



CSV

The Centre for the Study of  
Violence and Reconciliation

***“We need to do it for ourselves”***

**An Evaluation of the CSV Ex-Combatant Policy Dialogue Project**

By

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**July 2008**

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## **Acknowledgements**

As with any research endeavor, the following acknowledgments are due:

- To the research participants for sharing their experiences and without whose assistance this evaluation would not have been possible.
- To CSVR staff who provided invaluable feedback on drafts of the report.
- To Hugo van der Merwe, CSVR Transitional Justice Programme Manager, for the editorial assistance.
- To Atlantic Philanthropies for generously funding the project and the evaluation.

## **Executive Summary**

During the transition from Apartheid to democracy, South Africa decided to embark on a Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration program (DDR) programme in order to deal with the many non-statutory combatants produced from the time arms were taken up in the early 1960s, until the armed conflict that took place between the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the African National Congress (ANC) in the early 1990s. However, research has shown that the DDR process in South Africa has had limited success for a wide variety of reasons. These included amongst others, lack of proper planning, coordination, and implementation of effective programmes. The South African government also appeared to lack clear ex-combatant policies and had adopted an ad-hoc approach in dealing with ex-combatant issues. Furthermore, despite the availability of state funding, spending was sporadic, difficult to access and politically selective. Ex-combatants communities, on the other hand, were not well organised, which resulted in disjointed engagement with government when this took place at all. There was, therefore, a concern that government's failure to address and meet the needs of ex-combatants could plunge that sector into desperate straits, antithetical not only to political stability, but to inclusiveness, non-violence, and protection and access to rights and justice. Thus in 2007, CSVR initiated an Ex-combatants/Military Veterans Policy Dialogue Project. The aims were to (1) establish greater levels of networking and collaboration between Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) and others in the ex-combatant sector; (2) create a better understanding of the needs of their constituencies, of deficits in services by NPOs, and of the strategic role NPOs could play in addressing these and; (3) foster greater awareness of the problems facing ex-combatants and informed policy debates on the issues. This paper reports on a formative evaluation that was conducted on the project in order to assess the impact (if any) that the ex-combatant policy dialogue workshops had on stakeholders, particularly ex-combatants, and also to determine whether policy dialogue workshops are good ways of advancing the causes and concerns of ex-combatants. Results of the evaluation suggest that the CSVR Ex-combatants/Military Veterans Policy Dialogue Project achieved its expected outcomes to a significant extent. In addition to the expected outcomes envisioned at the initiation of the project, there were also unexpected outcomes that served to enhance the value and impact of the project. Furthermore, shortcomings were identified and recommendations are made, which should serve the purpose of further strengthening the effectiveness, efficiency, appropriateness and impact of the CSVR Ex-combatants/Military Veterans Policy Dialogue Project.

## 1. Summary and Description of the Project

The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVr) Transitional Justice Programme was established in 1994 with the purpose of engaging with various issues in relation to the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa. Since then, the programme has evolved to include a focus on ex-combatants<sup>1</sup>. In the face of violent repression by successive Apartheid governments, South African liberation movements had felt compelled to form armed military wings in the early 1960s and engaged in armed conflict against the government security forces for the next approximately thirty years. Furthermore, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, tensions between the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the African National Congress (ANC) had escalated into open warfare in the black townships<sup>2</sup> (van der Merwe & Lamb, 2007). After the demise of Apartheid, a Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration program (DDR) was instituted for non-statutory combatants. However, results from the three most comprehensive studies<sup>3</sup> indicate that the DDR process in South Africa has had limited success. This was largely due to lack of proper planning, coordination, and implementation of effective programmes (van der Merwe & Lamb, 2007). The government also appeared to lack clear ex-combatant policies and had adopted an ad-hoc approach in dealing with ex-combatant issues. Furthermore, despite the availability of state funding, spending was sporadic, difficult to access and politically selective. Ex-combatants communities, on the other hand, were not well organised, which resulted in disjointed engagement with government when this took place at all. Thus there has been a concern that government's failure to address and meet the needs of ex-combatants could plunge that sector into desperate straits, antithetical not only to political stability, but to inclusiveness, non-violence, and protection and access to rights and justice (Mika, 2007).

Thus in 2007, CSVr as an organisation that shared this concern, initiated an Ex-combatants/Military Veterans Policy Dialogue Project with funding received from Atlantic Philanthropies<sup>4</sup>. The expected short-term outcomes for the first three years of the project are the following:

- Greater levels of networking and collaboration between NPOs and others in the ex-combatant sector;
- Better understanding of the needs of their constituencies, of deficits in services, by NPOs and of the strategic role NPOs could play in addressing these;
- Greater awareness of the problems facing ex-combatants and informed policy debates on the issues.

In order to achieve these outcomes, the following activities were planned:

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<sup>1</sup> Following Gear (2000), ex-combatants here are defined as the non-statutory fighters of South Africa's past violent conflict who are not currently part of the statutory safety and security agencies.

<sup>2</sup> This conflict produced armed actors in the form of the ANC-aligned Self Defence Units (SDUs) and the IFP-aligned Self Protection Units (SPUs).

<sup>3</sup> See Gear (2002); Liebenberg and Rolfs (2001); and Mashike and Mokalobe (2003).

<sup>4</sup> As of May 2007, Atlantic Philanthropies was the largest non-governmental donor in the ex-combatant sector in South Africa with grants totaling R26 862 269.00 having been made to three grantees up until then (Mika, 2007).

- A series of meetings with potential stakeholders to establish the extent of existing services and resources available to ex-combatants;
- Development and distribution of a handbook which details what services are available to ex-combatants for use in the sector and how to access these;
- Seven workshops with NPOs and relevant government departments dealing with ex-combatant reintegration and social service delivery to examine existing policies and projects for ex-combatants and to identify policy and service gaps;
- Based on the workshops, a series of seven policy reports were to be produced and disseminated to potential stakeholders;
- Recommendations to relevant government entities for policy revision and improved service delivery for ex-combatants. This was to be preceded by meetings with officials in the Ministry and Department of Defence dealing with veterans' affairs, and Department of Defence Portfolio Committee members.

The project started in early 2007 when CSVR engaged a variety of stakeholders working in the ex-com sector, with the purpose of getting buy-in for their participation in the project. Key areas on which the policy dialogues were to focus were identified as the following: (1) Skills Development and Job Creation; (2) Involvement of Ex-combatants in Crime and Crime Prevention; (3) Memorialisation; (4) Psycho-Social Interventions; (5) Exhumations and Reburials and; (6) Restorative Justice and Prosecutions.

All of the consulted parties expressed their acceptance and willingness to participate in the project and acknowledged the need for it to be implemented as a matter of urgency. Dialogues around these issues were to take place in the form of policy dialogue workshops, which were to be preceded by background research aimed at examining the current available services and key policy challenges in each key focus area. Each stakeholder was responsible for covering the cost of their participation in the workshops and covering the core costs of one of the key focus areas. CSVR received funding from Atlantic Philanthropies to cover basic costs of planning and coordinating these workshops. Since the start of the project in 2007, the following four workshops<sup>5</sup> were held:

- Skills Development and Job Creation – September 5-6, 2007
- Ex-combatant Involvement in Crime and Crime Prevention - October 11, 2007
- The Role of Ex-Combatants in Memorialisation Processes in South Africa - November 15, 2007
- Psycho-social Interventions<sup>6</sup> - March 13, 2008

## 2. Purpose of and Justification for the Evaluation

This paper reports on an evaluation that was conducted of the CSVR Ex-combatants/Military Veterans Policy Dialogue Project. The purpose of the evaluation was to ascertain the impact (if any) that the ex-combatant policy dialogue workshops had on stakeholders, particularly ex-combatants. This would give an indication whether policy dialogue workshops is a good way

<sup>5</sup> At the time of conducting the evaluation and writing this report, the outstanding two workshops were also completed, but did not form part of the evaluation exercise. The *Exhumations and Reburials workshop* took place on April 15, 2008 in Johannesburg, and the *Restorative Justice and Prosecutions workshop* took place on May 29, 2008 in Cape Town.

<sup>6</sup> This workshop was preceded by two preparatory stakeholder meetings, one in Johannesburg and the other in Cape Town.

of advancing the development of ex-combatant reintegration policies. The current evaluation exercise can essentially be classified as a formative evaluation. Formative evaluations provide feedback and insight into the impact that a programme or project has had on its target population. This allows for improved accountability and can be used as a dynamic learning tool, allowing for the improvement of ongoing programmes, better allocation of funds, and informed decisions as to whether a project should be expanded, modified or eliminated (<http://go.worldbank.org/2DHMCRFFT2>). Thus information generated by the evaluation exercise could be used as a basis for:

- Assessing the effectiveness of the CSVR's approach in general and the workshop methodology in particular in advancing the development of effective reintegration policies in South Africa;
- Determining whether and how the project is carried forward into the next phase;
- Deciding whether this approach could be applied to other countries in transition to address ex-combatant reintegration challenges.

The generic goal of most project or programme evaluations is to provide "useful feedback" to a variety of audiences including donors, client-groups, administrators, staff, and other relevant constituencies. The feedback mentioned above relates to (1) the efficiency of running the project; (2) the effectiveness of individual workshops; (3) the appropriateness of CSVR strategy and; (4) the impact of CSVR project.

### **3. Evaluation Design, Procedure and Limitations**

A triangulated methodology involving the combining of a qualitative methodology with a quantitative methodology was used. Triangulation is based on the assumption that the strengths of one methodological approach would compensate for the weaknesses in the other. The sample was drawn from the workshop participants including the CSVR staff who participated in the workshops. The final qualitative sample consisted of 14 individuals and the quantitative sample of 25. For the qualitative component, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants<sup>7</sup>. Interview questions were open-ended, thus giving interviewees sufficient latitude in their responses and also allowing for the gathering of rich discursive information. For the quantitative component, a structured questionnaire was designed. The majority of items on the questionnaire required Likert-type responses, while there were also three requiring categorical responses. In addition to this, it was decided to include a few items requiring qualitative responses in order to broaden the range of qualitative data generated for the evaluation. Qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis, while descriptive statistics in the form of frequency tables and cross-tabulations were generated from the qualitative data.

Participants were contacted using contact details given during the workshop registrations. Interviews were conducted in both Johannesburg and Cape Town either at the CSVR offices or at the interviewee's place of work or home. Interviews lasted approximately forty minutes each. Requests for transportation cost refunds were honoured for those interviewees who came to the CSVR offices to be interviewed. Interviews were digitally recorded in cases

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<sup>7</sup> Interview participants were drawn from those who attended one or more of the first three workshops because these were the workshops that had been completed when interviews were conducted. For the questionnaire, however, it was decided to include attendees to workshop four since this workshop was conducted while the questionnaire was being administered.

where permission was granted. Notes were taken in cases where this was not granted. Some of the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim in order to allow for micro-analysis. These were chosen on the basis of the richness of their data, the range of thematic responses and the range of stakeholders they represent. For the quantitative component, the questionnaire was uploaded onto the CSVr website to allow for electronic completion and submission. Respondents that did not have internet access were supplied with copies of the questionnaire. While it was possible to maintain both anonymity and confidentiality with the electronic submission, only confidentiality was possible with the hard copy submissions.

There were a number of limitations inherent in the evaluation. One of these was the non-probability sampling strategy that was used for the administration of the questionnaire. This limited the range of statistical procedures that could be conducted on the questionnaire data to basic descriptive statistics. In addition to this, many of those who participated in the evaluation exercise spoke English as a second language. The extent to which this affected the data was especially apparent during interviews when some struggled to express themselves. In order to deal with this limitation, the interviewer attempted to give as much assistance to participants without influencing their views and beliefs. Another limitation was the fact that not all interview data could be recorded. This ultimately affected the quality of some of the interview data since it was impossible to note the verbatim words of interviews which were not recorded. To limit this shortcoming, all attempts were made to write down what interviewees were saying as accurately as possible.

## **4. Results**

This section presents the results of the evaluation. These are presented thematically under the categories outlined under goals and objectives in section 3. In most cases, verbatim indicators<sup>8</sup> are used to qualify themes. Themes are drawn from both the transcribed tape recorded interviews as well as those interviews that were not recorded. Indicators however, are only drawn from verbatim transcribed tape recorded interviews that had been subjected to detailed micro-analysis. Interview results are integrated into the results obtained from the questionnaire.

### **4.1. The efficiency of running the project**

The efficiency of running the project can be measured in terms of the extent of CSVr staff's understanding of the project. Thus there appears to be agreement that CSVr staff had a clear understanding of the project.

*...the staff that was working on the project, there was some clear understanding and guidelines of where the process is going... (CSVr staffer - 1).*

*...the CSVr people seemed to be well prepared. They knew what they were doing and what they wanted to achieve with this (Ordinary ex-combatant).*

Another measure of the efficiency of the running of the project is the extent to which workshop participants were clear about the purpose and objectives of the workshop. CSVr staff indicated that a significant amount of time went into preparing for the workshops and they

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<sup>8</sup> Please note that the number of indicators assigned to a particular theme is not a measure of the prevalence of that theme.



were thus under the impression that the purpose and objectives of the project were clear to all participants.

*...There is usually lot groundwork to be done before the workshop... So we were all quite clear about what we were doing (CSVr staffer - 2).*

A further measure of the efficiency of the project is the extent to which it was well organised. Questionnaire results seem to indicate that generally, participants did not have a problem with the organisation of the workshops. Asked whether they thought the workshop organisation needed to be improved, only 8 respondents out of 25 answered in the affirmative. See Table 6 below.

#### **4.2. The effectiveness of individual workshops**

Evaluation participants also commented on the effectiveness of individual workshops. Little substantive comment was made on the effectiveness of workshop I for a number of possible reasons such as the problems associated with that particular workshop or the fact that many interviewees did possibly not attend that workshop. The workshop took place more than six months before the interviews. This could have affected people's ability to recollect their workshop experiences.

##### **4.2.1. Workshop II - Ex-combatant Involvement in Crime and Crime Prevention**

One of the identified benefits of this workshop was the fact that it gave stakeholders, especially ex-combatants, the opportunity to engage with issues on which they might hold different views, but which is nonetheless of concern to them. It also gave ex-combatants a reason as to why and how they could and should become involved in crime prevention rather than engaging in crime. It stimulated debate around whom ex-combatants are and the representation of ex-combatants at the workshop, not only in terms of ideology, but also in terms of gender. The workshop further served the purpose of mobilising these different stakeholders, particularly ex-combatant factions who came to realise that they have more commonalities than differences. It also served as a platform on which relationships could be forged amongst different stakeholders and stimulated engagement among groups that had previously regarded DDR as pursuing specific party political interests.

*...they realise that they have skills that can be used in crime prevention... (CSVr staffer - 2).*

*...you have now given them an opportunity to network with each other... I've had one interaction after the workshop...and I've spoken to another... (Civil Society participant - 2).*

As much as ex-combatants were knowledgeable about issues that concerned them, the perception from CSVr staff was that ex-combatants, especially leaders, realised that there were important things on which they had little knowledge, but which affected them nonetheless, such as the Veterans Act.

*...for instance the very Act, they were never workshopped about the Act and what to expect from the Act. So it becomes important for them as leaders... (CSVr staffer - 1).*

Ex-combatants for their part had a definite sense that education was taking place during the workshop, although participants could not put their finger on exactly what was learnt.

*...look, we have learnt something here... (Ex-combatant leader - 1).*

#### 4.2.2. Workshop III - The Role of Ex-Combatants in Memorialisation Processes in South Africa

This workshop was experienced as important and positive especially because it validated ex-combatants and the contribution they have made to liberation. Some also expressed concern that they are stereotyped and that it embarrasses not only them, but also their children. They feel it is important that their contribution to the liberation of the country be recognised so that their children would be proud of them.

*...I know we made a contribution, but you never think that it needs to be remembered because we feel abandoned... (Ex-combatant leader - 2).*

*...a lot of negative things are being said about us... I want my children to be proud of what I did. We are not perfect, but we deserved to be remembered for our contribution, not only for us, but for our children as well... (Ex-combatant leader - 4).*

#### 4.2.3. Workshop IV - Psychosocial Interventions

According to the one person interviewed who attended this workshop, ex-combatants also found the psychosocial workshop useful. Many of them don't understand why they weren't able to connect with partners and children, and why they were engaging in destructive behaviours. The workshop gave them insight into how they have been affected by conflict and how this now impacts on their relationships, not only with family, but the community as well. One said that the workshop gave him a sense of relief and hope. He now understands that there is help both for him and his family in terms of dealing with his combat experiences.

*...they say you are mad, useless, and you abuse your family. You believe that...But coming to this workshop, it makes you realise that there are those who value your contribution. They also understand how you were affected and that you can be helped... (Ex-combatant leader - 5).*

*...so it is good to know that there is help for these things that go on inside my head, and my family, my wife, girlfriend, children can benefit as well...(Ex-combatant leader - 3).*

#### 4.2.4. Overall Effectiveness of the Workshops

A number of questionnaire items also addressed the issue of workshop effectiveness. These items, however, elicit more general rather than workshop specific information. Notwithstanding this, it gave a sense as to the extent the workshops were regarded as effective. Thus when asked whether the presentations were helpful in clarifying relevant issues, 92% either agreed or strongly disagreed, while there was only **one respondent**<sup>9</sup> who strongly disagreed. When asked whether the workshops provided a good opportunity to discuss critical issues related to ex-combatants, 19 respondents either agreed or strongly

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<sup>9</sup> It is worth noting that there were a number of cases where the views of one or two particular respondents were decidedly negative and inconsistent with those expressed by the overwhelming majority of respondents. The negative views expressed in the questionnaire are similar to those expressed in the interviews. It is therefore the opinion of the evaluator that these are the views of the same people with a particular grievance either towards the project specifically or the CSVV as an organisation in general.

agreed. Finally, when asked whether the workshops provided opportunities for networking with others who share ex-combatant concerns, no respondent either disagreed or strongly disagreed, while only **two respondents** neither agreed nor disagreed. For details of responses to these questions, see tables 9 and 10 below. When asked whether facilitators were effective in helping frame the way forward at the end of the workshop/s, only a single respondent disagreed as evidenced by the table below.

#### 4.3. *The appropriateness of CSVR’s policy dialogue strategy*

Not much information could be discerned from the interview data regarding the appropriateness of the CSVR strategy. However, a number of questionnaire items can be considered to have addressed this aspect of the evaluation. Thus only a **single** respondent felt that the workshop topics were not relevant. Furthermore, 84% of the respondents felt that the policy dialogue workshop strategy brought together the right people to address the workshop topics, while 88% thought that the strategy was a good way of learning about ex-combatant issues. For complete details of responses to these questions, see the tables 1; 2 and 3 below.

**TABLE 1**

*The topics covered by the workshops were relevant*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 STRONGLY AGREE	9	36.0	36.0	36.0
	2 AGREE	13	52.0	52.0	88.0
	3 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	2	8.0	8.0	96.0
	4 DISAGREE	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

**TABLE 2**

*The workshop brought together the right people to address this topic*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 STRONGLY AGREE	7	28.0	28.0	28.0
	2 AGREE	14	56.0	56.0	84.0
	4 DISAGREE	2	8.0	8.0	92.0
	5 STRONGLY DISAGREE	2	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

**TABLE 3**

*The workshop was a good way for me to learn about the policy issues facing ex-combatants*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 STRONGLY AGREE	12	48.0	48.0	48.0
	2 AGREE	10	40.0	40.0	88.0
	3 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	2	8.0	8.0	96.0
	4 DISAGREE	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Based on observations, it is the opinion of the evaluator that the CSVR policy dialogue strategy is an appropriate way of dealing with ex-combatant policy reintegration challenges. The process of conducting initial background research to identify issues and concerns as well as stakeholders to be involved, was critical to the appropriateness of the strategy. So too was the process of getting “buy in” once stakeholders were identified. More could have been done to educate ex-combatant representatives on key policy issues. The CSVR understandably did not want to be seen as advocating on behalf of ex-combatants, and was committed to empowering ex-combatant so that they lead the way in fighting for their cause. However, it is the view of the evaluator that given the capacity that the organisation has, the CSVR could play a more active role without being seen as championing the causes and concerns of ex-combatants. This view was even expressed by some ex-combatants. Thus, although much had been done to empower ex-combatants, the reality is that this would not be accomplished over the course of a few workshops. Therefore CSVR, along with other civil society organs could accomplish much more in terms of ex-combatant reintegration, if this is done in full partnership and involvement of ex-combatants.

#### 4.4. ***The impact of the CSVR project***

The impact of the CSVR project can be measured in terms of the value that participants attached to the workshops.

*...Yes off course, you know the criticism that I have does not deter from the fact that this is important and there is obviously value in what is being done. I could see it on the faces of some of these guys that they are learning things that they have learnt things that they did not know before and these are things that are important to them... (Civil Society participant - 1).*

*I think they actually enjoyed it and I think it had a lot to do with the fact that their opinions are valued... (Ex-combatant leader - 3).*

The workshops also derive their value from the way in which CSVR as an organisation involved in ex-combatant concerns is regarded. Ex-combatant participants expressed the belief that CSVR is the only organisation that is genuinely interested in the needs and issues

facing ex-combatants and that it is committed to helping ex-combatants improve their plights so that they can become productive members of society.

*...I used to hear that CSVR went as far as the prisons, meeting the people of APLA who were inside, and MK who did not even get amnesty. Those people they did not even get visits and other stuff from family. They were [forgotten]... (Ex-combatant leader - 1).*

The workshop on ex-combatants in crime and crime prevention provided an opportunity to learn more about the plight of ex-combatants and how they could be useful to the community.

*...they are not being properly utilised by the state.....they could link up with Community Police Forums (CPFs) and strengthen CPFs... (Civil Society participant - 2).*

The workshops gave ex-combatants the opportunity to vent their feelings and frustrations. It made them realise that there are those who were willing to listen not for the sake of listening, but because they are genuinely interested in their plight.

*...if you are in grief about anything and you want to release it, you have to talk about it and they want people to listen...the workshop gave them that opportunity, ja, they definitely helped... (Civil Society participant - 1).*

The workshops have helped ex-combatants in giving them an idea of the services that they have at their disposal in order to better their situation.

*So also in that sense it helped on that, in establishing what is in there and what is not there... (Ex-combatant leader - 3).*

Questionnaire data also reflect positively on the impact of the CSVR project. For example, when asked whether they will recommend to colleagues to attend future CSVR workshops dealing with ex-combatant issues, all but one respondent either agreed or strongly agreed. Furthermore, when asked whether they would be interested in attending a follow-up, more advanced workshop on this same subject, all respondents agreed or strongly agreed. In addition to the positive impact of the CSVR project, it was conceded that numerous factors beyond the control of the organisation that handicaps its ability to make a more meaningful impact, especially in terms of official policies pertaining to ex-combatants. This lack of impact at policy level is reflected by the fact that in cases where government officials were present, these were often more junior level officials who at times did not stay for the duration of the workshop. This gave the impression that these were not people that could or were interested in impacting ex-combatant policy.

*...Where are the people who make decisions? Shouldn't they be here when we have a workshop? (Ex-combatant leader - 3).*

In terms of the workshops giving stakeholders a better understanding of the needs and concerns of ex-combatants, this has happened to a limited extent. The problem identified here was that some politicians or government departments who clearly have a role to play, but who cannot conceive this possible role because they do not understand what the needs and concerns of ex-combatants are.

*...an example that I have mentioned is department of education who even after having explained everything to them, still cannot understand why they are being invited... (CSVN staffer - 1).*

#### 4.5. **Shortcomings in terms of efficiency**

Despite all efforts being made to familiarise participants with the workshop objectives, some were still left in the dark because they came to the workshop by chance after having been informed about it by friends and comrades.

*...I came to the workshop by chance. Was told by a friend and decided to come to find out what was going on. He did not explain to me properly so I was not that clear. I was expecting something else (Ordinary ex-combatant).*

Questionnaire results lend some support to the above-mentioned assertions. Thus when asked whether better information should be provided before the workshop and whether objectives should be clarified, more than half of the 25 respondents said yes to both questions. It needs to be added though that the issue of objectives not being clear should also be seen in the context of the number of workshops attended by those who participated in the evaluation. Thus the questionnaire results reveal that of the 25 questionnaire respondents, 16 had attended only a single workshop by the time they had completed the questionnaire. Of these, 10 were ex-combatants. This means that workshops 2 and 3 both had large proportion of first time attendees for whom, one can assume, more detailed explanations were required than for those who had attended more than one workshop.

It also appears that the issue of objectives needing clarification became less of a problem during subsequent workshops.

*...we wanted to empower ex-combatants to talk on their own behalf; at least on these issues. They are the ones who say this is the problem we have, and this is what we think can be done to resolve this. So, on that second workshop, that was the tone that you could sense... (CSV staff - 1).*

The efficiency of running the workshops was further influenced by the challenges that were encountered in the planning of the workshops. The impact of particularly the logistical challenges was mitigated with the help of the programme administrator.

*...Issues like [requisition], plans for the workshop... the fact that we organised the workshop in Johannesburg from Cape Town was a challenge on its own... (CSV staff - 1).*

*...there was good communication between us and the administrator who was organising logistical things in Johannesburg... (CSV staff - 3).*

Many interviewees recognised that there were planning issues. They understood the problems that were encountered and were sympathetic to the organisers. The statements below epitomise the views expressed regarding this.

*...There is only so much planning you can do. Sometimes things happen that you haven't planned for and then you have to deal with that... (Ex-combatant leader - 2).*

It also seems as if the problems encountered were more concentrated during the first workshop with things apparently having improved subsequent to that workshop. One can ascribe this to CSV staff's willingness to reflect on, be honest about these challenges, and to use it as a learning experience.

*...The first workshop was more challenging than the others and was sort of a learning curve (CSVr staffer - 1).*

#### 4.6. **Shortcomings in terms of workshop effectiveness**

Interviewees were also candid about what they identified as shortcomings to the CSVr project, particularly in terms of the effectiveness of the workshops. Some of these were workshop-specific, while others were critical reflections on the workshops in general. Where a particular criticism is workshop-specific, this is stated.

##### 4.6.1. The weak relationship between civil society and government

The belief was expressed that the effectiveness was compromised by the weak relationship between civil society and government.

*...it is supposed to be an effective way if you had [listening] authorities. If there was a strong relationship between organs of civil society and that of state; if the state was listening...to listen and act on the issues... (CSVr staffer - 1).*

The problem was however not merely one of weak relations, but also a problem of a government that attaches little importance to the needs and concerns of ex-combatants. It is conceded that there is not much that CSVr can do about this.

*...but it is not CSVr's fault...because they invite the department to send someone who is qualified and nothing happens... (Civil Society participant - 1).*

Another key challenge to the work of CSVr was the amount of time it took to engage government departments.

*...I had this directory... with all government departments' contact numbers. Only to find that those numbers that were there, almost all of them were no longer in use... (CSVr staffer - 1).*

Ex-combatants felt that the relevant policy makers in government should have been involved in the workshop, not only because they are at the forefront of the decision making regarding ex-combatants, but also because they have a responsibility towards those who have put them in positions of power.

*...there I am having a problem... I think we want to meet one on one with the leadership that is on top there in government. I cannot see what the problem is if you are a minister, or even if you are the president – you can't come down to the people that put you up there, the people that created you...(Ex-combatant leader - 1).*

Ex-combatants further felt that other stakeholders that should have been represented are those who are perceived to have a moral responsibility towards ex-combatants such as the business sector who have benefited from Apartheid and is still benefiting.

*...and that business sector should be there and to say listen; in the Apartheid years we made money and we're still making money, and these combatants brought South Africa where it is today. And we need to create something for them. ... (Ex-combatant leader - 3).*

There were also challenges in initially getting some veterans associations engaged in the project. These included getting them interested and serious about the project.

*...you talk to them now and they say call me later. You call them again tomorrow and they will say; can you send that information again. And that stuff, you know ... (CSVr staffer).*

#### 4.6.2. Ex-combatant expectations

Ex-combatants had expected that CSVr was going to do things for ex-combatants or on behalf of them. Despite this, there was an acknowledgement by ex-combatants that their interests would be better served if they are empowered to do things for themselves.

*...you know, we know what our needs are and we were expecting CSVr to take the lead for us. But we have come to understand that it will not help us if they do this. We need to do it ourselves and CSVr with the knowledge and skills that they have, can empower us to do that... (Ex-combatant leader - 4)*

For others, however, the idea of empowering will not help because it is time consuming and something that ex-combatants cannot afford to do while their wives and children are going hungry because there is no food on the table.

*...I am not kicking away, but to empower somebody at the stage where I have my children...I must have something at night so that my children when they come from school they must get bread. So I cannot have time of empowering because I am not happy... (Ex-combatant leader - 1)*

The only form of empowering some ex-combatants expressed interest in was that which will enable them to generate an income so that they can take care of their families.

*...we need skills that will help us change our conditions, so that we can take care of ourselves and our families. Show us how to tender, write business plans, office management, administration, things like that... (Ex-combatant leader - 3)*

The workshop was challenging in that there needed to be a constant reminder that CSVr's role is one of empowerment and not to be seen as championing the needs and aspirations of ex-combatants.

*...our role as CSVr should be seen as that of empowering; not necessarily championing the needs and aspirations of the ex-combatants. That should be rather led by ex-combatants themselves. But we empower them in doing so... (CSVr staffer - 1)*

#### 4.6.3. The presentations

Although the presentations were valued, some were also regarded as too lengthy and did not allow enough time for questions and discussions, this impacted on the effectiveness of the workshop.

*...I would have liked to have more questions from the floor – I think there was only one question...the presentation was too long... (Ex-combatant leader - 2).*

There was also a concern that effective and active discussion and participation was hampered by the fact that the presentations were conducted in English. All the reports were also written in academic English, which made it difficult to follow and understand, especially for those whose mother tongue is not English and who has a low level of education.



*...I was fine and wasn't affected, but I know for a fact that some of the guys were not comfortable because they couldn't follow everything properly and could not express themselves appropriately... (Ex-combatant leader - 3).*

#### **4.6.4. Workshop titles**

Concerns were raised with regards to the title of the workshop, ex-combatants in crime and crime prevention, which was experienced as especially problematic by ex-combatants as well as a civil society participant. There was a feeling that ex-combatants were already stigmatised as troublemakers and criminals in the community, and that the title seemed to perpetuate these stereotypes.

*...this perpetuates that stigmatisation and that misconception that all ex-combatants are involved in crime... (Civil Society participant - 1).*

*...that title makes it sound as if we are all criminals... (Ex-combatant leader - 2).*

#### **4.6.5. Workshop venues**

It was also felt that having the workshop at a military base was insensitive to ex-combatants. It was felt that workshops should take place in the communities where ex-combatants live so that stakeholders could be exposed to their realities.

*The venue! It's a military base. I think but I think that all the memories of the // and it was the military base of the freedom fighters' opposition. You know, very inappropriate, I would think... (Civil Society participant - 1).*

*...stakeholders should go to the combatants and see their lifestyle or what their livelihood is about. So to almost...when stakeholders can come up to us and to experience what we are dealing with day to day... (Ex-combatant leader - 1).*

## **5. Discussion and Recommendations**

The evaluation results provided useful feedback on the goals and objectives outlined in section 3 on page 2 of this report. Much of this has been positive and thus suggests that the CSVR ex-combatant policy dialogue project has indeed had a positive impact on those who participated in the project. Evidence points to the fact that the outcomes envisioned at the start of the project have been met to a large extent. Thus there appears to be greater levels of networking and collaboration between Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) and others in the ex-combatant sector. Furthermore, stakeholders who participated in the project seemed to have an improved understanding of the needs of ex-combatants, of deficits in services, and of the strategic role that they could play in addressing these. Most importantly though is the fact that there is a greater awareness of the problems facing ex-combatants. This has led to informed policy debates on the issues facing ex-combatants.

The workshops also appear to have given ex-combatants insight into how their combat experiences are affecting their lives. It led to a realisation among ex-combatants that in spite of their heterogeneity, they have more commonalities than differences. Ex-combatants realised that regardless of who they fought for, there are more similarities between them than differences, and this realisation seem to have led to closer cooperation between them. Another important benefit was the fact that the workshop represented for ex-combatants, an

acknowledgement and validation of the important contribution they have made to the liberation of South Africa. The workshops were regarded as educational in that ex-combatants now have a better understanding of services that are available to them. Furthermore, it brought some attention to the plight of ex-combatants and their potential for making a positive contribution to society, but also their potential for engaging in destructive practices should their needs go unaddressed. Generally, ex-combatants valued the workshops because, for the first time, there appear to be people who are genuinely interested in their well-being. One said there is no other organisation that has done for him what CSVR did. He is still unemployed, but feels a lot more positive about the future. The workshop provided opportunities for networking, and most importantly, they cultivated a belief in the importance of sector wide engagement if the needs and concerns of ex-combatants are to be addressed.

In addition to the desired outcomes, the workshops also had unintended and surprising positive outcomes not envisioned at the start of the project. It is argued that these outcomes can enhance the value and impact of a project (IFPRI, 2002). One of these unintended outcomes was that the workshops provided ex-combatants with a platform on which they could express their needs and concerns and vent their anger and frustrations. Although the workshops were intended to be inclusive, participatory and empowering, the value that ex-combatants had attached to this was not envisaged.

As discussed in the result section, a number of shortcomings were also identified. These are briefly discussed and recommendations that will address these identified shortcomings are suggested.

- Workshop planning should start well in advance in order to deal with logistical challenges and improve stakeholder representation, especially from government.
- In order to convince stakeholders of their role, a more structured engagement is needed especially with high-level government officials. It will also increase the possibility of getting access to relevant government officials.
- Ex-combatants should receive clear communication, in the language of their choice, about the general objectives of the project and the specific objectives about a particular workshop. This could be done by having pre-workshop meetings and information sessions with ex-combatants.
- Presenters should be properly briefed on the objectives of the project and the importance of engaging with ex-combatants in a manner that is sensitive to their concerns and frustrations. It would also be important to brief presenters about issues such as the length of presentations and the need for these to be brief so that enough time is spent on discussions and questions.
- Notification of upcoming workshop titles should be more effectively communicated to stakeholders so that they could comment on these. Additionally, CSVR should clearly spell out what the meaning behind a title is so as to prevent confusion.
- Careful consideration should be given to the choice of workshop venues so that it does not offend, insult or create power imbalances. Furthermore, the possibility of having workshops in the communities where ex-combatants live should be explored. This is likely to increase attendance and expose outside stakeholders to the existential realities of ex-combatants.
- Since many ex-combatants, including leaders, have limited formal education and basic competency in English, it is therefore recommended that the possibility of translating papers and presentations into local languages be explored.

- The issue of lack of proper facilitation was raised as a shortcoming that compromised the efficiency and effectiveness of some workshops. While proper facilitation is critical to the success of any workshop, it is also needs to be realised that some people might accept an invitation to a workshop because they have a particular agenda or concern that they fell strongly about and would want to have that addressed. In a situation where this cannot be addressed, such people are likely to loose objectivity and be critical regardless of what happens in the workshop. It would thus be important for the CSVR to make sure that invitees to workshops are matched with the workshop aims and objectives.

## 6. Conclusion

The CSVR Ex-combatants/Military Veterans Policy Dialogue Project was aimed at:

- Establishing greater levels of networking and collaboration between Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) and others in the ex-combatant sector;
- Creating a better understanding of the needs of their constituencies, of deficits in services, by NPOs and of the strategic role NPOs could play in addressing these and;
- Fostering greater awareness of the problems facing ex-combatants and informed policy debates on the issues.

It is the view of the evaluator that CSVR Ex-combatants/Military Veterans Policy Dialogue Project achieved its expected outcomes to a significant extent. In addition to the expected outcomes envisioned at the initiation of the project, there were also unexpected outcomes that served to enhance the value and impact of the project. The recommendations provided in this report should serve the purpose of further strengthening the effectiveness, efficiency, appropriateness and impact of the CSVR Ex-combatants/Military Veterans Policy Dialogue Project.

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