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brief 29

Exchanging Guns for Tools

*The TAE Approach to Practical
Disarmament—An Assessment of the
TAE Project in Mozambique*

World Vision



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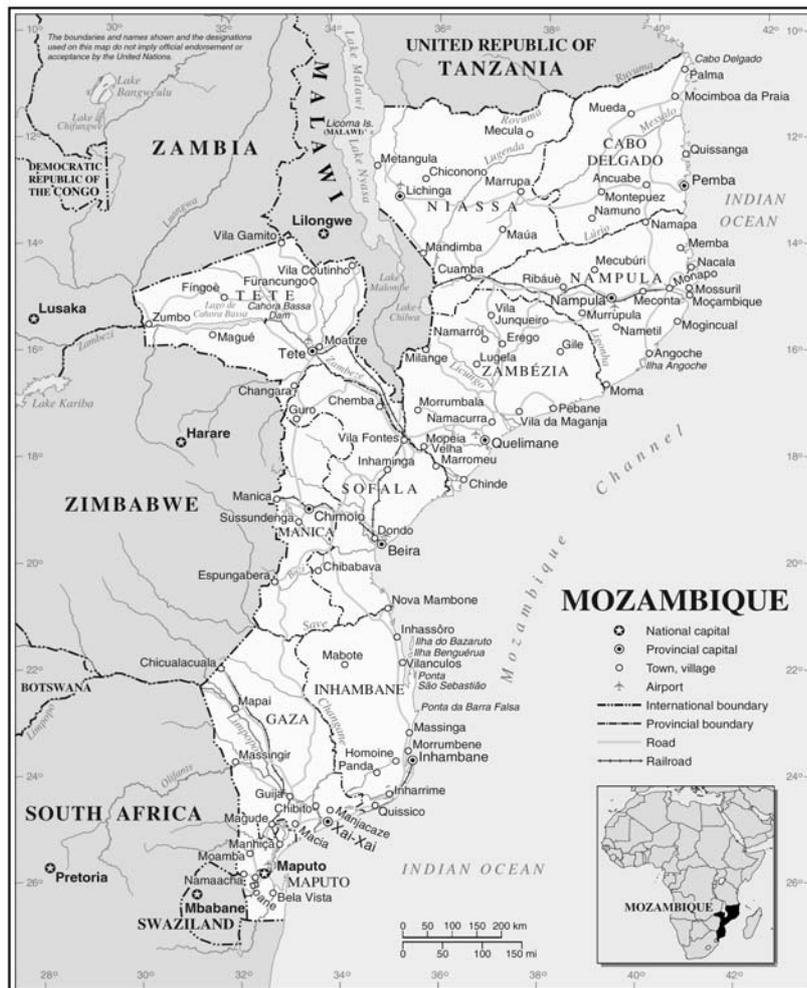
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*Sami Faltas and
Wolf-Christian Poes*



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Preface

Weapons are hazardous. Not just in the hands of robbers and rebels, but in and of themselves: The more of them exist and the easier they can be accessed, the more probable their lethal use. Hence, the disarmament of post-conflict societies constitutes one of the vital challenges that need to be addressed, once combat has ended.

In post-war societies, weapons can fulfil a multiplicity of functions:

- Although kept for defense, weapons promise only a false kind of security. All too often, accidents occur at home because weapons or ammunition are not properly stored.
- As long as a country's infrastructure and economy lie in ruins, a weapon can offer the basis for a family's survival. The owner of a gun can secure an income if recruited by a private security service or a new army or if hired to protect a drove of cattle.
- A weapon constitutes an object of value and a nest egg for times of want. Besides their material value, weapons also have their ideological appeal and their 'aura of power'. Former combatants are known to only reluctantly relinquish their 'companion' of many years.

For people who have lost everything during a war and who have been uprooted from their kin and native villages, a weapon sometimes offers the only prospect for securing a modest income, be it legal or illegal. At the same time, people's hopes and expectations for a rapid reconstruction and economic renewal of their country are often thwarted, for these processes take time and are

usually cumbersome and protracted. That leads to disappointments and to an increase of crime and armed self-protection: a vicious circle of violence threatens to plunge such a post-war society into chaos once again. That's why there is no reasonable alternative to a systematic disarmament of combatants and armed civilians.

The 'Tools for Arms' approach in Mozambique is a case in point and a spearheading example: For

the very first time, civil society is taking responsibility for the population's disarmament at a national level, thereby making an essential contribution towards peace and reconciliation. During Mozambique's civil war, millions of automatic weapons were distributed all over the country and amongst the people. Now the Christian Council of Mozambique is collecting at least part of those weapons and destroying them on the spot. Some weapons parts are then modeled into works of art,



Pieces of art made from destroyed weapons

demonstrating to the people that such killing devices are no longer needed.

It cannot be overlooked that this civil disarmament must be attributed to the courageous commitment of individual civil leaders. One of them is Bishop Sengulane, who has been a major player in Mozambique's peace process and also initiated this project. Mr. Sengulane could build on the excellent reputation and trust which the Christian Council of Mozambique had earned through its role in a successful conflict resolution.

His involvement demonstrates why civil actors must play their role in the peace process: They are neutral with respect to the conflicting parties and the government structures; and they have a proximity and easy access to the people. Civil actors can also find innovative interim solutions without losing their credibility. For instance, although it is now strictly prohibited to own a weapon in

Mozambique, people who hand in their guns during the project period need not fear prosecution. No doubt, the project has been able to learn from the experiences of previous—often failed—disarmament projects. So-called 'buy back' programs in which weapons were bought back at their actual market value have in the past actually boosted the arms trade of a whole region. In Mozambique, useful household tools are offered instead as incentives for people to hand in their weapons, thereby offering them new civil income opportunities. Those consumer goods given in exchange for arms—mostly sewing machines and bicycles—are symbols of a new beginning. The Mozambique disarmament process is accompanied by training and awareness programs to prepare society for a period of peace and to teach people how to resolve future conflicts in a non-violent way.

In post-war societies, civil actors and non-governmental organizations (NGO) can indeed fulfil a vital role in conflict resolution and peace building. In Mozambique, Church leaders and NGOs are living up to the challenge. However, there is yet another area in which NGOs can make a contribution: security. In this area, though, they still have to gather and document their experiences.

This present Report investigates the 'Tools for Arms' approach in Mozambique and looks into the general preconditions that lead to the project's success. It also tries to identify weak areas so other actors can learn from this experience and apply it to other contexts. WORLD VISION and BICC jointly hope that this documentation will help encourage other post-war societies to commit themselves more fully to the disarmament of their population and to raise awareness about the immense risks of small arms.



Weapons being destroyed in a public ceremony in Sofala Province

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Coordinator for Conflict Resolution
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Introduction

The Republic of Mozambique's coat of arms has at its center an AK-47¹ Kalashnikov assault rifle as a symbol of the people's struggle against colonial rule, which ultimately led to the country's independence in 1975. The 1970s and 1980s saw many violent conflicts in which the Kalashnikov, designed in the USSR in the 1940s, helped to bring down colonial rulers and regimes supported by the West in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Nicaragua, Cambodia and Vietnam. A popular culture of revolution evolved around slogans like "a luta continua", the image of Ernesto 'Che' Guevara and the gun with the distinctively curved ammunition magazine. A South African anti-apartheid music group even called itself AK-47.

Today, the Kalashnikov is still widely used for a variety of purposes, but it is not glorified as before. In fact, to many it symbolizes the disastrous proliferation of small arms that fuels political conflicts and promotes the rise of violent crime in many parts of the world. Bishop Dinis Sengulane of the Anglican diocese of Lebombo (Mozambique) finds it painful to see the gun on the Mozambican flag. He tells his compatriots that "to sleep with a gun in your bedroom is like sleeping with a snake" (Sengulane Interview). In the 1980s and early 1990s, Mr. Sengulane helped to launch the peace process that ended the civil war. In 1995, he founded a project called 'Transformation of Arms into Ploughshares', abbreviated TAE.² TAE is a project of the Protestant-dominated Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM), and particularly important to Bishop Sengulane, who has been the president of CCM since 1975. It aims to tackle one of the

dangerous legacies of the liberation struggle and the civil war, namely millions of weapons and huge amounts of ammunition and explosives in the hands of the population. This unusual church-based effort, which this report will discuss, does not actually convert arms into agricultural implements, though that was the original idea, and Dom Dinis still hopes to achieve that one day (Sengulane Interview). Rather, it collects weapons, ammunition and explosives from the population, destroys the ordnance, and offers tools and other useful implements in exchange.

TAE is unusual for being a disarmament project entirely run by civil society, for turning the metal of scrapped guns into works of art, and for its longevity. In this report, we will discuss how TAE works, what it has achieved, the difficulties it faces, how it might be made more effective, and to what extent its approach could be usefully applied elsewhere. Our aim is not so much to evaluate the project, but rather to describe and assess its approach. When we provide details, we do this to illustrate a general point rather than to explore the nuts and bolts of the project.

This study is based on two field trips to Mozambique, one undertaken by Sami Faltas to southern Mozambique in March 2003 and one made by Wolf-Christian Paes to the central provinces of Mozambique in May 2003, as well as on an extensive

literature review and interviews with experts on SALW proliferation both inside Mozambique and abroad. The main findings of this report were discussed during a stakeholders' workshop in cooperation with TAE in June 2003.

¹ AK-47 is the original version of the famously durable gun, admitted for use in the Red Army in 1947. Many types followed, with different names. In Mozambique, the Kalashnikov is referred to as the AKM, a later version.

² Its Portuguese name actually means 'Transformation of Arms into Hoes.' The acronym TAE rhymes with 'fly'.

History

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about Mozambique is how well it has overcome the anti-colonial war (1964-1974) followed by an even bloodier civil war (1976-1992). By 1992, Jim Wurst reports, at least one million people had been killed, while an additional 1.7 million had fled the country (Wurst, 1994). The World Bank estimates that when the war was over, nearly a third of the population, 5.7 million people, had been uprooted. Railway tracks, roads and bridges throughout the country were destroyed. Half the schools and a third of all health clinics were destroyed or severely

damaged. Agricultural fields and country roads had been hardened by drought and were strewn with landmines. Mozambique had become the poorest country in the world (The World Bank, 1997). Today, the country still faces severe problems. However, it is at peace, the wounds torn by the war are slowly healing, the infrastructure is being gradually repaired, and landmines and other ordnance are being removed. What is more, the economy is growing at one of the fastest rates in Sub-Saharan Africa, largely fueled by South African investment, and democracy is maturing. Much of this is made

possible by foreign aid, but none of it would have happened if the Mozambicans had not established a sustainable peace.

Around 1990, the FRELIMO ('Mozambican Liberation Front') government and the RENAMO ('Mozambican National Resistance') rebels came to the conclusion that they had nothing to gain from continuing the war. Probably most of their followers had grown sick of the conflict much earlier, not to mention the rest of the population. It is generally assumed that a strong and general desire among Mozambicans for peace is the main reason why despite many problems the peace accords signed in 1992 have held.

Probably a lack of resources contributed to the end of the war. Many observers have noted the contrast between the success of the Mozambican peace process and the quest for peace in Angola, which took 10 years longer and suffered many setbacks. Like Mozambique, Angola is a Lusophone Southern African country that underwent Portuguese colonialism, a war of independence, and a civil war stoked by foreign powers. Most analysts believe that peace was more difficult to achieve in Angola because of the country's exploitable resources. MPLA and UNITA fought amongst other things about access to rich sources of oil and diamonds, while in Mozambique the assets available to FRELIMO (prawns) and RENAMO (hardwoods) were less lucrative (Collier, 2001).

While Kenyans, Tanzanians, Italians, the United Nations and other outsiders played a big part in bringing the warring Mozambican factions together in the early 1990s, the earliest initiatives came from the Mozambican clergy. The Christian Council of Mozambique, the Anglican Church and the



Pieces of art made from destroyed weapons

Roman Catholic Church province convinced FRELIMO and RENA-MO that dialogue was the only way to end the war and save the country. Then, when the fighting stopped, the churches played a key role in the struggle to build a peaceful society. They continue to do so, using their influence both behind the scenes and in public. TAE is probably their best-known project in this regard.

The UN peacekeeping operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ), launched in 1992, counts as one of the most successful of its kind. It demobilized nearly 100,000 combatants and led the country to its first elections. All in all, at the end of the peace process, about 214,000 weapons had been collected, very few of which were destroyed. Mostly, they were handed over to the government (Berman, 1996, pp. 74 and 88; Chachiua, 1999a, p. 26). Many Mozambicans regarded the ordnance they held as a necessary precaution in case the fighting resumed. As a result, when ONUMOZ left in 1995, one expert estimated the number of weapons remaining in the country at one to six million (Chachiua, 1999a, p. 27).

That estimate was probably too high, as we will argue. However there can be no doubt that the legacy of weapons stands in the way of Mozambique's development toward peace, prosperity and democracy. Economically, it drained the country's resources. According to TAE, 70 percent of the Mozambican debt was due to the import of weapons (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2001a, section 2). Besides, the prevalence of weapons, ammunition, mines and unexploded ordnance of other kinds is an obstacle to commerce, agriculture, health care, education and the improvement of the country's physical infrastructure. Furthermore, the insecurity

stemming from uncontrolled ordnance also affects social and political life. While illegally held guns sometimes allow people to protect their family and property, they also give rise to suspicions and fears that are not helpful when it comes to peaceful and democratic development. Finally, they fuel the rise of violent crime and cause many serious accidents.

In the early stage of the peace process, these problems, and the desirability of disarming the population, were clear and undisputed. But who was to tackle them? ONUMOZ tried and failed. The government, according to many accounts, was unable to do the job. One reason was a lack of resources, but a more fundamental one was a lack of trust. The divisions caused by the civil war made people reluctant to give up their weapons, and perceptions of government corruption and ineptitude further undermined their confidence in the State and its officials. That, at least, is what the observers we consulted believe.

Enter the Council of Christian Churches (CCM). In its National Programme of Action for 2002-2004, CCM's TAE project says that

"Mozambique is the first Country in the world with a government who accepted in 1995 to give the civil society, (Christian Council of Mozambique) completely the responsibility for collection, massive destruction of small arms and light weapons as well as all security process of these complex and political very sensible issue."

It goes on to stress how unusual this step was, explaining that while non-governmental organizations often play a prominent role in small arms action in other countries, *"...the civil society by main governments is never allowed to manage (collection and destruction) completely of firearms*

without the interventions of their governments."

We can confirm this. Furthermore, TAE claims in its Programme of Action that Mozambique's decision to leave the disarmament of the population to civil society was the reason why a Mozambican diplomat, Carlos dos Santos, was chosen to chair the preparatory committee for the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms of 2001 (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2001a).

So the minority churches of Mozambique, united in CCM, took on the task of removing and destroying a million guns or more and immense quantities of explosives held illegally. Later in this report, we will discuss the consequences and implications (good and bad) of delegating such a task to non-governmental organizations. However, civil society is not alone in dealing with illegally held ordnance in Mozambique. The government authorities and the South African police have a co-operative venture called Operation Rachel (see box, p. 20) that seeks out and destroys caches of illegal ordnance, and TAE occasionally enlists the help of the Rachel experts.

CCM launched TAE on 20 October 1995 in the presence of religious, governmental and diplomatic representatives, as well as various national and international NGOs. A broad publicity campaign informed the population about the goals of the project and the means it planned to use to achieve them (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2001).

Assessing the Scope of the Problem

While Mozambique has been successful at keeping the peace between FRELIMO and RENAMO, it has been much less successful in achieving sustainable economic development and effective governance. While nominally the economic gains have been impressive since the end of the civil war, much of the development is focused on the coastal areas and the ‘development corridor’ linking Maputo’s hinterland to the South African border. Despite a noticeable ‘trickle-down’ effect, economic opportunities remain scarce for many people in the provinces, leading to substantial migration both to the capital and abroad. Agriculture, the predominant means of economic reproduction in rural areas, has also suffered greatly from the floods in 2000 and 2001, followed by a severe drought in 2002.

The combination of poverty, deep divisions in the population and weak governance has proved a fertile ground for the rise of crime, though Mozambique is still more peaceful than many of its neighbors. Due also to its geography, Mozambique has allegedly also become a major transit point for the trafficking of drugs and other contraband. Guns are also trafficked, for instance to the cities of South Africa. It is extremely difficult to assess the scope of the problem of SALW proliferation in Mozambique, as reliable statistics on illegal arms possession as well as on arms-related crimes are scarce.

It is widely assumed that during most of the colonial period, firearms were rare in Mozambique,

a function both of underdevelopment and of the comparatively superficial control of the Portuguese colonial masters over the neglected hinterland. This is supported by interviews undertaken during our research which confirm that weapons were not part of the traditional lifestyle. Some respondents even claimed that Mozambican society was inherently more peaceful, partially as the result of the ‘benign’ colonial rule, than the more violent societies in neighboring South Africa and Zimbabwe. While it seems questionable that the colonial regime was indeed more benign in Mozambique, there is little doubt that the country “was not to witness a massive influx of arms before the national liberation struggle of the early 1960s” (Chachua, 1999a, p. 16).

Observers have estimated that there had been about 45,000 military firearms in Mozambique in 1971, based on the existence of 35,000 Portuguese soldiers and 10,000 armed FRELIMO insurgents (*ibid.*, p. 16). This number seems to be extremely conservative and makes no allowance for the fact that regular armed forces usually maintain more than one weapon per soldier. Furthermore this number excludes police weapons as well as privately owned firearms. Despite these limitations it seems clear that the number of guns was comparatively low by the early 1970s, despite the fact that by the beginning of the decade the liberation struggle had been underway for six years. FRELIMO received arms from China, the Soviet Union and other Eastern European nations, while Portugal poured arms into the country to

equip both its colonial army and the white settler population.³ FRELIMO, in line with its doctrine of a popular revolution, followed a similar strategy of arming civilians in the areas under their control both for self-defense and to assist in an armed uprising of the population. This deliberate strategy assisted the spread of weapons throughout the country (Chabal, 1996, p. 8).

No organized attempt was made to collect these weapons during the brief spell of peace following the Lusaka Peace Accord in September 1974 and the outbreak of civil war between the newly established FRELIMO government and RENAMO insurgents in 1976. There is very little reliable information on the number of weapons which poured into the country between 1976 and the end of the conflict in 1994, however most experts agree that the number must have been very substantial. The Maputo government during the 1980s spent 40 to 50 percent of the state budget on defense (Berman, 1996, p. 43) and this figure did not include weapons delivered by the Soviet Union on credit (Chachua, 1999a, p. 19). Quickly developing into a ‘Cold War’ proxy, FRELIMO received substantial military assistance from socialist ‘brother’ countries, much of it in the form of small arms and light weapons. According to Western intelligence reports, some 6,000 tons of military equipment were shipped to Nacala Port in February 1977 alone (Africa

³ AK-47 is the original version of the famously durable gun, admitted for use in the Red Army in 1947. Many types followed, with different names. In Mozambique, the Kalashnikov is referred to as the AKM, a later version.

Contemporary Record, 1978-1979, p. C331). While these numbers are almost certainly inflated, there is little doubt that imports of military equipment during this period were substantial.

Meanwhile RENAMO initially received arms from Ian Smith's minority regime in Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe) and later on from the Apartheid government in South Africa. In line with RENAMO's guerilla strategy, much of this took the form of small arms and light weapons, including significant quantities of Soviet-made AK-47s seized by South African forces during operations in Angola and Namibia. Further assistance was provided by other western states and private groups espousing anti-Communist and pro-Christian agendas (Chachia, 1999a, p. 20), while some weapons were acquired commercially on the black market, in exchange for ivory and timber. Another important source of military equipment for RENAMO was the capture of weapons from government troops.

The situation was further complicated by the fact that both FRELIMO and RENAMO had a bad record for stock-keeping and storage procedures. It is widely believed that many weapons 'lost' during the almost two decades of

civil war ended up in the hands of civilians, or were hidden by combatants as a 'life insurance policy' for the post-conflict period. Meanwhile, FRELIMO continued its practice of handing out weapons, including automatic rifles both to paramilitary groups (such as party formations and factory brigades) and to the general population. According to one former FRELIMO officer, the motivation for this distribution was purely political:

"The military was not even consulted and, of course, it did not have in mind the need for arms control. From a military point of view the distribution of weapons to [the] civilian population was nonsense. Even to militia groups it should have been more cautious. Because, those weapons could—and most of the time did—end up reinforcing the enemy. But the political leadership deemed it correct" (ibid., p. 21).

There is no reliable information on the total number of weapons in circulation at the end of civil war. According to a much-quoted estimate (Smith, 1996, p. 6) in 1995 six million AK-47s were believed to have been circulating in Mozambique in 1995. It is not quite clear whether this number is supposed to include the 1.5 million assault rifles that were handed out

by the government to civilians according to the same source. In a country of some 16 million people and with only about 150,000 regular combatants at the time of the peace agreement, these numbers seem to be extremely exaggerated. However, while this inflated number still forms the basis for much of the needs analysis for small arms action, there can be no doubt that the problem of uncontrolled SALW proliferation by the mid-1990s was very substantial.

Matters were not helped by the fact that despite the impressive results of the ONUMOZ demobilization program, many ex-combatants preferred to retain some of their weapons by hiding them before reporting to the ONUMOZ assembly areas. With regard to RENAMO units, a number of former fighters interviewed in the context of this project confirmed the existence of a deliberate strategy to hide substantial amounts of arms and ammunition as a precaution in case the peace process failed. These caches are believed to be most numerous in former RENAMO strongholds. This leaves us with three different categories of uncollected illegal weapons at the end of the peace process (Chachia, 1999a, p. 27):



Assault rifles cut into pieces during public ceremony in Sofala Province

- Caches retained by the warring parties, in particular by RENAMO, mostly located in inaccessible areas near their former areas of operation;
- Caches retained by individual soldiers and militia members, usually located in or near private residences.
- Individual weapons retained by civilians, either stemming from government distribution or purchased individually, also usually located in or near private homes.

While the Lusaka peace agreement marked the end of politically motivated violence in Mozambique, the strong demand for automatic firearms by criminal groups in neighboring South Africa during the second part of the 1990s meant that cross-border gun-running became an important problem. Former combatants from both parties, justifiably worried about their peacetime prospects, utilized the market opportunities created by the high demand in South Africa and sold both their personal weapons and the content of caches across the porous border. Alex Vines (1996, p. 7) quotes a former FRELIMO soldier saying “we knew that guns make good business. So we kept the best for ourselves. I have sold some to dealers from Joni [Johannesburg] and I kept others for the future. [...] FRELIMO was never going to pay us for the years we were made to fight. We have to look after ourselves.” This view was shared by the head of the RENAMO Parliamentary Group who remarked that “the soldiers have not got any money and there is lots of military equipment in the bush” (Oosthuysen, 1996, p. 49).

In the absence of reliable statistics it is impossible to quantify these cross-border transfers, but the South African government was sufficiently worried to dispatch specialized police teams from 1995

onwards to conduct joint weapons collection and destruction operations with their Mozambican counterparts. Dubbed ‘Operation Rachel’ (see box, p. 20), this rare example of cross-border police cooperation is still on-going at the time of research and has succeeded in destroying more than 30,000 firearms plus several tons of ammunition, explosives and other military equipment (see detailed statistics for Operations Rachel 1-9 in the box, p. 20).

In the decade following the almost simultaneous end of white minority rule in South Africa and the end of the civil war in Mozambique, initiatives such as ‘Operation Rachel’ have contributed to a reduction in cross-border arms smuggling. Improved border management procedures and intelligence-sharing, as well as a reduction in demand for illegal weapons in South Africa (which probably peaked in 1996/97) had an impact on the illegal trade as well. Another factor could be that while South Africa’s black market reached the saturation point, leading to a reduction in market prices, the number of arms caches within easy reach of the South African border is shrinking. Interviews with former RENAMO soldiers in the context of this research confirm that potential beneficiaries need to go deeper and deeper into the bush to access remaining caches of weapons, which must lead to higher costs on the black market, making the cross-border trade less lucrative. There are even some indications that automatic weapons are now smuggled into Mozambique (UN, 2002, p. 8), indicating that weapons from local caches can no longer satisfy the demand of the indigenous criminal groups, even though this demand is fairly low by international standards.

Given an impoverished and traumatized population, scores of former fighters with dim prospects

and growing income disparities as the result of the government market-oriented economic policies, one would assume that the widespread availability of weapons in Mozambique would lead to a sharp increase in armed violence. Indeed, reports from the late 1990s cite anecdotal evidence for a rise in crime, particularly in the greater Maputo area (Chachiua, 1999a, pp. 34-35; Oosthuysen, 1996, p. 47). The few available statistics record a jump in reported crime of about a third between 1994 and 1996, even though the share of arms-related crimes remained constant at about 4.2 percent. Unfortunately no more recent statistics were available until the time of writing.

Therefore the authors have attempted to investigate the number of arms-related crimes by conducting interviews with local police chiefs in Maputo, Beira, Quelimane and Mopeia. The results of this informal survey painted a very different picture compared with the earlier reports.⁴ All police officers interviewed for this report confirmed that the number of arms-related crimes was actually very low and that this number has been stable in the period from 1998-2003, and much lower than in 1992-1995 (Interview Ministry of the Interior, May 2003). Unsurprisingly, the majority of cases were reported in the Maputo area and usually involved the use of guns in armed assaults and car-theft. The latter has also been a cause of concern along the National Highway Number One, where truckers and individual motorists had been targeted by

⁴ The authors are aware of the limitation of this information-gathering approach. Unfortunately, limited resources prevented us from undertaking a more comprehensive survey, which would be needed to assess the real impact of small arms on the security situation in Mozambique. We should add however that the general view on arms-related crime expressed by the police was corroborated by members of civil society.

armed bandits (Interview Ministry of the Interior and Police Chief Beira, May 2003).

This view was confirmed during interviews with police officials (May 2003) in Mozambique's second largest city, Beira. It is the capital of Sofala province and an important port city at the end of the Tete corridor between the coast and landlocked Malawi and Zimbabwe. Beira saw some heavy fighting during the civil war. Nevertheless, the police confirmed that there were very few incidents of arms-related crime, on average one case per month. While the city sees substantially more crime than the hinterland, much of it is peaceful. The police representatives mentioned the continual presence of armed bandits along National High-way Number One, but they claim that the number of assaults, which peaked at 7–8 cases per week in the mid-1990s, is now much lower, partially because a special unit of the rapid reaction police has been deployed in the province. While the police officer we spoke to acknowledged the existence of a black market for guns in the city, he claimed that most of them were coming from 'leaks' at the large military base in town, where underpaid soldiers are willing to sell or rent out (at a price of about US \$20) their firearms to criminals.

Police officers in Quelimane (May 2003), the capital of Zambezia province, paint an even more peaceful picture. According to the police chief, no black market for firearms exists in the province, even though the area witnessed very heavy fighting during the civil war and, like neighboring Sofala province, contained several important RENAMO bases. While some isolated incidents of armed robberies were reported, the police claimed that there had been only two cases in the period from January to May 2003. The police acknowledges that substantial

caches of weapons still exist in the province, mostly deep in the inaccessible bush, and while major stocks of arms are recovered by the police, usually as the result of accidental finds by farmers, the chief was mostly concerned about their potential for accidents rather than their use in crime.

All in all, we believe that the problem of small arms proliferation and misuse in Mozambique has been exaggerated by many observers. Whereas Maputo and the comparatively prosperous capital region suffer from substantial (mostly property-related) criminal activity, they have been spared the soaring crime levels common in many other large cities in Africa, including neighboring South Africa. Provincial capitals and secondary cities in Mozambique are much more peaceful than the Maputo region, while rural areas see virtually no violent crimes committed with firearms. This suggests that either the actual number of weapons in circulation is much lower than the published estimates we cited above, or that the majority of the weapons retained after the civil war were exported or well hidden. This is supported by an analysis of the weapons recovered by TAE during our visits to Mozambique. Most of the operational weapons (the ones most likely to be attractive to criminals) were recovered from caches in remote locations, whereas the weapons submitted in or near urban areas were less numerous, and often not in working order.

Even provinces with reportedly high numbers of remaining RENAMO caches, such as Sofala and Zambezia, show extremely low crime rates. In contrast, comparatively few caches are believed to exist near Maputo, yet the capital shows the highest incidence of arms-related crimes, indicating that the weapons are

coming from elsewhere. Furthermore, while many observers (Oosthuysen, 1996, p. 47) had predicted that former fighters would turn to crime in order to survive, the police confirmed that in 2003 the vast majority of crimes were committed by disgruntled young people between 20 and 35, often coming from an urban setting (Ministry of the Interior, May 2003).

The problems posed by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons continue to be substantial. However, the authors of this report believe that the size and the impact of the problem have been grossly overstated. Arms caches continue to be found in the countryside and pose a very real risk of accidental firing or explosion. The persons uncovering the weapons are the first to face these hazards. Similarly, individual weapons retained from the war could be a source of accidents or—less likely—end up in the hands of criminals. Given the inaccessibility of many caches and the low black market demand, their recovery by criminal groups currently makes little economic sense. These factors provide a benign environment for voluntary collection programs like the one operated by the TAE project.

When it comes to gun control, the government in Maputo is said to be very strict, but its possibilities are limited not only by a lack of money, equipment and qualified personnel. Its laws and institutions are also less than adequate. It has developed a National Action Plan to implement the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms of 2001, but needs resources to properly implement it. It is also drafting a new law on firearms to replace the outdated 1973 law introduced by the colonial power, Portugal. This law does not include certain types of weapons, nor does it impose adequate penalties on offenders (United Nations, 2002, p. 9).

Aims and Objectives of the TAE Project

In very broad terms, it seems fairly clear what TAE does and what it hopes to achieve. However, it is hard to discuss the objectives and aspirations of the project systematically because TAE describes them differently in various project documents. This even happens within a single document like the basic TAE text *Background Information*, which is updated from time to time, but does not bear a date.⁵

According to this text, the fundamental aim of TAE is to “establish a *culture of peace*” in a country ravaged by war and natural disasters (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2000). To do so, it seeks to “strengthen democracy and civil society by encouraging the population to participate in active peacekeeping activities, by promoting reconciliation and by facilitating the initiation of productive activities for the population. The project also encourages the social integration of the target group” (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2000), that is to say, ex-combatants and others illegally holding weapons and explosives.

According to the basic TAE project document, Background Information, the five major components of the project are:

1. *Collection of weapons*⁶
2. *Exchange of weapons for tools*
3. *Destruction of weapons*
4. *Civic education of the beneficiaries’ and surrounding community*
5. *Transformation of the destroyed weapons into pieces of art and presenting them to the general public (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2000).*

A TAE report issued in 2001 adds two further components:

6. *“To share the TAE experience by...promoting Peace and Reconciliation during various national and international events/activities” and*
7. *“To improve the TAE project through the constant proposal of new practical ideas (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2001).*

TAE’s Background Information document goes on to distinguish in greater detail

i) General Objectives

- *to help build a culture of peace*
- *to support and maintain a peaceful post-war transition in Mozambique*
- *to offer an alternative lifestyle to arms holders*

ii) Specific Objectives

- *to collect and destroy all available weapons*
- *to transform arms into “ploughshares”, i.e. offering useful tools for delivering weapons*
- *to reduce violence and educate civil society about its results*
- *to transform destroyed arms into sculptures and other forms of art (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2000).*

Background Information also specifies that TAE’s target group comprises “illegal arms holders, former combatants, and all others willing to share information concerning existing arms caches or individually kept weapons of any type” (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2000).

It goes to list as “expected results and tangible past benefits”

- *Reducing the number of arms circulating in the country*
- *Diminishing accidents due to arms caches*
- *Diminishing acts of criminality and violence*
- *Social reintegration of the target group members by involving them into productive activities*
- *Better acceptance of the principles of a culture of peace amongst the population through participatory acts of reconciliation (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2000).*

Furthermore, the document goes on to describe the wide press coverage that TAE enjoys, especially in Mozambique, but also in foreign media (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2000). It provides examples of the impact of tools and other useful items provided by TAE to people reporting or surrendering ordnance:

- *A local woman has been able to start a business by using her incentive received in exchange for weapons (a sewing machine). She is now looking to expand her business.*
- *A young man whose home was destroyed by the latest floods was able to begin the process of home reconstruction with the help of*

⁵ The project also gives varying renditions of its English name, sometimes calling it the ‘Tools for Arms Project’ and in other instances the ‘Transforming Arms into Ploughshares Project’. Occasionally, ‘A Culture of Peace’ is added to the name.

⁶ When TAE speaks of ‘weapons’, it often means to include ammunition and explosives.

⁷ TAE uses this term to denote the recipients of goods offered in exchange for ordnance.

cement bags exchanged with TAE.

- *A former Child-soldier, captured by one of the fighting factions during the civil war in Mozambique, received various materials in exchange for information leading to the discovery of two arm caches buried by himself after the war.*
- *A young university student was able to receive an Oxford English Dictionary in exchange for his weapon.*
- *The many bicycles that have been exchanged are now being used to alleviate the stress of bringing family essentials daily such as water, firewood or bringing produce to the market for its sale (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2000).*
- *A civic education programme initiated by the Anglican church in Maputo has succeeded in having some children bring in their toy plastic guns to the TAE project office for destruction, in return for another new toy.*
- *Through the donation of a small land tractor by a Japanese partner, two groups of people in the Manhiça region and the Chibuto region competed for the tractor. The second group successfully raised 500 weapons and thus the tractor was delivered to them (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2000).*

Turning to the creation of sculptures from destroyed guns, the document reports:

- *The creation of hundreds of works of art made from arms fragments by the Nucleo de Arte Association of artists in Maputo, has provided the symbols for peace: for example, artists have created with the destroyed weapons: motorcycle, various types of birds and animals, traditional African statues, a jazz-player, a table and chair etc (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2000).*

We will now attempt to provide our own interpretation of TAE's goals. By doing this simply and clearly, we will be better able to estimate TAE's success. Naturally, we will try to avoid misrepresenting the project's intentions.

The impression we obtained during our visits in 2003, and reading documents written throughout the seven years of the project, is that in practice, TAE particularly wants to remove as much weaponry and ammunition from Mozambican society as possible. That is by far its most important objective. Nearly all its other activities serve to support this main function. In our view, the handing out of useful products in exchange for guns, the staging of civil education campaigns, the production and exhibition of guns turned into art, and drawing attention to the TAE project at home and abroad in practice all serve to reinforce TAE's principal function, the removal and disposal of ordnance, even if TAE suggests that they are equally important.

But beyond weapons reduction lies a bigger goal. By targeting illegally held arms and explosives, TAE wants to contribute to peace in

Mozambique. That is its ultimate aim. How, in TAE's opinion, will weapons reduction lead to greater security and a more durable peace? After all, removing weapons does not automatically produce peace. With some justification, TAE believes that disarmament will contribute to peace in three ways.

First, by making it more difficult for political activists and criminals to obtain guns and bullets. This will be the case if the tools of violence are in smaller supply or if people hide them more carefully. Second, by demonstrating that it is both possible and advantageous for civilians to get rid of arms and explosives that they hold illegally. Here civil education and the offering of incentives are useful. Third, by widening the movement to remove illegal guns from Mozambican society, both by expanding the TAE project and by promoting efforts by others. Here fund-raising and public relations are essential.

Now let us see what TAE has achieved, and how its achievements measure up to its aims and objectives.



Collected pistols in storage at TAE Headquarter in Quelimane, Zambézia

Output and Impact

In its reports to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), TAE relates its ‘objectives’ to ‘outputs’, ‘outcome’ and ‘actual result’, (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2001). This provides a useful framework for our discussion.

Weapons Collection and Destruction

The most recent data available (October 1995–October 2003) indicate that TAE collected 7,850 weapons, 5,964 pieces of unexploded ordnance (like mines and grenades of various types), 256,537 rounds of ammunition, and various other pieces of military equipment, adding up to a

total of 270,351 items ranging from bullets to machine guns (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2003).

We have no way to judge the accuracy of these numbers, but we have no evidence to suggest they are incorrect. By contrast, we find some of the texts that TAE puts out about its results in weapons collection confusing and misleading. In its sixth-month report to CIDA, TAE claims that it passed the milestone of “200,000 pieces of weaponry collected” in September 2001 (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2001), and in its Background Information and other documents, TAE claims to have collected “over 221,000 different pieces of

weaponry and accessories” (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2000).

These statements sound as if TAE collected over 221,000 arms, instead of several thousand arms and over 200,000 bullets and other pieces of military equipment. Unfortunately, this confusion seems to be deliberate. On other occasions, TAE has literally claimed to have collected 200,000 weapons.

In April 2002, TAE’s national coordinator Albino Forquilha told a Portuguese news agency “that ever since the creation of TAE, this CCM project has resulted in the collection and destruction of about 200,000 weapons...” He also noted that “the CCM needs about 19 million dollars...to make viable its program of Exchanging Weapons for Hoes (TAE) for the next three years. It plans to collect a total of 100,000 weapons per annum” (Lusa News Agency, 10 April 2002). A few months later, Mr. Forquilha made a similar statement to South African reporters (South African Press Association, 2002).

Clearly, TAE has on several occasions exaggerated the results of weapons collection by using word like ‘arms’ and ‘weapons’ for a wide variety of military items, 90 percent of which are bullets.

TAE’s tables of collection statistics seem more consistent and precise than its texts. These tables indicate that since 1995, TAE has collected about 1,000 weapons a year, plus respectable quantities of unexploded ordnance, ammunition and other military gear. In terms of disarming the Mozambican population, this crop is very small. Nor have we seen any statistical evidence that supports TAE’s claim that the removal of weapons and ammunition has led to a decline in weapons-related crime and accidents. At any rate, it is almost



Improvised storage site for collected arms and ammunition in Mopeia, Sofala

impossible to obtain reliable statistics on these matters in Mozambique.

The 7,850 arms collected by TAE since 1995 are less than the approximately 30,000 weapons recovered and destroyed by the nine Operations Rachel that took place in about the same period (see box on Operation Rachel, p. 20).

To be sure, Operation Rachel is a project of the South African and Mozambican governments, while TAE is entirely run by civil society. Besides some of the weapons collected by TAE are included in the figures for Operation Rachel due to the fact that the government program destroys weapons collected by TAE. All things considered, for a church-run project to run a weapons collection program for seven years and collect thousands of guns and large quantities of ammunition and explosives is no mean achievement. For them to do this with very limited government support is remarkable.

How has the collection and destruction of the guns and explosives recovered by TAE affected Mozambique? We do not believe it has made it more difficult for political activists, criminals or anyone else to arm themselves. However, it has proven and demonstrated that weapons reduction is possible in Mozambique. Without Operation Rachel and TAE, there would be no one seriously challenging the normality of weapons being widely available in the country. Thanks to these two programs, the population are finding out that there are benefits to getting rid of illegally-held armaments.

This message is reinforced and amplified by TAE's civic education activities, and its success in reaching the Mozambican media. We do not believe that TAE's art

program has had a big impact within the country. The art scene of Maputo is very far removed from the life of most Mozambicans. However, stories, photos and exhibits of art made from scrapped guns have hugely contributed to TAE's public relations outside the country, probably making it much easier to raise funds for the program. So indirectly, the art project may have had a strong impact on TAE's activities throughout Mozambique. This effect may now be wearing off, as many potential donors know the story of turning guns into art, and the artists show a greater interest in furthering their artistic and commercial careers rather than promoting the TAE project.

As we will see in the section on civic education, TAE is planning a gender activity. So far, it has shown little inclination to consider the various ways in which men and women experience the spread and the recovery of weapons. The way it rewards influential ex-combatants may not be encouraging to women suffering from insecurity and gun violence. On the other hand, we could imagine that women are in a general sense sympathetic to TAE's attempt to get guns out of society. Unfortunately, we can only speculate about these important questions.

Provision of Tools and Other Incentives

In the six years between the launching of the program in 1995 until September 2001, TAE handed out nearly 7,000 kilograms of commodities and a negligible amount of cash. The items included bicycles, sewing machines, sheets of zinc for roof construction, agricultural tools, building materials and a wide range of other items (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2002).

The exchange of ordnance for productive goods has been the object of much thought at TAE. The project has carried out needs assessments in order to select the most appropriate rewards, though Christian Brun, previously assigned to TAE as a CUSO volunteer, believes they now need to be re-examined (Brun Interview, March 2003). The criteria that TAE uses to determine how large a reward a 'source' should receive are not crystal clear, but most current and former staff members agree that some of the most important are:

1. The volume of the ordnance offered, which can vary greatly.
2. Its condition, which staff members claim is usually very good.
3. The type of ordnance offered. Dangerous items rate higher.
4. The characteristics of the source. According to the staff, deserving recipients get more.
5. 'Social value', that is to say the likely impact of the reward.

⁵ The project also gives varying renditions of its English name, sometimes calling it the 'Tools for Arms Project' and in other instances the 'Transforming Arms into Ploughshares Project'. Occasionally, 'A Culture of Peace' is added to the name

⁶ When TAE speaks of 'weapons', it often means to include ammunition and explosives

⁷ TAE uses this term to denote the recipients of goods offered in exchange for ordnance

Figure 1: Collection Results of TAE Project from 20 October 1995 until 14 October 2003⁹

Type	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	C. Del.	Zamb.	Total
AKM	76	279	120	718	193	604	102	355	639	3	1582	4671
Pistols (various)	36	55	27	28	20	29	194	33	91	2	239	754
MG	2	7	1	6	5	5	1	0	0	0	14	41
PPX	82	79	85	17	84	13	6	69	120	1	5	561
Bazooka	17	14	5	53	12	3	0	0	31	0	15	150
Mortars (various)	2	7	0	3	6	87	0	10	0	0	1	116
Machine Guns PK	1	9	3	18	1	3	0	0	0	0	42	77
Machine Guns Pieces	8	15	2	1	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	32
Mauser	12	23	4	2	9	15	9	12	0	0	197	283
G3	4	11	71	6	2	2	4	10	4	0	72	186
Semi-automatics	19	10	145	13	13	5	19	1	4	0	34	263
Grenade Launchers	18	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50
Rifles	3	1	2	2	1	7	221	1	52	1	229	520
FBP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	80	29	0	0	109
M20	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	0	0	0	0	32
ZG1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	5
Weapons collected	280	543	465	867	348	777	590	571	970	7	2432	7850
Other items collected												
Explosives	1172	844	57	103	33	240	355	85	1856	34	1185	5964
Ammunition	10489	9943	2881	33307	10226	19227	40059	22669	200507	3494	102907	455709
Cartridges etc.	147	128	371	187	26	112	160	46	3	0	8	1188
Other equipment	5	7	1	0	2	4	1	3	6	0	1	30
Bayonets	75	4	1	1	0	34	0	0	3	0	2	120
Grand total	12168	11469	3776	34465	10635	20394	41165	23374	203345	3535	106535	470861

⁹ This figure is based on data provided by TAE. The weapons categories were defined by TAE. The columns C. Del. (Cabo Delgado) and Zamb. (Zambezia) refer to two TAE 'satellite' offices, which are operating semi-independent from the headquarters in Maputo.

Whom does TAE reward? It is important to note that it offers incentives to the people who provide information leading to the recovery of ordnance, or who hand over such ordnance. These are called 'sources' or 'beneficiaries'. They may not be the same people who actually held the ordnance. The sources may take TAE's operational staff to caches of arms belonging to themselves, their families, their neighbors, their rivals, or anyone else. Alternatively, they may have obtained the ordnance from other people by purchase, barter, theft or extortion. Of course, they may also have had the items in their own possession.

During our mission, we spoke to a beneficiary in Boane, near Maputo, who had paid friends and acquaintances to give him arms and explosives to surrender to TAE in exchange for sewing machines. These machines enabled him to expand and modernize his tailor's shop in the central market. He seemed pleased with the arrangement and eager to continue it. In this case, it was the tailor, his workers and family, as well as the people who had supplied the ordnance, who benefited from the swap. Probably, there were indirect benefits for other people as well. We did not detect any adverse effects, but when we come to discuss TAE's method of operation, we will discuss unintended effects.

It is difficult to assess the impact of providing bicycles, tools and building materials to people who help TAE recover illegal weaponry. Definitely, the recipients benefit. Who are they? Generally speaking, they are not women hoping to start a business, or struggling young students, as the examples put forward by TAE suggest. Male ex-combatants in their forties who are men of influence and accustomed to doing business benefit much

more, and much more frequently. The incentives provided by TAE rarely benefit the poorest members of local communities directly. However, the poor may profit indirectly. The women working the sewing machines in the tailor's shop in Boane may be a case in point.

TAE refers to the beneficiaries as 'sources', and for good reason. These people are suppliers of information, not necessarily of guns and bullets. TAE offers rewards to people who provide information leading to the removal of illegal weaponry. The guns and bullets may be in the possession of the source himself, but it is also common for the source to offer TAE guns and explosives that he obtained from others in order to trade them in. In this case, he will give the actual suppliers something in exchange for the weaponry. In other cases, the source will not provide weaponry at all, but lead the project staff to the place where it can be found, for example in a cache.

How this mode of operation affects local communities is not clear to us. Unfortunately, the impressions we gained in our fieldwork are haphazard and superficial. We suspect that the provision of benefits to 'sources' makes people think that giving up guns and ammunition can make good business sense. We also believe that to most potential beneficiaries, this financial incentive is a more powerful motive than the desire to promote peace and security. However, TAE steadfastly denies the commercial nature of exchanging guns for tools.

We are uncertain about the effects of the goods handed out on income generation amongst the weaker members of local communities. If by adding a sewing machine to his shop, a tailor can employ another

seamstress, then perhaps a job will be created. The same applies if a farmer receives a set of tools, enabling him to gainfully employ another person on his land. However, we suspect that in most cases, the impact of the small rewards provided by TAE is insufficient to create sustainable jobs.

Civic Education

This TAE activity was launched in 2000. By 2001, about 500 people had participated in what TAE describes as civic education events (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2001). From reports and interviews with the staff, we conclude that this work mainly consists of encouraging the population to hand in weapons. It is in this context that the dangers of living with arms and explosives are described, as well as the advantages of trading them for bicycles, sewing machines and the like. So civic education is instrumental to enhancing the success of disarmament (collection, destruction and exchange of ordnance).

TAE encourages people to hand in ordnance, gives them something useful in return, and destroys the ordnance, turning some of the scrap into art. It is more successful than most similar campaigns around the world in drawing public attention to these activities, and this publicity serves to highlight the possibility and desirability of getting rid of weapons and explosives.

Operation Rachel

Operation Rachel started in 1995 and it has become a leading example of a weapons collection and destruction program that has sought to stem the movement of illegal firearms and other small arms and light weapons across national boundaries, in particular across the borders of Mozambique and South Africa.

Both the democratically elected governments of Mozambique and South Africa have since their transitions, been faced with increasing levels of violent crime exacerbated by the widespread proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In 1995, South Africa and Mozambique signed an agreement to jointly combat crime. The aim of Operation Rachel is to destroy arms caches still buried in Mozambique following that country's civil war and transition to democratic rule and relates to disarmament, arms control and crime prevention.

Its objectives are twofold. First, to prevent weaponry in these uncontrolled caches from falling into the hands of smugglers/traffickers who direct them to lucrative underground markets, mainly South African,

where they are used to perpetrate crimes and acts of violence. Second, to remove and destroy unstable explosive devices and material from these caches thereby preventing injury to innocent civilians who reside in the vicinity of these caches.

From a South African Government perspective then, the collection and destruction of small arms and light weapons in Mozambique is not [only] an issue related to disarmament and arms control, but an issue of crime prevention. "The destruction of arms caches in Mozambique is viewed as a natural extension of fighting crime in the cities and towns of South Africa." As the National Commissioner of the South African Police Service, Mr. J.S. Selebi has stated, "the destruction of these arms caches in Mozambique with the assistance of the South African Police Service is part of our mandate in maintaining law and order *within* [our emphasis] South Africa."

For Mozambique, Operation Rachel is an important means of demilitarizing its society. When the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Mozambique (UNOMOZ) was phased out of Mozambique, it was soon realized

that there was an increasing availability of firearms which posed a threat to security, peace and social stability. After identifying hidden arms caches as the main source of these weapons, and in order to reduce the potential of violence, the government of Mozambique defined as a priority the location and ultimate destruction of the weapons.

South Africa and Mozambique have thus been acutely aware of the "cross-border" nature of crime and therefore the need to combat it at both a national and regional level. As such Operation Rachel prevents the weapons from causing further destruction in the region generally and, in particular, from being used in violent crime in both South Africa and Mozambique.

Between 1995 and 2002, eight operations consisting of some 19 missions have been undertaken (the data below include figures on the ninth as well). In total 611 weapon caches have been located and destroyed. All of the operations are carried out collaboratively with members of the South African Police Service (SAPS) teaming up with police officials nominated by the National Department of Operations of the police of the Republic of Mozambique (PRM). In a unique development with respect to disarmament matters Operation Rachel has received support from both the international donor community and from the private sector in South Africa.

Operation Rachel's success is attributable, in part, to consistently well-planned and executed operations as well as a high degree of cooperation between the relevant states.

Most areas or provinces of Mozambique have been covered by one or more of the various

Operation Rachel Weapons Collection Results, 1995-2003

Type	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Handguns	8	13	79	353	453
Submachine Guns	91	68	980	735	1874
Rifles	981	355	4345	3183	8864
Light/Heavy MG	47	52	279	467	845
Mortars	15	44	35	21	115
Ammunition	23,153	136,639	3,000,000	155,314	3,315,106

Type	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total
Handguns	18	372	101	45	1442
Submachine Guns	126	467	346	235	4922
Rifles	2205	2943	2072	1302	26250
Light/Heavy MG	66	148	47	1	1952
Mortars	70	32	5	0	337
Ammunition	83,276	486,000	2,004,018	2,200,000	11,403,506

operations, including: Cabo Delgado, Gaza, Inhambane, Massingir, Maputo, Manica, Nampula, Niassa, Sofala, Ponto d'Ouro and Zambezia.

The types of weapons and weapon parts and accessories collected and destroyed have included: Anti-personnel mines, anti-vehicle mines, boosters, cannons, demolition mines/charges, detonators, rifle grenades, hand grenades, handguns, heavy machine guns, initiators, fuses, launchers, light machine guns, magazines, mortar bombs, mortars, projectiles, rifles, rocket motors, rockets, small arms ammunition and submachine guns.

Commonly found items include: AK47 series assault rifles, Uzi submachine guns, Browning, Makarov and Tokarev pistols, PG-7 rockets and RPG-7 launchers, 82mm mortars, 75mm recoilless cannon ammunition and 122mm rockets.

Noel Stott, Institute of Security Studies, Pretoria

In other words, what TAE does in the way of civic education is mostly marketing. Successful marketing, in our opinion. Public awareness campaigns are an auxiliary, not a principal activity at TAE. The gender project that TAE plans to launch may be its first major step toward pursuing public education as a main focus, rather than as a means of maximizing weapons collection. However, one could imagine other public awareness efforts. Assuming that only a very small part of the population will be prepared to trade ordnance for bicycles and sewing machines, and therefore a lot of guns and explosives will escape recovery, TAE could have chosen to teach people to minimize the risks of holding and handling weapons and explosives in order to minimize accidents and misuse. However, it has not. Of course, TAE cannot do everything. As its resources are limited, its choice may have been a wise one. What is not wise is the unsafe and insecure way in which TAE handles weapons and explosives itself.

Guns into Art

TAE did not intend turning gun metal into sculptures to be a commercial venture, nor was it primarily motivated by the desire for artistic innovation. Here again, the motive was publicity and marketing, and in this sense, the art project has been successful within Mozambique and perhaps even more so abroad (see box on "Arts in the Crossfire"). Amid a lot of international media coverage, the sculptures have gone on tour in the United States, Britain, Italy and France, and other shows are to follow (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2001).

TAE says this "may lead to the sale of some art pieces to support the project's activities" (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2001), and indeed it has. In fact,

commercial success has been the downfall of TAE's art project, with many artists breaking away from the project in order to profit from the moneymaking potential of their work. The Maputo art center *Nucleo d'arte* that used to work with TAE now presents its 'art from arms' on an Internet site (www.africaserver.nl/nucleo) that only mentions TAE in passing. Now TAE plans to stop supplying gun scrap to these artists, and intends to employ others to produce art from guns for the benefit of the project, as was originally intended (Interviews with staff and former staff).

We have already pointed out that in our opinion the art project has been very important to international public relations and fund-raising for the TAE project, but not so important within the country. In fact, the pieces of art produced by the *Nucleo* artists are rarely, if ever, used during civic education campaigns in the countryside. During a visit to the town of Mopeia (Zambezia province) the authors were able to witness the destruction of some previously collected weapons by a TAE field team. This was done during a brief ceremony, including speeches by the local dignitaries in front of the assembled population. Although the TAE field team actually had some pieces of art with them, these were not on display, nor was any reference made to the idea of turning guns into art. When questioned, the members of the field team explained that the people would not understand the ideas of the artist, and that displaying the pieces could even have a negative impact, as superstitious villagers might mistake them for magic charms (Interviews with team members, May 2003).

Resources Available to the Project

The national project office of TAE is currently located in one of the rougher quarters of Maputo, plagued by violent crime. Here TAE plans to build a depot for collected ordnance and a studio for hired artists turning gun scrap into art objects. Currently, its storage space consists of an IFA truck that was donated to TAE by a German charity three years ago as a mobile collection and destruction platform, but which broke down in January 2000, soon after its arrival in Mozambique, and has not been repaired yet.¹⁰ This vehicle is parked under a tree on the compound of the Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM) in the center of town.

The project team consists of a National Coordinator, Mr. Albino Forquilha, who is also the coordinator for the southern part of the country, where the capital Maputo is located. There are seven project officers, a driver, at least one security guard and a consultant (formerly two) from the Canadian volunteer organization CUSO.

The project office in Maputo is responsible for the development of national strategies, the maintenance of international contacts, the training of TAE staff members and also for the weapons collection in the provinces of Maputo and Sofala. As of June 2003, satellite 'teams' existed in

the provinces of Gaza, Zambezia, Inhambane and Niassa, usually consisting of an official TAE representative working out of the provincial CCM office.¹¹ In Sofala, Cabo Delgado, Manica, Tete and Nampula the project maintains no permanent staff of their own, but uses CCM offices and staff members as their informal

team in Zambezia province visited by one of the authors in May 2003 maintained that it was independently funded and run by the local CCM office. The same allegedly applies to the smaller TAE operation in Niassa province.

All current members of staff are men. A female CUSO volunteer



Villagers assembled to observe the public destruction of weapons in Sofala

'representatives' (Interview with Kayo Takenoshita, May 2003).

Despite our best efforts, we have not been able to fully grasp the relationship between the TAE headquarters in Maputo and its 'satellites' in the provinces. Weapons collected in the provinces are included in the collection statistics published by TAE in separate columns and in most cases the head office is providing funds for salaries and for the purchase of incentives, as well as expertise in collection and destruction. However, the TAE

who, amongst other things, designed a gender activity for TAE left the project in June 2003.

Two of the operational officers, a lieutenant trained as a military engineer and a private, are seconded by the Mozambican military, and one is seconded by the police. In addition to their low government wages, they receive a salary from TAE. A third staff member used to work in counterintelligence and was a soldier for many years before that. He was trained by the South African-Mozambican Operation

¹⁰ We are told that the spare parts have arrived, and the truck will soon be operational again

¹¹ The exception is the TAE representative for Inhambane, who works out of the TAE office in Maputo and de facto fulfills the role of a second weapons collection officer.

Rachel and supplied to TAE in 1998 by the Ministry of the Interior (Interview Guerra, March 2003). Yet another worked for the government's 'political security' agency SINASP during the last years of the civil war and joined TAE in 2000.

TAE is at pains to conceal this involvement of serving and former security service officials, because it believes, probably correctly, that a large part of the population does not trust the government and will be reluctant to hand over illegal ordnance if they suspect that state officials are involved. This applies most particularly in areas where there is strong support for the RENAMO. When we spoke to the seconded officers, we got the impression that their contact with their commanders consists mainly of sending them short reports with statistics of ordnance collected and destroyed. They seem to consider themselves TAE staff rather than soldiers and policemen.

Other forms of government support include giving the project official approval, allowing it to handle illegal ordnance without risk of prosecution, and sometimes providing explosives for the destruction of collected ordnance. All in all, the government is not deeply or intimately involved in TAE's work and its organization. TAE currently has two vehicles in Maputo, one of which used by the national coordinator, and the broken down IFA truck. Additionally, two Land Rovers are on their way from the UK.

The Mozambican organizations that support TAE are the CCM, chaired by Bishop Dinis Sengulane, and Ms. Graça Machel's Foundation for Community Development (FDC), which are both involved in the running of the project. Bishop Sengulane and Ms. Machel are TAE's patrons. Their organizations provide personnel as well as

materials and money, besides helping to raise funds abroad. TAE also receives help from the Association of Demobilized Soldiers (AMODEG) and the peace group PROPAZ, which have provided personnel and expertise on weapons safety. Leaders of both the government party FRELIMO and the opposition party RENAMO have endorsed and commended the work of TAE, providing political backing. The government ministries of Home Affairs and National Defense provide practical support, while the ministry of Finance and Planning has exempted cargo destined for TAE from customs duties. Finally, TAE receives assistance from the Mozambican-South Africa weapons recovery and destruction project called Operation Rachel (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2000).

Overseas donors have been Press Alternative and the Mozambique Development Corporation Japan Committee, both from Japan, 'Arche Nova' from Germany, CUSO and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) from Canada, plus organizations from the Netherlands, South Africa, Sweden and the USA (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2000).

TAE has been quite successful in attracting a significant level of funding and support, both locally and overseas. In these efforts, the art project has been very important, as we have seen. TAE has especially benefited from Canadian support over several years. However, it has suffered and continues to suffer from gaps and shortfalls in funding which limit its ability to carry out its current plans, let alone launch the extremely ambitious expansion devised in its National Plan of Action (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2001a).

According to the 2001 figures, the latest available to us, the operating budget of TAE is about US \$304,000 (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2001). Of this, about 10 percent is spent on preparation, 34 percent on implementation, 26 percent on administration, 10 percent on the CUSO consultant, 5 percent on the CCM management fee, and the rest on monitoring, evaluation, equipment and unforeseen items (Transforming Arms Into Ploughshares, 2001). This budget does not include donations made by other organizations in cash or in kind.

Arts in the Crossfire

“During the four (4) years I was with the TAE project (*Transformação de Armas em Enxadas* or Tools for Arms) working as a Development Adviser, hardly a week passed without spending a few hours at the *Nucleo de Arte*, the workshop where weapons are transformed into works of art. I also spent the occasional Saturday sipping on a beer and exchanging views with artists that rapidly became friends. To say the least, the environment was relaxing... and inviting. Just to set the mood, the *Nucleo* consists of a couple of picnic tables, some banged up chairs (a few made of cut up weapons by the way), a small bar, a workshop and an exhibition room. But, that’s not really important.

What **is** important is that every single set of foreign or local eyes visiting the *Nucleo* workshop for the first time, without any exception I can recall, was immediately captivated by these weird, something scary but mostly just beautiful rusted weapon pieces of artistic creativity, and even more so, by their creators. Curiosity was the result of looking at these odd shapes.

If not during discussions on an individual basis with the artists, it was by providing translations for the international media that I was mostly able to understand the depth and thoughts behind the metal shaped into a chair, the bazooka canon into a saxophone, the butt of an AK-47 into a lady’s body, bullet shells for a crocodile’s back or a G3 mechanism for a rose. I often smiled at the interviews—the artists continually surprised me—all sharing the same guiding principle, but separately having created their own artistic methodology and philosophy for creation. As I think back, my memory stumbles like always, but I clearly remember

Humberto, a huge fellow with the bulging eyes of *Savimbi*, telling me how his creations are fundamentally based on the peaceful flowering of ideas and how *Gonçalo*’s first weapons artwork, *The traveler*, was constructed with separate pieces each of which represented the soul of those that were killed in war-torn years. Those comments caught my attention and from there on I was to discover the minds of not just a group of artists jammed together working with similar materials, but of a distinguishable artistic movement challenging each other and learning together in a very isolated environment.

But apart from the art, what can these pieces of metal really mean and what do they truly symbolize? I was not aware of their awesome power until I joined a filming crew and *Gonçalo* on a trip to Marracuene, a small town forty (40) km from Maputo. At the time, the whole neighborhood was celebrating a national holiday linked to the lengthy war that occurred in Mozambique. It was when *Gonçalo* took his *saxophone* out of the car that one elderly man pointed at him and muttered words in the local language. He looked at me and said, “He sees blood and snakes (mambas)”. I saw a saxophone. As a volunteer in a weapons destruction program, I also saw chopped up AK-47 pieces and the canon of a bazooka launcher. This man saw blood and snakes (mambas). The more I traveled and met people in the presence of the artwork, the more I was astonished by their reactions. Following *Gonçalo*’s explanation of the transformation of weapons into art, one lady danced a while and fell to her knees, a joyful dance, and screamed in harmony with others that joined in to seemingly close a difficult chapter.

These powerful reactions were not

only observed in Mozambique, but also in my own country, in Canada. The previously mentioned artist, *Gonçalo* and myself were on a seven (7) City Tour of Canada with the TAE artwork. Many remarkable comments appeared as we visited the twenty-two (22) schools and over two thousand (2000) students of all ages. A ten-year girl in Winnipeg asked me why people would bother to start a war and use guns if nobody liked them. I tried, but I couldn’t answer. I recall the teenager in Saskatoon that reminded us all, a group of 100 fellow students and myself, of the fact that weapons must be readily available in Canada if a teenager in a nearby city was able to use one the week before to take her own life. As *Gonçalo* did, I learned a lot about my own country during our trip.

The anecdotes concerning my work at TAE, both positive and negative, abound. But too many anecdotes tarnish the message one wants to submit. And that message is rather simple: what is more symbolically beautiful and real than turning a killing machine into an instrument of language and creativity.

On a personal note, I say with relative certainty that my work with TAE was equally the most satisfying I will ever experience and the most frustrating I will ever endure. That is why I loved it. The better part of it, and this is what kept me wanting more, is the fact that I could on any given day, observe a young Mozambican friend pick up a piece of a cut up PPX and watch it slowly become a leg or a face. This symbolic transformation of contrast and extreme made it all fall into place, made it all worth while. It was my own proof that a change of attitude can beat a powerful path. It was my own proof that art does indeed wear a bulletproof vest.”

Christian Brun

Mode of Operation

For most of its history, TAE's activities have been centralized in Maputo and have been focused on the southern and central parts of Mozambique, even though activities in other parts of the country are growing. The national coordinator personally approves all decisions involving policy, public relations and expenses, down to the payment of per diem allowances for each member of the operational staff embarking on any trip outside his base. We observed on various occasions the paralysis that sets in when a decision needs to be made that requires the national coordinator's approval, but he cannot be reached. This problem will become much more serious as the project extends to other parts of the country.¹²

Let us look at how the weapons activities at TAE are organized.

Information Retrieval

The first stage is information retrieval. TAE's operations officers have an extensive network of friends, former colleagues, informers, beneficiaries who are interested in new exchanges and others potentially capable of providing information that leads to a collection and exchange mission. However, the chief information officer told us that all his contacts went through serving or demobilized soldiers, either from the government forces or from RENAMO, especially high-ranking officers whom he called 'generals' (Guerra Interview, March 2003). This was confirmed by the second operations officer in Maputo (Luís Interview, March 2003).

¹² This seems to be less of a problem with the largely autonomous and independently financed TAE operation in Zambezia province, but certainly applies to the other 'satellite' operations across the country which operate without budgets of their own

Considering that in the TAE approach it is the source that is rewarded, it seems likely that senior serving and demobilized officers are the main beneficiaries of the bicycles, sewing machines and other rewards distributed by TAE. Outside of Maputo, the TAE 'satellites' play a similar role in information gathering, which combines serving as a contact point for potential 'beneficiaries' with pro-actively pursuing leads in areas where substantial weapons holdings are suspected. Outside of the capital region, the local CCM offices usually serve as a contact point for people interested in exchanging weapons (or information leading to weapons) for goods. When questioned how potential 'beneficiaries' find out about TAE, CCM officials pointed to media coverage and the information dissemination through existing CCM structures. In the drought-stricken areas, these structures often extend to the village level (Interviews with CCM officials in Beira and Quelimane, May 2003).

During the visit to Sofala province in May 2003, one of the authors was able to observe the modus operandi of TAE outside of the capital area and to talk to two beneficiaries. Sofala province in the center of Mozambique saw heavy fighting during the civil war and continues to be a RENAMO stronghold. All people interviewed for this study agreed that substantial caches, mostly hidden by RENAMO prior to demobilization, continue to exist in the province, particularly in the inaccessible hinterland. Furthermore, Sofala is home to Mozambique's second largest city, Beira, and hosts the transportation corridor to Malawi and Zimbabwe, as well as the notorious National Highway No. One, which used to be infamous for armed highway robberies. While these factors

would seem to make Sofala the natural choice for a TAE satellite office, the project maintains no permanent presence in the province but relies on the good offices of the local CCM representative in Beira to act as an intermediary. When the CCM office receives credible expressions of interest from potential beneficiaries, it calls the headquarter in Maputo which then dispatches one of the collection officers, usually Mr. Guerra, who hails from the province. Due to the cost of traveling from Maputo to Beira, these trips only take place every couple of months, and only when the amount of weapons offered is substantial.

Two beneficiaries agreed to be interviewed for this study in Beira, here are their stories:

Mr. Z. (name withheld on his request), seems to be in his 40s or 50s, served with RENA-MO for nine years during the civil war, mostly fighting in Zambezia province. During his military time he was in charge of the arms and ammunition storage in his unit. Prior to demobilization, acting on orders from RENAMO headquarters, his unit buried about half of its weapons before reporting to the assembly areas. Now a self-employed car mechanic, Mr. Z. lives upcountry and finds it very difficult to feed his four children, a fate he says he shares with many of his former comrades-in-arms. He heard about TAE through someone in the police, who told him that people handing in weapons to TAE would be rewarded. In 2002, he first made contact with Mr. Guerra and arranged for the exchange of 200 weapons for 200 zinc sheets. While he used some of the sheets to repair his roof, he sold most of them for US \$6 per piece. This money he shared with six other people who had known about the cache. Ever

since this first contact, Mr. Z. has talked to former comrades and has tried to locate further weapons. When he is successful, he calls Mr. Guerra and arranges for exchanges to take place. This time he has assembled some 80 weapons from various caches and has already transported them from the countryside to the vicinity of Beira, hiding them under agricultural produce to avoid seizure at police road-blocks. He expects 'payment' again in the form of zinc sheets, which he has to share with five other men.

The second beneficiary told a similar story:

Mr. B. was born in Sofala province in 1956. He joined RENAMO in 1985 and was posted to RENAMO's operational zone in the northern part of the province. He was in charge of arms and ammunition for his battalion of 500 soldiers. Most of their weapons were delivered by ship from South Africa. Prior to cantonment, his unit hid a substantial part of its weapons in the countryside. The location of these caches was only known to him and a few comrades. After demobilization he has received payment from the government for 18 months, but he has received nothing since. For survival he farms and keeps animals. He heard about TAE on the radio and went with two comrades to the CCM office in Beira to find out more about the project. In 2001, he led TAE to a cache consisting of 300 weapons, as well as ammunition. He received many zinc sheets in return, but declined to accept sewing machines, as he does not know how to operate them and finds that the re-sale value of zinc sheets is higher. He shared the profit from this trade with three other men. In 2002, he led TAE to another cache, consisting of 100 guns, after receiving a tip from a former comrade, this time he did not want a share of the profit as he

felt that the cache did not belong to him. Mr. B. thinks that he could lead TAE to many more caches, if Mr. Guerra could come up with the necessary incentives more quickly. He believes that many more weapons are out there, but the work has become more difficult recently, as informers expect to be paid in advance.

Interviews with Mr. Guerra (May 2003) confirm that the project relies on a network of informers and middlemen in Sofala province, who search for information on caches on their own and pool weapons from various sources for one exchange with TAE. Very often these informers were RENAMO fighters during the conflict, and many of them have participated in more than one exchange, indicating that they act as de-facto agents of the project. This practice, which stands in marked contrast to the way TAE portrays its operations in public, is the result of specific conditions in Sofala. As TAE has no permanent presence in the province and Mr. Guerra's visits to more remote destinations are limited by the difficulty of obtaining transport, the project relies on individuals to do much of the actual weapons collection and also to move the arms to the vicinity of Beira for pick-up by TAE. These individuals are rewarded for their work and share the goods received with the original 'owners' of the weapons. Sources also claim that Mr. Guerra, who plays a key role in these transactions and is the only person to know the true identity of the informers, receives 'kick-backs' from the beneficiaries.¹³

The modus operandi observed in Beira is different from the approach witnessed by the authors in the Maputo area and in Zambezia province. In Zambezia, one of us was able to join a mobile TAE team on a field trip to the town of Mopeia. Mobile teams usually consist of two or three

TAE staff members, which repeatedly visit remote locations where weapon caches are suspected. During their initial visit, the team members contact the local authorities, asking for permission to conduct weapons collection and explaining the TAE approach. Local authorities, particularly the local administrators, and in some cases also the local churches, inform the population about the project. They also act as intermediaries between the weapons holders and TAE, informing the project about leads. During subsequent visits, weapons are then collected by the mobile teams. These field visits usually last about a week and can only take place if TAE has sufficient resources to pay for vehicle rental, fuel and per diems of the team members, which means that very often there is a time gap between the initial contact, the collection of the weapons and the provision of the incentives. These are usually delivered during a third visit.

Provision of Incentives

Once TAE's information officers have what they consider a good lead, they discuss the terms of the exchange. For instance, an AK-47 Kalashnikov assault rifle in good condition is often exchanged for a second hand bicycle worth around US \$50. We tried to find out what the black market price for such an AK-47 is, but received conflicting information. While the junior information officer cited 50 million Meticaís (about US \$2,100) for the

¹³ We have no way of verifying that corruption of this sort exists in the TAE project. However, a number of sources close to CCM in Maputo and Beira have made this claim, some even arguing that Mr. Guerra had already been reprimanded by TAE headquarters, but continues this practice nevertheless. We were surprised to note that Mr. Guerra collected an 'information fee' of US \$25 per interview with beneficiaries, arguing that "information is not cheap" (Interview Guerra, May 2003). Such payments had not been previously agreed.

rural areas (Interview Luís), his senior colleague gave us an estimate of about 3 million Meticaís (some US \$128) (Interview Guerra). The Small Arms Survey (2002, p. 66) cites a market price of US \$15 for a used AK-47 in Mozambique in 1999.

If weapons are as widely available in Mozambique as most reports indicate, then the lowest figure is probably closest to the truth. At any rate, it seems unlikely that anyone would consider trading a 2,000-dollar gun for a 50-dollar bicycle a good deal. However, if selling a weapon illegally is risky, as the project staff told us, then people might want to trade a rifle worth between 15 and 150 dollars for a used bicycle, especially if they possess several guns.

As we noted in the previous section, the exchange of individual weapons for bicycles, sewing machines, tool kits and other goods donated by Western charities¹⁴ and shipped at considerable expense from their country of origin to Mozambique, is a small-scale activity. For the retrieval of smaller quantities of weapons, TAE maintains container depots with such goods at its headquarters in Maputo and at the Quelimane (Sofala province) satellite office. Problems arise if the quantity of weapons traded is either very high, or the recipient lives far away from the closest CCM office. Where larger quantities of arms are involved, the beneficiaries usually need to share the reward with several others. The same is true in the case of recipients from remote locations bringing weapons to CCM offices. They face the problem of transporting sewing machines or similar rewards back to their homes. During several

interviews, recipients have stated that they would prefer to receive incentives in cash. However TAE has committed itself to exchange weapons only for tools.

To find a way around this problem imposed by its own rules, TAE has introduced quasi-monetary rewards in the form of zinc sheets. Zinc sheets are used in Mozambique in construction, adhere to standard specifications and carry a fixed retail price (in Beira) of about US \$6. As TAE has been handing out building

materials, including sacks of cement and zinc roofing previously, zinc sheets are considered an acceptable reward by the project. Numerous interviews have confirmed that there seems to be a detailed formula by which the price of a weapon is estimated in zinc sheets:

- One operational weapon equals
- 12 non-operational weapons, equals
- 520 units of ammunition, equals



Weapons stored in IFA truck at TAE Headquarter in Maputo

¹⁴ The main source of these goods are Dutch charities, however shipments have also been received from German and Japanese groups.

- 10 zinc sheets, equals
- 1 used bicycle, equals
- about US \$60.

According to interviews with Mr. Guerra (May 2003), this formula is usually adhered to, even though in the case of very large caches, the number of zinc sheets per gun is reduced. Unlike the bicycles and sewing machines, the zinc sheets are locally procured in Beira and therefore do not need to be transported from Maputo. The procedure seems to be that Mr. Guerra, after inspecting the weapons, agrees on the number of sheets a beneficiary is to receive and then asks the TAE office in Maputo to wire the necessary funds to procure the sheets. In theory, the beneficiary then takes receipt of the zinc sheets, concluding the transfer. However, some sources have indicated that the recipients often do not take possession of the sheets, but rather sell them back to retailer, in effect exchanging them for cash. For the beneficiaries this is easier than having to transport the sheets upcountry, either for their own use or for resale. This introduces monetary rewards through the back door, including numerous opportunities for corruption, and most people at TAE must be aware of this. Nevertheless, this aspect of the TAE operation has to our knowledge never been reported to the international donors. To them TAE prefers to portray individual gun owners handing in their personal weapons in exchange for donated bicycles and sewing machines. Our point here is not that commercial exchanges are inherently bad, but that TAE's mode of operation is less than transparent and susceptible to corruption.

Another matter of concern is the lack of vehicles to transport weapons and incentives between the CCM offices and the beneficiaries. Even in the greater

Maputo area, the TAE staff have in the last few years been severely limited in their means of transport, with their only truck (equipped with weapons destruction tools) stranded in the center of the capital, while the other project vehicle is reserved for the national coordinator. Once a vehicle is available, a typical mission in the South would comprise the chief of operations, one of the military men, and the police officer, who is in charge of security. These three will go to the location, taking with them the goods to be exchanged for guns.

They travel with a letter from the TAE National Coordinator addressed to the military commander of the region concerned, announcing the intention of the project to collect ordnance in a period of a few months. However, they have no legal authorization to be in possession of illegal guns and ammunition. Their only protection against prosecution is the confidence that the Mozambican government will not consider it appropriate to prosecute them, as they are doing good work. This has so far proved correct, but it is a weak legal footing on which to work.

At the location, they inspect the items to be handed in, which are not necessarily what they have been led to expect. We participated in a mission that had been told to expect a few pistols, but was instead handed a bag containing two highly explosive grenades designed to be launched by a mortar, bazooka or some such weapon. Several staff members told us that the quality of the ordnance received is usually excellent (Luís, Guerra Interviews).

Storage and Destruction

The next step in TAE's preferred method would be to destroy dangerous items on site, or as

near by as possible. However, this requires explosives, which are often not available. Therefore, the team often resorts to transporting such items, like the grenades just mentioned, back to Maputo. There they are placed in the IFA truck on the CCM compound, along with all the other weapons and explosives currently in storage. And as the team rarely has more than one vehicle at its disposal, any items destined for storage are taken to Maputo in the same car used by the team. In the case of unexploded ordnance, this is extremely dangerous.

The junior information officer told us he considered field missions a "risky job". The first risk he discussed was corruption. If they wanted to deal in weapons illegally for personal profit, it would not be very difficult for TAE's field officers to do so. This is all the more tempting because they are not highly paid, even by Mozambican standards, and they receive no bonuses for good results. However nothing we have seen or heard suggests that they engage in arms-trafficking. Another problem they face is the slow and complicated paperwork imposed by CCM. "We never leave on time, thanks to the bureaucracy", the information officer said. Besides, there is a lack of vehicles and means of communication, and money needed to bribe officials and middlemen (Luís Interview). "To get results, I have to give two or three million Meticaís to the generals I deal with," his senior colleague explained. "If I go to a RENAMO area, I also have to bribe the people guarding the weapons. All this comes out of my own pocket. CCM is aware of this, but won't acknowledge it. They like to pretend that I am given information because I represent the churches. But in reality I am doing secret intelligence work. Except that I

don't have any funds. CCM demands results, but they are not prepared to pay for them" (Guerra Interview, March 2003).

Then the junior information officer started talking about the safety risks. "When we go to investigate an arms cache, we ask the source to draw us a map and lead the way. Still, we sometimes stray into mined areas. Besides, the caches are sometimes protected by booby traps unknown to any of us. At least if we had metal detectors, we might have some protection, but we don't. At least, now we have some protective equipment for use when destroying ordnance, like aprons, helmets and goggles. Kayo bought these for us" (Luís Interview, March 2003).¹⁵

The TAE team received two days of informal and basic training in weapons safety in 2000, after CUSO had complained about unexploded ordnance stored in the TAE office (Brun Interview, March 2003). However, the lieutenant responsible for weapons safety told us that since he joined TAE in 2001, there had been no such training either for the team or for civilians dealing with weapons in the towns and villages. He also said that he sometimes lacked the materials required for the safe and reliable destruction of ordnance, because the government was unable to provide them (Mussa Interview, March 2003).

With regard to storage and destruction of the collected weapons, the situation is similarly hazardous in the other provinces, where TAE is active. In Sofala province, where TAE maintains no permanent staff, weapons have been stored in the local CCM office, awaiting the arrival of TAE staff from Maputo. In one case documented by one of the authors, 80 assault rifles in good working condition were stored

overnight in the office of the CCM coordinator. While the office building had a private security guard, it seems questionable whether he could have prevented an organized ambush. A similar situation exists in Quelimane, where weapons are stored in the freight container in the CCM compound. Again a private guard provides a minimum level of security, but could be overpowered easily by an organized group. During longer field missions, such as the one witnessed by one of the authors in Mopeia, weapons are kept with the team, often being stored in a tent. It seems remarkable that since 1995 there have been no reported incidents of attempted theft given these storage conditions, but this never-theless leaves a lot to be desired, particularly as (non-TAE) CCM employees in Beira expressed their uneasiness about having to work in the same building that is used as temporary storage facility for weapons, ammunition and explosives.

The collected weapons are usually handed to the police for destruction, particularly when TAE has retrieved large caches. Smaller quantities of weapons are often stored at the TAE offices until the police can make the necessary specialists and explosives available. In the past years, weapons collected by TAE were also destroyed during Operation Rachel (see box, p. 20) sorties in Mozambique. According to project staff, TAE would prefer to exploit the destruction of weapons for educational purposes, therefore the media often is invited to these events and TAE representatives are used to giving interviews on those occasions. During field trips in Zambezia, guns are often mechanically destroyed using a generator-powered saw during public ceremonies, which combine the display and the

destruction of the collected weapons with public speeches by TAE representatives and local dignitaries. The Maputo office probably had planned to use the equipment installed in the IFA truck for similar field activities, however as the vehicle was stationary for almost three years this has hardly happened so far. Furthermore, SALW ammunition is sometimes destroyed using burning kerosene, a highly dangerous practice in the view of the authors.

¹⁵ This is a reference to the previous CUSO volunteer, Kayo Takenoshita. CUSO acted to improve safety pro-cedures after an incident in 2000, when it came to their attention that unexploded ordnance was being kept in the TAE office.

Government and Civil Society

As we have seen, the TAE project is run entirely by the churches, with some government support behind the scenes. This is not only unusual, it runs against what is considered good practice. Nearly all experts and instruction texts on weapons collection maintain that only fully trained experts, acting under government authority, should handle, move and destroy the ordnance (Wilkinson and Hughes; Laurance, Godwin and Faltas, etc.).

In the Mozambican case, the government was unable or unwilling, or both, to fully assume this task, and to a significant extent relegated it to the churches.¹⁶ This, we submit, has had various effects. First, TAE has not had full access to the expertise, facilities and resources of the military and police. Of course, these are not well developed in Mozambique. In late 2002, at the request of the government in Maputo, the UN Department of Disarmament sent a mission to assess problems related to the storage and management of military equipment and explosives. This was triggered by an explosion caused by a stroke of lightning at a military depot in Beira in November of that year. The mission concluded that the armed forces and police of Mozambique are unable to ensure proper stockpile management, safe

storage and control over their firearms (United Nations, 2002, pp. 7-8). Nevertheless, full government assistance would certainly have made TAE's job easier, and maybe also safer and more secure.

Second, TAE has been able to avoid being seen as an accomplice of the FRELIMO government, which politically made its job easier in the areas sympathetic to RENAMO, and maybe in other regions as well.

Third, by avoiding any visible collaboration with the government, TAE has not helped to increase public confidence in the willingness and ability of the government to maintain public security. In the long term, this is likely to be seen as a problem.

We believe that TAE could be more effective in contributing to public security in the country if it developed a more visibly co-operative relationship with the government. This kind of relationship could operate on two tracks. On the first, it would mobilize support for attempts by the police to enforce weapons laws and maintain law and order. In doing so, it would also seek the help of the police in moving, destroying and storing weapons safely and securely. However, on the second track, the churches would critically monitor the actions of the police and the military to make sure that they abide by the law and protect the rights and liberties of the population.

¹⁶ At a workshop organized by BICC and TAE in Maputo on 24 June 2003, a representative of the Ministry of the Interior said that his country's two contributions to the implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Combat and Prevent the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons were the TAE project and Operation Rachel.

Costs and Benefits

According to our incomplete information, the TAE project costs something in the range of US \$350,000 a year, not counting some of the work and material provided without payment by the people and organizations involved. It collects something like 1,000 weapons, 700 pieces of unexploded ordnance and 40,000 rounds of ammunition a year. So in terms of collecting and destroying weapons, this is obviously not a cheap project, as several members of staff confirmed to us.

If the churches were simply to buy illegal ordnance for cash, they would probably be able to get a larger crop for US \$350,000 dollars. Would that be a better alternative? Would it produce more benefits in terms of the money spent? Probably not.

First, collecting and destroying illegal weapons is not very meaningful unless it is part of a wider effort to improve security and maintain peace. In the case of TAE, it is an attempt to promote a culture of peace, advocate a life without guns, help ex-combatants to gain a peaceful livelihood and reduce the suspicion between former enemies. Much of this costs money, which is why a program like TAE cannot be as cheap as a straightforward gun buy-back program.

Second, giving people cash for illegal ordnance is risky. The money can easily be used for purposes that are hostile to peace, security and public order. It can even be used to finance the purchase of other guns, criminal operations or political violence. Besides, more than the provision of tools, it emphasizes the financial value of illegal ordnance. Large sums of money can have an inflationary effect. Finally, cash for

guns and ammunition does not directly and visibly contribute to the development of peaceful livelihoods like farming.

In other words, the basic reasoning behind TAE's choice to ask people to hand in illegal ordnance and, in a separate activity, provide them with materials and tools that will help them build a peaceful existence, seems sound. When the rewards mostly consisted of farming implements, some critics said that this was not very attractive to city-dwellers (Meek, 1998) but now that TAE uses a wider range of rewards, including bicycles, this no longer applies.

Does this mean that the US \$350,000 allocated to TAE is money well spent? Maybe. Compared with many other peace and development projects, this seems a worthy and successful effort. However, some questions and doubts remain.

A few paragraphs back, we submitted that collecting and destroying illegal ordnance is not very meaningful on its own. TAE does more than that. It engages in civic education, though that is mostly geared to encouraging people to hand in guns and explosives. It also does a lot of media work, highlighting the project and the idea of peacebuilding in Mozambique. And it says that the number of guns and explosives collected is less important than the impact on people's mentality and the effect on public security. But what do we know about such impacts? Very little. When it comes to assessing the success of the program, there is a general tendency to take the number of items collected and destroyed as the most important indicator of TAE's performance. We find this regrettable.

Perhaps the TAE project would have a greater impact if it focused



TAE team member demonstrating that a pistol is in working condition

more on educating people about the dangers of firearms and explosives, not only to persuade them to hand over these items, but also to convince them to be more careful in storing, handling and moving the ordnance. After all, no one believes that TAE will ever be able to collect all illegal ordnance. Much would be gained if the people who are not ready to disarm become more careful in the way they handle the ordnance, and less inclined to use it. Naturally, TAE should lead the way by providing a good example for the safe and secure handling of ordnance. So far, it has failed to do so.

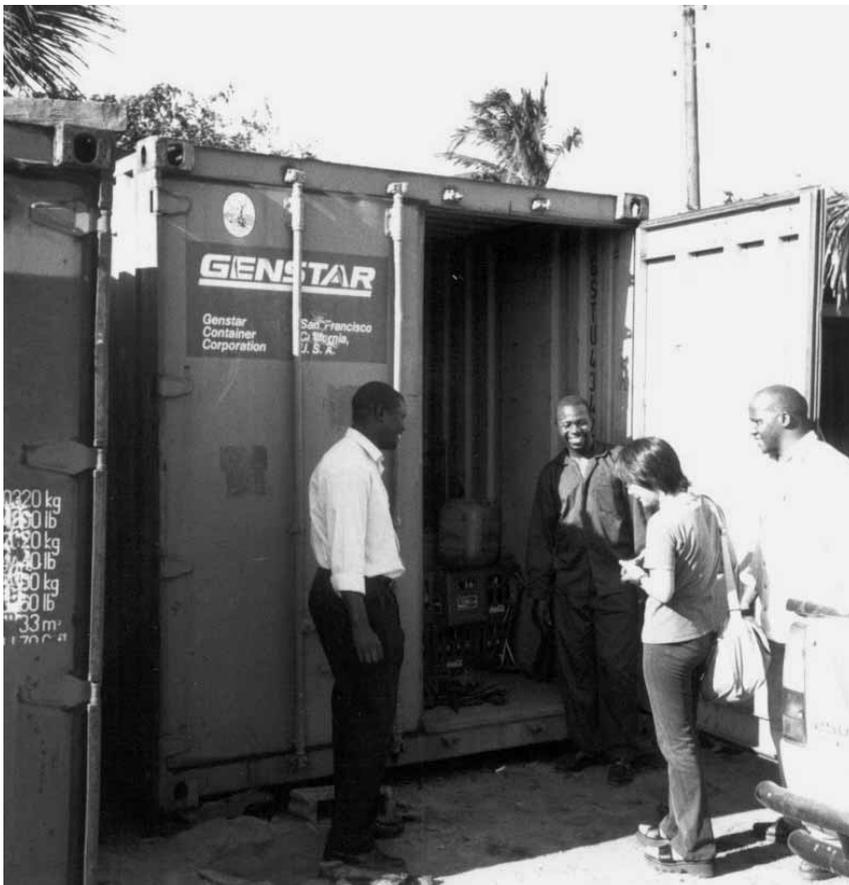
In the same vein, TAE urgently needs to look at the different ways in which its efforts affect, and are perceived by, men and women. Nearly all the policy-makers and staff members, and most of the

'sources' and 'beneficiaries' are men. However, women are also affected by the violence, insecurity, degradation and poverty associated with the proliferation and misuse of guns and explosives. They may be affected more or less drastically than men, but the main point here is that they are affected differently. They have different concerns, perceptions, interests and hopes. TAE needs to get them on board.

If additionally, TAE could encourage and help the government to do a more effective job of controlling the possession, movement and use of firearms and explosives, that would also be significant. At present, it goes to great lengths to avoid being associated with the government and its agencies, for reasons that make sense in the short term. However, in the long term,

Mozambique needs to move toward strict and effective weapons control by the government.

In response to these comments, TAE will tell us they can hardly be expected to make additional efforts, as they already find it difficult to fund their current activities. Perhaps the solution to this dilemma is to shift the program's priorities from weapons collection and destruction to public education and cooperation with the government. Whether TAE collects 1,000, 2,000 or 3,000 weapons a year does not make a big difference in a country like Mozambique. There will always be plenty of arms left over. But if the project could help change public opinion and government policy with respect to illegal weaponry, the impact might be significant and lasting. And after all, churches are better prepared for a job like changing people's minds than for recovering and destroying military equipment.



Container used to store weapons at TAE Headquarter in Quelimane, Zambézia

Lessons Learned and Replication

When it comes to the question whether the TAE approach can and should be applied in other countries, there are two opposite positions one can adopt. Both are legitimate, but neither is entirely convincing and satisfactory in our opinion.

If one accentuates the positive, one can applaud the farsightedness, courage and tenacity of the CCM in setting up and pursuing this project despite considerable difficulties. One can go on to admire the way TAE has put the issue of illegal guns on the map in Mozambique, widely promoted the idea of replacing them by something peaceful and useful, and actually carried out thousands of such exchanges. Besides, one can point out that this is a unique example of civil society taking the job of weapons reduction into its own hands, even if in reality the government provides more support to TAE than meets the eye. Surely, one might argue, this is a shining example for other poor countries with weak governments to follow. Any deficiencies in the project must, according to this line of thinking, pale in comparison with its strengths.

However, with equal justification, one can focus on the weaknesses of the TAE approach. TAE's handling of weapons and ammunition is often extremely unsafe and insecure, it frequently operates without explicit legal authorization, it publishes misleading data, and the public picture it presents of its operations is quite different from reality. While it claims to be spreading peace and

reconciliation, and may indeed be doing so, it is also deeply involved in the commercial business of buying guns and explosives. In this business, its use of funds and other resources is not transparent. Therefore, despite its remarkable achievements, it is not a good example to follow. Looking at the shadowy side of TAE, one can hardly avoid arriving at this conclusion.

The authors believe there is merit in both views. In our opinion, civil society in other countries will find the TAE story inspiring in many ways and can learn much from the strengths as well as the weaknesses of this approach. However, we do not think it would be a good idea to emulate the TAE approach

without modifying it. Modification will in any case necessary because conditions vary from place to place.

Points to consider when considering the replication of the TAE approach to disarmament include the following:

Motivation of Gun-Holders

The success of voluntary weapons collection programs depends on various factors. The single most important is how well the program understands why people want to be armed. In any country that has experienced a civil war in recent history, people who are in possession of illegal ordnance essentially fall



Weapons being destroyed in a public ceremony in Sofala Province

into three distinct groups. In this regard, it makes no difference whether they are ex-combatants or not.

The first category consists of people who feel uneasy about the political process and fear a return to war. Especially during the initial stages of a peace process, this group is likely to be sizeable. As we have seen, in Mozambique military units often undertake deliberate measures to prevent their weaponry from being seized during the peace process. Retaining some weaponry is considered a 'life insurance policy' in case political reconciliation fails. This group of gun-holders can only be reached by a voluntary disarmament program if political conditions are favorable. As we have witnessed in Mozambique, the loyalty to their former military formations erodes over time, and concern about political repercussions are replaced by socio-economic worries. In this context, a well-targeted voluntary collection program offering some form of material incentive can be extremely effective in 'mopping-up' military weapons that were not collected during peacekeeping operations.

The second group of gun-holders consists of individual civilians who retain personal weapons acquired during the conflict in order to defend themselves, their families and property against criminals (and/or in a more rural setting against wild animals). Here the key to success is convincing them that their weapons pose a greater risk to life and limb than attacks by criminals or wild animals. The capacity of the police and other security providers to provide reliable services is another important yardstick. Voluntary weapons collection programs need to highlight the risks of having military weapons and

particularly explosives around the family home in order to be successful. Offering material incentives of the kind provided by TAE can also help to convince people to surrender at least some of their personal stocks. In rural areas, where policing is spotty and a real risk of animal attacks exists, collection programs could specifically target heavier weapons and explosives, or even offer to assist in the replacement of military firearms with rifles more suitable for hunting.

The third distinct group of gun-holders consists of people, who held onto their weapons because they plan to use them for criminal acts or in order to traffic them to other areas. Obviously, this group can not be reached by voluntary collection efforts and program planners need to be conscious that there will always be people unwilling to surrender their arms.

Program Goals

During the description of the TAE program we noted that it aims to improve security in Mozambique and ultimately contribute to a 'culture of peace.' This is common to most post-conflict voluntary weapons collection programs. The mere act of surrendering and destroying weapons can, if well publicized, contribute enormously to a peace process by increasing trust among the population. This is particularly true when programs make a deliberate effort not to target a specific group or geographical area, but encompass participants from all sides and therefore take a non-partisan stand. In the context of a successful peace process and in the absence of widespread ordinary crime, voluntary disarmament can be an extremely effective tool in stabilizing a post-conflict society.

This seems to be the case in Mozambique where virtually everybody interviewed in the course of this research agreed that TAE's activities had made an important contribution in terms of improving public security, although the number of weapons collected is comparatively small in relation to the size of the remaining stocks. Program planners need to be conscious that few voluntary programs will succeed in making a substantial dent in those stocks.

Unfortunately, because changes in public security (and the perception thereof) are difficult to measure, program officers often use the number of guns collected as the yardstick by which to measure the success or failure of a program. As we have seen in the case of TAE, this means that instead of focusing on the creation of trust and promoting non-violent methods of conflict resolution, the program concentrates on collecting as many weapons as possible, maybe even inflating the numbers of arms recovered in their desire to advertise their success.

Government Relations

The relationship between the authorities and any voluntary collection program is of crucial importance. While there can be very good reasons for the government to leave these programs to representatives of civil society, particularly in post-conflict societies where many people may view the government and its agents as representatives of the former enemy, the support of state authorities is still necessary. There are three components to this.

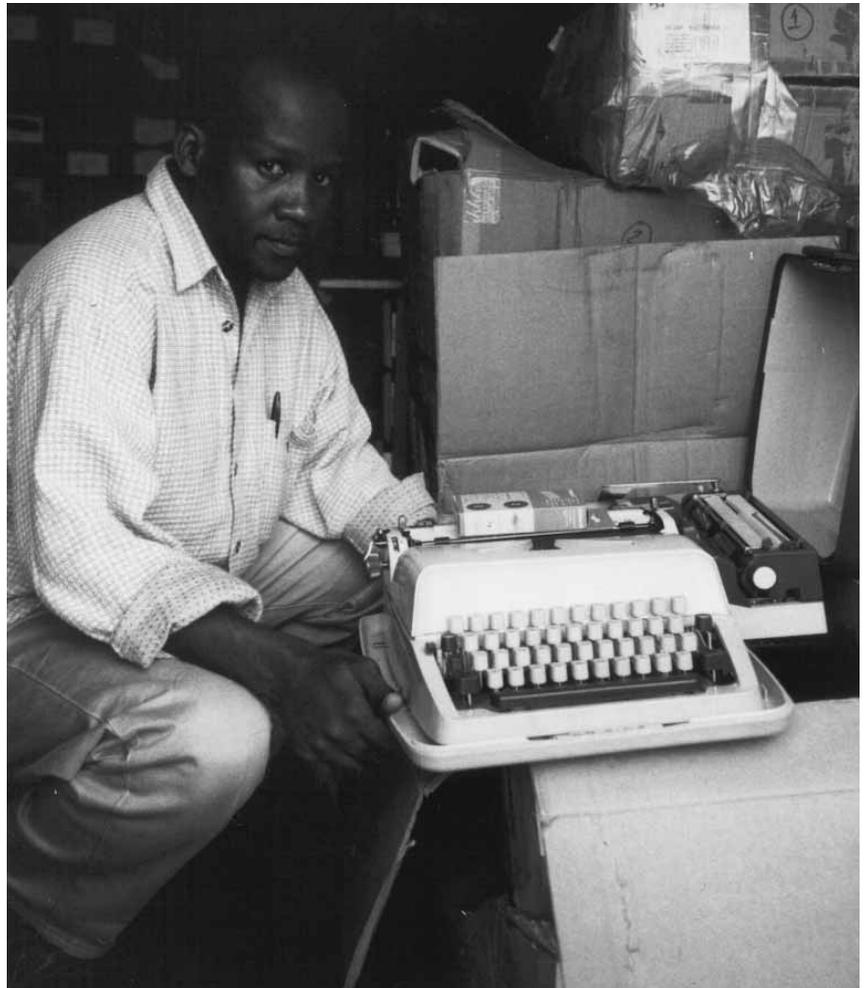
First, the government needs to create the legal conditions to allow any civilian program to operate, i.e. program staff need to be allowed to collect,

transport, store and destroy illegal firearms without risking prosecution. This also needs to include people coming forward to surrender their weapons. As we have seen, this is a challenge in Mozambique—although TAE operates with the support of the government, gun-holders fear detection by the police and essentially rely on covert tactics to get their weapons to TAE. This issue could be addressed effectively by local amnesties during the collection periods. Second, the authorities could provide crucial assistance in providing safety and security during collection operations, i.e. policemen could secure temporary storage sites and military engineers could assist in the destruction of firearms and explosives, while civilians would supervise the process and undertake the sensitive exchanges. This cooperation has already partially implemented by TAE and seems to be very successful.

Third, the government could assist collection efforts by outlining clear and uncompromising penalties against holders of illicit weapons after the end of the amnesty period. International experience suggests that the ‘carrot-and-stick’ approach, which combines the provision of incentives for the surrender of illegally held ordnance during the amnesty with the credible threat of punishment for the illegal possession of ordnance after the end of the amnesty period, can be very successful.

Provision of Incentives

As mentioned before, the provision of material incentives is a key component to convince people to surrender their weapons. This is particularly the case in impoverished post-conflict societies where firearms



Used typewriter donated to TAE as an exchange good

might well be the only valuable possession of demobilized soldiers. The effectiveness of offering non-cash incentives for firearms depends to a large extent on the existence and dynamic of a local black market for military weapons. Where such a market is in existence and accessible, gun-holders are much less likely to exchange their weapons for a used bicycle, as long a strong demand for firearms keeps the market price comparatively high. In Mozambique the success of TAE’s approach can to a large extent be explained by the absence of a functioning black market outside of the Maputo area, and a seemingly low local demand for firearms. In addition, easily

accessible and large caches had already been trafficked across the South African border in the 1990s, leaving behind stocks whose location deep in the bush made their recovery uneconomical, especially in view of diminishing foreign demand and improved border controls.

Whereas individual gun holders can sometimes be convinced to exchange their weapons for items such as sewing machines, bicycles and tool kits, this approach is less effective when one is dealing with larger caches. As TAE found out in Sofala province, the people controlling caches of military ordnance, often former officers of high rank, demand payment in cash rather



Used sewing machine donated to TAE as an exchange good

than in kind. This is partially because they may be more aware of the black-market value of their stocks, but also because they usually need to pay off several people, which is easier if the reward is in cash. TAE has addressed this problem by introducing zinc roof sheets as an artificial currency, thereby circumventing the issue of cash rewards. Nevertheless, program planners need to take this experience into account when planning exchanges.

On a more technical note, the sourcing-in of incentives needs to be discussed. Here, the approach used by TAE seems unpractical. While the idea of collecting donated second-hand sewing machines and bicycles in Europe and Japan and shipping them to Mozambique may hold appeal in solidarity circles, in practical terms it is hardly the most economic way of utilizing scarce resources. The high cost of shipping plus the considerable customs and handling fees¹⁷ are a

major burden. Besides, the project staff rarely knows in advance what kinds of good will arrive and when to expect them, which makes operational planning difficult. This suggests that it would make more sense for a program like TAE to procure tools and other exchange goods locally, or in neighboring.

¹⁷ We are told that these days the Government often waives customs duties on these imports

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BICC at a Glance

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BICC is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting peace and development through the efficient and effective transformation of military-related structures, assets, functions and processes. Having expanded its span of activities beyond the classical areas of conversion that focus on the reuse of military resources (such as the reallocation of military expenditures, restructuring of the defense industry, closure of military bases, and demobilization), BICC is now organizing its work around three main topics: **arms, peacebuilding and conflict**. In doing this, BICC recognizes that the narrow concept of national security, embodied above all in the armed forces, has been surpassed by that of global security and, moreover, that global security cannot be achieved without seriously reducing poverty, improving health care and extending good governance throughout the world, in short: without human security in the broader sense.

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While disarmament frees up resources that can be employed in the fight against poverty, conversion maximizes outcomes through the careful management of such transformation of resources. It is in this sense that they together contribute to increasing human security.

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