

Approaching Community-Based Armed Groups in Sub-Saharan Africa: Lessons Learned & Measures of Success

This fact sheet provides a snapshot of conclusions from the mapping effort of the RESOLVE Network’s Community-Based Armed Groups Research Initiative that investigates the dynamics of community-based armed groups (CBAGs) to identify potential approaches to engage, manage, and transform them. This Research Report maps how different intervening actors have approached the challenge of CBAGs and how to best measure the success of these interventions. Discussions with stakeholders and a critical review of the literature revealed the need for a deeper empirical understanding of the strengths and shortcomings of current responses to CBAGs to inform more effective and appropriate practices and policies. To learn more about the research methodology, detailed findings, and illustrative case studies, please refer to the RESOLVE Research Report by Moritz Schubert: *Approaching Community-Based Armed Groups in Sub-Saharan Africa: Lessons Learned & Measures of Success*.

Approaches to CBAGs can be categorized as following three different logics: Engagement, Management, and Transformation (EMT).

APPROACH	ENGAGEMENT	MANAGEMENT	TRANSFORMATION
TIMEFRAME	SHORT-TERM	MID-TERM	LONG-TERM
OBJECTIVES	SAFE ACCESS; IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND CBAGS	CHANGE IN ROLE, REACH, AND BEHAVIOR OF CBAGS	CHANGE ROOT CAUSES AND STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS OF THE CBAG ECOSYSTEM
EXAMPLES	BARAZA COMMUNAUTAIRES AND ACCESS NEGOTIATIONS BY ICRC AND MSF IN EASTERN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO	TALKS WITH GRANDS TRAFI QUANTS IN MALI; CO-OPTIONATION OF CJTF BY NIGERIAN STATE	DDR, SSR, AND CVR IN UN STABILIZATION MISSIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, AND MALI

Tools employed by intervening actors to deal with CBAGs.

		APPROACHES TO CBAGS			
		ENGAGEMENT	MANAGEMENT		TRANSFORMATION
			COERCIVE	COOPERATIVE	
FUNCTION OF CBAGS	SECURITY	HIRE CBAGS AS SECURITY PROVIDERS	DEFEAT CBAGS (PACIFICATION)	CO-OPT CBAGS (HYBRID SECURITY GOVERNANCE)	REPLACE CBAGS WITH POLICE (SSR)
	POLITICS	ENTER CBAG-CONTROLLED AREAS WITH CSOS	GAIN LOCAL SUPPORT (COUNTER-INSURGENCY)	NEGOTIATE WITH CBAGS (POWER SHARING)	REPLACE PATRONAGE NETWORK (DDR)
	ECONOMICS/CRIME	SIDELINE CBAGS IN COMMUNITY PLATFORMS	INCARCERATE CBAG MEMBERS (WAR ON GANGS)	MEDIATE BETWEEN CBAGS (GANG TRUCES)	REDUCE APPEAL TO JOIN CBAGS (CVR)

Key Takeaways

- » Lack of coherence and coordination among different intervening actors regularly leads to duplication of efforts and the use of contradictory approaches to individual CBAGs.
- » Coherence and coordination between the multitude of actors involved in the EMT of CBAGs is important for the overall outcome of interventions and for the security of intervening actors and beneficiary communities. Moreover, improved interagency coordination can help pool existing resources and use them in a more efficient and sustainable way by streamlining efforts and diversifying funding sources.
- » Over recent decades, numerous national and international actors have developed a set of standard tools to engage, manage, and transform CBAGs. Intervening actors should not export standard templates from one setting to another. Interventions should reflect contextual variation and focus on the predominant functions of the targeted CBAGs, following a thorough context analysis and actor mapping.

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