and Wolf-Christian Paes. 2001. "The Problem of Small Arms in Developing Countries: The current international debate and recommendations for Development Cooperation, in particular Technical Cooperation." Eschborn: GTZ.
- GTZ. 2003. "Youth and Small Arms—A Dangerous Combination." Documentation of an Expert Discussion on 8 November 2002. Eschborn: GTZ.
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- McIntyre, Angela and Taya Weiss. 2003. "Exploring Small Arms Demand. A Youth Perspective." *ISS Paper 67*. March. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.
- Shaw, Margaret. September 2005. "Youth and Gun Violence: The Outstanding Case for Prevention." Paper. Montreal: International Centre for the Prevention of Crime. Available at <http://crime-prevention-intl.org/publications/pub_177_1.pdf>.
- Specht, Irma, Michael Ashekanzi, Christine Beeck, Julie Brethfeld and Elvan Isikozlu. 2006. *Youth and Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)*. Bonn: BICC. Available at <<http://www.tresa-online.org/modules/module.php?id=9>>.
- UNICEF. N.d. "Children in Conflict and Emergencies." New York: UNICEF. Available at <www.unicef.org/protection/index_armedconflict.html>.
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Section 5: SALW in West Africa

Drugs and SALW

Across the world, the use and trade in certain classes of drugs is banned. As a consequence, manufacturing and trading in drugs have become a big business which is often defended by the use of firearms. In many cases drugs are manufactured and traded by non-state actors in exchange for guns.

Generally, six dimensions of the small arms-drugs nexus involving various actors can be distinguished (Honwana and Lamb, 1998):

1. **Criminal organizations:** Irrespective of the size and reach of a criminal organization, it can be involved in both the illicit weapons and drug trade. These organizations may act as intermediaries or even control the manufacture or production of weapons and drugs.
2. **Peasant farmers:** Especially in periods of heightened tensions or civil war, farmers who feel insecure may cultivate crops which are sources of drugs. These are sold or exchanged for weapons to protect the farmers.
3. **Guerilla or rebel movements:** For rebel movements, drug cultivation and trade can be a means of acquiring money to finance weapons purchases.
4. **States:** Like rebel movements, certain states have been suspected of cultivating and dealing with drugs in order to finance their military and its weapons.
5. **Drug lords:** Drug dealers need to protect themselves and their business operations and guarantee their supply routes. They often do so with the help of armed guards, frequently organized in paramilitary forces. The same is true for street gangs involved in drug dealing—they rely on small arms to secure their business.
6. **Individual drug addicts:** If an individual becomes addicted to drugs and has no alternative means to finance the purchase of drugs, he or she may rely on criminal activities, often using small arms for robbery.

Nevertheless, it is not appropriate to generalize these links by saying that, for example all drug traffickers are involved in trafficking SALW. There is too little evidence to support this claim. It has to be seen in individual cases whether drugs and SALW are illicitly traded through the same channels and networks.

In order to address the demand for drugs and SALW and the effects of their misuse, targeted policies are needed. However, the supply of drugs and SALW can largely be stemmed in a holistic approach by targeting weak law enforcement. By improving border controls, strengthening the police and the judiciary and reducing overall levels of corruption, the working environment of criminal networks can be made much less permissive (UNODC, 2007). United Nations member states have acknowledged this link in the preamble of the UN Programme of Action (PoA), expressing concern “about the close link between terrorism, organized crime, trafficking in drugs and precious minerals and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons” (UN PoA, Preamble, para. 7).

Transnational organized crime is increasingly operating in West Africa. Criminal groups usually rely on very loose networked structures, benefiting from community and family ties. Drugs destined for North American and European markets are transiting through West Africa, increasing its exposure to drug abuse. In a number of countries in West Africa there are rumors of the exchange of drugs manufactured from abroad for guns, also manufactured abroad.