



Prevent the recruitment and use of children by armed forces/groups in Myanmar as an entry point for durable peace

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Evaluation consultant: Laurie Zivetz, MPH, PhD

Evaluation manager: Ma Lourdes Kathleen Santos Macasil

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Acronyms

CAAFAG	Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups ¹
	CBO Community-based Organizations
CTFMR	Country Task Force for Monitoring and Reporting on the 6 grave violations against children
	NSAG Non-State Armed Groups
EAG	Ethnic Armed Group
EC	European Commission
GoM	Government of Myanmar
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMWG	Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Reintegration
INGO	International Non Government Organization
JAP	Joint Action Plan
MRM	Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on the 6 Grave Violations against children
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PBF	Peace Building Fund/PBSO Peace Building Support Office, United Nations
SC	Save the Children
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator’s Office
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WV	World Vision

¹ While the terminology of Child soldiers is widely used in this report, UNICEF reviewers note that UNICEF, as well as other agencies, prefers “CAAFAG” to refer to children forced to play different roles, not only carrying weapons. Recognizing the merit of this term, this report adopts the more narrow reference to children as soldiers in view of the major emphasis of this grant.

Executive Summary

Background. This report documents a final evaluation of a project designed to contribute to the achievement of the Joint Action Plan on the elimination of child soldiers in Myanmar. Supported by the UN Peace Building Fund, project holders are UNICEF, UNRCO and ILO. The project covers the period 9/2015-10/2017, but the issue and the response processes the project supports have a longer history.

UN attention to issues of forced labor and in particular child soldiers dates back to the 1980s when concerns about widespread use of forced labor in the country contributed to justification for international sanctions on Myanmar (child soldiers represent one form of forced labor). Since 2002, the Tatmadaw—the national armed forces (currently under the Ministry of Defense)—and seven other armed groups have been listed by the UN Secretary General for the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict.

The Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (**CTFMR**) along with a formal Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (**MRM**) on the six grave violations committed against children in armed conflict in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1612 were established in 2007. The CTFMR is co-chaired by UNICEF and UNRCO, with other members including the ILO, UNHCR, UNFPA, OCHA, WFP, World Vision and Save the Children.

In 2012, five years after its formation, the CTFMR signed a **Joint Action Plan** (JAP) with the Government of Myanmar which lays out the terms for ending and preventing child recruitment and use in the Tatmadaw and providing for rehabilitation services for discharged child soldiers. The JAP focuses on the Tatmadaw. Although the JAP makes reference to outreach to other the other seven parties listed in the annexes of the UN Secretary General’s Annual report on Children and Armed Conflict (referred to hereafter as Ethnic Armed Groups), in fact it was made conditional to agreement by the Tatmadaw. The JAP lays out an 18-month timeline. More than five years on, some progress has been made, but closure remains elusive. Momentum on a number of fronts seems to have declined in recent years.

Funding from the UN PeaceBuilding Fund was provided for a project described as follows:

The project will support the implementation of the Joint Action Plan to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children by the Tatmadaw, to identify, verify and discharge underage recruits still associated with the Tatmadaw as well as support their reintegration back into their communities. The project also aims to strengthen prevention and accountability for perpetrators of underage recruitment and promotes the overall protection of children from armed conflict in Myanmar including through increased engagement towards the signature of Action Plans with listed non-State Armed Groups. (MA MMR1507UND Nov15)

A total **budget** of \$1,526,890 was provided with \$736,695 to UNICEF, \$576,195 to the ILO and \$214,000 to UNRCO with co-financing from each agency. UNICEF and ILO were the main implementing partners, both providing reintegration support (most of it subcontracted by UNICEF under contract to Save the Children and a number of Myanmar NGOs). All agencies participated in CTFMR meetings and monitoring visits.

The evaluation. Terms of reference for the final evaluation describe the purpose as follows:

The final independent evaluation will cover all outcomes and will assess the validity of the project logic. It will provide key knowledge building and learning for the broader national process and for stakeholders. It will look at the overall project performance from start to end of the project life as part of project accountability (summative). It should review the project’s attainment of the overall objective of supporting the

implementation of the Joint Action Plan to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children by the Tatmadaw, and specifically to identify, verify and discharge underage recruits still associated with the Tatmadaw as well as support their reintegration back into their communities.

This final evaluation was undertaken in the period Sept-November, 2017. The evaluation was entirely qualitative in scope. Document review was followed by a two week period in Myanmar (October 9-20) with a validation workshop on the last day. Some 73 interviews with former child soldiers, family members, case workers, UN and project partners were carried out in Yangon, Mandalay and Naypidaw. A one hour meeting with the Tatmadaw was held in Naypidaw. All stakeholders (except members of the Tatmadaw) completed short **questionnaire** that solicited views about the contribution of the PBF project to 12 key elements of the JAP.

The evaluation findings need to be considered in light of a number of **limitations to the evaluation**, including uneven documentation and data, the qualifications of the national evaluator, and uneven access to all stakeholder voices (in particular prior members of the CTFMR who were no longer employed with the participating agencies, and government partners). Key informant perspectives on many of the important issues relevant to the findings in this report varied considerably. For all of these reasons, **evidence to advance best practices is insufficient.**

Key findings:

- **Public awareness** about the issue of child soldiers appears to have broadened. The **hotline** continues to function 24/7. Five hundred and nineteen (519) **complaints** about underage recruits were received during the period of the project (9/2105-2/2017), most via the hotline. After a year of negotiation, a second national awareness campaign was approved and is being co-financed by the GoM.
- The CTFMR met 31 times in the period 9/2015-11/2017—19 times internally and 12 times with the Ministry of Defense during which time they **reviewed 519 cases of underage** recruitment in the Tatmadaw. Some 203 children were **discharged** during the life of the PBF project, in four discharge events. Another 170 cases remain open, generally because they could not be traced or because no agreement about their age could be reached. Anecdotally, there are indications that the number of new recruits has dropped, that underage recruits are older than they were in the past, and that the duration of time from complaint to release is shorter.
- The CTFMR has conducted **13 monitoring visits** to a total of 55 military units of the Tatmadaw over the period of the PBF project, or an average of one visit every other month. There are signs that transparencies and access are declining, however. This can be seen as military representatives seem able to better prepare for UN monitoring visits.
- Protocols and practices for **underage screening** have been introduced.
- **Reintegration services** have been delivered to more than 200 ex child soldiers, modeling a system and building capacity amongst INGO and NGO partners. An Inter Ministerial Working Group on reintegration was created in 2013. Over the course of the project the IMWG met three times. Regional and state government groups were established in seven hotspot sites to address reintegration issues.
- Since the signing of the JAP, the GoM has put forward the names of 385 individuals who were allegedly **responsible for child recruitment** into the Tatmadaw. As of the 2016 annual report, only 23 have been verified. This remains a sensitive, unresolved issue with clarity about accountability mechanisms and a legal framework still pending.
- Efforts to formalize JAPs with **Ethnic Armed Groups** have been stymied by government resistance; however, dialogue with the CTFMR with most of the listed parties has been undertaken.

- Community-based efforts to build grassroots support, undertaken by ILO under the no cost extension, lacked coherence.
- The effective **operations of the CTFMR** were held back by human resource instability amongst the agencies represented on the CTFMR, largely at the technical level, and a persistent difference of view on the appropriate negotiating posture. At the same time, while the Tatmadaw is now better equipped to address the issue than it was at the outset of the project, and appears to have taken some steps in the direction of more rigorous age assessment, there is little evidence of a deepening commitment to the issue itself by the Tatmadaw (including, importantly, commitment to the underlying principles behind being listed by the UN). Access and transparencies have declined, and issues related to accountability remain unresolved.

A number of **issues** will need to be considered by CTFMR members, as the efforts to help the GoM meet the terms of the agreement it signed proceed. These include:

- The structure, leadership and format of the CTFMR
- An agreed posture and strategy for tackling the issue of perpetrator accountability
- The role of the DSW in the delivery of reintegration support
- A holistic strategy for engaging with EAGs (recognizing that groundwork on negotiations on Agreements have been laid and some development initiatives are underway)
- The CTFMR's posture towards cash transfers from the GoM to released child soldiers

Recommendations:

1. Retain the Joint Action Plan (JAP) on the recruitment and use of children in armed forces with the Government of Myanmar and the United Nations Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) mechanism.
2. Support achievement of the JAP through engagement of a senior, seasoned negotiator with strong facilitation skills and relevant legal background to lead the CTFMR for a fixed period of time, to i) work with members of the CTFMR to detail a roadmap to achieve the terms of the JAP—a reset; ii) lead negotiations with the Tatmadaw on resolution of all outstanding issues included in the JAP.
3. Prioritize agreements on access and accountability in negotiations with the Tatmadaw.
4. Explore the use of social media to target youth in public awareness campaigns.
5. Revisit monitoring forms and data for use in measuring compliance and in negotiations. Specifically, the CTFMR should retain the spotlight scoring system, and transition the scoring system into a more quantifiable metric system with indicators weighted based on their importance to achievement of broader JAP objectives. Such an approach may help sharpen the focus on specific expectations.
6. Schedule monitoring visits to battalions that have already been visited in order to mitigate stage managed element on the part of the Tatmadaw and to measure progress against a baseline.
7. Conduct a rapid costing and impact assessment of reintegration services, including a comparative analysis of beneficiary outcomes to a) validate and test current assumptions about optimal inputs for different cases; b) estimate the cost of providing reintegration services for the average, individual recipient.

8. Include group peer networking opportunities in rehabilitation support.
9. Develop a comprehensive CTFMR strategy for outreach to other listed parties.

While some officers within the Tatmadaw are sympathetic to the issue of child soldiers, the decision makers have their eye on one thing: delisting. The process that the CTFMR has engaged in to date has not yet translated into a deeper appreciation for the rights or protection principles driving the processes. Nonetheless, given the stated commitment on the part of the Tatmadaw to continue to engage with the process, continued dialogue at the highest level and continued activity in regions, states and communities seems to be the best course of action.

1. Background to the Project

In 2001, Human Rights Watch reported that Myanmar had the largest number of child soldiers in the world, up to 20% of the national army, and including children in the majority of opposition groups (Human Rights Watch, 2016)².

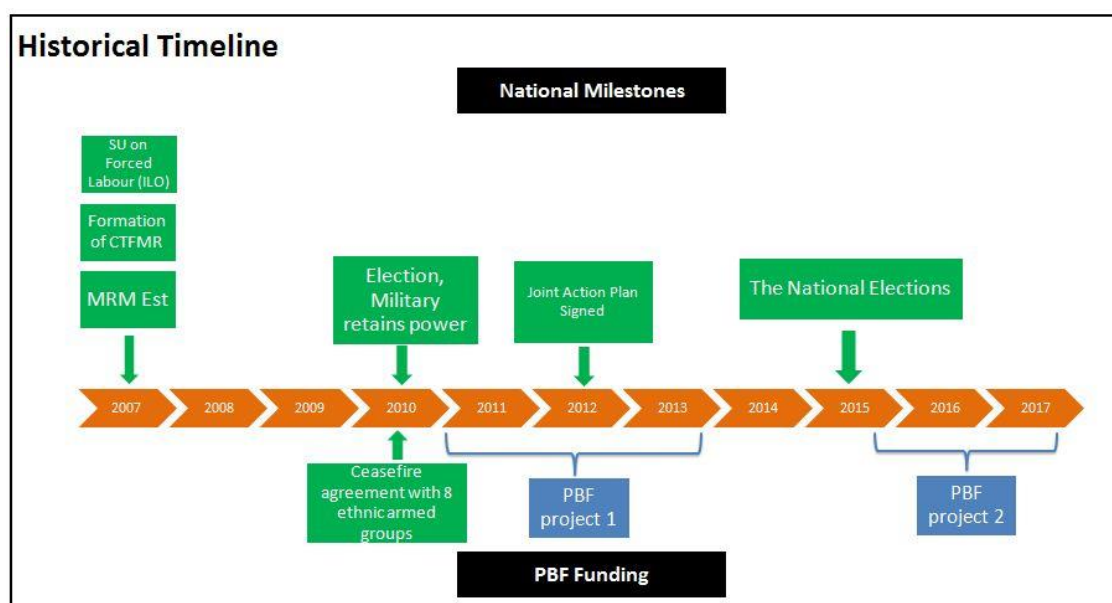
UN attention to issues of forced labor and in particular child soldiers has a long history in Myanmar. Evidence from the ILO dating back to the 1980s about widespread use of forced labor in the country contributed to justification for international sanctions on Myanmar; child soldiers represent one form of forced labor. Since 2002, the Tatmadaw and seven armed groups have been listed by the UN Secretary General for the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. The 2013 report of the Secretary General includes these groups as “persistent perpetrators” (2014 evaluation).

In 2007, after a number of years in which the ILO maintained a strict posture with respect to exposing the practice of forced labor, including by the military government in the country a so-called “Supplementary Understanding” was signed between the ILO and the Government, providing protection to anyone submitting complaints of forced labor to the ILO. It was at this time that the UN began negotiations about child soldiers under Security Council Resolution 1612. In the same year, the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) was established in Myanmar to keep the Security Council abreast of the six grave violations committed against children in armed conflict in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1612 (2005). The mechanism formed to spearhead oversight of the MRM and lead the dialogue with the GoM is the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR), also established in 2007. In Myanmar, the CTFMR is co-chaired by UNICEF and the UN Resident Coordinator Office (UNRCO), with other members including the International Labour Organization (ILO), UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNFPA, OCHA, WFP, World Vision and Save the Children.

The political situation in Myanmar has undergone significant changes in the last five years and during the life of the project under evaluation. The November 2015, elections signaled overwhelming support for a civilian government, transitioning the Tatmadaw from the formal head of government. Nonetheless, the military remain largely in control of key security and policing functions, with the constitution and parliamentary representation in their favor. Some 20 so-called Ethnic Armed Groups (EAGs) are present in the country. In 2015, the Government signed a National Ceasefire Agreement with eight of the twenty such groups, and one of the first acts of the new Government was to organize a Peace Conference (so called 21st Century Panglong Peace Conference)

²There are historical reasons for this. Soldiers who today would be considered underage fought and supported Myanmar’s wars of independence. The army, though feared, has also been regarded as an employment alternative for young men without other prospects.

Figure 1



Supported by international sanctions (some referring directly to forced labor in the country), over the next five years, the CTFMR engaged in intensive negotiations related to the issue of child soldiers. On 27 June, 2012, a Joint Action Plan to address the issue was agreed, with the Government of Myanmar and a senior representative of the CTFMR as signatories. Importantly, the JAP focuses solely on the Tatmadaw and does not include other EAGs. (Each listed party would need to sign and implement its own Action Plan in order to be delisted). It stipulates the actions required to be delisted, the respective roles and responsibilities of the Government of Myanmar (and within it, the Ministry of Defense) and the CTFMR. It lays out an 18-month timeline. More than five years on, some progress has been made, particularly on identification of unlawfully recruited children and on prevention of child recruitment and reintegration procedures (under the auspices of the InterMinisterial Working Group), but closure remains elusive. Momentum on a number of fronts seems to have declined in recent years, while the contextual reality has become arguably more challenging.

The UN PeaceBuilding Fund supported activities leading up to and immediately after the signing of the JAP (2011-2013). The final evaluation, conducted in 2014 encouraged further support to the CTFMR. A second project (September 2015-November, 2017), designed to move towards the completion of the JAP is the subject of this evaluation.

The project document describes the purpose of this project as follows:

The project will support the implementation of the Joint Action Plan to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children by the Tatmadaw, to identify, verify and discharge underage recruits still associated with the Tatmadaw as well as support their reintegration back into their communities. The project also aims to strengthen prevention and accountability for perpetrators of underage recruitment and promotes the overall protection of children from armed conflict in Myanmar including through increased engagement towards the signature of Action Plans with listed non-State Armed Groups. (MA MMR1507UND Nov15)

Project objectives (Outcomes), as presented in the project summary are³:

- Protection of children from 6 Grave Violations is strengthened through effective identification and release of underage recruits from armed forces/groups in accordance with the 2012 Joint Action Plan and increased engagement with EAGs
- All children and young persons released from armed forces and groups receive quality reintegration support.

A total **budget** of \$1,526,890 was provided with \$736,695 to UNICEF, \$576,195 to the ILO and \$214,000 to UNRCO with co-financing from each agency. UNICEF and ILO were the main implementing partners, both providing reintegration support (most of it subcontracted by UNICEF under contract to Save the Children and a number of Myanmar NGOs). Between \$150,000-\$195,000 was budgeted for staff costs for each agency to cover one full time position in each agency for the life of the project plus a 50% FTE for UNICEF to cover time for the chair of the CTFMR. At the time of the evaluation, it appears that both ILO and UNRCO may still be underspent. Details about **organizational working relationships**, including organograms, are presented in the Findings section.

The original project was due to finish in February, 2017 but a request for a **no cost extension** (based on an underspend by the ILO and UNRCO) extended the end date to November, 2017. This evaluation is designed to consider achievements during the period 10/2015-10/2017. This project cycle is somewhat artificial, however, as many of the activities dedicated to meet project objectives have been underway since the establishment of the CTFMR in 2007 and the signing of the Joint Action Plan in 2012. This reality is consistent with the catalytic and flexible nature of the PBF, but it makes a strict delineation (and evaluation) of project cycle outcomes problematic in some cases.

2. Evaluation background

The Terms of Reference for this evaluation provide a comprehensive overview of the history of the issue in Myanmar and clear guidelines for the evaluation. A final evaluation was anticipated in the original agreement with the Peace Building Fund. The purpose is described as follows:

The final independent evaluation will cover all outcomes and will assess the validity of the project logic. It will provide key knowledge building and learning for the broader national process and for stakeholders. It will look at the overall project performance from start to end of the project life as part of project accountability (summative). It should review the project's attainment of the overall objective of supporting the implementation of the Joint Action Plan to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children by the Tatmadaw, and specifically to identify, verify and discharge underage recruits still associated with the Tatmadaw as well as support their reintegration back into their communities.

The project aims to catalyze change at country and individual levels. The evaluation therefore focused on assessing achievements in moving towards conclusion of the **national** Joint Action Plan, as well as successes in providing reintegration services to **individual** former child soldiers. For reasons detailed below, the project and the evaluation adopted a lighter touch on achievements related to Ethnic Armed Groups (EAGs).

³ These objectives are reframed in different documents and the objectives from the Results Framework are used in the Findings section.

The Terms of Reference for this evaluation include a number of questions organized under the OECD/DAC evaluation categories about project relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. These are addressed specifically in the conclusions section.

3. Methodology

The evaluation was entirely qualitative in scope. Document review was followed by a two-week period in Myanmar (October 9-20) with a validation workshop on the last day. Interviews were held before and during the fieldwork with a range of informants in order to get as comprehensive a view of the project as possible (see Table 1 and Annex C).

All stakeholders (except members of the Tatmadaw) were asked to complete short **questionnaire** that solicited views about the contribution of the PBF project to 12 key elements of the JAP. Results of the survey, presented in the Findings section, should be considered **illustrative only** given the limited number of respondents in each category (all four Government respondents were from the Department of Social Welfare).

3.1 Respondents

Interviews with former child soldiers, family members, case workers and project partners were carried out in Yangon, Mandalay and Naypidaw. A one hour meeting with 7 representatives of the project's key partner—the Tatmadaw—was held in Naypidaw on the final day of the fieldwork.

Table 1. Types of people interviewed in the evaluation

Stakeholder group	Number of people interviewed
UN Representatives from UNICEF, ILO and UNRCO (past and current)	13
Government counterparts*	11
INGO partners Save the Children and World Vision International (past and current)	11
NGO/CBO partners	8
Former Child Soldiers	19
Family members of former child soldiers	8
Other partners (including PBF)	3
Total	73

*Includes a meeting attended by 7 senior members of the Tatmadaw

The evaluation team included an international evaluator, a national representative and a translator who also undertook the data analysis.

3.2 Evaluation logistics and team

Some comments on the documentation, preparation and team composition, including **limitations** are presented here.

3.2.1 Documentation was quite limited for this evaluation.

- There was no central repository for information and the breadth and detail of information available to inform this evaluation was uneven. **Data related to monitoring of military sites and reintegration support** is held confidentially at UNICEF and was not in a format that could be analyzed (nor was there time). **Minutes of CTFMR meetings** were reviewed in the UNICEF office given confidentiality concerns.
- Documents and data were provided by the ILO and UNICEF in several waves. UNICEF provided data in several iterations and much of what is presented in this report is from UNICEF records. Guidelines for structures and assessments, training ppts as well as data collection forms were also provided by UNICEF in the course of the fieldwork.
- The inception report and evaluability assessment were based on a review of the ToR, the original project document, the 2016 annual report and a few recent studies done for the ILO which came in quite close to the deadline.
- The Results Framework indicators were not formally updated through the end of the project and only two project reports were shared. There was an unresolved discussion about whether an **Annual Report for 2017** would be prepared, covering the period of the no cost extension.
- Not all of the **indicators** cited in this report are for the project period (2015-2017). Cumulative data since the establishment of the CTFMR (2007) or starting from the signing of the JAP (2012) are also included when annual or project cycle disaggregated data was not available.
- The absence of a clear, consolidated synthesis of project achievements (including an updated Results Framework) through the end of the project was a major limitation of this evaluation. Without this as a starting point, and with no comprehensive briefing from within the project, the findings presented in this project relied in large measure on interviews conducted during the fieldwork.

3.2.2 Logistics

The **scheduling of interviews** was challenged by a number of limitations:

- The set-up of field visits became a point of dispute between the ILO (which was managing the evaluation) and UNICEF (the main implementing agency). There was reportedly some initial resistance to the evaluation team meeting with former child soldiers and case workers. As a result of miscommunications, interviews with former child soldiers and families and partner agencies outside of Yangon were hurriedly set up, and crammed into two days. A full day was spent traveling back and forth to Naypidaw for a 20-minute meeting with the Director General of the Department of Social Welfare.
- Only people who were currently working on the project were included in the initial schedule. Given the significant turnover of senior and middle level staff from CTFMR member agencies over the life of the project, limiting interviews to current staff represented a narrowed view of the project (particularly given the limited availability of documentation). This only came to light in the course of interviews in the first week, and rapid networking enabled interviews

with a number of former staff, including former members of the CTFMR who were reachable via Skype or still resident in Myanmar.

Nonetheless, several key individuals, notably the recently departed UNICEF Technical Chair of the CTFMR, was not included and was unreachable during the fieldwork⁴. Other past and current UNICEF and UNRCO Representatives, who formally chair the CTFMR were also not included on the interview list, and not interviewed for this evaluation. Representatives from other UN agencies were also not included, notably UNHCR which featured prominently in the 2014 evaluation.⁵

Although the Inter Ministerial Working Group (IMWG) was a key structure in this project, and in fact had been set up in a number of regional sites during the project, these did not appear on the original schedule. Ultimately, information about their functioning had to be gleaned from UNICEF and the local DSW representative in one region. As noted above, input from the national DSW was quite abbreviated.

3.2.3 Tripartite issues assessment

The ToR for this evaluation report requests a **tripartite issues assessment**—ensuring that the voices and perspectives of all those who have a stake in the project have been heard and considered in the findings and recommendations. An aspirational list of types of people to be interviewed during the fieldwork was included in the evaluation’s inception report. This list included implementing agencies, government partners and grassroots implementers and direct and indirect beneficiaries (that is, former child soldiers and their families) and was based on information provided in the ToR and project document. The fieldwork included interviews with representatives of almost all of the stakeholders listed in the inception report, and met the numerical targets for each group set in the inception report. About a dozen people attended the validation workshop, with all three UN and both INGO agencies represented.

Where the aspiration of a full 360-degree investigation of this project was compromised most was the **voice and perspective of government partner agencies** which was limited in terms of quantity and quality. A total of 2.5 hours was spent over the course of the 10-day fieldwork in conversations with government representatives from the two key entities—the Tatmadaw and the Department of Social Welfare. Per advice of UNICEF, no meetings at battalion level were possible, and meetings with other government agencies were not included in the schedule. No representatives of **EAGs** were interviewed.

3.2.4 Evaluation team

The **evaluation team** was comprised of an international and national evaluator and a translator. The national evaluator had been recently employed by the ILO (2007-2015) and was involved in child soldier and forced labor issues until his retirement. He was hired very late and his CV shared only days before the evaluation began, making it too late to explore potential conflict of interest concerns. He had no prior evaluation experience and was not well briefed or prepared. Given the highly complex, dynamic and somewhat contentious context of this project, the absence of an appropriate national evaluator has definitely limited the nuance and potentially the veracity of this analysis.

⁴The Chair was not available following the fieldwork.

⁵ UNICEF notes that a UNHCR International staff involved in the implementation of the JAP was included in the interview list and confirmed, but later on had to cancel the meeting because of the emergency in Rakhine.

3.3 Summary

The evaluation took place during a period of significant activity in Myanmar with the situation in Rakhine and high-level UN missions demanding the time and attention of UN representatives. Individuals from ILO, UNICEF, UNRCO involved in the PBF project nonetheless made themselves available for interviews and responded promptly to requests for information during the field visit. UNICEF child protection representatives have been particularly responsive, providing data and clarification before, during, and after the fieldwork. The validation workshop was well attended, including by INGO and NGO partners, and stakeholders offered honest input and analysis.

The dearth of documentation (and particularly reflective analysis on process and outcomes in a final report), the team composition, and uneven access to all stakeholder voices in the brief time allocated to this evaluation may have compromised the veracity of the findings put forward in this report. **Evidence to advance best practices is insufficient.**

Many people have been generous with their time and openly shared their perspectives. Given the complexity of the issue and the context, there will, inevitably be errors of fact and interpretation—for which the author takes full responsibility.

4. Findings

This chapter presents findings related to each of the key Outcomes, and considers separately issues related to the functioning and role of the CTFMR, outreach to Ethnic Armed Groups, and the key outstanding issue of accountability. The last subsection in this chapter briefly looks at administrative and project management issues.

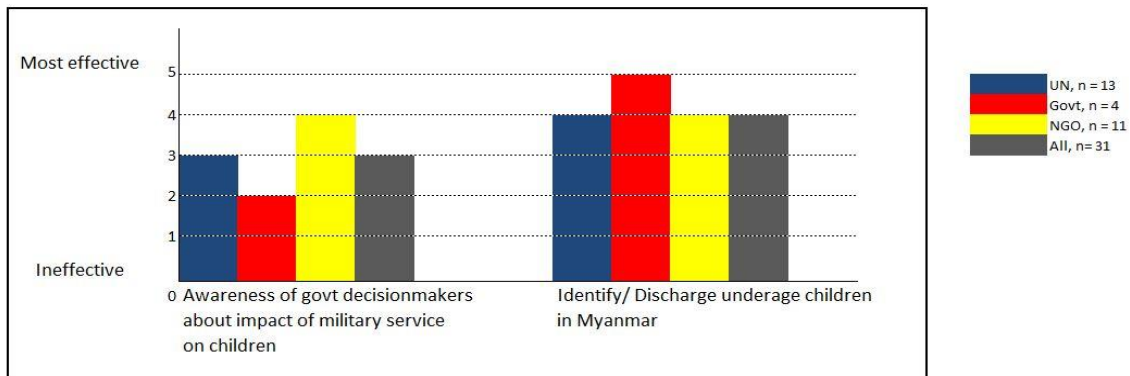
4.1 Identification and release of child soldiers from the Tatmadaw

Most of the former child soldiers interviewed for this evaluation had entered the military without their full understanding and consent. Many were from families struggling financially and were motivated by the steady income, however small, and accommodation and food offered by the Tatmadaw. Some had been coerced, some had been convinced by a peer. Some were escaping from family feuds. Some were kidnapped or duped with false promises—of education or skills training. Many had no contact with family members for years after they entered the army. Those who recruited interviewees were both soldiers and civilians, and in some cases they were even family members.

The project supported a range of initiatives designed to contribute to a cessation of recruitment: public awareness raising; a diversity of safe reporting mechanisms; monitoring visits to battalions and other military units; and follow up on individual cases once they were reported. All of these efforts were undertaken by one or several agencies under the umbrella of the CTFMR and in partnership and consultation with the Tatmadaw.

The actual number of underage recruits in the Tatmadaw is unknown. The number of reported cases over time (including within the life of the PBF project) may be an indication that recruitment is dropping. Respondents to the short survey view achievements in this central area of the project as a success, although curiously there seems to be less confidence in government *awareness* than in military *action*.

Figure 2. What stakeholders think: *In your view, how effective was the project in supporting...*



4.1.1 Public awareness

The Joint Action Plan identifies four tracks for identifying children who were underage when the JAP was signed or who were recruited underage since then (i.e. born after June, 1994)⁶:

Track 1: internal (mass) identification by Tatmadaw (battalion commanders, etc.)

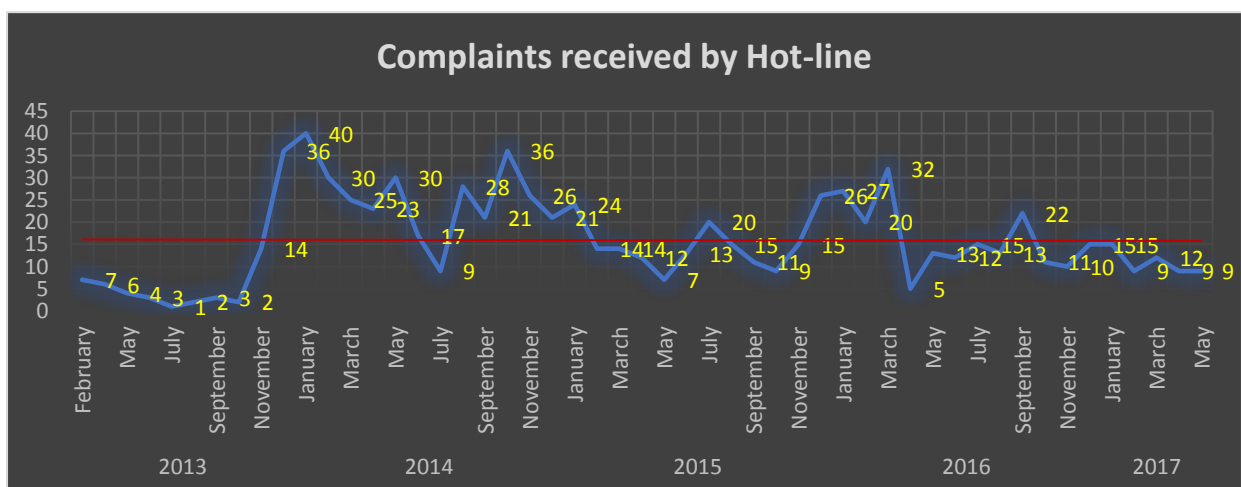
Track 2: suspected minors self-identifying to their Adjutant officer, senior staff or friends

Track 3: internal identification by Tatmadaw based on the documentation/ personal files, and for all the soldiers recruited since 2008.

Track 4: Safe reporting mechanism including Hotline/CTFMR

Five hundred and nineteen (519) complaints about underage recruits were received during the period of the project (9/2105-2/2017) (UNICEF, 2017). In practice, most of the complaints come through the **hotline** (Track 4), which is managed by World Vision in Myanmar (WViM). Quite a number came directly to the ILO (the forced labor mechanism), UNICEF, or through INGO and CBO partners (also Track 4). Often both methods would be used to alert the CTFMR.

Figure 3. Number of calls to the hotline about underage recruits in the Tatmadaw



Source: UNICEF

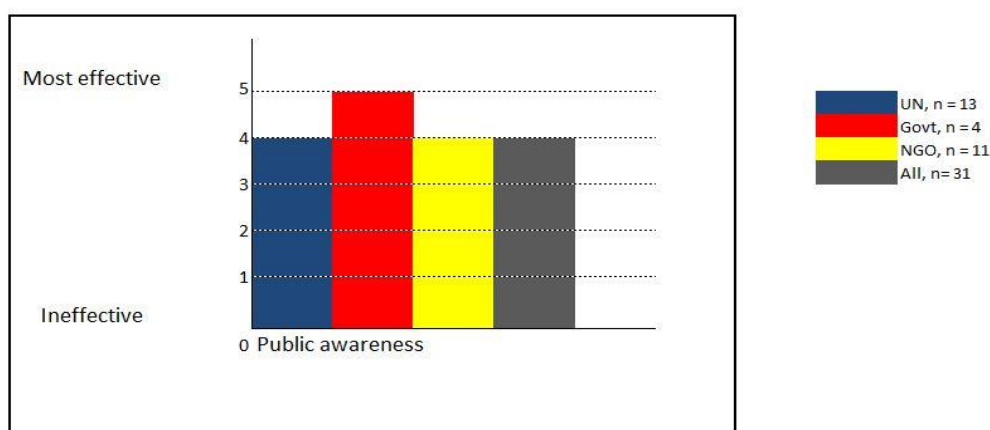
⁶ The Tatmadaw also discharges children recruited before 2012 without necessarily informing the CTFMR or requesting CTFMR assistance in the age verification process.

UNICEF estimates that 60-70% of calls to the hotline are reports of new suspected minors, approximately 30-40% are second calls about a suspected minor who has already been reported and is either sent to the frontline or held in detention, and a small number—approximately 5%—are about children facing difficulties and in need of immediate help.

The spike in calls in the 2013/2014 period coincide with the first **public awareness campaign**. This campaign featured billboards, radio and television spots providing key messages about the laws related to underage recruitment, and included the hotline number. UNICEF has printed stickers and cards with information about the law and reporting options. In the course of their grassroots development activities participating INGOs and NGOs also raise awareness about the legal aspects and risks of recruitment and how to report underage recruitment. The ILO has a network of some 400 volunteer community facilitators who also promote awareness and bring complaints in the course of their broader work on forced labor. UNICEF similarly developed a network of more than 500 community members and trained them to monitor and report any 6 grave violations. All of the former child soldiers and family members interviewed for this evaluation said that they got information that helped them secure the child’s release via word of mouth, most commonly from other underage soldiers, though a number had used the hotline and all were in touch with at least one member of the CTFMR.

As shown in Figure 4, respondents to the short survey rated the effectiveness of the project on raising public awareness high, particularly when compared to other elements of the project.

Figure 4. What stakeholders think: *In your view, how effective was the project in supporting....*



In April, 2017, after over a year of CTFMR discussions, the Government approved a renewed public awareness campaign based on materials previously developed and agreed upon. The GoM is underwriting the messaging and broadcast for the 2017 campaign in public and military media; UNICEF is only paying for renewal of the +200 billboards.

Figure 5. Billboards informing the public about underage recruitment and how to report about it (2017)



4.1.2 Assessment and Reporting

The project took steps to equip the Tatmadaw to conduct **age assessment screening and ensure rigor in the documentation required for recruitment**. In 2015, an agreed set of Standard Operating Procedures for age assessment was signed between the CTFMR and the GoM and UNICEF prepared a training module that is now delivered to all recruiters. The work done by the CTFMR also led to a centralized recruitment system, which has reportedly enhanced oversight of age assessment screening. Each new applicant also needs to provide five key identification documents (copy of family list, police and school recommendations, etc.), with all documents including the date of birth of the applicant. The introduction of thumb scanners reportedly also prevents individuals from applying at a second location if they are rejected at the first.

These are valuable steps being undertaken at the time of recruitment. Nonetheless data about the source of reports overall suggests that the hotline remains the mechanism of choice, and reporting through the Tatmadaw (Tracks 1-3), never high, has declined.

Indeed, the annual report to the PBF for 2016 suggests that of 154 underage recruits released since the beginning of the project and falling under the scope of the JAP, only 5 (3%) were identified by the Tatmadaw. One observer notes that child soldiers fear being punished if they appeal to their commanding officer to be released (Track 3).

It is widely recognized that in order to **advance their promotion** possibilities officers may find it easier to recruit children--a factor that potentially incentivizes underage recruitment⁷. Although centralization of recruitment may be helping to counter such incentives, the practice continues. Interviews with discharged child soldiers about the circumstances of their recruitment suggest that **forgery of documents** (school records, birth certificates, ID cards) at the point of enlistment remains a common element of the pathway into the military. Indeed, in the interview with the Tatmadaw, one respondent reflected that it was likely that about 10% of underage recruits are mistakenly enlisted because of forged documents.

4.1.3 Field monitoring

An important role of the CTFMR is monitoring of battalions and other Tatmadaw units as agreed to in the JAP. Unique to Myanmar, the JAP provides for a 72 hours advance notice ahead of a CTFMR

⁷The 2014 evaluation notes that "...an [Tatmadaw] officer needed to recruit to keep the numbers up, and even with the Myanmar Law 13/73, if you did not keep up the numbers an officer was in a worse situation than if he recruited children"

visit.⁸ According to UNICEF, only one of the requested trips in the 2015/2016 period was denied, based on a legitimate reason. In 2017, access for one military unit and two whole missions (which included 10 military units) were declined, based on security reason (one unit) and conflicting agendas⁹.

The evaluation team heard reports of the CTFMR being **denied full access** to barracks, military prisons, and documentation. According to some observers, the advanced notice has allowed the Tatmadaw to learn the process, and to prepare for CTFMR visits. As a result, in some instances visits appear to be stage managed. In one case, a deputy commander reportedly had a transcript of an interview held in a prior monitoring visit with a battalion chief. The deputy commander read the responses verbatim to the monitoring team, suggesting perhaps questions had been taped. Other members of the CTFMR note that compliance is uneven, with some battalions and military focal point persons (who accompany each monitoring mission) more cooperative than others.

Feedback is provided to the battalions after each visit, including to a senior liaison officer accompanying each mission, and to senior representatives of the Tatmadaw during regular national level meetings.

During the period of the PBF project, the CTFMR has conducted 13 **monitoring visits** to a total of 55 military units of the Tatmadaw, including battalions, border guard forces, training schools and recruitment units. This represents one visit every other month. UNICEF suggests that staff designated to do monitoring spend an average of five days per month on monitoring. While there were five monitoring visits between January and October in 2017, three of the five monitoring visits were in Yangon. Members of the CTFMR recognize a slowdown in monitoring and blame it on lack of staff. The Team Lead has to be an international staff, which has further impeded momentum because of turnover and gaps amongst member agencies.

4.1.4 Reporting and monitoring data collection and use

UNICEF designed a **monitoring reporting system** which includes a comprehensive set of questions to be used by monitoring teams. These range from questions about awareness of the JAP and the specifics of stipulations and procedures related to age assessment, reporting mechanisms, child protection and perpetrator accountability. The form includes questions about the availability and veracity of documents reviewed.

In recent years, the CTFMR introduced a **stoplight approach** as way of summarizing compliance based on findings from monitoring inspections. (The form notes, for instance, that if only preselected soldiers at the noncommissioned level are available for interview, nothing higher than an orange score can be awarded). While anecdotally, the evaluation team heard that the Tatmadaw has been reluctant to accept this approach, the move towards a more rigorous scoring system has some merit. It may relieve some of the growing tensions around defining and discussing transparencies. However, in its current format further aggregation of data would be quite challenging, as information is recorded as text in an open-ended format. An indexed, weighted set

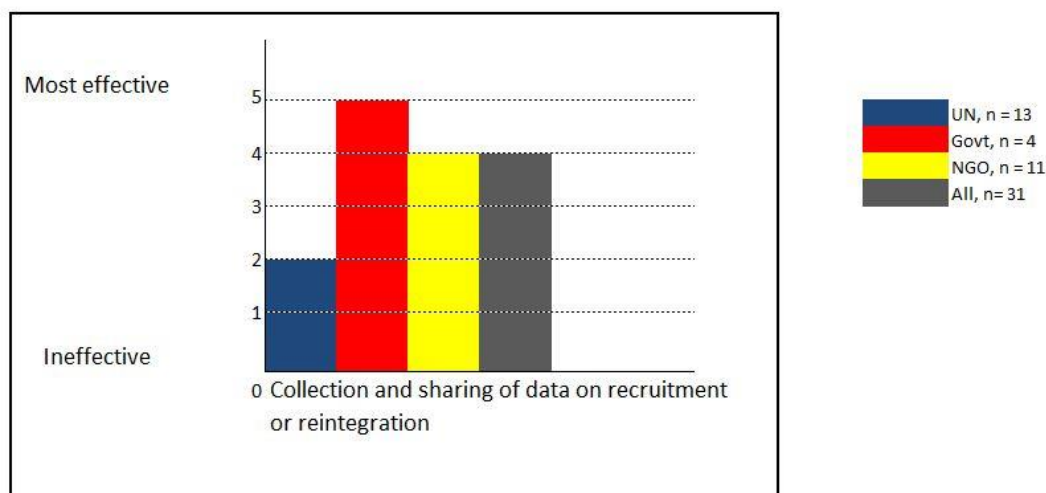
⁸The ILO has noted that access to victims of forced labor needs no prior warning. The major difference is that these are civilian laborers.

⁹ Clarification from UNICEF: *in the first mission cancelled, the Tatmadaw had recently suffered the loss of a plane with +70 people on board, and was searching the pieces of debris of the plane when we asked for a mission (about 3 weeks after the crash). Lots of troops were apparently engaged in the search. The second mission cancelled was requested one week after the August 25 attacks in Rakhine (but would have been organized in a very different region). Tatmadaw declined the request and informed that they would not be available for any monitoring mission for the whole month of September.*

of indicators linked to each color, and agreed with both partners, could provide a helpful reference point for dialogue.

As shown in Figure 6, the UN and government (DSW) regard data systems quite differently.

Figure 6. What stakeholders think: *In your view, how effective was the project in supporting...*



Since the survey did not include responses from a major consumer of MRM data—the Tatmadaw—it is likely that the enthusiastic response from DSW was with regard to reintegration data—discussed below. INGO and NGO stakeholders, who are key collectors and users of reintegration data regard this as an achievement of the project.

The CTFMR has provided **MRM training** to more than 500 CBO, NGO and government stakeholders in 11 sites¹⁰ in the project period, which UNICEF notes as a significant undertaking. These trainings help to spread accurate information about each 6 grave violations, and also covers the JAP, and reporting options¹¹. The CTFMR continues to receive information about the **6 grave violations to children** (killing and maiming of children, recruitment or use of children, sexual violence against children; abduction of children; attacks against schools or hospitals; denial of humanitarian access for children) committed by armed parties to the conflict as listed in UN resolution 1261. In 2015, for instance, reports about a total of 449 incidents affecting 2272 children were received. Just over half (255) of the incidents could be verified, and the majority of those (211) were related to military recruitment and use.

The Joint Action Plan refers to the 6 grave violations and the MRM in Article 2 (Definitions) but compliance with the JAP relies on one: the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and only in the Tatmadaw¹². Other violations are tabled at meetings and addressed through programming by members of the CTFMR, and urgent notifications are sent to the Tatmadaw whenever necessary, for instance in the case of an occupation of a school. Violations to children by other armed groups

¹⁰ Data provided by UNICEF details trainings delivered to 343 trainees across 11 sites in the Oct, 2015-Feb, 2017 period. While no other data was provided, reviewers to this evaluation report suggest more than 500 individuals have been trained, possibly by other agencies and during the period of the no cost extension, including by UNICEF.

¹¹ Reports about violations to children by other armed groups are also collected under the MRM.

¹² All eight parties listed by the UN, including the Tatmadaw are only listed for recruitment and use of children. However, once created the CTFMR is in charge of collecting information about all the armed parties in Myanmar, and all the 6 grave violations.

in the country do not fall under the current JAP and are presumably more difficult to verify. The response is also more challenging, as discussed below.

4.1.5 Case review

During the project period, the **CTFMR reviewed 519 cases of underage** recruitment in the Tatmadaw. Some 257 cases remain open, because they could not be traced (some may have been killed or may have migrated) or because no agreement about the age of the person could be resolved. The **CTFMR met** 24 times in the period 9/2015-2/2017—14 times internally and 10 times with the Ministry of Defense.

Minutes from CTFMR meetings with the Ministry of Defense reflect the painstaking nature of negotiation on each case. The JAP specifies that case review should take no longer than three months from complaint to release. However, some take as long as a year. For more complex cases, with the CTFMR was often requested to put forward additional documentation in subsequent sessions. Curiously, the frustration expressed in the interview with the Tatmadaw the protracted nature of case review was blamed on foot dragging by members of the CTFMR.

4.1.6 Discharge

Since the signing of the JAP, some 849 children recruited since its signing have been **discharged**, 203 children during the life of the PBF project, in four discharge events.

For individual children and their families, the **time between reporting and release** raised feelings of vulnerability. The CTFMR has requested that children who are being reviewed be brought back from the front line if they are there until cases are resolved, and that no punishments are meted out for reporting. Nonetheless, for fear of reprisal, many recruits ran away from the army (went AWOL) while their case was being reviewed, in particular when the child was now over 18. Letters from the ILO or UNICEF verifying the recruits' status as having been recruited when underage were mentioned repeatedly in interviews. The letters served as a source of protection during this period, and were reportedly respected by local officials.

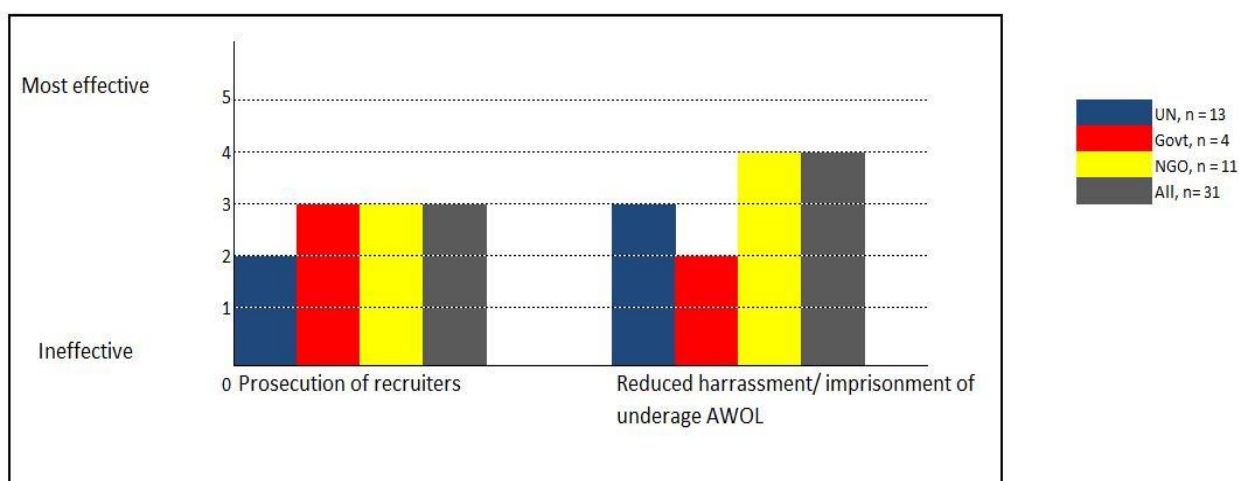
4.2. Accountability for perpetrators

Article 3.6 of the Joint Action Plan states that the

Government shall....Confirm that Child Recruitment and use is a criminal offence under existing law, and promptly investigate and apply the existing laws against Tatmadaw personnel and civilians who are responsible for the Recruitment and use of Children and the abetting thereof....

There are two types of recruiters: i) soldiers in uniform; and ii) civilians who collaborate with military recruiters. Since the signing of the JAP, the GoM has put forward the names of 385 alleged perpetrators. As of the 2016 annual report, only 23 have been verified. Punishment for those who have been identified as perpetrators appears to be uneven. Stories from former child soldiers interviewed for this evaluation suggest that in some cases their recruiters got jail sentences (2 years being an average). In one case, the perpetrator was still at large and a member of the same community.

Figure 7. What stakeholders think: *In your view, how effective was the project in supporting...*



Lack of Tatmadaw transparency on documentation and due process remains a stumbling block. Legal principles may also be poorly understood or at least anathema to prevailing thinking. Nonetheless, the ILO notes that the Supplementary Understanding mechanism on forced labor includes a mechanism for identifying perpetrators—something that faced some resistance to start, but is working today¹³. (At the same time, the diluted implementation of the JAP in this regard is reportedly also impacting adherence to the SU).

Accountability remains a sensitive, unresolved issue, with clarity about mechanisms and a legal framework still pending. The CTFMR has raised the issue in meetings with the DoM and high-level meetings are scheduled for November, 2017.

4.3 The CTFMR

The CTFMR brings together international agencies that share interest and expertise on the issue of child soldiers under one umbrella, in order to be able to negotiate with and provide capacity support to GoM agencies tasked with addressing the identification, release and reintegration of underage military recruits in Myanmar. Formed in 2007, the CTFMR was the body that negotiated the Joint Action Plan (signed 2012). It is the mechanism tasked with taking the agreements in that Plan forward, in partnership with the Ministry of Defense. The MoD provides access to the Tatmadaw and is essentially an administrative entre to the more senior and more powerful military entity.

Resources under the PBF project were provided to three **UN partners** on the CTFMR—UNRCO and UNICEF (co-chairs of the CTFMR) and the ILO¹⁴. PBF funding helped to underwrite the labor-intensive process of identifying and documenting individual cases of underage recruitment, and negotiating their release with the Tatmadaw. Funding also supported the similarly labor-intensive reintegration support provided to individual child soldiers (discussed in the following section). In pursuit of the fulfillment of the agreements under the JAP, members of the CTFMR provided **capacity building** to the Tatmadaw and other government agencies in identification and reintegration of child soldiers. Capacity building was offered directly— through provision of informational sessions on international laws and covenants, tools and training for age screening,

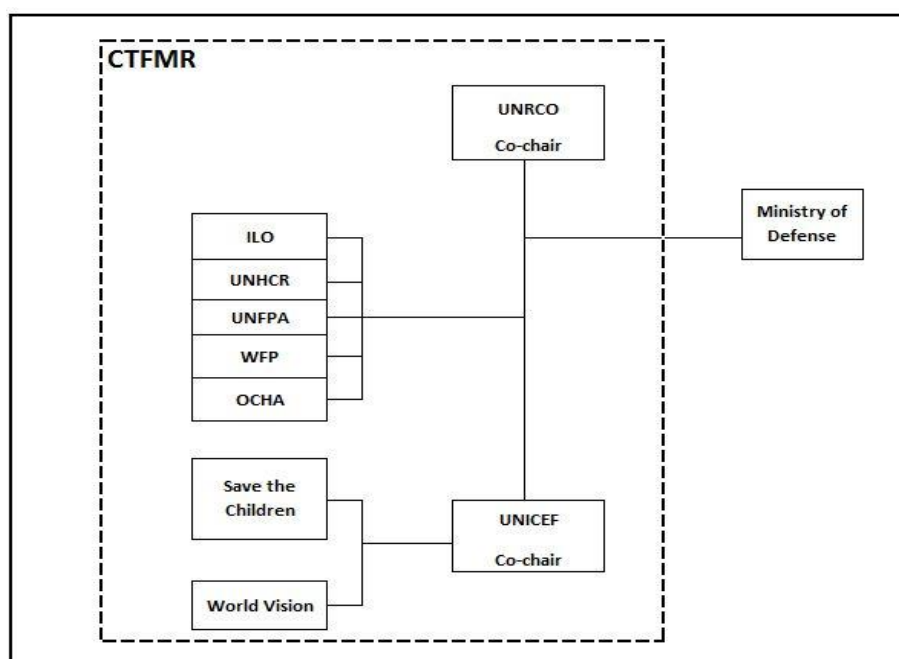
¹³The important distinction of course is that the SU is not, strictly speaking under the aegis of the military, though of course until very recently there was little distinction between military and civilian from a governance point of view.

¹⁴As noted above, the ILO has a long history of working on issues related to forced labor in Myanmar and began receiving cases of underage soldiers under its Supplementary Understanding mechanism even before signing of the JAP.

monitoring tools—and indirectly—through joint monitoring, negotiation about specific cases, and collaboration on reintegration activities—all of which theoretically served to expose military and government representatives to approaches consistent with international practices.

The **composition of the CTFMR** has not changed since its formation in 2007, but the structure has altered slightly. UNRCO and UNICEF were co-chairs from the outset, given their respective mandates on UN coordination and child protection. UNICEF is in charge of the CTFMR secretariat. The ILO has played an active role given its focus on forced labor and existing mechanisms for identifying child soldiers. Other UN agencies involved in elements of child protection and peace building in Myanmar were included as well. Two international NGOs—World Vision and Save the Children—were also included on the CTFMR based on the alignment of mission and presence on the ground in Myanmar.

Figure 8. Current structure of the CTFMR, 2017



All of the original agencies remain in the body, but a number of **transitions** have taken place over the last decade:

- UNICEF has taken an increasingly **singular role** in chairing and negotiations.
- Whereas SC and WVI were full members of the CTFMR at its inception, their **role as subcontractors**¹⁵ under this and the prior PBF project for the delivery of reintegration services has served to shift them into more of an operational role, which some argue has muted their voice on the CTFMR.

By most accounts, the workings of the CTFMR has been characterized by a low level of internal discord since its establishment. At the time of the evaluation, cohesion and momentum appeared to be diminishing. There are a number of intersecting reasons for this:¹⁶

- **Perspective on approach and modality** amongst the key UN agencies diverged, with the ILO framing the issue in terms of human rights *principles* while UNICEF advanced concerns in

¹⁵The project document notes *UNICEF will work with CTFMR members World Vision and Save the Children as implementing partners of the project, who will allocate funds to national organizations.* (pg 16, MA MMR1507UND, Nov 15)

¹⁶These observations are put forward solely based on interviews with current and past members of the CTFMR.

terms of child protection *practicalities*. While both are of course valid, not mutually exclusive, and fundamentally important in achieving the goals of the CTFMR under the JAP, they served to divide the committee. According to some observers, UNICEF adopted an increasingly softer approach to elements like access and transparencies in order to encourage continued partner engagement, while the ILO maintained a stance of strict compliance to legal requirements. UNRCO appears to have taken a more hands off approach. The tension between principles and practicality continues to divide the membership, reflecting the historical legacy of each agency in the country, the overarching mission programming posture, and to some extent the individual training and predispositions of individual representatives on the CTFMR.

- **Turnover** of representatives on the CTFMR has been significant from every agency. UNICEF, ILO and UNRCO all experienced gaps at the technical officer level during this and the prior PBF cycle, sometimes for more than 6 months. These discontinuities have disrupted and further diminished the ability of the committee to work and speak as a cohesive group.
- **Leadership transitions.** The UNICEF Resident Representative officially chairs the CTFMR but the evaluator neither met with nor heard much reference to their input. Rather the Head of Child Protection took a leadership role in the CTFMR. The UNRCO was not part of the committee in the early days. In the critical period after the signing of the JAP, one observer characterized the leadership (from UNICEF) as forceful and technically strong on the legal aspects, enabling agreements on protocols to be fixed and skillfully managing the divergence of views and skills within the CTFMR. Leadership changes at the critical moment of the national election ushered in a softer, more technocratic approach to the CTFMR's negotiations which to a number of observers weakened the committees' insistence on adherence to principles.
- **Inclusiveness in consultation and decision-making processes within the CTFMR** appears to have diminished over time, as UNICEF assumed an increasingly centralized, and often bilateral role in negotiations with the Tatmadaw. This has served to further aggravate existing tensions within. It has also muted the INGO role at the table, subsuming them as largely as implementing partners.
- **Legacy considerations.** As described above, until the establishment of the CTFMR, ILO was the preeminent UN agency working on labor and protection issues with identification and recourse mechanisms in place. The establishment of the CTFMR and signing of the JAP represented a significant step forward on a specific labor and protection issue with elevated profile and backed by UN sanctions. It also served to effectively shift primary leadership to UNICEF (as co-chair of the CTFMR).

At the same time, the posture of the partner has made the job of the CTFMR increasingly difficult. A number of observers note that the **Tatmadaw has hardened its position over time**, offering reduced access during monitoring visits, less overall transparency, heightened demands for evidence related to individual cases¹⁷, and a shrinking space for negotiations about accountabilities for perpetrators.¹⁸ While observers agree that this trend has been gaining momentum, speculations about *why* vary. Some blame fears on the part of the military to heightened oversight and exposure of negative practices, particularly given the international spotlight on Myanmar as a result of events in Rakhine (current and previous); some cite fears of diminishing control following the 2015 elections which ushered in a degree of powersharing (albeit still fragile) with the NLD; while another suggests that a hostile posture has been adopted in order to undermine "wins" by the new civilian government. Another notes that the growing number of alternative economic opportunities for

¹⁷Both members of the CTFMR and representatives of the Tatmadaw complain about delays in resolving individual cases, symbolic of broader frustrations with the protracted nature of achieving the goals of the JAP.

¹⁸A small but indicative indicator of this trend is the fact that in 2014 the PBF evaluator had access to a battalion where interviews were carried. In the present evaluation, three years later, this was ruled out as completely inadvisable by UNICEF, and even securing a meeting with the Ministry of Defense took the better part of two weeks.

young people particularly in urban areas may also diminish the attraction of a military career—a concern for the national military. Still another observer suggests that the lack of capacity and understanding of global principles within the Tatmadaw has contributed to an increasingly defensive posture.

Several observers also note that that leadership discontinuities and disagreements within the CTFMR and may have empowered more pushback from the Tatmadaw, who recognized cracks in its negotiating partner. One school of thought contends that the Tatmadaw may have mistaken what the CTFMR leadership saw as conciliation for a softening of principles. In the evaluator’s interview with the Tatmadaw, however, there was a complaint that feedback provided directly from the **CTFMR often sounded more “friendly” than what the CTFMR was reporting back to the UN Secretary General’s office.** On the other hand, and perhaps *most* importantly, the Tatmadaw’s singular focus on being delisted does not appear to be associated with an internalized commitment (or understanding) of the purpose and principles behind the listing. **The lack of a commitment to a shared purpose with the Tatmadaw has confounded progress, particularly for a CTFMR comprised of principle-driven agencies.**

Relationships with the Tatmadaw presently appear at an all-time low, with the diminishing number of meetings and monitoring visits an indicator of dwindling momentum. As this discussion suggests, there is little consensus amongst current and former members of the CTFMR on the reason for this situation, and it is clear that no one factor is to blame.

4.4 Reintegration of former child soldiers

Most of the former child soldiers interviewed for this evaluation had entered the military with documents forged by their recruiters (military and non-military). Some had served on the front line, and a few had been injured there, one seriously. Quite a number said they had been struggling in school before they were recruited. As a result of their time in the military, all had missed out on key years of education, and felt they were now too old to return to school. In a number of cases, children had been kidnapped by recruiters leaving their parents desperate and unable to locate them, sometimes for years. All were released with the help of one or more of the CTFMR agencies (some also mentioned the NLD), and parents played an important role in working through the system.

Former child soldiers face a range of particular social reintegration and employment challenges. Former soldiers and case workers point to social adaptation challenges, depression, and family issues. Older ex-soldiers are sure that if they had not been in the military, they would have found it easier to get a job (most don’t disclose their former military status to would-be employers).

The Joint Action Plan stipulates that the

Government shall...Take all necessary measures to facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of Children released/discharged from the Tatmadaw (3.10).

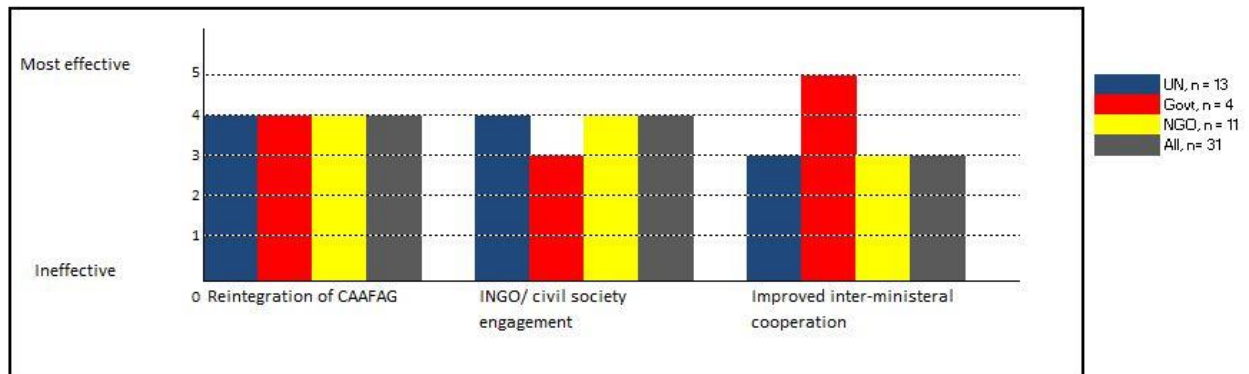
The project document anticipates the main challenges and expected results as:

- Strengthening Government and NGO capacities in the area of life skills, vocational and economic reintegration training
- Strengthening reintegration coordination at the regional level
- Developing standardized reintegration tools for children formerly associated with EAOs.

These challenges were addressed and progress made on each over the life of the project.

Project stakeholders who completed the short survey for this evaluation gave the project high marks for reintegration related interventions, and held mixed views on the agency engagement, as shown in Figure 9. Notable in particular is the DSW's view of inter-ministerial cooperation, which UN and NGO respondents regard somewhat less enthusiastically.

Figure 9. What stakeholders think: *In your view, how effective was the project in supporting..*



4.4.1 Reintegration support provided

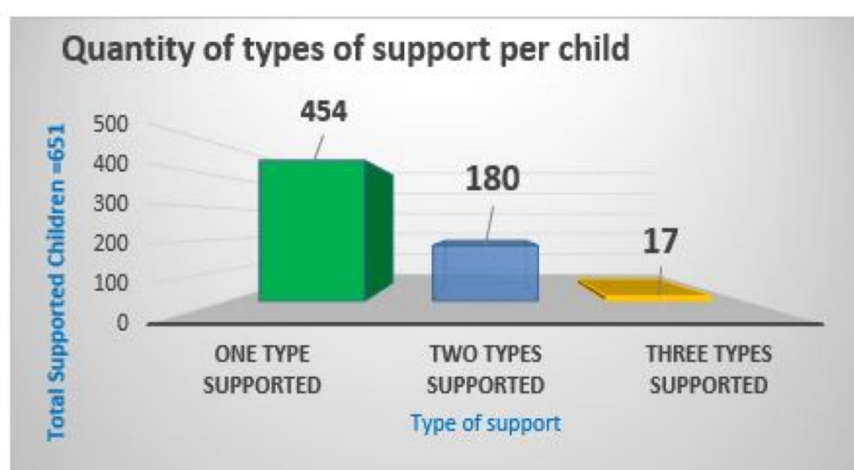
Since the signing of the JAP in 2012, some 849¹⁹ children have been discharged under the scope of the JAP, approximately 77% of whom have received reintegration support.²⁰ Table 2 provides a snapshot of the types of support provided. Many beneficiaries receive multiple types of support, to a ceiling of \$500/individual (does not include labor for administration and case management).

Table 2 Main types and level of reintegration support (7/2012-10/2017)

Type of support	Number of beneficiaries
Education Support	63
Vocational Training	195
Income Generation Support	365
Medical Support	14
Structural Support	14
Total	651

Source: UNICEF

Figure 10
Children receiving more than one type of support per child



Source: UNICEF

¹⁹This figure is at odds with the number cited in the Results Framework for 2016, Indicator 2.1 which states that 800 former child soldiers with the Tatmadaw received reintegration support *during the reporting period (2015/2016)*.

²⁰Data from UNICEF data indicates that 767 of the children were eligible, 82 fell outside of the JAP and 30 refused support or could not be traced.

The 2016 report to the PBF notes that all 154 children released during the period of the PBF project (i.e. 9/2015-12/2016), as well as an unspecified number of others whose pending cases were resolved during this period received an initial **needs assessment** when they were discharged, followed by up to two years of social and livelihood support.

Members of the CTFMR are present at the discharge ceremony where youth receive a discharge “kit” comprised of clothing, toiletries and money to cover their transport home. Importantly, they also receive valid identification papers. They are also given up to two days of life skills training designed to help them to set life goals and facilitate their social reintegration. Many former child soldiers recalled learning the “do’s and don’ts”—guidelines for social reintegration that were shared with them in those sessions—life skills advice they found helpful²¹. In 2017, the GoM began giving a 200,000 kyat (USD 130) payout to child soldiers when they were released (provided to 67 youth so far).

Once they return home, case workers visit the youth and explore options to help them get back on their feet socially and economically. The loss of income (soldiers earn the equivalent of approximately USD 100/month plus accommodation and food) may be profound for the individual and the family. Some have also been exposed to drugs and/or drug trading, and may need rehabilitation services as well as transition to the legal economy. The case worker develops an individualized plan in consultation with the child, his family and local leaders. In addition to the types of individualized support noted in the graphics above, UNICEF has also provided education support for siblings of the released child soldier, help for a family member with a chronic illness, renovation of a house and other ancillary assistance.

Case workers note that it is those ex recruits who have strong family support who reintegrate most successfully. One NGO estimated that about a third of released recruits are orphans or are not welcomed back into their families—other observers put this proportion lower. Case workers also note that children who have been in the military a long time are also more likely to struggle with violent or other anti-social behavior (about 10-15% of cases) and so find it harder to reintegrate than those in for shorter times. (More recently, soldiers tend to be enlisted for shorter periods).

The cut off for eligibility for reintegration support established by the CTFMR resulted in ILO picking up on older cases. Unfortunately, ILO lost track of the many child soldiers who were discharged before 2015 under the Supplementary Understanding, as many had migrated to other countries or not stayed in touch after their release. Some 39 former child soldiers—most of them in their mid 20s now— who *could* be found, were given reintegration support as part of the no cost extension of this project. The package of support included a twoday of life skills training provided by a local NGO—Rattna Metta. The Professional Social Workers Association of Myanmar provided counselling sessions on two occasions. In addition, 28 of the group of ex-soldiers were offered options for career counseling, apprenticeship opportunities, or entrepreneurship training.

²¹ Some examples:

Do’s include: control your anger; consult and plan your future with your family; inform whenever authority approaches you with wrong information (e.g deserter instead of discharged) etc...

Don’t: move out from family and/or community without informing your case worker; decide anything without consulting with parent or case workers.

Figure 11. Former child soldiers in a two-month training supported by the ILO to manage heavy hydraulic equipment (October, 2017). Such skills are in high demand in Myanmar. Many of these young men were 14-16 when they joined the Tatmadaw, and as a group they served an average of 5 years. Newer recruits are released more quickly, a factor that case workers say promotes easier reintegration.



Photo included with permission

Given the age and maturity level of the trainees and the **market-driven element of the strategy**, it is likely that the majority of participants will sustainably improve their economic position as a result of these inputs. This type of vocational training, targeting a sector where the demand for skilled labor is high, resonates with the common-sense recommendations from the studies commissioned by ILO about private sector engagement to support child soldier reintegration²². However, as a pilot for providing reintegration support, there appear to be no plans to follow up or validate impacts, or learn about what is most effective. A costing analysis might be valuable, as the investment per person was as high as US \$700, not inclusive of administrative costs.²³

A number of observations **about reintegration support** for child soldiers surfaced in the course of this evaluation:

- Many recent recruits missed years of their education because of their time in the military (some said they were promised further education as a condition of their signing on but never received it). Because of their age at discharge and pressures to earn, most are disinclined to **return to school**, or even to sit the Grade 10 exam. This effectively reduced their employability options, but case workers report facing challenges to convincing the young men—most of whom were now over 18—to re-enroll.
- Most youth approach **choices about livelihood reintegration support** on a short-term desire for income, preferring in-kind grants of livestock or equipment (e.g. motorcycles) over vocational training. Reports of families who immediately liquidated these forms of support were also not uncommon. After five years of providing reintegration support, UNICEF recognizes that **vocational training** is more likely to result in sustainable livelihood outcomes for former child soldiers. Nonetheless, case workers still struggle to convince clients of this.²⁴ Even if they don't sell these assets for cash, livestock can die and equipment needs to be maintained, whereas vocational training opens opportunities for long term employment. It is also the case that low education levels leave some vocational training options out of reach of this group of youth.
- Case workers note that **life skills training**, though effective, may be diluted when offered at the time of release. The heightened emotionality of the situation and focus (and fears)

²² Reports have not been circulated amongst CTFMR implementing partners as of this writing.

²³ A participating NGO estimated that vocational training for a driver would cost US \$75 equivalent; chef training up to US \$185 equivalent.

²⁴ No formal analysis has been conducted, but this is a view shared by UNICEF and the ILO.

related to the transition to home, may make it harder for youth to retain and further apply what they learn. Repositioning the training to the period some time before or in the weeks after the release ceremony was recommended (though once the participants are discharged a group training becomes more problematic of course).

- Discharged child soldiers live in some 208 different townships. **Travel costs and time** to provide reintegration support can be quite cost intensive. UNICEF has streamlined its delivery model by assigning participating NGOs and CBOs responsibility for discrete geographic area. This more decentralized model of regional hubs can also leverage additional community support because of the local presence of the delivery agencies. The establishment of **IMWG coordination committees** in seven hotspot localities similarly leverages individualized reintegration assistance closer to the recipients, from a variety of ministries, as described below. These are sensible models and seem to be working²⁵.

Figure 12. *The timeline created by this ex-soldier included training in the military to detect landmines. He found out he could get released from another child recruit who was older than him. With help from an NGO, he now has a job in a mobile phone repair shop with plans to open his own shop next year. Case management support helped this boy.*

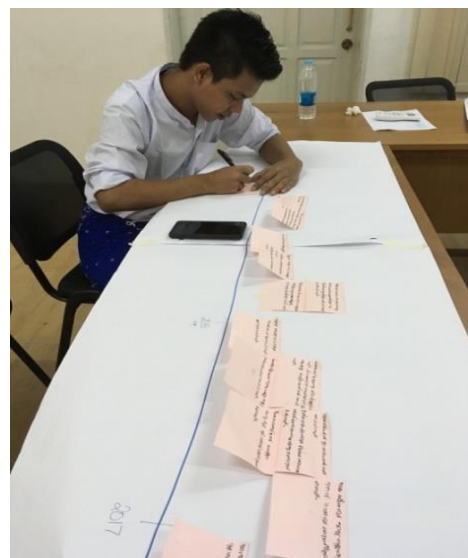


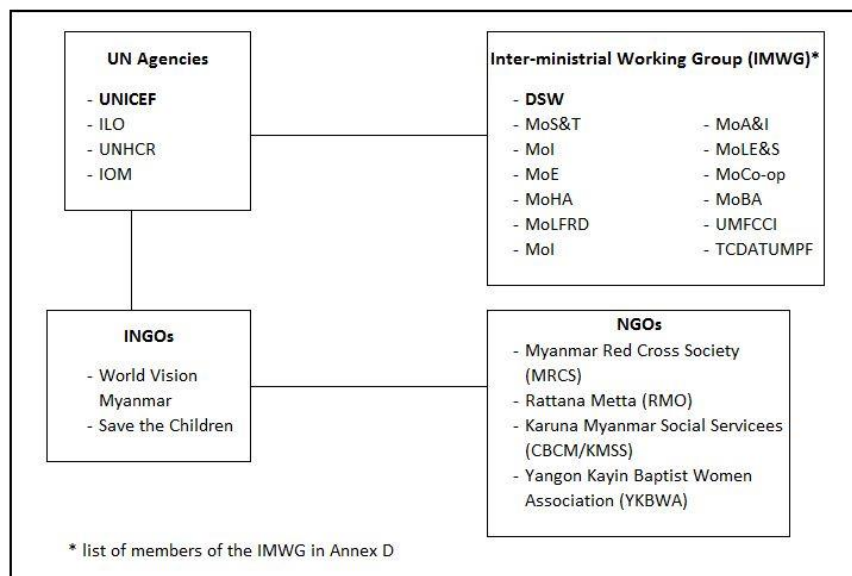
Photo included with permission.

4.4.2 Agency collaboration

Under the terms of the JAP, UNICEF spearheads reintegration support for underage recruits born after June 1994, while ILO supports former child soldiers born before that date. **Collaboration with the GoM** on reintegration work is facilitated through an **Inter-Ministerial Working Group**, formed in 2013. The IMWG brings together a range of service delivery ministries. In 2016, the IMWG met three times, plus three Technical Subgroup Meetings to discuss the reintegration technical guidelines revision and development of framework prepared by UNICEF, and to deliberate on individual cases.

²⁵ As noted in the Methodology section, only two stakeholders from one regional hub were interviewed (only one from a Government agency), so this finding is quite tentative.

Figure 13. Reintegration partners



UNICEF services are delivered under a contract to Save the Children which delivers some services and subcontracts with local NGOs and CBOs in some parts of the country. World Vision also delivers reintegration services to youth living in the areas where it implements its program.

UNICEF has provided training and instituted a reporting system that gives coherence to the services across delivery agencies. UNICEF also co-convenes meetings with the Inter Ministerial Working Group (IMWG) which garners specific types of inputs from technical GoM and UN agencies for individual youth. Reintegration guidelines and an accompanying suite of training PowerPoints have been reviewed by the IMWG.

Government vocational training centers have provided training free of charge. Initially these centers did not provide essential job readiness or life skills, but are now addressing this at UNICEF's recommendation.

There are now **7 regional and state level working groups**. In meetings with UNICEF, these groups review individual cases and requests for medical, educational, training and other reintegration requirements. While labor intensive, the silo'd nature of the ministry structure, makes the IMWG an effective forum for leveraging a range of types of reintegration help tailored for individual ex-soldiers.

The **Department of Social Welfare**, which chairs the IMWG, and is UNICEF's government counterpart for reintegration support, has historically been an under-resourced part of the government. It currently has a presence in 37 townships in the country and 120 social workers available to do case management. These staff cover a range of social protection, drug rehabilitation and human trafficking issues. In Mandalay, the handful of case managers from the DSW are able to accompany case managers from INGO/NGO/CBO agencies on their first visit to the ex-recruits' home, but typically do not participate after that. By all accounts, the Department

is very stretched. This appears to be changing, however, and in an interview the Deputy General anticipated a three-fold increase in staff over the next few years.

Although the terms of the JAP specify that reintegration support be delivered through the CTFMR and the Department of Social Welfare, the Director General of the DSW articulated a long-term vision in which DSW will assume full responsibility of reintegration services. The DG foresees reintegration services being delivered by DSW in collaboration with CBOs (because CBOs would be around for the long term whereas INGOs and possibly NGOs might not). The DG's request for an **exit strategy for UNICEF**, while a positive sign, may be premature until such time as the Tatmadaw is delisted (and the terms of the JAP fulfilled). In the longer term, as **EAGs also sign action plans with the UN**, the role for the DSW may grow (assuming the requirement for the CTFMR to deliver all services is eased in JAPs with EAGs). An exit strategy that targets capacitating the DSW in preparation is a legitimate goal.

An upcoming and potentially contentious issue are moves by the GoM to take over reintegration support entirely in 2018/2019. Already the cash assistance provided by the GoM at release ceremonies has been met with concerns by CTFMR—mainly relating to the sustainability of such an approach. The ILO has been promoting the use of taxes to fund social protection measures, but is also wary of use for this purpose. While the DSW has no formal link to the JAP or CTFMR, in the current climate there are some who worry that protections may be jeopardized if reintegration rests solely in the GoM hands.²⁶

This project **built the capacity** of individuals and local NGOs to deliver psychosocial support and livelihood advice through a case management approach. Some of the case workers, and particularly their supervisors, were previously trained in more generic child protection services so the project strengthened and diversified their skills and client focus. Based on interviews held, it is impossible to say what affect the program has had on DSW case worker capacities.

4.4.3 Data collection and use

The 2014 evaluation notes that a database designed to manage information on child soldiers was developed in 2012 with prior funding, noting *UNICEF is trying to see patterns, for instance do recruits come from a specific geographical area or areas, is a specific age group a target, from where are they recruited – from bus stations etc.?*

At present the **reporting system** includes 9 forms completed by case managers to record their initial and follow up assessments, referrals, expenditures, and case closure. One form records information about how the child was recruited. The forms were introduced in the course of the PBF project. Case managers appreciate the structured nature of the forms which they say has helped them professionalize the process. Forms are retained in the office of the INGO or NGO which is responsible for the case, and a copy is sent to UNICEF. UNICEF notes that it uses the

²⁶An interview with the new Deputy Director General of the Department of Social Welfare focused entirely on Tatmadaw grievances about delays in delisting Myanmar, with no apparent recognition about the agency responsibility for child protection or child soldier reintegration.

information for system strengthening, awareness raising and reporting back to government and donors. Forms are also used to collate requests to for individual youth, which is then tabled at meetings with the IMWG (including regional working groups) as described above.

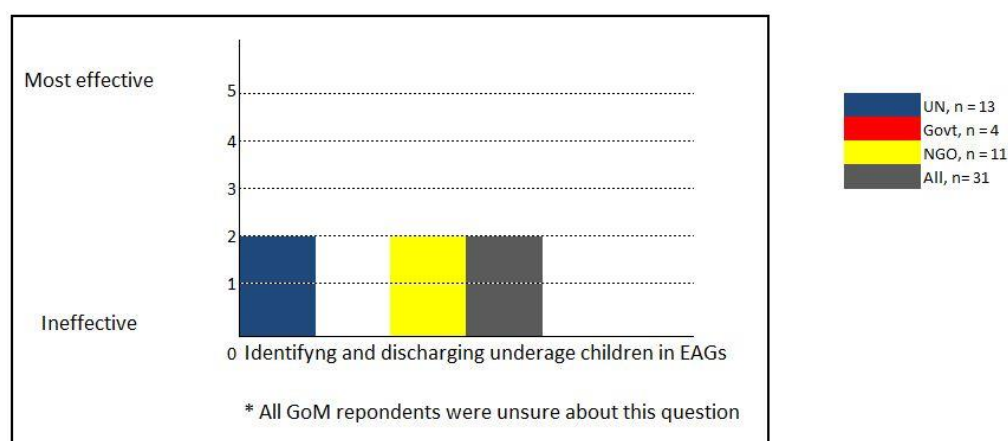
The rich database offers the *potential* for extracting lessons about what works, including for different types of cases. However, as with the monitoring **forms**, most of the questions in these forms are open ended and it is hard to see how anything but the most basic information can be synthesized or aggregated for wider use. For instance, while UNICEF has formed a view about the relative value of support options in terms of livelihood outcomes, this appears to be largely based on informed impressions rather than data (including income data). Answering the question posed in the 2014 evaluation would be challenging. An adjustment to the format of information collected and its use could contribute to more robust evidence about what works, including with different types of cases.

4.5 Outreach to Ethnic Armed Groups (EAGs)

There are some 20 so-called Ethnic Armed Groups in Myanmar, seven of which have been listed by the Secretary General for recruitment and use of children, which constitutes one of the 6 grave violations against children, along with the Tatmadaw. Children living in areas controlled by Ethnic Armed Groups can be under pressure to support the particular armed struggle of their community, and put to work doing activities that would be considered forced or exploitative labor. Some EAGs are also well known to exploit girls either in active combat or to perform other types of forced labor.

The project document anticipates **outreach by the CTFMR** to non-state armed groups. Progress on this front has been uneven, in part because of contextual complexities and in part because the human resource in participating agencies was never at full capacity and priority remained on moving the JAP with the Tatmadaw forward. UN and INGO/NGO stakeholders ranked this area amongst the lowest impact of the project, while the government respondents all declined to comment, as presented in Figure 14.

Figure 14. What stakeholders think: *In your view, how effective was the project in supporting...*



Early efforts by the CTFMR to negotiate a Joint Action Plan with one Ethnic Armed Group were met with a strong, negative reaction from the Tatmadaw which has asserted its prerogative to be delisted before JAPs can be signed with other groups.²⁷ This has not prevented the CTFMR from continuing to dialogue with all the listed EAGs, pursuing a strategy designed to lay the groundwork for JAPs, when the situation with the Tatmadaw resolves. This includes strategies to raise awareness about basic child protection principles.²⁸

The CTFMR has established **focal point liaison officers** with most of the seven listed EAGs. As noted above, the CTFMR receives reports of recruitment as well as other grave violations through its collaboration with CBOs, NGOs and UN agencies. It follows up on specific cases through this liaison officer. However, without a formal mechanism, identification and response remains ad hoc, and somewhat under the radar.

The CTFMR raises the issue of child soldier issues through training for local Community Based Organizations on the MRM. UNICEF has also undertaken training with CBOs in EAG conflict areas on broader issues of child protection, though this is outside of the PBF project. The ILO's focus on EAGs picked up at the end of PBF funding and became a priority with the remaining resources. In the period Jan-October, 2017, the ILO undertook a number of activities designed to address the broader issue of children exposed to and recruited into Ethnic Armed Groups. **Trainings and consultancies** funded under the no cost extension include:

- i. The Pa'O Youth Organization (PYO), an established youth network in an economically deprived area with a EAG, was provided with support to undertake community consultations with youth, culminating in a 10-day forum where youth leaders were exposed to information about issues and international covenants relevant to forced and child labor, and had an opportunity to dialogue with EAG leaders and community members about aspirations for development and peace;
- ii. A training for youth in Shan State on organic farming conducted by the Center for Centre for Rural Education & Development (CRED)/formerly Rural Development Foundation of Shan State (RDFSS) (the computer programming is not detailed in the report).
- iii. A study on livelihood options for conflict affected youth in Karen State.
- iv. A study on livelihood options for youth in Shan State

The quality of the two studies is good. A meeting with the head of the PYO suggests that strategic leadership will carry the networking results of the forum forward. The evaluation team did not meet with CRED and was given a short report of the workshop, which suggests an inappropriate fit between the organizational capacity, the pressures to spend quickly and the initiative—CRED struggled with basic administrative elements, finding technical resource persons, and articulating the relevance and use of organic farming to participants.

A senior representative of the ILO frames as key to building trust and momentum from the bottom up (reportedly the armed groups distrust the UN as well as, of course, the Tatmadaw and may

²⁷Poised to sign, CTFMR feedback to this particular group was reportedly not provided in a timely fashion, triggering a complaint from the group directly to UN HQ.

²⁸Per UNICEF, this is taking place outside of the remit this project, and documentation was shared for context at the end of the fieldwork.

associate one with the other). In addition to raising awareness about child rights and international humanitarian law, the strategy broadly conceives of livelihood opportunities for youth as an entry point for leveraging a commitment to carry out self-monitoring on child soldiers.

Taking these initiatives as a whole, there is **no evidence of a coherent strategy** for engaging with EAGs, including an approach to generating evidence and learnings which could be applied or adapted more broadly. While these efforts may provide credibility for future conversations in participating communities via participating youth on issues related to child soldiers, little effort appears to have been made to generate evidence sufficient to consider them as models to inform such efforts. No follow up is anticipated in the project documents that would contribute to such insight. Indeed, the activities supported in the last phase of the project appear quite bitsy, rushed and lack a coherent framework, including conceptual and strategic links to efforts of the CTFMR to advance foundational elements of a JAP with armed groups.

The two key implementing players—ILO and UNICEF--appear to be taking pragmatic programmatic initiative to build awareness, networks and capacity to address many forms of child exploitation, and provide positive opportunities for youth. These can all be considered constructive contributions to peace building, and foundation laying for the moment when agreements can be formalized through a JAP. In anticipation of that moment, more intentional strategic coordination and information sharing amongst the members of the CTFMR will allow this mechanism to work most effectively, and contribute to efficiencies in the interim.

4.6. Management and administration

The overall management structure for this project rested with a Project Management Committee comprised of the Chief of the Child Protection Section from UNICEF, the Deputy Liaison Officer from ILO and the Senior Advisor on Peacebuilding, Recovery and Development from the UNRCO (MMR1507UND, Nov 15). Technical leadership and implementation of the project rested with the CTFMR which was supposed to meet *at least once a month* and be led by the heads of the respective agencies. Information about the frequency and nature of PMC meetings was not forthcoming from the co-Chairs.

The project activities were characterized by committee and monitoring efforts which were all labor intensive. Resources in this project for staff were to cover 3.5 FTEs—one full time staff for each agency and 1.5 FTE for UNICEF (including to cover the CTFMR co-Chair). Gaps and turnover in staffing which plagued all three implementing partners contributed to challenges at the CTFMR level, as discussed above. The ILO had a 4-month hiatus (and both technical officers who worked on the PBF project were simultaneously working on other projects) and leadership at the Deputy Liaison level was stretched as the Liaison Officer (Res Rep) position was open for much of the PBF funding period. At the same time, while the UNRCO was only able to recruit a project officer in October, 2016, two thirds of the way through the original project period. In both cases it was reportedly difficult to identify individuals with the right set of skills to fill the role. Gaps and turnover also contributed the underspend for two of the agencies at the end of the original project cycle (see Table 3).

Table 3. Spending status as at the end of the original project cycle (12/2016)

PBF Budget (USD)		Spent by 12/2016*	Explanation
ILO	576,195	26%	-Staff turnover; gaps in technical -Difficulty tracking beneficiaries
RCO	214,000	42%	-Staffing gap
UNICEF	736,695	99%	-Reintegration case management outsourced to partners

Although a final report and budget for the project was not available, information provided separately by the ILO and UNRCO suggests that they are underspent by 10% and 25% as at October, 2017 respectively. A UNRCO representative noted that funds remaining would be spent on updating billboards for the awareness campaign.

4.7 Gender assessment

Women are not recruited into the Tatmadaw, and the project considers gender largely in relation to EAGs, some of which have female soldiers and “use” of girls for other purposes, as noted above. The MRM collects information by gender. UNICEF has noted that it would anticipate that recruitment and use of girls would be an explicit component of any Joint Action Plan signed with an EAG. UNICEF has also provided a small number of girls who have been released with case management support and underwritten logistical costs so girls could access vocational training. For reasons described above, this has been largely ad hoc to date.

5. Conclusions

A 2013 report by the Secretary General acknowledged progress and put forward action points one year after signing of the JAP. Four years on, the recommendations from the report are a sobering reminder of the still unfinished business.

Recommendations by the UN Secretary General on Children in Armed Conflict, Myanmar, 2013

(a) Identify, register and discharge all children within the ranks of the Tatmadaw in coordination with the country task force on monitoring and reporting;

(b) Rescind the military instruction on “relaxation of age restrictions for military service in the armed forces” permitting the recruitment of those who are 16 years of age who have passed the tenth grade standard examinations;

- (c) Cease with immediate effect the arrest, the harassment and the imprisonment of children or adults over the age of 18 who were recruited as minors, for desertion and/or attempting to leave the army, and ensure their swift and unconditional release;
- (d) Facilitate access by the country task force on monitoring and reporting to military facilities, operational battalions and other areas where children may be present, including by allowing access to operational regiments and battalions, in addition to regional commands, recruitment units and training schools;
- (e) Hold accountable perpetrators of child recruitment and use, including through systematic investigation of all incidents and prosecution of military and civilian individuals responsible for such acts. To this end, relevant military and civilian courts should also allow for independent verification of their proceedings by the country task force on monitoring and reporting;
- (f) Remove all incentives and rewards for meeting recruitment targets and quotas that increase the risk of child recruitment;
- g) Facilitate access by the country task force on monitoring and reporting to other listed parties in Myanmar to engage in dialogue with a view to developing action plans to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers and to address other grave violations as appropriate.

Further, the 2014 evaluation report reflects:

It is the assessor's view that the Tatmadaw is focused on getting de-listed from the Annex of the S-G's annual report on CAAC, but that the commitment to the protection and rights of children is not very strong.

Three years later, this evaluator arrives at a similar conclusion. Systems may be more robust, but principles have not been internalized and without commitment to principles, it is hard to imagine accountability procedures enduring without the incentives offered under the JAP.

The 2016 report of the Secretary General on Children in Armed Conflict notes that for Myanmar to fully comply with its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, action plans on underage recruitment need to be signed with all armed groups. Obstacles to achievement of this goal reflect further on the Tatmadaw's limited commitment to the principles undermining its *own* action plan.

It is fairly clear that while some officers within the Tatmadaw are sympathetic to the issue of child soldiers, the decision makers have their eye on one thing: delisting. The process that the CTFMR has engaged in to date has not yet translated into a deeper appreciation for the rights or protection principles driving the processes. In that respect, negotiations around the JAP appear to be a microcosm of broader peace building efforts in Myanmar. Nonetheless, given the stated commitment on the part of the Tatmadaw to continue to engage with the process, whatever the motivation, continued dialogue at the highest level and continued activity in regions, states and communities seems to be the best course of action.

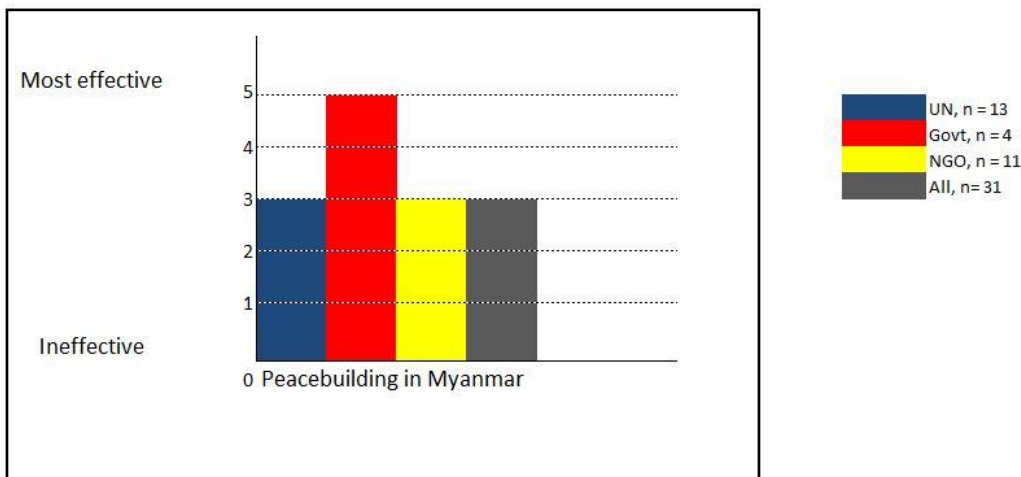
Despite the challenges, there are a number of **achievements**, to which the project contributed, that should be celebrated. There is no doubt that public awareness about the issue of child soldiers has broadened. The hotline continued to function and a second national awareness campaign was approved and will be co-financed by the GoM. There are indications that the number of new recruits has dropped, that the age of underage recruits has risen, and that the duration of time from recruitment to release is shorter. Most respondents to the short survey delivered in the course of this evaluation believe progress has been made in the key area of identifying and discharging children. Protocols and practices for underage screening have been introduced. Reintegration services have been delivered to more than 650 former child soldiers (more than 200 during the project period), modeling an approach for the GoM, and motivating closer engagement, despite capacity limitations. At the same time, momentum on broader issues related to accountability and engaging with Ethnic Armed Groups on stopping the recruitment and use of children have begun to take shape. The project's steps towards youth awareness raising, networking and skills training for advocacy and negotiation amongst young people living in areas of EAGs are encouraging. Such networks may hold promise for addressing issues related to forced labor amongst children and, though dialogue with military elders also pay a peace dividend. And, despite frustrations on both sides, there is a willingness to continue to engage.

Neither members of the CTFMR nor counterpart members of the Tatmadaw want to revisit the JAP or change the CTFMR as a structure for moving it forward. However, with frustration building on both sides, a **re-set** is called for. The operations of the CTFMR need to be revisited before serious negotiations can resume. Collaboration amongst the members and the ability to speak with one voice is essential to be able to tackle the remaining issue of accountabilities and revitalize full access for monitoring.

One of the challenges in achieving closure on the issue of child soldiers is that **success is difficult to measure**. It will never be entirely possible to know whether the Tatmadaw is completely free of underage recruits. And its arguably more important that the military has institutionalized the principles behind the JAP than complied with the letter of it. Compliance in terms of numbers today could easily slide back tomorrow unless such principles are embedded in the organizations' culture and practices.

One observer notes that the issue of child soldiers has little profile in the **broader discourse** amongst agencies working on peace building in Myanmar. Nonetheless, survey respondents give the project some credit for contributing to peacebuilding in Myanmar. Government DSW respondents assign the project high marks for this, while partners in the CTFMR are somewhat more conservative.

Figure 15. What stakeholders think: *In your view, how effective was the project in supporting...*



The Terms of Reference for this evaluation raised a number of crosscutting issues under broader DAC headings. Evidence to hand has been provided in the findings section, and these crosscutting issues are briefly addressed here.

Relevance

To what extent were the strategy and the logic of the PBF- funded intervention appropriate to achieve the set objectives?

How has the project responded to changes in the socio-political environment and structure in the country whether ongoing lessons from implementation were used to increase impact?

What is the relevance of the interventions in terms of advocating for and facilitating the end of child recruitment in armed forces and groups in the context of peacebuilding?

The project helped to continue a process that was underway already, with existing agreements and mechanisms already in place. Resources provided by the PBF helped to push the initiative forward, including through a period of change and uncertainty in the country. Continued efforts through the CTFMR to meet the terms of the JAP, and the motivation of the Tatmadaw to get delisted brought both parties to the table, thus maintaining dialogue and activity on the issue of child soldiers in the Tatmadaw. In the current context, despite disappointing progress on finishing the JAP, the process at least maintained a spotlight on the issue.

How has the project been contextually relevant in terms of dealing with NSAGs for their release of children that they have recruited?

A definitive view on this is difficult because no members of any EAGs/NSAGs were interviewed as part of this evaluation. In particular it is difficult to assess how individual EAGs

view recruitment and use of children, and how they view being listed by the UN (and whether this is as much of an incentive to reform as it is for the Tatmadaw).

Broadly, it is clear that efforts have been made by members of the CTFMR to take steps within the significant limitations facing the UN towards laying the foundation for Action Plans with a number of NAGs. Awareness raising efforts about the law and recourse options also appear to be important and relatively more straightforward, though grassroots initiatives are not necessarily targeted at areas of NSAG activity but more targeted based on pre-existing presence of the implementing partner.

What is the project's relevance in terms of the overall national objective of national reconciliation?

The project started in a dynamic period of national reconciliation, with the signing of cease fire agreements with seven of the some 20 EAGs. It is unknown whether the issue of underage recruits was part of the negotiations or the agreements. What is known, is that even with these agreements in place, the Tatmadaw remains less interested in getting them off of the UN's list (and so effectively addressing the issue of child soldiers amongst these groups) than it does about being first to be delisted. This issue was not extensively explored in this evaluation. The issue of child soldiers does not appear to be central to the reconciliation discourse in the country.

Effectiveness

What significant progress have been made related to the project's desired outcomes? What were the contributing and hindering factors for moving towards their achievement and were the project's responses appropriate and sufficient?

To what extent has the project contributed to the development and the strategies of the Myanmar government and other ethnic armed organizations in: (1) putting an end to the recruitment of children into armed force/ groups; and (2) economically reintegrating CAAFAG?

To what extent has the project influenced Tatmadaw's implementation of the JAP and work plan and quality by which such implementation were carried out?

Detailed findings related to these questions are presented in Section 4. Efforts were made by the CTFMR, including meetings monitoring, technical assistance and training related to recruitment. Achievement of desired outcomes were held back in part by human resource instability amongst the agencies represented on the CTFMR, including at the leadership level. At the same time, while the Tatmadaw is now better equipped to address the issue than it was at the outset of the project, and appears to have centralized the recruitment and taken some steps in the direction of more rigorous age assessment, there is little evidence of a deepening commitment to the issue itself. Access and transparencies have declined, and issues related to accountability remain unresolved. Some of this may be simply the military exploiting the perceived weakness in its negotiating partner, but it is impossible to isolate the

dynamic from broader and significant tensions between the Tatmadaw and the international community in general.

How effective are the project's interventions in terms of changing the lives of the children formerly associated with Armed Forces/Groups and their families?

The project had very little impact on children affected by EAG activity in part because of restrictions to access and restrictions on formal negotiations of Action Plans which would permit the types of reintegration support provided to children released from the Tatmadaw. Outreach via more development type networking and livelihood training activities began at the end of the project; it is impossible to say how transformative they were. (In one project the implementing agency could not find any former child soldiers).

Efficiency

To what extent was the project work plan implemented in terms of quality and quantity?

The PBF project supported the work of three UN agencies. UNICEF used all of its resources within the project period, in some measure because of subcontracts with a range of INGOs and NGOs which delivered services. UNICEF also pushed forward with tools for age assessment and co-convening government agencies to work on reintegration cases and convened meetings with key partners more or less to plan. By the end of the original project period, the ILO was underspent by nearly 75% and the UNRCO by more than 50%. Both agencies blamed HR issues and the national environment. Competing priorities were likely also relevant.

Given the overall remit of the project, the broad workplan was appropriate. However, a more robust set of outcome indicators to set the expectation of impact, however tentative or intermediate, would have been an optimal counterpoint. As it was, most of the indicators in the Results Framework relate to inputs and outputs.

To what extent did the project external environment had an impact on the efficient use of implementing partners' human and financial resources?

Contextual challenges were significant, and certainly the labor-intensive nature of every element of the project was challenged throughout by partnership issues and capacity. Ironically, it appears that the time of greatest cohesion and strong leadership on the CTFMR coincided with the period immediately after the signing of the JAP and before national elections. This was, according to one observer, a period of progress in terms of foundation laying. External factors, including a more defensive posture on the part of the Tatmadaw has coincided with transitions in the political environment as well as a weakened posture from the CTFMR, and contributed to a slowing of progress towards resolution of the JAP. It is difficult to parse the relative importance and impact of each of these factors on project efficiencies.

Was the budget and human resource allocation sufficient to address the project's interventions?

Yes.

How were the risks outlined in the risk assessment managed?

The project document puts forward a realistic appraisal of risks associated with this initiative, some of which were borne out. Pre-eminent amongst the list is the suggestion that government cooperation with the CTFMR and the JAP would diminish. While all of the mitigating factors noted remain relevant—the high-level relationships, regular interaction, the compelling incentive to be delisted—the project ends with a number of key issues unresolved.

The project document anticipates a number of other risks associated with i) failure of ceasefire agreements (leading to declined interest in ending child recruitment on the part of the EAGs and Tatmadaw); ii) stigma for children who have been victims of one of the 6 grave violations, who receive services. The ceasefire agreements have mostly held, but formal access to EAGs has nonetheless been problematic because of the Tatmadaw, as described in this report.

Further, based on the interviews conducted in the course of the evaluation and references in recent reports for this project that described interviews with former child soldiers, there is little evidence of social stigma related to their services they received (though it is possible that jealousies have arisen within communities). Case managers appear to be well briefed and resource allocation flexible enough to help respond to such circumstances. There is some evidence that the youth feel stigmatized or at least ashamed or embarrassed about their military service. Some said they do not tell would-be employers about their past and many indicate they do not talk about their experiences with friends. The social support built in to reintegration services appears responsive to this as well.

Impact and Sustainability

To what extent has the problems and needs that gave rise to the project still exist or have changed?

It is impossible to say for certain how current members of the Tatmadaw recruited while under age there are today. Most observers agree that public awareness about the issue has improved²⁹, the numbers of soldiers inducted when underage have declined, and the average age of recruitment for those still being inducted has risen. The persistent question is whether the partner in this project has a commitment to the underlying principles of the agreement this project is designed to promote, and whether the partner would adequately retain internal accountability standards post JAP. Most observers are skeptical.

Has the project identified any other constraints or opportunities that need to be accommodated in the design in order to increase the impact and relevance of the project?

Given the dynamic environment, the project had to adapt, and refinements to negotiating approach, capacity building, delivery of reintegration services and partnership with government agencies are apparent even over the course of this project. A number of

²⁹ Penalties introduced in the draft Child Law for civilian brokers also offers a sustainable long term deterrent if it becomes law and is enforced.

important issues will need to be considered by the UN, as the efforts to help the GoM meet the terms of the agreement it signed proceed. These include:

- The structure, leadership and format of the CTFMR
- The CTFMR's posture towards cash transfers from the GoM to released child soldiers
- The role of the DSW in the delivery of reintegration support
- A holistic strategy for engaging with EAGs (recognizing that groundwork on negotiations on Agreements have been laid and some development initiatives are underway)
- An agreed posture and strategy for tackling the issue of perpetrator accountability

These issues are considered in more detail in the Recommendations section.

To what extent is the project in line with and contributing to the UN (and the individual agencies) and donor's objectives for peacebuilding and protection of children in armed conflict?

This project supports a process addressing the issue of child soldiers in the Tatmadaw in Myanmar that is more than a decade old. It aligns with the child protection, forced labor, and broader peace building mandates of the three participating UN agencies. It has remained relevant and maintained a profile for the issue with the GoM, and has contributed to building greater public awareness on the issue— also a contribution to peacebuilding.

To what extent could current key partnerships contribute to the sustainability of the initiatives under the project? What other partnerships should be considered for sustainability?

The partnership structure that is in place at the moment is appropriate and essential for ensuring the commitment and capacity for the GoM to address this issue fully in the future. More diverse and robust partnerships with civil society organizations would help to enhance citizen knowledge and action on child recruitment across all armed groups.

Has the project had intended catalytic effect?

The project has helped to maintain forward momentum on the issue and deliver information to the public as well as reintegration services to individual former child soldiers. It has not catalyzed the anticipated resolution of the issue with the Tatmadaw, an outcome which is in large measure due to contextual realities.

Gender and Equity

To what extent is the project using an equity lens, where relevant (including economic assessment and livelihood activities)?

What interventions have been provided to vulnerable female and male youths from conflict-affected areas (in particular its relevance to ethnic conflict issues) and were they appropriate?

The Tatmadaw does not recruit girls and given the emphasis in this project on the Tatmadaw, all of the *direct* beneficiaries—current and future—are boys. Some girls affected by military exposure in areas of EAG activity were helped, but information received about this was entirely anecdotal. It appears this is ad hoc and the numbers are small. All participating agencies, including government agencies, have other programs that include a focus on protection, security and livelihoods for women and girls which could be beneficial in a future project with EAGs.

To what extent is the reintegration programme gender-sensitive in addressing the specific challenges that young men and boys face in their transition from military to civilian life?

Reintegration support is individualized and offers advice on life and work skills that ex recruits say they missed while in the military. The project also addresses the key concern of recruits after discharge: income.

Use of good practices and lessons learnt

What are the approaches and strategies that are recommended to be pursued in future project implementation and nationwide scale-up based on lessons learnt from the project? A number of approaches which were pursued (but not all developed) under this project merit continuation³⁰:

- The decentralized delivery of reintegration services, including forging strong linkages with GoM agencies at regional and state hot spots
- Engagement with youth groups in areas of EAG engagement as an entry point for dialogue, empowerment, awareness raising and peace building
- Continued face to face dialogue with the Tatmadaw on specific cases and general issues via the CTFMR (adjustments outlined in the recommendations section)

What is the value added of joint UN implementation of this project?

The value added of the engagement of multiple UN agencies standing together behind the issue of child soldiers is of course enormous—in terms of the message it sends and the depth of expertise and experience that each agency brings to the task. Unfortunately, the potential for realizing a common voice and maximizing the diversity of expertise has floundered somewhat as noted in the Findings section.

What are the emerging good practices and models of intervention from the project that could inform future programming on peacebuilding, protection of children in armed conflicts and prevention of child recruitment? Which of these could the national partners incorporate into national policy and implementation?

³⁰ These are not put forward as lessons or emerging good practices as the evaluation did not have access to sufficient evidence.

The project introduced a number of practices and strategies that were used and appreciated by stakeholders. These include tools for age assessment, deployment of grassroots workers for case management, and multi-agency working groups (IMWG and the regional counterparts). NGO partners appreciated the training and reporting systems the project introduced. Former child soldiers appreciated the protection the letters from UN agencies had allowed them in the interim period between reporting and release. They also, of course, appreciated the social and financial contributions they had received to ease their reintegration. All of these elements may merit greater study. **There is insufficient evidence from this brief evaluation to advance these as best practice models for country-specific or broader consideration however.**

6. Lessons Learned

The ILO Terms of Reference offer the opportunity to put forward lessons learned and emerging good practices that might be helpful for future programming in on the same issue in Myanmar and elsewhere. This evaluation has relied almost entirely on impressions gathered in a very abbreviated period and with the limitations described in the Methodology section. Without additional documentation, impact or outcome-related data, and triangulation with stakeholders from a broader cross section of the project (in particular government partner agencies), advancing *impressions* as emerging good practice or even lessons learned seems ill advised. At the same time, lessons arising from this evaluation may be so idiosyncratic to this particular initiative and unique in this highly fluid, complex period of time in Myanmar, that they may not stand the test of time. For this reason, two *reflections* are put forward here with some measure of tentativeness.³¹ They are based solely on composite insights from interviews about what *could have* enabled a smoother project.

6.1 Lessons about the CTFMR.

As the engine of the project, a cohesive CTFMR that maximizes the diverse expertise represented to reach its goal is essential. As noted elsewhere in this report, the body fell short of this aspiration. With nine³² well established agencies, each with its own history in the country and ways of operating, this is hardly surprising, but it did contribute to dysfunctions at the committee level and difficulties in speaking with one voice. Some lessons:

- **Roles, responsibilities and continuity of representation need to be clear and agreed.** When the level of representation on working and negotiating committees is appropriate, agreed and transparent, and there is continuity in representation, it is easier to maintain a cohesive committee. This is particularly the case in a fluid environment. If agreements about decisionmaking processes and responsibilities are transparent, members are more likely to feel engaged and included. Leadership committed to inclusivity and transparency makes a difference.

³¹ The reader will note that the Lessons put forward in this section are essentially recommendations, and so repeated in the following section.

³² UNICEF, UNRCO, ILO, UNFPA, OCHA, UNHCR, WFP, WVI, SAVE

- **Diversity can be an opportunity; disagreements are inevitable.** Diversity of posture towards an issue can divide a committee, *or* be quite strategic (good cop/bad cop). The balance between legal and protection arguments and strategies can be considered as *complementary* rather than *trade off's*.

Having INGOs at the table offers an opportunity to represent the voice of civil society (including child soldiers and their families) which can be leveraged in negotiations as well.

- **Understanding the partner is important.** This is perhaps the greatest, (and the most problematic) lesson. More investigation is merited into the mindset and priorities of the partner, including of individual representatives.³³

6.2 Lessons about tackling hard issues.

Tackling the issue of perpetrator accountability during the JAP negotiations or immediately thereafter when political capital was high could have contributed to early closure on this key issue, and potentially set a more assertive tone.³⁴

7. Recommendations

This project supported a nearly 3-year period in a process that has been going on for almost a decade. Recommendations presented here are put forward in an attempt to reflect that rich and highly complex legacy (insofar as the evaluator was able to understand it in the brief period of this evaluation), while recognizing that the context is dynamic and unpredictable. Suggestions for next steps try to focus on what the implementing agencies might productively *do*, individually and mostly in concert, to reach the Outcomes articulated in the project document—which remain relevant and still a work in progress. These recommendations focus on the issue of recruitment and use of children in the military—one of the six grave violations. It is possible that achievement of a formal resolution on one of the six grave violations will enable the others to be addressed more effectively. It is also probable that assuming peace agreements with EAGs hold, resolution of the JAP with the Tatmadaw will lead to JAPs with other EAGs. Recommendations also assume a level of coherence with broader peace building initiatives in which all agencies in this project participate—an important but only superficially explored element of this evaluation. These recommendations therefore focus on next steps in the road towards achievement of the JAP, and particularly sustainability of capacity within Myanmar to pursue the international principles of the JAP independent of external oversight and assistance.

³³Longtime members of the CTFMR have valuable insights, albeit sometimes competing insights, about the partner. Given the number of agencies working on peacebuilding in Myanmar, other insights can also be tapped.

³⁴There were precedents for perpetrator accountability in the civilian sphere via the Supplementary Understanding.

Outcome 1. Support the professionalization of the Tatmadaw to prevent underage recruitment, including self-monitoring, registration and discharge of underage recruits, and identification and prosecution of perpetrators.

Recommendation 1.1: Retain the Joint Action Plan (JAP) on the recruitment and use of children in armed forces with the Government of Myanmar and the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) mechanism. This mechanism is now nearly four years beyond its intended completion date and frustrations exist on both sides. Nonetheless, all parties agree the JAP and the CTFMR remain relevant and revisiting them would put the process back.

Actors: UN members of the CTFMR: UNRCO, UNICEF, ILO

Priority: High

Timeframe: n/a

Resource Implications: none

Recommendation 1.2: Support achievement of the JAP through engagement of a high-level negotiator with strong facilitation skills and relevant legal background to lead the CTFMR for a fixed period of time. This person would have two main roles:

- i) work with members of the CTFMR to prepare a detailed roadmap to achieve the terms of the JAP. This would include very specific strategies related to key outstanding elements (transparencies, access, accountability), agreed bottom line positions, and specific roles and responsibilities of each member of the CTFMR. It would also include a timeline. Senior agency representatives of the members of the CTFMR would need to sign off on roadmap agreements.

Given significant divergence of view amongst the members of the CTFMR, the process would require good will and flexibility on the part of all stakeholders. It could also leverage the good cop/bad cop stance of the two technical partners³⁵ (matching the prevailing approach within the negotiating partner).

Representation levels at the various CTFMR meetings should be agreed and insofar as possible, adhered to, including maintaining continuity with the same person at the table.

- ii) lead negotiations with the Tatmadaw on resolution of all outstanding issues included in the JAP. Begin with a high-level meeting to review progress and agree on next steps. (using the CTFMR roadmap (i) above as a starting point). The negotiator would be

³⁵ One member of the CTFMR expressed a concern about this recommendation in the review of the evaluation report as it is seen as potentially allowing the Tatmadaw to play the stricter partner off against the more lenient “good cop”. This would be an unfortunate outcome, indeed. The recommendation is meant to leverage the natural inclination of CTFMR members programmatically whilst continuing to retain consistent adherence to the principles of the JAP.

expected to include members of the CTFMR in negotiations as appropriate and to be transparent and inclusive in updating and making adjustments to the roadmap.

Having the negotiator available for a time-bound period may help move the process along.

The post-delisting sunset period, already built in to ensure agreements reached are sustainable in practice, is important and should be retained.

Actors: Members of the CTFMR (UNRCO, UNICEF, ILO, UNHCR, UNFPA, WFP, OCHA, SC, WVI). As co-chairs of the CTFMR, the negotiator should probably be hired by either UNRCO or UNICEF.

Priority: High

Timeframe: 12 months

Resource implications: Fee for negotiator, including travel (may be intermittent over the course of the year).

Recommendation 1.3: Prioritize agreements on access and accountability in negotiations with the Tatmadaw. As noted above, full access to military localities and relevant documentation has grown steadily more problematic over time, though the CTFMR is not of one mind about *how* problematic this is. Mechanisms and legal guidelines for military and civilian perpetrator identification, trial and punishment are yet to be detailed and agreed. These would be addressed as part of the high-level negotiations (see Recommendation 1.2)

Actors: Negotiator, CTFMR

Timeframe: As above

Resource implications: As above

Recommendation 1.4: Explore the use of social media to complement public awareness campaigns. All of the former child soldiers met said they received the information that led to their reporting and release via word of mouth. While the use of billboards, mass media, stickers and cards should not be abandoned, youth may be effectively reached with information about their rights and reporting options via social media.³⁶

Actors: UNICEF, WVI, SC

Timeframe: 12 months

Resource implications: Staff or consultant time for messaging and web design.

Recommendation 1.5: Revisit monitoring forms and data use for negotiation and compliance. The introduction of a stoplight system for monitoring is useful and should be integrated fully into the roadmap negotiations. Revisiting specific indicators and measurement metrics with the

³⁶This recommendation was not explored in the validation workshop and it may be that existing restrictions would preclude this recommendation.

government partner, and adopting a scoring system, may help sharpen a focus on specific expectations. The monitoring forms should be reviewed to include closed-ended response options (retaining space for notes) that are weighted and indexed. Analysis can be completed in the field and data reviewed as part of the debrief at the end of each monitoring visit. More M&E capacity would also need to be added to agency teams.

Action in this regard will expose military stakeholders to data-based decision-making, contributing potential benefits for post-JAP accountability systems.

Actors: Members of the CTFMR

Priority: Low

Timeframe: within 4 months

Resource implications: M&E staff

Recommendation 1.6 Schedule monitoring visits to battalions that have already been visited.

This has the dual advantage of being able to undermine efforts on the part of the Tatmadaw to stage manage the visits, and also to be able to measure progress against a baseline.

Actors: CTFMR

Timeframe: 1 year

Resource implications: Travel and team time

Outcome 2. Provide quality reintegration services for all children and young people related from the Tatmadaw and other armed groups.

Recommendation 2.1: Conduct a rapid costing and impact assessment of reintegration services including a comparative analysis of beneficiary outcomes to a) validate/test current assumptions about optimal inputs under different cases; b) estimate the cost of providing reintegration services for the average, individual recipient. This analysis could be useful for

- i. targeting services for maximum impact going forward;
- ii. demonstrate the financial benefits of preventing recruitment vs the cost of rehabilitation;
- iii. discussing the relative value of a lump sum payout (currently anticipated by the GoM) vs actual costs and benefits of current social and in-kind support.

Actors: UNICEF, ILO, WVI, SC and NGO, CBO partners.

Priority: Low

Timeframe: within 12 months

Resource implications: Time for an economist consultant.

Recommendation 2.2: Include group peer networking opportunities for rehabilitation support.

Discharged youth often struggle with social, emotional, planning and basic life skills during their reintegration. Families are not always well equipped to support them and case manager interaction is, at best, once a month. In addition to the 1:1 case management provided under the CTFMR, group sharing would provide opportunities for peer networking, peer support and peer mentoring. At present, child soldiers are provided life skills just ahead of release ceremonies—something many observers suggest could be more effective at a less emotionally charged time. Group convening offers an opportunity to provide such skills in a forum in which youth can encourage one another. Groups also offer opportunities for young people to talk about their experiences in the military with others who have shared their experience, and with trained facilitators. Livelihood plans can also be discussed in group settings, offering a framework for considering options with other ex-child soldiers who are older and can reflect on the pro's and con's of their choices. Mentoring opportunities can also be forged.

Group sessions for parents may also help parents share tips and receive support from one another and case workers about supporting reintegration.

Group settings may also empower youth and family members as community mobilizers to multiply awareness of the issue, the law and reporting options.

Actors: UNICEF, ILO, WVI, SC and NGO, CBO partners.

Priority: Low

Timeframe: within 12 months

Resource implications: travel and accommodation expenses for participants

3. Address children recruitment and use in Ethnic Armed Groups.

Recommendation 3.1: Develop a comprehensive CTFMR strategy for outreach to EAGs. Many of the agencies on the CTFMR have links to individual EAGs. UNICEF has been trying to lay the foundations for formal Action Plans--prohibited now by the Tatmadaw before it is delisted--through informal consultations with a number of EAGs. ILO has undertaken a series of activities supported by this project and under other programming which initiate a more bottom up approach to peace building, youth empowerment and livelihoods in areas of EAG activity. These have been used as entry points for awareness raising and networking. A comprehensive strategy which brings together reflections on what has worked in the past and leverages respective networks and expertise of the various members of the CTFMR would advance progress with the EAGs in the interim, while formal JAPs remain problematic.

The strategy should also include **social media outreach** with messaging and in languages that will reach youth at risk of in recruitment and use by EAGs with information and reporting options.

Actors: Members of the CTFMR

Priority: Medium

Timeframe: 6 months

Resource implications: The strategy could potentially be done with current resources. It would then need to be costed.

Appendix A. Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference For

Final Evaluation

**“Prevent the recruitment and use of children by armed forces/
groups in Myanmar as an entry point for durable peace”**

ILO Programme Code	MMR/15/07/UND
Country	Myanmar
Starting Date	1 September 2015
End Date	31 May 2017
Programme Locations	Nationwide
Programme Language	Myanmar, English
Executing Agencies	UNICEF, ILO and UNRCO
Financing Agency	United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)/ Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)

Donor Contribution	USD 1,526,890
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List of abbreviations

CAAFAG	Children Associated with Armed Forces/ Groups
CBO	Community-based Organizations
CTFMR	Country Task Force for Monitoring and Reporting
NSAG	Non-State Armed Groups
EC	European Commission
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMWG	Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Reintegration
JAP	Joint Action Plan
MRM	Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on Grave Violations against children
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PBF	Peace Building Fund
PBSO	Peace Building Support Office
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution

I. Background and justification

1. Myanmar is in the early stages of a transformational change in its socio-political and economic environment, while peace and reconciliation in the country having been set as a government priority. The Government-launched peace process with non-state armed groups (NSAGs) has progressed from bilateral ceasefire agreements to negotiations for a nation-wide ceasefire agreement which has remained elusive up to this point. As described by Myanmar Peace Monitor, Myanmar's peace process is highly complex given the large number of actors involved, lack of transparency and rapid speed of changes. Aside from the government's peace team and the militia groups, the international community, community-based organizations (CBOs) and non-state mediators are crucial in brokering, mediating and monitoring the peace talks; as well as well implementing ceasefire agreements and policy advocacy.³⁷
2. Clashes between different armed groups as well as with the Tatmadaw continue in certain areas in the country such as Kachin, Northern Shan and Rakhine states. Children continue to suffer from the ongoing conflict and violence. In the ongoing fighting in Kachin and Northern Shan states for example, children are reportedly being forcibly recruited by parties to the conflict. The Tatmadaw and seven NSAGs have been listed by the UN Secretary-General for years for the systematic recruitment and use of children in armed conflict and other NSAGs are also occasionally recruiting and using children. Other grave violations are also committed against children with serious implications for the wellbeing and development of children and their communities.
3. In 2007, the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) was established in Myanmar to keep the Security Council abreast of the six grave violations committed against children in armed conflict in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1612 (2005). The mechanism is organized by the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR), formed by UN agencies and International non-government organizations (NGOs) such as UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), International Labour Organization (ILO), UN Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO), UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNFPA, UNOCHA, World Vision and Save the Children and aims to monitor the situation of conflict-affected children. The CTFMR has been actively advocating for a halt to grave violations, including but not limited to the recruitment and use of children into the Tatmadaw and the listed armed groups in Myanmar.
4. After years of negotiations with the Government, the CTFMR and the Government signed a Joint Action Plan (JAP) on 27 June 2012 to pursue the immediate release and discharge of underage recruits from the Tatmadaw, to take measures to strengthen accountability against perpetrators of child recruitment and to support the reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Groups (CAAFAG) into civilian life.³⁸ For the Tatmadaw to be delisted, full implementation of the JAP is required.
5. Since the signing of the JAP, more than 860 children have been discharged through the CTFMR mechanism. The CTFMR notes both progress made and gaps that remain in the implementation of this JAP. The successful implementation of the JAP will not only demonstrate the Tatmadaw's determination to alter

³⁷ <http://www.mmpeacemonitor.org/peace-process/peace-process-overview>

³⁸ Project document

their recruitment patterns as well as re-position themselves to be on par with other national professional armed forces and thus be delisted from the Secretary-General's Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict, but also its genuine commitment to change in the new political context. Since mid-2014, the CTFMR has witnessed an acceleration in the implementation of the JAP which has been manifested by a constant number of children identified by the Tatmadaw in the various battalions, stricter recruitment procedures, a decrease in the number of newly recruited children and more systematic JAP training and awareness raising among the troops. For example, in June 2014, the Tatmadaw issued a directive which no longer allows recruitment at the infantry battalion level, thus making a critical breakthrough in strengthening and centralizing recruitment system thereby narrowing potential loopholes for underage recruitment.³⁹

6. A Work Plan towards completion of the JAP was endorsed by the Tatmadaw in September 2014 which identifies outstanding action in the JAP implementation and provides clear indicators and thresholds to be achieved for compliance. The Work Plan focuses on the identification of suspected minors in all military units, more coherent recruitment policies which are uniformly applied nation-wide, and the systematic and consistent prosecution of military and civilian perpetrators of child recruitment. In this sense, the full implementation of the JAP will be an important step towards achieving and strengthening the rule of law, including by the Tatmadaw, in the new democratic context.

Similar JAPs are planned to be developed with other listed parties in Myanmar although political challenges have currently prevented the development and signing of such agreements. For the time being the CTFMR works closely with the other listed parties to ensure that they are widely informed about the prevention of grave violations against children, delisting requirements and child protection principles.

Programme Background and Current Status

7. The project "Prevent the recruitment and use of children by armed forces/ groups in Myanmar as an entry point for durable peace" is implemented by UNICEF, ILO and the UN Resident Coordinator Office (UNRCO)). UNICEF is the lead implementing partner and administrator of the PBF Fund. The project is funded by the UN Peace-Building Fund (UNPBF) while some of the activities are co-funded by CTFMR agencies. Agreement with the UNPBF was signed on 1 September 2015.
8. The project builds on past projects' gains on implementing Children in Armed Conflict activities which focused on support for discharge processes, signing, implementation and monitoring of JAP with the Government of Myanmar and the establishment of basic services to start broader reintegration/rehabilitation programming. Support to the JAP implementation from 2013 to 2015 were provided by DANIDA, CIDA, DFID, Switzerland, the European Commission (EC) and internal UN resources for Children and Armed Conflict interventions.
9. In 2014, an Impact Assessment of EC Project: Monitoring and Reporting, Prevention, Protection, Release, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Children Affected by Armed Conflict in Myanmar, was conducted to assess CTFMR's work from January 2011 to December 2013. The report encouraged continuous support to the CTFMR to bring long-lasting change for the better protection of children in Myanmar and for the

³⁹ Project document

Tatmadaw as a national professional armed force as well as lay the foundation for lasting peace in Myanmar.

10. The recommendations from the EC Impact Assessment provided guidance to the development of the current PBF project which is the subject of evaluation. The project aims to support the implementation of the Joint Action Plan to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children by the Tatmadaw, to identify, verify and discharge underage recruits still associated with the Tatmadaw as well as support their reintegration back into their communities. The project also aims to strengthen prevention and accountability for perpetrators of underage recruitment which not only promote the overall protection of children from armed conflict but offers an opportunity for confidence building among different groups in Myanmar. Increased engagement towards the signature of Action Plans with listed NSAGs also provides for strengthening of the ongoing peace process.

11. The project outcomes are as follows:

Outcome 1. Professionalization of the Myanmar Armed Forces in support of the peace process. To achieve this, the project planned to:

- Strengthen the protection of children from grave violations with a special emphasis on the effective identification, registration and discharge of underage recruits from the Tatmadaw in accordance with the Joint Action Plan.
- Ensure that underage recruits are identified, registered and promptly released from the Tatmadaw through an official discharge process.
- Strengthen the capacity of the Tatmadaw to further prevent underage recruitment and take action against perpetrators.

Outcome 2: All children and young persons released from armed forces and groups should receive quality reintegration support through enhanced reintegration capacity of Government, international and national NGOs and strengthened inter-ministerial and inter-agency coordination to provide overall guidance on reintegration activities.

12. As of 11 May 2017, the project accomplishments include:

- A total of 154 children and young persons have been discharged during the project period. The boys/young men and their families received (or are receiving) support for their reunification from the discharge site, as well as a kit consisting of small food support, clothing and other basic household items. Among the discharged children, while some received medical support in addition to other reintegration assistance, 5 % received support for formal education; more than 25% received vocational training of their choice and 40% of the boys and their families received income generation support in the form of animal husbandry, assistance to set up a small business, etc. Finally, some boys were followed-up and supported with (structural Support in order to reduce community stigmatization accordingly to the Paris Principles 2007. Assistance provided can last from 6 months to 2 years per child.
- The CTFMR has been organizing monthly coordination and follow-up meeting with the Tatmadaw as well as (approx.) bi-monthly meeting with the Ministry of Defence and the Committee for the Prevention of Underage Recruitment. The CTFMR has been sending regular urgent communication to the Tatmadaw to ensure follow-up for individual cases.
- The CTFMR has launched a hotline number to facilitate the safe gathering of complaints by community and family members of children. The communication channel has been constantly operational since 2013 (24/7) and has allowed to gather from 20 to 40 complaints per month. In addition, a nation-wide

awareness campaign has been launched in November 2013 and revitalize several times in order to raise awareness of the population about the prevention of underage recruitment in the Tatmadaw.

- In addition, the CTFMR has been training CBO members about the monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children nation-wide (thus not only on the reintegration and use of children but also other conflict-related grave violations affecting children) and is developing adequate communication and awareness raising tools to increase the mobilisation and capacity of grassroots organizations. This process is done in close collaboration with CBOs and NGOs.
- Efforts have been undertaken to enhance capacities of the Government and NGOs to provide reintegration support for children formerly associated with armed forces and groups, and to strengthen inter-ministerial and inter-agency coordination to promote standardized and sustainable quality reintegration programs. Through these efforts, all children and young men discharged have been visited by social workers and most of them have received or are planned to receive support in the form of formal and non-formal education, vocational training and livelihoods and income generating activities.
- The Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Reintegration (IMWG) composed by the Department of Social Welfare, UNICEF and other partners have been closely working together and meeting quarterly in order to provide reintegration support to children discharged. The IMWG has been set up in February 2013 by the Department of Social Welfare of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement with the aim of serving as an overarching platform to coordinate reintegration of children in Myanmar and it is now active in 5 of hotspots regions/state of the country as well as in the two conflict affected regions. At the national level, IMWG established a sub-group for technical coordination and support at the same time of establishment of IMWG.
- Its overall objective is to develop a coordinated, sustainable and common approach to the reintegration of CAAFAG in accordance with international standards and in consultation with affected communities. A total of 32 discharged child soldiers have been provided with counselling and psychosocial support as well as life skills training by ILO. Apprenticeship and employment will be provided to some of these beneficiaries by businesses who have expressed interest to support their economic reintegration. On a wider scale, a strategy paper for effective private sector engagement on economic reintegration of former child soldiers is being prepared and take into consideration inputs from consultation workshops with businesses that are interested to engage in skills training, apprenticeship and employment of beneficiaries.
- 36 vulnerable youths from conflict-affected villages in Northern Shan State have received vocational training support on organic farming. Beneficiaries are provided with safe learning and living environments. Another batch of enrollees will receive the same form of intervention.
- ILO rolled out implementation supporting experiential learning (form of capacity building) by NGOs as they actively implement directly economic reintegration services such as vocational skills training. The implementing agencies can be consulted in the future by the reintegration bodies for developing future interventions.
- To demonstrate an effective engagement of the communities and local authorities on community reintegration for the youths who are vulnerable for recruitment by armed organizations, capacity building and awareness raising to vulnerable youths is scheduled in May 2017 so the youths become knowledgeable and capacitated about issues on child soldiers and forced labour in the context of peace.
- A conflict-sensitive assessment that identifies economic opportunities which can be supported to benefit conflict-affected and vulnerable youth is being conducted in areas of Kayin State, as a means for reducing risks of violations of their rights and increasing their access to sustainable livelihoods. Similar assessment has been completed for Southern Shan State.

The implementation of the project is being carried out by UNICEF, ILO and UNRCO. In the case of the UNICEF component, the project is managed by the Chief of the Child Protection Section. In case of the ILO component, the project is managed by the Deputy Liaison Officer. In case of the UNRCO, the project is managed by the Senior Advisor on Peacebuilding, Recovery and Development. Therefore, the Project Management Committee is comprised of the abovementioned three individuals, from UNICEF, ILO, and UNRCO.

Evaluation Background

UN PBF and implementing partners have agreed that an independent evaluation will be conducted by an independent specialist at the end of the project.

II. Purpose and Scope

The final independent evaluation will cover all outcomes and will assess the validity of the project logic. It will provide key knowledge building and learning for the broader national process and for stakeholders. It will look at the overall project performance from start to end of the project life. It should review the project's attainment of the overall objective of supporting the implementation of the Joint Action Plan to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children by the Tatmadaw, and specifically to identify, verify and discharge underage recruits still associated with the Tatmadaw as well as support their reintegration back into their communities.

The evaluation will cover the period September 2015 to the point the consultant is recruited to conduct the evaluation. In general terms, the evaluation will focus on:

- The relevance, Efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project financed by the UN PBF;
- The relevance, effectiveness, and coherence of the CTFMRs work on the overall goal and sustainability of the objectives.
- The impact of capacity-building and training activities on preventing underage recruitment.
- The impact, effectiveness and sustainability of systems of economic reintegration designed to support children and young people identified and released from the Tatmadaw and other armed organizations.

The above areas will be analyzed from the perspective of the following orbits of influence of the intervention:

- **CTFMR members:** Office of the UNRC, UNICEF, ILO, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNOCHA, Save the Children, World Vision.
- **National decision-making level:** national authorities and key stakeholders (Ministry of Defense and Department of Social Welfare, Committee for the Prevention of Underage recruitment).
- **Final beneficiaries:** CAAFAG, their families and communities.
- **Service providers:** social workers, service providers, etc.

Clients of the Evaluation

This evaluation will be useful for UN PBF, CTFMR members, government and other development partners who may use the findings for opportunities of convergence and guide to future initiatives on peace-building and related areas of work.

Suggested Aspects to Address

Relevance

- To what extent were the strategy and the logic of the PBF- funded intervention appropriate to achieve the set objectives?
- How has the project responded to changes in the socio-political environment in the country whether ongoing lessons from implementation were used to increase impact?
- What is the relevance of the interventions in terms of advocating for and facilitating the end of child recruitment in armed forces and groups in the context of peacebuilding?
- How has the project been contextually relevant in terms of dealing with NSAGs for their release of children that they have recruited?
- What is the project's relevance in terms of the overall national objective of national reconciliation?

Effectiveness

- What significant progress have been made related to the project's desired outcomes? What were the contributing and hindering factors for moving towards their achievement and were the project's responses appropriate and sufficient?
- To what extent has the project contributed to the development and the strategies of the Myanmar government and other ethnic armed organizations in: (1) putting an end to the recruitment of children into armed force/ groups; and (2) economically reintegrating CAAFAG?
- To what extent has the project influenced Tatmadaw's implementation of the JAP and work plan and quality by which such implementation were carried out?
- How effective are the project's interventions in terms of changing the lives of the discharged underage recruits and their families?

Efficiency

- **To what extent was the project work plan implemented in terms of quality and quantity?**
- **To what extent did the project external environment had an impact on the efficient use of implementing partners' human and financial resources?**
- **Was the budget and human resource allocation sufficient to address the project's interventions?**

Impact and Sustainability:

- To what extent has the problems and needs that gave rise to the project still exist or have changed?
- Has the project identified any other constraints or opportunities that need to be accommodated in the design in order to increase the impact and relevance of the project?
- To what extent is the project in line with and contributing to the UN (and the individual agencies) and donor's objectives for peacebuilding and protection of children in armed conflict?
- To what extent could current key partnerships contribute to the sustainability of the initiatives under the project? What other partnerships should be considered for sustainability?

Gender and Equity:

- To what extent is the project using an equity lens?
- To what extent is the reintegration programme gender-sensitive in addressing the specific challenges that young men and boys face in their transition from military to civilian life?
- What interventions have been provided to vulnerable female and male youths from conflict-affected areas and were they appropriate?

Use of good practices and lessons learnt:

- a. What are the approaches and strategies that are recommended to be pursued in future project implementation and nationwide scale-up based on lessons learnt from the project?
- b. What is the value added of joint UN implementation of this project?
- c. What are the emerging good practices and models of intervention from the project that could inform future programming on peacebuilding, protection of children in armed conflicts and prevention of child recruitment? Which of these could the national partners incorporate into national policy and implementation?

III. Outputs

The expected outputs to be delivered by the Evaluation Consultant are:

- Draft inception report defining the methodological approach and instruments;
- Final inception report incorporating comments from UNICEF, ILO, UNRCO and UNPBF;
- Draft evaluation report incorporating the following:
 - Executive Summary with key findings, conclusions and recommendations
 - Methodology of the evaluation (including methodological limitations)
 - Clearly identified findings addressing all evaluation questions
 - A table presenting the key results (i.e. figures and qualitative results) achieved per objective (expected and unexpected)
 - Clearly identified conclusions and recommendations (identifying which stakeholders are responsible)
 - Lessons learnt
 - Potential good practices
 - Appropriate Annexes including present TORs and tools
- Final evaluation report incorporating feedback from Validation Workshop (hard copy and electronic version in English)
- Notes with reflections on the process of the evaluation identifying lessons learnt and suggestions for future evaluations of similar nature
- All drafts and final outputs, including supporting documents, analytical reports and raw data should be provided in electronic version compatible for Word for Windows. Ownership of data from the evaluation rests jointly with implementing agencies, UNPBF and the Consultant. The copyright of the evaluation report will rest exclusively with the [REDACTED].

IV. Methodology

The evaluation will be based on both qualitative and quantitative techniques, and on primary and secondary data. An inception report by the evaluator will specify the methodology and the evaluation instruments to be used. The inception report will include:

1. Identification of the information needs and possible sources of information;
2. Description of the suggested methods and plan for information gathering and organising (surveys, interviews, case studies, etc.).
3. A final work plan including a plan for analysis of data/information;
4. Description of the involvement of the key stakeholders in the implementation of the assessment, and in the finalisation of the report.

The evaluator will familiarise him/herself with available and relevant documentation including, but not necessarily confined to:

- Project document
- Progress reports and other material documenting project implementation
- Monitoring Reports within the project duration
- Conceptual and methodological work produced under the project
- Training, awareness-raising and advocacy materials produced under the project
- Evaluations of workshops and other activities

These documents will be provided by the project team.⁴⁰

Individual interviews and/or mix focused group (as appropriate) will be a key instrument in the evaluation process.

Meetings will be scheduled in advance of the field visits by CTFMR project staff, in accordance with the evaluator's requests and consistent with these terms of reference.

Adequate measures will be taken to ensure that the process responds to quality and ethical requirements. Interviewees should be protected (e.g. references to information sources should remain confidential and the report will not contain names unless explicit permission is granted).

Following the completion of the fact-finding and analysis phase, a Validation Workshop will be conducted with key stakeholders to be identified by the evaluator and the implementing agencies. Inputs from the workshop will be included in the draft evaluation report (in English) to be circulated to the CTFMR and the UNPBF for comments. Comments from CTFMR and UNPBF will be reviewed by evaluator and addressed, as necessary.

V. Tentative Schedule and Duration

Activities	Tentative dates	Evaluator's estimated no. of work-days
Desk review of documents	17-21 July 2017	5

⁴⁰ Documents that are considered confidential, including the action plan, will not be shared publicly.

Design of the data collection phase and relative tools and preparation of inception report	24-27 July 2017	4
Review of inception report by CTFMR and UNPBF	28 July – 10 August	
Field work (10 days)	14-25 August 2017	10
Validation workshop	28 August 2017	1
Analysis of findings and draft report preparation	28 August – 4 September 2017	10
Review of draft report by CTFMR and UNPBF	5-18 September 2017	
Revision of the report	19-25 September	5
Final review of CTFMR and UNPBF	26 Sept – 4 October	
Submission of final report	9 October 2017	3
Total Working days		38

VI. Estimated cost

The rate per day of professional fees will be in accordance with the complexity of the TOR and the level of the expertise required. Consultants interested in the consultancy should submit a proposal with methodology, estimated cost, time line, and resume of the consultants who will take part in assessment process.

VII. Conditions of Service

International Consultant's fees will be inclusive of professional fee, visa fee, local DSA and travel from consultant's home residence (including taxi fares from Consultant's home-airport, vice versa) to Myanmar in line with ILO regulations and rules. Local transportation within Myanmar will be provided by ILO.

Payment schedule & Fee:

1st Payment: First payment of 50% upon receipt of the inception report.

2nd Payment: Final payment (50%) at the end of the consultancy, upon satisfactory completion of all expected deliverables.

ILO reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of payment if performance is unsatisfactory, if work/outputs is incomplete, not delivered or for failure to meet deadlines.

VIII. Report Submission Procedure

The following procedure will be followed in submitting the inception report, draft and final evaluation reports:

- The Evaluation Consultant will submit the report to the ILO Evaluation Focal Point.

- Evaluation Focal Point will forward a copy to the CTFMR members, UNPBF and other key stakeholders for comments and factual check.
- Evaluation Focal Point will consolidate all comments and send them to the Evaluation Consultant.
- The revised report is submitted to the Evaluation Focal Point with explanation for those comments that might not have been reflected in the report. The report will be forwarded to CTFMR and UNPBF. If further revision will be needed, the Evaluation Consultant, will submit the revised report.
- Once the report is approved, it is disseminated by CTFMR (through UNICEF) to key stakeholders.

IX. Consultant's Responsibilities and Profile

The evaluator shall act independently and have the following qualifications:

- Relevant international experience at a senior level at least for fifteen years (national experience can also qualify in some instances);
- International experience in conducting development project evaluations, small surveys, focus groups discussions as well as evaluations, with a preference for experience around children and armed conflict;
- Experience with MRM and children in armed conflict programs;
- Experience in quantitative and qualitative data analysis and report preparation;
- Familiarity and prior work in the region is considered an asset;
- Experience in evaluating UN or bilateral/multilateral cooperation projects highly desired, particularly in child protection;
- Previous experience in Myanmar or understanding of the complexity of the country highly desirable
- Fluency in English.

Use of the data for publication and other presentations can only be made with the written agreement of . Key stakeholders can make appropriate use of the evaluation report in line with the original purpose and with appropriate acknowledgement.

X. Management

The evaluation consultant will report to the ILO Evaluation Focal Person and UNPBF and should discuss any technical and methodological matters with them should issues arise. CTFMR team will provide administrative and logistical support during the evaluation mission.

Appendix B. Inception Report

**Prevent the recruitment and use of
children by armed forces/groups in
Myanmar as an entry point for durable
peace (MMR/15/07/UND)**

Inception Report for the Final Evaluation

Draft for Review

Prepared by: Laurie Zivetz, Evaluator
September 25, 2017

Acronyms

CAAFAG	Children Associated with Armed Forces/ Groups
CBO	Community-based Organizations
CTFMR	Country Task Force for Monitoring and Reporting
NSAG	Non-State Armed Groups
EAG	Ethnic Armed Groups
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IDI	In Depth Interview
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMWG	Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Reintegration
JAP	Joint Action Plan
MRM	Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on the 6 Grave Violations against children
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PBF	Peace Building Fund
PBSO	Peace Building Support Office
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution

1. The program

In 2001, Human Rights Watch reported that Myanmar had the largest number of child soldiers in the world, with up to 20% of active duty soldiers under the age of 18.

Over the last 16 years a partnership between the Government of Myanmar, UN agencies and international NGOs has contributed to redressing this situation. The UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR), established in 2007, has become an important mechanism for dialogue with government about underage recruitment. The focus of the CTFMR includes not only the national army—the Tatmadaw—but also other non-state armed groups. In 2012, the CTFMR and Government of Myanmar successfully negotiated a Joint Action Plan (JAP) which provides a framework for national efforts to prevent recruitment, and ensure the release, rehabilitation and reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces/Groups (CAAFAG).⁴¹ An Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Reintegration (IMWG), co-chaired by the Department of Social Welfare and UNICEF works in concert with the CTFMR on reintegration issues.

This report puts forward a methodology and associated requests for evaluating the most recent initiative to realize the goals of the Joint Action Plan. The project, *Prevent the recruitment and use of children by armed forces/groups in Myanmar as an entry point for durable peace*, covers the period 1 September, 2015-30 November, 2017. It is jointly implemented by UNICEF, the ILO and UNRCO. Support in the amount of \$1,526,890 was provided by the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)/Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) with co-funding from UNICEF and the ILO in the amount of \$1, 667,000.

The current project follows a prior initiative (2013-2015) which laid many of the foundational elements for implementation of the JAP. The design of the current project was informed by an impact assessment carried out as part of the prior project, in 2014. The project took place during a period of significant change in the country, including the election of the first civilian government in 60 years (2015), negotiated peace agreements with a number of non-state armed groups (2015), both of which offered opportunities for progress in addressing underage recruits in the armed forces. The evaluation is expected to contribute to future programming.

The design document (September, 2015) outlines some major achievements since signing of the JAP, and remaining challenges which inform the objectives and design of new project (August 1, 2015-January 31, 2017), summarized here.

Outcome 1. Professionalization of the Myanmar Armed Forces in support of the peace process.

- Strengthen the protection of children from grave violations with a special emphasis on the effective identification, registration and discharge of underage recruits from the Tatmadaw in accordance with the Joint Action Plan.
- Ensure that underage recruits are identified, registered and promptly released from the Tatmadaw through an official discharge process.
- Strengthen the capacity of the Tatmadaw to further prevent underage recruitment and take action against perpetrators.
- *Achievements* at the outset of the project:
- Discharge of 646 children and young men

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- Bimonthly case review meetings with the Tatmadaw
- Better age verification processes (more attention required)
- Broader CTFMR monitoring, including to operational battalions and Boarder Guard Forces
- Finalized joint Tatmadaw-CTFMR WorkPlan for completion of the JAP, Sept, 2014
- More engagement with EAGs and opportunity for development of Action Plans

Challenges and opportunities for the project:

- Streamlining identification of CAAFAG
- Verification of underage cases especially for minors without documentation
- Ensuring the safety and dignity of children in the Tatmadaw not yet discharged
- Discharge procedures and documentation (including children with special needs)
- SOPs and training modules for Tatmadaw on prevention of child recruitment
- Child protection in judicial system, including support to revision of Child law
- Strengthen government monitoring capacities on all grave violations
- Greater outreach and capacity building of non-state actors,(MMR1507UND, 2015).

Outcome 2: All children and young persons released from armed forces and groups should receive quality reintegration support through enhanced reintegration capacity of Government, international and national NGOs and strengthened inter-ministerial and inter-agency coordination to provide overall guidance on reintegration activities.

Achievements at the outset of the project

- Social worker visits to all CAAFAG discharged since JAP; 60% have received other educational, medical or livelihood support
- -Inter ministerial working group on reintegration (IMWG) established in February 2013 to coordinate reintegration; guidelines developed

Challenges and opportunities for the project:

- Capacity building of government and NGO partners in life skills, vocation and economic reintegration
- Education and social support to discharged underage recruits
- Direct skills training and apprenticeship opportunities to discharged underage recruits
- Strengthen reintegration coordination at regional level
- Standardize framework and workplan for reintegration of CAAFAGs (MMR1507UND, 2015)

Terms of Reference for this evaluation highlight the need to pay special attention to:

- The relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the project financed by the UN PBF;
- The relevance, effectiveness, and coherence of the CTFMRs work on the overall goal and sustainability of the objectives.
- The effectiveness and sustainability of systems of economic reintegration designed to support children and young people identified and released from the Tatmadaw and other armed organizations.

(TOR,31 May, 2017)

The evaluator is contracted by the ILO for the period September 15-November 27, 2017, and will share findings from the fieldwork with members of the CTMFR in a validation workshop at the end of the fieldwork (October 20) and in a report to be submitted in draft in mid-November.

The following section presents the evaluation methodology, including proposed respondents and numbers of respondents, suggestions for site selection and scheduling, and a note about ethics. Section 4. Considers the evaluability of this project. Evaluation tools are presented in the Annexes.

2. Evaluation methodology

The methodology has been developed in order to be able to answer the questions put forward in the ToR for this evaluation (Item 24.) It will rely on review of project documentation and data, interviews with individuals and groups of project stakeholders, and a short survey.

2.1 Secondary sources

The Terms of Reference for this evaluation refers directly or indirectly to a number of **key documents** which are listed below. A number of additional documents have also been shared with the evaluator, and have been included in this list.

Document	Date Received
1. Impact Assessment of EC Project: Monitoring and Reporting, Prevention, Protection, Release, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Children Affected by Armed Conflict in Myanmar, 2014	14/9
2. Project design document (MMR/1/UND)	22/9
3. Joint Action Plan	22/9
4. Operational Guidelines for the Reintegration of Children Formerly Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups, v.1 2014	14/9
5. Terms of Reference for the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Reintegration (IMW), undated (a revised version anticipated, ToR, 2017)	14/9
6. Standard Operating Procedures for Age Assessment to Prevent and Respond to Child Recruitment and Use in Myanmar, undated	14/9
7. Strategy Paper: Private Sector Engagement in Economic Reintegration of Children Formerly Associated with Armed Forces in Myanmar, 2017	14/9
8. Opportunities for Conflict-Affected and Vulnerable Youth: A Conflict Sensitive Economic Assessment in Southern Shan State	14/9
9. Attack and military use of Schools and Hospitals, Summary, undated	14/9
10. Analogous study ref'd in ToR for Kayin State	
11. Minutes of CTFMR meetings*	25/9
12. Mission visit reports**	25/9
13. UNICEF reports to PBF (received 2016; biannual 2017 pending***)	25/9
14. Rationale for no cost extension	25/9

*Schedule of meetings received 9/25; minutes to be reviewed in Yangon

**Questionnaires received 9/25; reports to be reviewed in Yangon

***Including updated Results Framework

Additional documentation relevant to prior UN/PBF related to CAAFAG and peace building in Myanmar more generally will also be valuable, if available.

A number of **secondary data sources** will also add to the evaluation. The **Results Framework**, included at the end of the TOR lays out some specific indicators against which project achievement can be assessed. Although some are actually expressed in terms of activities rather than indicators, baseline and target figures should make it possible to cross check at least some during the course of the final evaluation.

The ToR also makes reference to **other secondary data** that would be helpful to include in the evaluation:

- i. **Hotline** data on underage recruitment. If source, nature and dates of calls are available, illustrative trends could be identified, including where project efforts may have stimulated more calls, increase or decrease in certain types of calls, and changes in types of callers.
- ii. **Monitoring data on CAAFAG who have received rehabilitation support** under the project, including demographic and economic profiles of CAAFAG and families; type, level and duration of support received; and outcome information as available. This data is anticipated, in part, in the log frame.

Details about outcomes could, at minimum indicate how investments have been made to date, and the variety of types of support the project has offered to CAAFAG and their families. When triangulated with IDIs and FGDs with CAAFAG and their families, this data could also provide a comprehensive snapshot of reintegration assistance supported through this project.

- iii. **Monitoring data on six grave violations**, as available.

2.2 Primary data collection

The evaluation team (one international and one national evaluator) will spend two weeks in the field (October 9-20), including a briefing and a validation workshop. The plan described here is aspirational, as it is understood that access to stakeholders may depend on whether they can be contacted, agree to participate, and whether sites currently identified by ILO for this evaluation (Napatwaw, Ayeyarwady, Bago and Mandalay) can be visited for this purpose.

The fieldwork will be largely qualitative and iterative in approach, building a nuanced perspective on the evaluation questions by investigating emerging issues as the evaluation unfolds. Individual interviews will be conducted with most key informants. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) will be held where possible with committees connected with this project—though key individual members will also be interviewed independently—and with beneficiary groups. Guidelines for IDIs and FGDs are presented in Annex A.

The team size and abbreviated fieldwork duration preclude a formal survey or more population-based data collection, though a rapid rating scale is proposed to capture and triangulate stakeholder perspectives on progress of key elements of the program. This rapid rating scale is presented in Annex B and is designed to be administered to everyone who participates in this evaluation. Some of the secondary data also lends itself to analysis for descriptive purposes, as noted above.

A number of participatory exercises will be used in the context of **Focus Group Discussions** and selectively in **in depth interviews**. The exercises are designed to structure sessions and stimulate dynamic discussion. Group exercises take the focus off of the facilitator, offer an opportunity for stakeholders with a shared experience to discuss sensitive issues with one another. These exercises will provide visual data—a timeline, a matrix, a map of referral networks—from a select number of project beneficiaries.

Participatory approaches are described here and their specific application presented in the annex. While these are fairly standard participatory tools and the evaluator has used them in other contexts, they have not been pretested for this evaluation and so suitability will need to be determined, and adaptation carried out in the course of the fieldwork. They include

- i. **Historical timelines** organize a chronology of events, enabling a facilitated conversation that investigates the contribution of events to individual or group outcomes. Timelines can help respondents to tie contextual and personal events together and to interpret the importance of each on the current situation. In interviews with CAAFAG and family members, a timeline of events leading up to military exposure or participation and milestones during the reintegration process will be developed. Each time an event that is important to the story is mentioned, the respondent will be invited to summarize the event on a card. A horizontal line (representing time) will organize information. Cards about events in the respondents' personal life (for instance change in family economic status, contact with a recruiter, help from a social worker etc) will be placed below the line, with general dates noted on the line. Cards about historical events that coincided with or impacted on personal outcomes (for instance major political or weather events or changes in local laws or infrastructure) will be placed above the line. The respondent can draw lines between personal and contextual events and make notes on the graphic. Reflections about reintegration options, personal decisions and satisfaction with services provided will complete the creation of the timeline. Probing and good note taking as well as photographs of the timeline in this exercise will provide a record for inclusion in the evaluation report.
- ii. Construction of a **Venn Diagram** (sometimes referred to as Chappatidiagram) to explore respondent knowledge, use and trust in reporting and reintegration services. The construction of the diagram requires the group to identify key agencies and talk about their role and how effectively they work together on the issue at hand. Participants are asked to arrange circles of various sizes on a large piece of paper. Circle size reflects the group's view of the importance of each agency or structure to the service or topic. The arrangement of the circles shows how the agencies or structures are networked (in terms of proximity of circles). Facilitators probe for anecdotes and to surface majority and minority views within the group. The Venn can provide a powerful visual snapshot of how linkages amongst reporting and reintegration structures are viewed—which will of course vary depending on the vantage point of the respondent group. Good notes on the discussion can inform other evaluation questions. The Venn exercise will be used with groups of CAAFAG, and could also be used with family members, NGO/CBOs and Social Workers in individual interviews as appropriate.
- iii. **Ranking** exercises help groups (and individuals) prioritize what matters to them on a particular issue. Ranking may be used in FGDs with CAAFAG to gather more data about a number of points on the continuum of experience including: i) reasons for joining the military; ii) challenges to reintegration; iii) post discharge support desired; iv) value of support received. Groups or individuals are asked to brainstorm all of the items that are relevant to a given topics. So, for instance, a group of CAAFAG may brainstorm types of support they wanted after they were discharged (item iii). Each item is presented in the lefthand column of a matrix. Participants are given stickers and can then "vote" or assign the stickers to the items depending on their personal perspectives on what is important. Once the voting is completed a facilitated conversation about the highest (and the lowest) scored items may help unpack priorities and preferences.
- iv. **Sentence completion** is a way of allowing respondents to free associate on a topic on paper before norming begins in a group. Participants are invited to complete sentences about a topic on a piece of

paper provided by the facilitators. Papers are then put into a box, mixed together and then passed around and members of the FGD are invited to select a paper from the box. Papers are then read out anonymously. The method gives members of a focus group an opportunity to respond to a specific idea in an open-ended way independently and thus not influenced by peer pressure. This approach can elicit a *range* of perspectives, which can then be considered in a FGD discussion. This may be used to stimulate discussions about reintegration, aspirations for the future with CAAFAG and family members as noted in the list of indicative sentence completion questions in the Annex A.

3. Respondents and scheduling

In order to get a full picture of project achievements the evaluation will seek to hold interviews with a range of government, UN, INGO and NGO and participant/beneficiary respondents. The inclusion of representative perspectives from national, regional and local levels will also be important particularly given the mix of policy and grassroots initiatives included under this project.

3.1 Respondents

The following table is a comprehensive list of stakeholders mentioned in the ToR and other reports. It suggests how many interviews could be undertaken for each stakeholder group, and the distribution (national/regional). This list should be taken as aspirational and may be quite optimistic given the number of days for data collection.

Stakeholder	# of people	Notes
CTFMR	1 (FGD)	Ideally a briefing from this committee at the outset and participation in the validation workshop
UNICEF	2	Participant/rep on CTFMR and a program person would be ideal
ILO	2	Participant/rep on CTFMR, a program person and an M&E person (if this is where this function was housed) would be ideal
UNRCO	1	Participant/rep on CTFMR
UNHCR	1	Rep on CTFMR
UNFPA	1	Rep on CTFMR
UNOCHA	1	Rep on CTFMR
World Vision	3	At least one national (rep on CTFMR) and two regional
Save the Children	3	At least one national (rep on CTFMR) and two regional
Department of Social Welfare	3	At least one national (rep on CTFMR) and at least two regional representatives
Tatmadaw	3	At least one national and at least two regional representatives
Ministry of Immigration	1	National only?
Committee on the Prevention of Underage Recruitment	1	Assumes this is a national committee, perhaps with overlap with the CTFMR, and the chair can be interviewed?
CBO or NGO	3 (FGD as possible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there are NGOs or CBOs that have a number of staff who have been engaged with this project (more than four staff), a FGD would be desirable (rather than a series of IDIs). At least one respondent or respondent group in each site with association with the program from the outset
CAAFAG	10 (2 FGDs if possible)	See notes on FDGs with CAAFAG below. At least one FGD and a couple of IDIs in each site would be ideal. Ideally selection based on

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a diversity of circumstance (family and military); • type of support received from the project; • when support provided (at least half from the first year of the project to be able to gauge outcomes); • gender (assuming girls were supported)
Family members of CAAFAG	8	Do not need to be family members of the CAAFAG interviewed, in fact optimally not all should be
Social workers	6	Should have been trained or oriented by the project and worked with CAAFAG since the outset
Mentors or employers of CAAFAG	4	Ideally have mentored or employed more than one CAAFAG who was placed in employment under the project
Consultants, academics	2	Consultants who have worked with the project and/or academics who work on the issues
Total interviews	55	IDIs only; does not include the FGD participants

The evaluation team will consult with ILO and UNICEF about the **advisability of holding focus groups with CAAFAGs or their family members** who have received support through the project. A FGD setting is desirable as it offers an effective way to gather a variety of views in a shorter period of time, and to undertake some of the mapping and ranking exercises that can provide a lens into stakeholder perspectives about the project. The conversation related to mapping or ranking can be quite illuminating, and more difficult to undertake in an individual interview. Nonetheless, given sensitivities that group discussions may raise, the team looks to the ILO and UNICEF for guidance.

Considerations about whether a FGD is desirable may include:

- i. whether variation in support to individual CAAFAG may raise concerns amongst participants;
- ii. whether variations in experience or benefits received may make the group too heterogeneous thus making it challenging to have a group discussion;
- iii. whether members of the group may have met in the past or be acquainted with one another (confidentiality and trust issues);
- iv. whether prior army affiliation or ethnicity may preclude a helpful dialogue, or raise protection issues (positive or negative).

3.2 Scheduling

The ILO is preparing a schedule for this evaluation. The following outline is for review and discussion. It assumes a day in Yangon for technical and logistics briefing, a validation workshop on the last day of the fieldwork (Oct 20), and a preparation day for the team to organize a presentation for the validation workshop (October 19).

The proposed schedule has government meetings sandwiched between field visits to interview respondents on the ground. This is intentional, as it will allow the evaluation team to put findings from field interviews in context by exploring findings from conversations with CAAFAG, families and providers with government officials, and, following interviews in Naypyidaw, to explore field implementation with greater insight into national perspectives. This triangulation of views will be key to arriving at a full picture of the program in context.

Proposed schedule, for review

Date	Place	Activity
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Monday, October 9	Yangon	Technical and logistical briefing, ILO Team meeting Meet with CTFMR (part of technical briefing, and expectations) National stakeholder meetings (as available)
Tuesday, October 10	Yangon	National INGO and UN stakeholders CAAFAG and family members Travel in pm to Site 1
Wednesday/Thursday, October 11-12	Site 1 (regional)	Regional site interviews Travel in pm to Naypyidaw
Friday, October 13	Naypyidaw	Interviews with government stakeholders (full day)
Saturday, October 14	Travel to Yangon (am)	Off day
Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday , October 16-18	Travel to site 2 (regional) Site 2 (regional)	Regional site interviews
Wednesday, October 18	Travel to Yangon (am)	Outstanding meetings with national stakeholders
Thursday, October 19	Yangon	Evaluation team consolidates findings
Friday, October 20	Yangon	Validation workshop (am) International evaluator departs (pm)

3.3 Site Selection

ILO's initial planning for this evaluation anticipates a five site focus including Yangon, Naypydaw, Bago, Mandalay and Ayeyarwady. The rationale for this may be the diversity of contexts and outcomes. However, with a very abbreviated time for fieldwork, the amount of travel time getting from place to place may consume too much of the fieldwork time. Time in Yangon and Naypyidaw are important in order for the team to engage with national level stakeholders. Assuming there are CAAFAG and family members in Yangon, we recommend that ILO and UNICEF select one or two additional sites. Criteria for selecting a site or sites should include:

- i. Sufficient numbers of CAAFAG and family members who have benefited from this project
- ii. A diversity of types of support received under the project's umbrella
- iii. Sufficient numbers of local military and government representatives and social workers who have been engaged with the project (ideally from the outset)
- iv. Ease of access to respondents (so minimizing travel time in order to maximize interview time)

3.4 Ethical considerations

Child protection is extremely important in such an evaluation. Every effort will be made to protect the safety and confidentiality of all underage informants and their families. Interviews with CAAFAG will take place in private locations where others are not listening. Informed consent will be sought at the outset of every interview, and respondents will be encouraged to decline to answer or to stop an interview if they are uncomfortable at any point. Requests to use quotations and photographs will be confirmed with every respondent. Unless permission is given, no names will be presented in the final report, including in annexes that list informants for the evaluation. If names of CAAFAG are provided by other informants, for instance so that they can be located for interviews, their names and contact information will be kept confidential, and not included in the final evaluation report. Child protection concerns or anomalies that may arise or be observed in the course of this evaluation will be reported immediately to the ILO (UNICEF?).

4. Evaluability considerations

A number of factors have been considered in whether this project can be evaluated. These factors considered in this section will inform the reliability of the findings and ideally should be explored with the commissioning agency in advance. Are the assumptions correct? Have they been considered in the planning for this evaluation? Can they be addressed in advance of or during the fieldwork?

1. Clearly stated objectives, theory of change and beneficiaries

The Terms of Reference and project documentation lay out a well-defined, internally consistent rationale and associated objectives for this project. A historical narrative in the ToR provides a brief, useful situation analysis with logical links to project objectives and activities. The relationship between the current project and prior initiatives is explained in project documentation and supported by an end of project evaluation for the prior project (2014). The beneficiary group is clearly described. Baseline and end of project reach targets are put forward in the log frame. Output targets, including training and other deliverables are articulated in the Results Framework, though some are compound indicators and may be problematic to measure. The theory of change is summarized in the results framework would benefit from a more specific articulation of the assumptions about links between project activities and anticipated outcomes.

2. Documentation and data:

The project documents reference a range of anticipated project deliverables, including strategy and planning documents, protocols and guidelines, and high level government agreements. Some but not all of these documents were readily available, though those that are sufficient to provide a starting point for evaluation. Some will be reviewed in Yangon as they are considered confidential. Aggregated, high level project monitoring and reporting data has been shared. Disaggregated data and details on the source and reliability would be helpful.

The design document anticipates three reports from UNICEF over the life of the project, and the project includes multiple observation missions and training workshops, which presumably involved some kind of paper trail. Systems designed to gather and use this data are also an anticipated output of the project and their durability and use an indicator of the sustainability. It is still possible that an updated log frame, will be provided before the field evaluation begins. Either way, challenges and opportunities for project and CTFMR and government data systems will be investigated during the evaluation.

3. Team and timeline

A two-person team will conduct this evaluation: an international and a national evaluator over a two-week period (fieldwork). The geographic scope of the evaluation is quite ambitious, given the national reach of the program and the dual emphasis on national policy and systems, and individual beneficiaries. The national

evaluator is expected to act as a translator as well, which will restrict how many interviews can be carried out in a day.

The impact of locality on project outcomes is unknown at this point, so interviews with CAAFAG and their families in at least three localities has been requested (see section 3.3) to ensure findings are broadly representative of the overall/national project. Selection of respondents will also not be randomized and the ILO is requested to select beneficiaries who represent a range of circumstances and experiences—in their military exposure and with the project. (Often less than successful results yield the greatest learning opportunities).

4. Access

It is unlikely that the evaluation team will have unfettered access to national, regional and individual stakeholders in this project, and the team will rely on the ILO (which is leading on the management of this evaluation) to put together the schedule. Access to key government, Tatmadaw and UN representatives who have been extensively involved in the project is particularly critical. Follow up interviews with individuals not available during the fieldwork period, either remotely by the team, or in person by the national evaluator, may be desirable (though the turnaround time for the final report may also preclude a lot of follow up interviews).

Overall, this evaluability review suggests that an evaluation of the project can be undertaken.

Unknowns:

- Are there other agencies carrying out similar activities either nationally or regionally?
- Whether girls were considered as beneficiaries through this project?
- Specific roles and contributions of INGO and NGO partners

Annex A: IDI and FGD guide

This annex includes guiding questions for individual interviews and group discussions with key informants. They are designed to allow the evaluation team to answer the questions put forward in the ToR and to triangulate perspectives on key issues amongst various stakeholders. For this reason, a similar line of questioning is adopted for a number of respondents. The guiding questions presented here are intended to be a starting point, and will be adjusted as interesting and relevant insights emerge in the course of the fieldwork. Use of specific participatory tools is also put forward and will also be adapted.

IDI with CTFMR members

The following lines of questioning will be used for all members of the CTFMR, including representatives at regional level. Additional questions for members of the Project Management Committee appear at the bottom.

The CTFMR

1. How long have you served on the CTFMR?
2. How would you describe the purpose of the CTFMR?
3. How often does it meet?
4. What are the most frequent items on the agenda?
5. What proportion of your job is devoted to issues related to child soldiers (CAAFAG)?
6. How much interaction do you have with other members of the CTFMR outside of the meetings? How much of this interaction is about this issue?

7. What would you say have been the biggest accomplishments of the CTFMR over the last 3 years? (Probe on how this got done).
8. What have been its biggest challenges?

Tatmadaw

9. How does the Joint Action Plan inform the work of the CTFMR with the Tatmadaw; NSAGs?
31. The project design doc suggests that subsequent to the JAP recruitment processes have been tightened to ensure better screening, and to prosecute offenders. Yet underage recruitment continues. What are the incentives for continuing to admit underage recruits? How has this project specifically supported positive changes and addressed remaining challenges?
32. How would you describe the relationship between the CTFMR and the Ministry of Social Welfare? Has this changed over the last 3 years? How?
33. What do you think are the main factors motivating better screening and reporting?
34. How would you describe the relationship between the CTFMR and the Tatmadaw at the moment? Probe on how this relationship evolved and what contributed to it.

Monitoring visits

35. Does the CTFMR have access to military facilities (including detention centers)? Has this access been consistently granted on request over the last two years? Probe for enabling and impeding factors. How is this different than before 2014?
36. How many monitoring visits did you participate in over the last two years? Who did you meet? What did you observe? Were there things you wanted to observe that you were unable to? Has access changed over the last two years? Probe for enabling and impeding factors.
37. How do you provide feedback after a monitoring visit? To whom?

Access to NSAGs

38. How have you contacted NSAGs? How would you describe the CTFMR's relationship with Non-State Actor Groups? Probe on how has this relationship evolved and what contributed to it.
39. Have you noticed a change in attitude or action on the part of any of the NSAG with respect to underage recruitment over the last 3 years? If yes, what do you attribute that to?

Reintegration support to CAAFAG

21. What kind of support have individual children received under this project by your agency? Do you collaborate with other agencies (govt, UN or NGO) to deliver these services?
22. Within the PBF, which agencies are involved in reintegration initiatives? Do they know about one another and work together? How strong are the referral linkages amongst them?
23. In your view, what types of support have been particularly effective? Why? Probe for evidence, examples.
24. Are there any that you think should be stopped because they are not effective or even harmful? Why? Probe for evidence, examples.
25. Aside from what your agency provides, do you know about other types of efforts to end recruitment or promote positive reintegration of CAAFAG provided by other agencies outside of this project? Probe on details.

Monitoring and data

26. Who is responsible for collecting monitoring data on incidence of the six grave violations against children in armed Conflict (UNSCR 1612, 2005) collected? Where is it kept? Have you seen it? How reliable and complete do you believe it is? How is it actioned?

27. What kind of data does your agency collect about recruitment or release of child soldiers? Where is that stored? How do you use it?
28. With respect to age and follow up, if a child is identified as having been recruited when he was underage but is 18 by the time he is identified, what kind of services is he eligible for [NB Track graphic suggests if he is discharged he is not eligible; NCE suggests ILO assumes responsibility]
29. What about data on reintegration efforts and outcomes for individual CAAFAG? Who is responsible for collecting it? Where is it stored? Analyzed? Do you have access to it?
30. How confident are you in these sources of data? Do you rely on them for planning or monitoring purposes?

Sustainability

29. The policy framework for addressing underage recruitment has matured considerably since the formation of the CTFMR. What elements of the JAP do you feel are best integrated into government and Tatmadaw practice? Explore underage review processes; reporting mechanisms; prosecution procedures; reintegration services
30. Would reintegration support to individuals continue without project support? Probe for potentials and challenges.

In sum:

31. What have been the most important adaptations that the CTFMR has made in light of the changes in Myanmar during the last 3 years (the life of the project)? Ask about messaging, committee structure, priorities. Probe for specifics.
32. What has the CTFMR and the PBF project specifically done to raise awareness about the issue of child soldiers? What is your view on the effectiveness of this effort? (Probe for evidence)
33. Is there anything we have not touched on that you'd like to say about the ways in which the CTFMR and the PBF project specifically have contributed to peace in Myanmar? (Probe for specifics)

Additional Q's for UNICEF

1. Unicef works most closely with the Department of Social Welfare. How would you describe the partnership? Has it changed over the last 2 years? How?
2. How effective is the DSW as an advocate for child rights, especially child soldiers? Probe for strengths and challenges. How has the project supported the DSW's advocacy efforts?
3. How effective is the DSW in providing reintegration support to CAAFAG? Probe for strengths and challenges. How has the project supported the DSW's reintegration efforts?
4. The 2016 annual report says that 800 children received reintegration support (Indicator 2.1) but the data up to 2017 data says only 647 received support and it appears that each one only received one type of support. Pls advise.
5. What is the status of the revision of the Inter Agency Reintegration Guidelines? What has the process been? Stumbling blocks?
6. What is the status of the mapping of vocational training options. How will this be accessed and used by CAAFAG?
7. How are the IMWG efforts in 5 hotspots and 2 conflict affected regions (pg 5 ToR) working in practice? Probe for successes and challenges.
8. How did you determine how to allocate resources? What is covered by your cost share? Has the staffing to meet the goals of this project been sufficient? Where do you think additional resources would be best spent?

9. What kind of programmatic synergies has this PBF project had with other projects aimed at child protection or youth employment?
- 10.
11. How has the joint management of the program worked in practice?
12. What will be UNICEF's role in these efforts going forward?

Unicef + World Vision

10. How does the hotline work? Who answers the phones?
11. Once calls come in, where are who is expected to respond? Where are referrals made? probe on specific types of calls.
12. Ask about data about trends (types of calls, profile of callers, location of callers, follow up). (NB. data for number of calls provided by Uncief)
13. Why do you think the number of calls has been declining over the last few years?
14. How is the confidentiality of the caller protected?

Additional Qs for ILO

- v. What kind of programmatic synergies has this PBF project had with other ILO projects aimed at child protection or youth employment? Get specifics.
- vi. How did you determine how to allocate resources for this project? Has the staffing to meet the goals of this project been sufficient? Where do you think additional resources would be best spent?
- vii. The ILO was quite underspent in terms of its allocation in 2016 (financials presented on MPTFO gateway)—27% expended. Why?
- viii. How does the ILO forced labor complaint mechanism interface with reporting systems established by this project (including the hotline)? Who manages? Govt/Tatmadaw “ownership”?
- ix. How has the joint management of the program worked in practice?
- x. What will be the ILOs role in these efforts going forward?

Additional Q's for the UNRCO

1. What has been the UNRCO's role in this project?
2. How has the joint management of the program worked in practice?
3. Which agency managed the budget for this program and made decisions about allocation?
4. For UNRCO, how did you determine how to allocate resources? Has the staffing to meet the goals of this project been sufficient? Where do you think additional resources would be best spent?

IDI with Tatmadaw and Department of Defense representatives

1. Role and rank in Tatmadaw. Nature of respondent's affiliation with the IMWG or CTFMR, and awareness of program. Probe on historical relation with these structures as well as any role in JAP preparation.
2. How would you describe your relationship with the CTFMR? Are there particular agencies you work most closely with? Probe for details, helpful, challenges.
3. Have you received any training or briefings related to children in armed conflict? This could relate to recruitment, reporting, or reintegration. Probe on content, dates, who delivered training or briefing.
 - [Training on age verification part of the project]
4. Have you delivered any trainings or briefed other members of the armed forces on these issues? Probe on content, dates, recipients.
5. Do you know about other trainings or briefings that have been offered to members of the Tatmadaw or other armed groups about child protection or reintegration? Details.

6. What is your policy and protocol for allowing access to members of the CTFMR to visit units, bases and prisons? Have there been any issues with gaining access?
7. After these monitoring visits, do you receive reports on their findings? What do you do with these reports? Probe for anecdotes.
8. Reports suggest that the Tatmadaw has significantly improved prevention of underage recruitment through underage screening and through punishing individuals who recruit children under 18 years. Are there specific protocols or practices that you have adopted to achieve this? What challenges remain?
9. What about prevention of underage recruitment for non-state military groups? What is the Tatmadaw doing about this? Challenges and opportunities.
10. What additional support from the members of the CTFMR to the Tatmadaw would be helpful in meeting the goals of the JAP?

IDI with Department of Social Welfare representative

1. Respondent's role in DSW, number of years in DSW and past roles.

CTFMR and IMWG

- 2 Knowledge of PBF program; role on CTFMR and IMWG, including duration.
- 3 How often does the IMWG meet? Who are the members?
- 4 What are the main issues the IMWG has had to grapple with over the last two years? Have the agenda items changed at all over the last two years? Probe
- 5 What do you see as the biggest accomplishment of the IMWG over the last two years? 6.
- 6 What do you attribute this accomplishment to?

Reintegration work

7. With respect to reintegration of released children, what do you see as the biggest challenge to their reintegration? What do they need most?
8. What has the DSW done to address these needs over the last two years? How has help from the project supported these initiatives?
9. What kind of training or orientation have you or other members of the DSW received from the program to help you to reintegrate children who have left the armed services?
10. What do you think will be the biggest challenges facing the DSW in terms of reintegration of CAAFAG going forward?
11. Ask about linkages to other ministries and agencies incl NGOs, INGOs etc. How does the DSW engage with them in to provide reintegration support?
12. Do Social Workers who work with discharged or exposed children or young adults get any special training? Details. Do they need training?

IDI with CBOs/NGOs/INGOs

- . What is your organizations' overall mission? How does this fit with the PBF project's objectives?
- . What has been your agency's role in this and previous projects to eliminate underage recruitment and/or promote reintegration of children who have been exposed to the military?
- . What kind of support or training did you receive from the project? Probe on use and usefulness.

- . Did the support or training change the way you operate or the number or type of people you reached in the past?
- . What opportunities do you see for your agency to continue to contribute to eliminating underage recruitment or promoting reintegration of CAAFAG in future? What resources will you put towards this?
- . What challenges do you foresee to achieving this? In Myanmar? In your agency?

IDI with Consultants/academics

Perspectives on factors enabling or impeding achievement of project goals.

Probing on insights gleaned from discussion with other stakeholders to try to put findings into broader contextual policy, political, cultural or development perspective.

Interviews with CAAFAG

FGD

- Collect basic demographic info on participants (age, how long in military, what they are doing now, support from project)
- Sentence completion:
 - Underage youth join the army because.....*
 - Facilitate a discussion about responses. Talk about awareness of law, drivers of recruitment, vulnerabilities.
 - The hardest thing about being in the army is....*
 - The hardest thing about leaving the army is.....*
 - After they are discharged, underage recruits need.....*

- 2 To organize a discussion of iii. and iv. if the responses are diverse and clear enough, use Ranking matrix:
 - cluster responses from ii. into key themes and put the main themes across a matrix (columns).
 - Cluster responses from iii. and put them down the left-hand column of the matrix (so they define the rows).
 - Ask respondents if there are any important items missing and add them to the row or column headers.
 - Give each member of the group 20 stickies (10 in one color; 10 in another). Ask participants them to “vote” on which “reintegration challenge” is most challenging to recent underage recruits (ii.), and then which solution (iii) is most important. They can put as many of their stickies in one box as they wish
- 3 Tally up the stickies and discuss the ones that have received the most and least votes.
 - Probe on why some issues are significant and why solutions some are optimal. Some with low votes may be hardest to deal with—talk about why and what can be done. Some may be easy to address—talk about best way to approach.
 - Consider the overlap between challenges and solutions.
- 4 Probe on social worker support, follow up, types of services sought and received by participants of the FGD.

IDI

1. After an introduction and warm up, tell the respondent you are going to create a timeline of their life that looks at how they were recruited, and what has happened to them since they were released from the army.
2. Draw a line on a flip chart and put the month and year (date) almost at the right of the line.
3. Give the respondent a stack of blank cards (could be two different colors) and a marker.

4. Ask the respondent when they joined the army. Put that date somewhere in the middle of the line.
5. Then ask the respondent to tell you about the main events leading up to their recruitment to the army. For each major event or issue, ask them to summarize on a card and place it above the line (if it is something general, like a political or climate event), and below the line if it is personal (contact with someone, a personal or family decision or event).
6. Help them create and place the cards, noting dates as you go (specific dates are not as important as the chronology).
7. Then talk about what happened in the army and how they were released, noting events on cards. Note the release date on the line.
8. Then talk about what happened when they were released, starting with the major challenges they faced and then noting services they received from agencies associated with the project. Ask them to think about whether these services helped with the challenges and how.
9. Finish the exercise by creating cards for the future, what the respondent expects to be doing in 1 and 3 years.
10. During this exercise, probe for the respondent's interpretation of events, feelings, and sense of agency.
11. Events and factors contributing to conscription? Circumstances for release? Reintegration support provided? Who provided help at each point? what were key turning points? what does he see as his future now?

If this exercise seems unsuitable for the respondent, use the interview to create a chronology of events in the same way, and probe on key points related to recruitment, challenges to reintegration, and perspectives about services received—from the project and anywhere else.

Interviews with Family members of CAAFAG

FGD

1. Begin with some background on the participants and their children. If participants are literate, use sentence completion.

Thinking about your child and other children or youth you may know who was in the military, please finish the following sentences:

i. *Underage youth join the army because.....*

Facilitate a discussion about responses. Talk about awareness of the law, drivers of/reasons for recruitment, vulnerabilities.

ii. *The hardest thing about leaving the army is.....*

iii. *After they are discharged, underage recruits need.....*

Venn:

1. Ask family members to think about all of the agencies and individuals that may be available to help them and their child after they are discharged.
2. Brainstorm a list of the agencies on a flip chart.
3. Then hand out cut out circles of different sizes and ask them to agree on which are more or less important for helping children reintegrate. Write the name of the most important on the large circle; least important on the small circle. Encourage them to reflect on their own experience. Probe for anecdotes and reasons as they are discussing.
4. Then on a large piece of flip chart paper draw the family in the middle of the page—with the CAAFAG in the family.
 - Ask the group to arrange the circles on a large piece of paper to show how available they are to the family. Close by the center means more valuable; farther from the center means not as valuable.

- As they create the Venn, ask the group to draw lines between the agencies and individuals and with the family to show this cooperation. As they are arranging, probe to find out the nature of the linkages, whether they are positive or negative, and why. Disagreements are important, and if the group gets stuck, help to resolve.

Note taking is very important in this exercise.

IDI

Create a timeline, like what is described above for the CAAFAG, which focuses on

- i. how, when and why the child was recruited?
- ii. what the family member knew about him at that time and during his time with the army?
- iii. how, and why he was released?
- iv. what be biggest challenges to reintegration he faced were?
- v. what support he received via the project?
- vi. how did this affect the family? Other siblings?
- vii. Expectations for the future

During this exercise, probe and observe respondent's interpretation of events, feelings, and sense of agency.

Social Worker

- . 1. Background, experience, education, demographic.
- . What kind of training or orientation have you received from the program or elsewhere to work with CAAFAG?
- . How many CAAFAG have you worked with over the last two years?
- . How do you determine what kind of help the young person needs?
- . How involved is the family typically in that determination?
- . How do you ensure they get that support?
- . How long do you stay engaged with your clients?
- . What kind of information do you collect about each case? What do you do with that information?
- . In your view, what are the most important types of support that discharged children need to help them reintegrate.
 - Rank these in terms of importance
 - Rank them in terms of ease of access (for the CAAFAG)
- . What support has the project provided to help you do your job?

Annex B. Rapid survey

This short survey is designed to gather high level perspectives from a range of individuals who have contributed to or benefited from the efforts of the PBF project, by gathering their opinions about the effectiveness of key elements of the PBF program. It goes without saying that use and analysis of this data will be informed by findings from the broader evaluation.

It may be helpful to translate this instrument, in which case efforts should be made to do so ahead of the fieldwork start.

In 2012 Myanmar signed a Joint Action Plan which laid out some specific actions related to the recruitment and rehabilitation of children in the armed forces. The PeaceBuilding Fund project seeks to implement the agreements in that Plan. The following statements summarise the objectives and activities of the project over the last two years.

Based on your personal experience and your own viewpoint, please rate the effectiveness of the project on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being ineffective, 3 acceptable and 5 very effective.

Keep completely anonymous. Please answer honestly.

<i>In your view, how effective was the project in supporting....</i>	1	2	3	4	5	Not sure
1. Raised awareness amongst key government decision makers about the damaging effects of child recruitment into the armed forces						
2. Inter-ministeral cooperation to address underage recruitment						
3. Identification and discharge of underage children by the Tatmadaw						
4. Identification and discharge of underage children amongst other military groups						
5. Stopping the harassment and imprisonment of underage recruits who deserted						
6. Prosecution of individuals responsible for child recruitment						
7. Increased public awareness about child recruitment						
8. Appropriate reintegration services for children associated with or affected by armed forces or groups						
7. INGO and civil society engagement to address underage recruitment and/or reintegration						
8. Private sector engagement to offer livelihood options for children released from the military						
9. Collection and sharing of reporting information about child recruitment and reintegration						
10. Overall peace building in Myanmar						

Appendix C. List of Persons Interviewed

UN				
UNICEF	Yangon	Ms. Diane Crittin, Child Protection Specialist, Children and Armed Conflict Mr. Myat Min Thu Child Protection Officer, Children and Armed Conflict Ms. Luhar Danee Teona Ataslanishvili, Child Protection Specialist (Justice for Children)		
	Mandalay	Ms Van Chi Pham, Child Protection Specialist Ms. Thida Sein Mr. Than Kyaw Soe		
		Yangon	Ms. Piyamal Pichaiwongse Ms. Mhwe Lon Mr. Jess Macasil, consultant Mr. Rory Mungoven, Resident Representative Ms.Ma. Lourdes Kathleen Santos, Evaluation Manager	
			Formerly with ILO/Myanmar Mr. Ben White Ms. Jodie Mitra	
	UNRCO Ms. Susu Thatun, Head, Peace Support Unit Ms Sint Sint Khin,			
INGOs				
World Vision	Yangon	Ms. Win Pa Pa, Proection Manager Ms. Win Mar		
Save the Children	Yangon	Mr. Salai Thura Aung Mr. Saw Hta Yaw Ah Mr. Kyaw Zin Htet Ms. Khin Nyein Chan		
	Mandalay	Mr. Htin Lin Aung Ms. Theint Theint Soe Ms. Wah Wah Thin Mr. Saw Martin Tun Tun Ms. Laura Payne (former)		
		Formerly with SC		
		NGOs		
		Pa-O Youth Organization	Yangon	Mr. Khun Htee , Chairperson
		Rattana Metta Org	Yangon	Mr. Kyaw Sun, Project Manager Ms. Myat Myat Soe Mr. Myo Htike Mr. Khin Maung Soe U Sithu Tun
			Myanmar Red Cross Society	Naypyitaw
	Gov			
	Departnerment of Social Welfare		Naypyitaw	Ms. Dr. San San Aye, Director General Mr. Myo Set Aung, Deputy Director General & assistant
			Mandalay	Mr. Kyaw Win & assistant
MOD	Naypyitaw	Major General Khung Than Zaw Htoo Brag General Thaung Naing + 4		
Others				
Social Work Association of Mynamar	Yangon	Mr. Swe San Oo		
Heavy Equipment & Technician Group Co, Ltd	Yangon	Mr. Than Shwe, Managing Director		
Peace Building Fund		Mr. Tammy Smith		

Appendix D. List of government ministries on the IMWG

- Department of Social Welfare of the Ministry of Social Welfare Relief and Resettlement (DSW)
- Ministry of Science & Technology
- Ministry of Immigration
- Department of Education Planning and Training of the Ministry of Education
- Department of General Administration of the Ministry of Home Affairs
- Department of Fisheries of the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development
- Ministry of Industry
- Ministry of Agriculture & Irrigation
- Department of Labour under the Ministry of Labour, Employment & Social Security
- Ministry of Co-operatives
- Ministry of Border Affairs
- Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry
- Transnational Criminal Department and Anti-Trafficking Unit of Myanmar Police Force

