



From Conflict to Resilience

Ex-Combatants Trade Associations in Post Conflict

Experiences from DRC and RoC

Natacha Lemasle
AFTCS, World Bank

Reintegration through Associations

➤ **Context : from individual to collective reintegration**

- Association tradition
- Trade Associations of ex-combatants
- DRC and ROC case studies

➤ **Objectives**

- Drivers of cooperation
- Economic and social dynamics associated with trade associations
- Comparative perspective: what type of association for what context and what objective

➤ **Outline**

1. Trust and Leadership
2. Economic vs Social Reintegration: Trade Off?

Methodology

- **442 participants**
- **Focus Groups**
 - **44 ex-combatant trade associations**
 - **365 association members**
 - Various trades
 - Various origins
 - Rural/Urban
 - **10 locations**
- **One-on-One Interviews**
 - Association members
 - Ex-combatants outside of associations
 - Partners (PNDDR, executing agencies)



Trust

- **Trust: Cement of Associations**
 - **4/5 - Lack of trust, main reason for not joining**
 - Underperformance
 - Theft
 - Arbitrary decision-making
 - **5/5 - Identified as main pillar of association by members**
 - ROC: 4/5 – core members with trust/long time socialization

- **Wartime and Peacetime Trust-Building**
 - **Peacetime** → Rural: 3/5 - Gamboma and Ngo
 - **Wartime** → Urban: 3/5 – Brazzaville

- **Training**
 - **DRC: 1/5 Socialized during vocational training**
 - Several months training
 - Involvement of community members
 - **Role of training beyond skills acquisition**

Leadership

➤ Wartime hierarchy, peacetime leadership



- › Former Commanders
 - RoC - 1/3 presidents: commanders
 - DRC - Anecdotal evidence: mid-level commanders
 - See also examples from Sierra Leone
- › Key role in creating association
 - “There is the train, and there is the locomotive”
 - Choice of trade
 - Knowledge transfer

Wartime Trust and Leadership

ADVANTAGES

- Existing
- Reliable
- Relatively stable
- Understood
- **ONLY appear** contradictory to DDR
 - Disbanding AG: neither fully possible nor guarantee for peace
 - Can support peace if create new opportunities
- Used for conflict → Can also **foster RESILIENCE and REINTEGRATION**

LIMITATIONS

- **Risk of power-abuse**
 - › XC expressed fear of power abuse
 - › Limited use of elections
 - › Limited check and balances
- **Mitigation Measures**
 - › Ex. of VSLA in South Kivu
 - › Include governance aspects in training

Economic vs. Social: Trade Off?

**ROC : Limited membership -
Economic Performance**

➤ “If we accept everyone, it can’t work”

**DRC: Open membership -
Focus on Social Support**

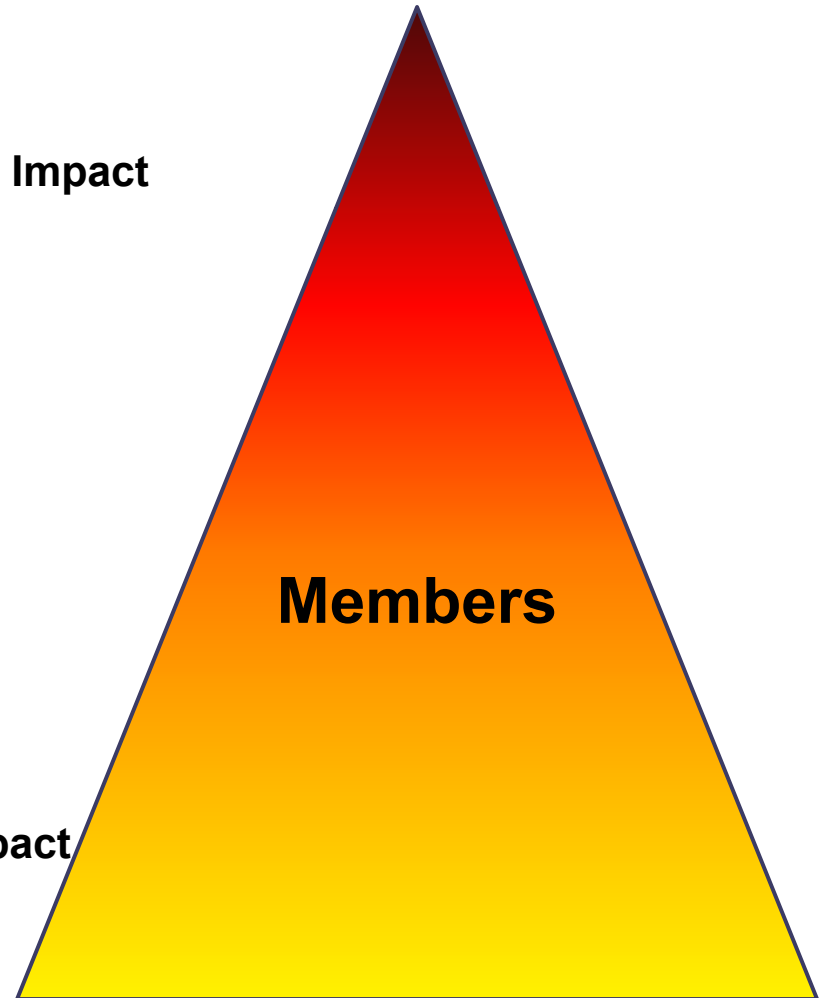
➤ “The association was created to help each other when facing problems than an individual alone cannot solve”

Economic Impact



Social Impact

Members



Economic vs. Social: Trade Off?

Membership and revenue creation

Membership and mutual support

Country	Average Members	Main source of revenue	Payment of medicine	Contribution to funeral expenses	Small loans for hardship (often school fees)
ROC	9	1/3	2/5	1/5	0/5
DRC	48	1/5	5/5	3/5	2/5

- **The fewer members, the more manageable**
 - Recognize limited management capacity of human and financial resources
 - Consistent regional constraints (Illiteracy - DRC: 33% / RoC: 26%)

- **The more members, the less vulnerable**
 - Tontines / Mutuelles
 - Insurance to cope with vulnerability shocks

Unexpected Advantages

- **Mixed membership and community inclusion**
 - › **DRC: 4/5**
 - Community inclusion
 - Access to land and production means
 - › **RoC: 1/5**

- **Access to individual employment**
 - › **DRC ex.**

- **Conflict mitigation**
 - › XC spokesperson in the community
 - › Role of counselors

- **Knowledge sharing**



Food for Thought

Building on existing social capital

- Offering Choice
- Relying on leadership
- Using training

Getting the best of both worlds?

- Limiting membership
- Encouraging mixed membership
- Tailoring to context priorities

Further research

- Quantitative data
- Comparative advantages of individual versus collective reintegration