



Reintegration and Localized Conflict: Promoting Police-Combatant Communication

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Dave McRae (2009). "DDR and Localized Violent Conflict: Evaluating Combatant Reintegration Programs in Poso, Indonesia". *Indonesian Social Development Paper No. 14*. Jakarta: World Bank.

Two series of Policy Briefs are published by the Conflict and Development program within the World Bank Indonesia country team. The first, "Understanding Conflict Dynamics and Impacts," summarizes the results of research on conflict in Indonesia. These briefs draw out lessons for understanding and responding to conflict in other middle-income countries. The second, "Evaluating Responses to Conflict," summarizes the results of evaluations and assessments of conflict programs, and the methodological implications of how we can best measure the impacts of peace-building programs. All Policy Briefs are available at

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Worldwide, reintegration programs have gained wide recognition as an important element of post-conflict peace-building. By providing economic assistance to combatants and helping them to gain social acceptance, programs hope to reduce the chance of ex-combatants acting as spoilers. Its widespread application notwithstanding, the empirical basis to judge the effectiveness of reintegration approaches remains limited, as does our understanding of the mechanisms by which reintegration programs produce security impacts.

This note presents the findings of a Conflict and Development (C&D) program study that evaluates two combatant reintegration programs undertaken in Poso district, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia from 2007-2008. The Poso programs are interesting because they involved the application of conventional reintegration approaches in a novel context of localized, sporadic violence.

The study finds that the primary value of reintegration in Poso was its role in assisting authorities to establish relationships with combatants which in turn helped them better manage security. Police increased their levels of contact with combatants through reintegration and other informal economic inducements, and were able to leverage this contact to gather information in the aftermath of security incidents and to detect potential security disturbances.

There are two implications for reintegration theory and practice. If reintegration is understood as a means to provide inducements to cooperate with police, then individual targeting is crucial. In light of this, planners need to limit the resources allocated for reintegration to a level that achieves security goals but minimizes the longer-term negative impacts associated with prioritizing ex-combatants.

INTRODUCTION

Despite frequent application internationally, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs are new to Indonesia. Formal DDR programs were first attempted in Indonesia in 2005 in Aceh and then for a second time in 2007-2008 in Poso district, Central Sulawesi. Unlike the Aceh programs, DDR in Poso involved only reintegration – there was no disarmament or demobilization component.

In its integrated DDR standards, the United Nations defines reintegration as "the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income" (UN 2006). Beyond this basic definition, reintegration programs differ in approach and scope. Programs may select combatants individually as recipients (individually-targeted) or may ask communities to determine allotment of resources (community-driven). Programs may focus on short-term security goals (minimalist) or be explicitly oriented towards broader post-conflict recovery (maximalist) (Kingma and Muggah 2009).

The Poso programs were an example of individually-targeted minimalist reintegration. There were two programs in Poso: a police-designed vocational training program and a cash payment program run by the local government. Introduced shortly after police raids halted violence in Poso in 2007, each program aimed to prevent further attacks by addressing perceived economic difficulties experienced by youths whose main skill was perpetrating violence (Karnavian et. al. 2008, 377). If combatants were occupied with "productive concerns", planners hoped, they would be less likely to engage in renewed violence that could endanger their businesses. Police also hoped that the programs would provide a forum for them

to establish relationships with combatants. In addition to the formal programs, the authorities also provided combatants with other preferential access to resources, such as construction projects allocated without tender and free administrative documents.

Several atypical features of the Poso conflict may have been expected to aid the effectiveness of the reintegration programs. As serious as violence in Poso has been, the conflict was

The Poso conflict

The Poso conflict was the most persistent of several communal conflicts that marked Indonesia's post-authoritarian transition. In the later years of the conflict, the district also became an important arena of operations for Indonesia's jihadist networks. An estimated 600 to 1,000 people were killed in fighting between Christians and Muslims in Poso (the state was not a direct party to the violence), more than half of whom met their deaths in 2000 and 2001. Following the peak years of fighting, the conflict entered a protracted phase of sporadic violence, during which violence became increasingly one-sided, as a core group of Muslim combatants targeted non-Muslims. This sporadic violence was finally halted in early 2007 by two major police raids.

Combatant entities in Poso were clandestine and were never rigidly structured, meaning it is often difficult to identify who was or was not a combatant. Indeed, "combatant" is used here as a shorthand for perpetrators or active supporters of violence - the term is not widely used in Poso.

largely confined to just one of Indonesia's 400-odd districts. This local scale meant that the programs faced a caseload of hundreds rather than tens of thousands of combatants, making trade-offs between coverage and quality of assistance less necessary. Additionally, social acceptance of combatants was not a major problem in Poso, as combatants typically lived within their own communities while perpetrating violence.

But the localized pattern of violence in Poso also meant that having a job was not fundamentally incompatible with taking part in violence. Indeed, the majority of program participants appear to have been engaged in at least some form of economic activity prior to receiving reintegration assistance.

The methodology and main findings of the C&D study are summarized below. This note addresses the following key questions:

- Is individually-targeted reintegration an appropriate strategy to contribute to improved security in situations of localized conflict such as Poso?
- Through what mechanisms can reintegration assistance be effective after localized conflict?
- What costs are inherent in attempting individually targeted reintegration under these circumstances?

METHODOLOGY

To investigate program impacts, around one-sixth of program participants were selected as respondents via stratified random sampling procedures. Each respondent completed a quantitative questionnaire followed by a semi-structured qualitative inter-

view. Groups of respondents with particular characteristics could be identified from the quantitative data, after which the relevant qualitative transcripts were used for process-tracing.

Key informant interviews were conducted with program planners and implementers, other police and government officials, and with combatants who played a role in selecting program participants. Focus group discussions and key informant interviews were also held to investigate community attitudes to the programs.

Two aspects of the security impacts of each program were assessed: direct effects, namely influences on the motivations and capacity of combatants to perpetrate further violence; and indirect effects, namely influences on police capacity to manage security.

Although field research covered all groups of participants, analysis in this note focuses on Muslim male participants. Muslim males were by far the largest group of program participants, and it was with them in mind that planners formulated the strategic aims of reintegration in Poso.

FINDINGS

Contrary to the assumption of program planners of widespread ex-combatant unemployment, most combatants interviewed reported that they were engaged in economic activity immediately prior to taking part in the programs. Only around a quarter of program participants interviewed said that they were unemployed or underemployed at the beginning of 2007, shortly before the programs began. This finding calls into question the programs' rationale: if most combatants were employed even prior to the programs, then ex-combatant idleness is less likely to have been as significant a security threat as program planners assumed. There are two necessary caveats. Ex-combatants may have incorrectly recalled their employment status. Their willingness to engage in vocational training also suggests that whatever their prior employment status was, they were keen to increase their level of economic activity.

Table 1: Reintegration programs in Poso

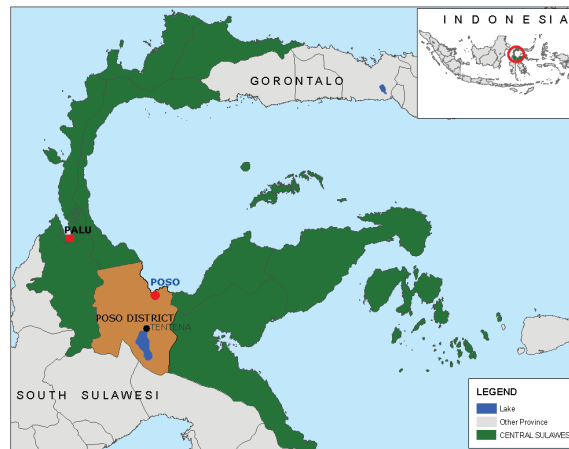
| Program | Form of Assistance | Budget | Program duration | Combatant recipients | Non-combatant recipients |
|--------------------|--|---|---|---|---|
| Police -designed | Individual-targeted (training and in-kind enterprise capital) | Rp. 1.7 billion (US\$ 170,000, approximate) | July 2007; Nov 2007 – May 2008 (two phases) | 227 Muslim (two phases), 20 Christian (approx.) | Yes (female training and micro-credit groups) |
| Poso District Gov. | Individual-targeted (cash payment to each individual, Rp. 10 million to Muslims, Rp 2.5 million to Christians) | Rp. 2 billion (US\$ 200,000, approximate) | Aug 2007 | 172 Muslim, 87 Christian (approx.) | Yes (wives, family of men arrested or killed) |

The programs were unlikely to have been the main factor exerting a direct influence on security improvements in Poso. The situation in Poso had improved markedly even before the programs began as a result of the January 2007 police raids. Indeed, there were no security incidents during the two months immediately prior to the commencement of the programs. Because security had improved before the programs began, the broader question for reintegration practice of whether occupying combatants can effectively contribute to security in localized conflict settings remains unanswered. Regardless, the programs produced positive longer-term economic outcomes for only a fraction of participants. If occupying combatants was a viable mechanism to contribute to security in Poso, then alterations to design and implementation of the programs could have been made to increase the period during which they occupied combatants.

The clearest program effect on security was achieved through increased levels of contact between police and Muslim ex-combatants. Establishing relations with ex-combatants in Poso constituted a formidable challenge for police due to widespread hostility generated by past failures in law enforcement and jihadist doctrine that police were *thoghut* (anti-Islamic) (ICG 2005, 2007). Furthermore, police had killed sixteen Muslim youths during police raids in 2006 and 2007, creating a fresh source of anger. Nevertheless, almost half of Muslim respondents reported being in contact with police, with some respondents saying they would not have been willing to communicate with police prior to taking part in the programs.

Police are able to leverage contact with ex-combatants to gather information in the aftermath of security incidents and to detect potential security disturbances as they are developing. Their relationships with ex-combatants also serve as a point of contact for police to manage security when security incidents do occur. When two brawls took place in mid-2007 after ex-combatants objected to other youths consuming alcohol, police were able to contact influential ex-combatants to try to prevent the

Map 1: Poso district



confrontations from escalating. Police also use their contacts to convene meetings of ex-combatants ahead of periods when security risks are perceived to be elevated.

The forms of contact and motivations for respondents to communicate with police vary widely. Not all contact between police and ex-combatants takes place on voluntary terms - police forcing the issue is part of the picture. Indeed, some ex-combatants expressed resentment over contact with police that more closely resembles surveillance than reciprocal communication. Such resentment does not mean police are wrong to engage in surveillance or to take the initiative in contacting ex-combatants to gather information, but it does remind us that building good relations is not the only tool that police use to manage security.

Other contact appears to derive from the programs and a broader police strategy of providing preferential access to resources to combatants, called the “persuasive” approach. The programs provided police with a reason to contact ex-combatants, ostensibly to ask how their business enterprises were going. Police have also made a priority of pursuing contact with ex-combatants through other fora,

including invitations to combatants to participate in religious study sessions with the Poso police chief, himself a devout Muslim.

The granting of preferential access to economic resources also created a mutual interest in contact for police and ex-combatants. Some ex-combatants reported that they contact the police to access free drivers’ licenses or vehicle registration. One man had even positioned himself

as an agent for local residents who needed to arrange these documents. Other said they would make contact with either the police or the government when they sought access to construction projects. Indeed, almost a quarter of Muslim ex-combatants interviewed mentioned the importance of construction contracts to their livelihoods or to the security situation.

Granting targeted reintegration assistance and preferential access to resources to ex-combatants in Poso has generated negative side-effects, but the extent to which these costs have manifested has been limited by the relatively modest commitment of resources thus far. Between them the two reintegration programs cost around Rp. 4 billion (US\$400,000), a fraction of the post-conflict aid allocated to Poso. Most construction contracts allocated to ex-combatants also appear to have been of relatively modest value. This level of assistance does not appear to have entrenched

Figure 1: Reported contact with police by arrested status, Muslim respondents

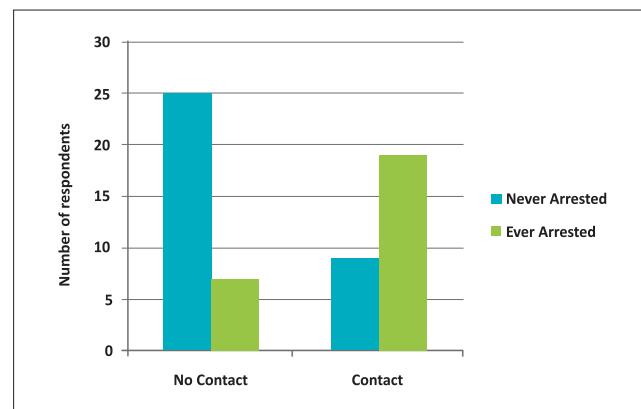
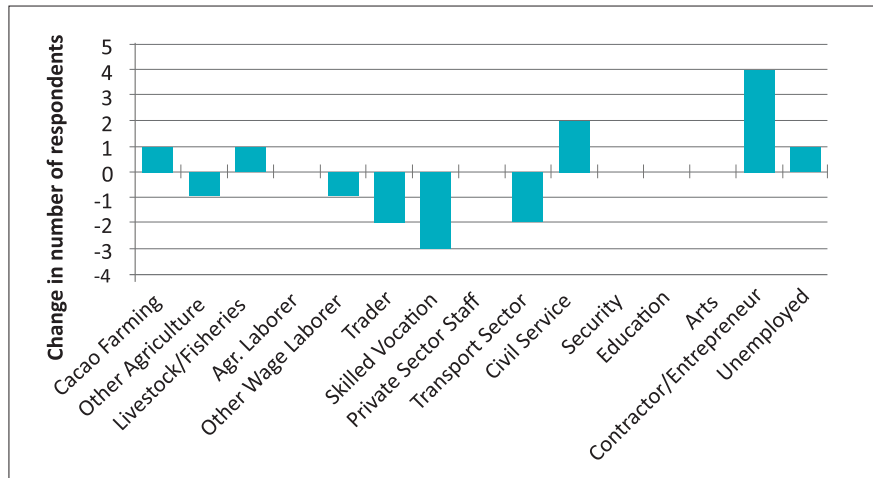




Figure 2: Change in occupation 2007 - 2008/9, Muslim respondents



ex-combatants – or at least those ex-combatants who took part in the programs – as dominant players in the district economy. But the longer ex-combatants are provided with preferential access to resources, the more they are likely to consolidate their position and to develop a sense of entitlement. The sooner preferential access to resources is ended or scaled down in Poso, the more manageable possible associated difficulties such as low level attacks and intimidation are likely to be.

If reintegration is understood as an intervention to increase contact between authorities and ex-combatants, then an individually-targeted approach is likely to be most suitable. Community-driven programs typically focus on public goods making them less suited to provide individual inducements to cooperate with police. Implementers of individually-targeted reintegration may also be able to narrowly target recipients, thereby limiting the level of funding required to run programs. Individual targeting may thus assist program planners to determine a level of resource allocation that achieves security goals but minimizes the longer-term negative impacts associated with prioritizing ex-combatants for assistance in a post-conflict environment.

CONCLUSIONS

The available data suggests that most ex-combatants in Poso did not face particular obstacles in accessing work or economic resources when the conflict came to an end, a pattern also observed in the aftermath of the Aceh conflict (Barron 2009). Indonesia may thus present a set of reintegration cases where one of the main conventional rationales for targeted reintegration – assisting ex-combatants to overcome acute reintegration challenges (Tajima 2009) – does not apply. Under such circumstances, the main value in targeted reintegration may lie in helping authorities to establish relationships with ex-combatants to enable them to better manage security.

In highlighting the potential security impacts of reintegration measures, we must also consider the ethical and developmental costs. When entire communities have been affected by conflict, the prioritization of combatants over others can be seen as an ethical trade-off between security benefits and the fair allocation of resources (Baare 2005, Jennings 2008). Offering significant incentives to combatants may also risk undermining longer-term development, if doing so entrenches combatants' "economic and political standing" (Torjesen 2006,7). Of course neither benefits

nor costs can be known in advance. But planners should explicitly consider the possible negative side-effects of individually-targeted reintegration during the design phase.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider individually-targeted reintegration immediately after localized conflicts to address hostility and lack of contact between authorities and combatants.
- If reintegration is conducted to increase police/combatant interaction, limit resource allocation to a level that achieves security goals while minimizing negative side-effects.
- Include investigation of likely longer-term costs when evaluating reintegration programs.

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