

Psychosocial Interventions for Child Soldiers and Children Born of War



Noorin Pattni

Professor Annie Bunting, Dept. of Social Science
Postdoctoral fellow, Dr. Sylvie Bodineau

Abstract

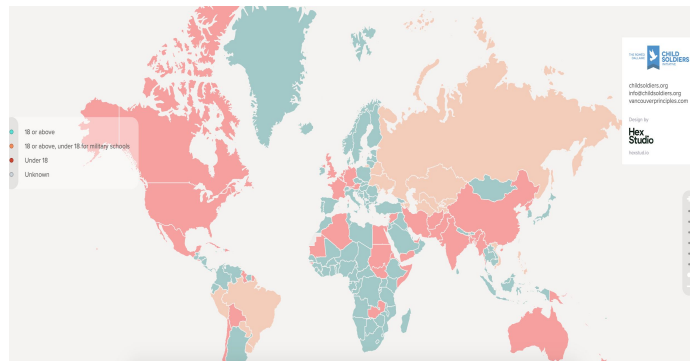
My research entails looking into the psychosocial support and interventions provided to child soldiers and Children Born of War (CBoW). The aim of this research is to bring the research and policy for children born of war and child soldiers into conversation, to determine key points of overlap and departure in terms of experiences and programmatic approaches to reintegration.



Image showing DDR process for Child soldier @LesAiglons/2007

The DARE project is part of a 5-year research Partnership which documents cases of abduction for forced marriage in conflict situations, places them in historical context, and the impacts of crimes against humanity and local reparation programs for survivors of violence. The studies are based on Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Nigeria, Uganda, Sierra Leone, and Nepal.

Child Soldiers world Map



Child Soldiers World Index (2020)

Findings from the Comparison

Child Soldiers	Comparison	Children Born of War (CBoW)
More literature on Child soldiers	Individual challenges: psycho-social trauma,	Less literature of CBoW
Non-violence and putting of arms	-High levels of anxiety, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD),	Individual and medicalized procedure
Embedded in Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration (DDR)	Depression and somatic symptoms	There are innovative programs of child tracing and peer support
Reintegration into society and resocializing into society	Societal Challenges: -hostility, stigma, discrimination and structural violence	Integration and engagement into society
Child soldiers often gendered male		non-existent programs

Challenges of Child Soldiers & CBoW

Nightmares of Child Soldiers:

“Apiyo also started to develop symptoms....sleeplessness and nightmares in which the spirits of people killed by her (gen) appeared and threatened revenge” (Akello et al, 2006).

Stigma by Children Born of War (CBoW)

A boy from Gulu narrates his ordeal; “whenever any of us [children] do anything wrong, people would tell my mother that because she is formerly abducted, she produced her children with that bad mentality from the bush”(Interview, Gulu, 20 November 2018, Teddy Atim)



Image adapted from the SEVOTA Report of Children Born of Sexual violence during the Rwandan Genocide (Mukasarasi, 2019)

Other findings

- ❖ Statelessness - major challenges for CBoW. Interventions seek to support them in securing legal identities (birth registration, citizenship etc).
- ❖ No child-care framed by children’s rights and girls excluded from the DDR process and received no assistance returning home

