Children of Mozambique: 
The Cost of Survival

Neil Boothby
Abubacar Sultan
Peter Upton

November 1991

This report is written by Neil Boothby, Abubacar Sultan and Peter Upton, all of whom were involved in projects for Save the Children Federation (USA) in Mozambique when the information was collected. An edited version of the report will appear as a chapter in a forthcoming book on children and war to be published by Oxford University Press.

The U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR) receives no government funding. USCR is grateful for the important support it receives from the Ford Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation, and the John Merck Fund. USCR is also grateful to many individual contributors.
Children of Mozambique: The Cost of Survival

Mozambique has been engulfed in a ten-year war noteworthy for its devastating impact on children. Recent surveys reveal that one-third of Mozambique’s children die before they reach the age of five years. These surveys list Mozambique’s high rates of infant and child-mortality as an indirect consequence of the decade-long war, statistically demonstrating that increasing child deaths by starvation, malnutrition, and preventable illnesses parallel the continuing conflict.

What happens to the Mozambican children who do survive beyond the age of five? Many have become the victims and the tools of war. Boys as young as six have served as soldiers, children of all ages have been the targets of systematic, country-wide abductions, and large numbers have been killed or been the victims of torture, rape, and forced labor.

In response, the Mozambican government and international organizations assisting it have focused most of their efforts on keeping the war’s survivors fed and alive; as the war rages on, there are scant resources to meet anything beyond the children’s physical needs. But children’s needs are not limited to physical survival.

This report is concerned with those children who survive their first-hand exposure to the war. What have they been through? How did their experiences affect them? What should be done to help them? And, more important, given the circumstances, what can be done?

Part One of this report first presents a numerical summary of the most common kinds of traumatic events children endured. The summary indicates, for example, that of those children interviewed, 77 percent had witnessed civilians being murdered. If anything, this survey serves as a reminder that what happened to these children were not isolated incidents. They are representative of children’s experiences throughout the country.

The bulk of Part One examines children’s war-related experiences through their own words. It is based on hundreds of interviews with children who have been exposed to the war. Boys and girls, such as Augustin and Atisha, described what happened, what was done to them, what they witnessed, and what they did to survive:

**Augustin:** One night we heard a loud knock on the door. We didn’t open it, so it was kicked in. Bandits [Renamo soldiers] burst in. They used the bayonets attached to their guns to stab my mother, father, and brother. I ran into the bush where I hid until the next day. When I returned, I found that my parents and my brother were dead and that the bandits burned our house down. I don’t know why they killed my family. We weren’t members of Frelimo; we didn’t have any money; we didn’t do anything to make the bandits mad at us.

**Atisha:** When we arrived at the [bandits'] base, I was brought in front of the chiefs along with other girls. One of the chiefs chose me to be his woman. He took me to his house, and I found he already had four wives. His wives told me that I could not cry in front of him or I would be killed. If I cried, he would think it was because I wanted another man. The chief didn’t speak my language. He spoke Portuguese. I stayed with him at the base camp for a year. I cried a lot to myself but the chief never caught me crying, and never beat me....Later...I was able to escape.

Part Two of the report offers an overview of what the authors of this study learned about the
psychological consequences of children's exposure to war and how their families and communities have responded to their varied circumstances. This section also looks at a range of issues that should be considered in formulating strategies to assist war-affected families and communities. It reviews the efforts of several programs whose achievements and difficulties reveal the short-term potential and the long-term limitations of working with war-traumatized children while the war still persists.

Mozambique's ability to survive this ten-year war is a tribute to its people's resilience and promise. But their survival has not been without cost. Until the war is over, children of Mozambique will continue to sacrifice their childhoods and their lives. Though there are intimations of change throughout southern Africa, the war continues. The following section briefly reviews how this conflict began and the course it has taken over the last decade.

THE ORIGINS OF THE WAR

Mozambique is a large country with a coastline equivalent to that of the United States' east coast excluding Florida. It is as wide as 480 miles in the north, tapering down to 50 miles in the south where, significantly, it shares its western border with South Africa. Mozambique's size permits it to accommodate a population of about 15 million, which is divided into some 12 different ethnic groups, many of which possess their own distinct language and traditions. Its strategic location on the Indian Ocean establishes it as the closest sea outlet for land-locked nations such as Zimbabwe and Malawi and, for most of its history, its ports have flourished in service to those and other inland countries. Mozambique's strategic location and its natural resources and agricultural capacity reflect its economic potential.

Mozambique's current condition, however, belies its great promise. A majority of its roads are unsafe, and there is little ground travel without military escort. Great stretches of the country are either abandoned, threatened, or controlled by hostile forces. Much of the countryside is vulnerable to attack, leaving only the country's provincial and district capitals as relatively secure havens for their residents and displaced rural populations. The 150-mile long railroad to Zimbabwe functions only because it is protected by Zimbabwean and Mozambican soldiers. In short, Mozambique has been economically as well as emotionally devastated by the war. While most of the destruction is attributable to events over the past ten years, the causes of the war have deep roots in both Mozambique's history and the region's geopolitical reality.

Portugal had claimed Mozambique as its own since the 16th century, but until the 1900s it did not solidify its control over the country's local inhabitants. Until the 1960s, its colonial administrations exploited the indigenous population its labor and denied these people advanced education or skilled jobs. Those living in the rural areas were dominated by tax collectors and lived in isolation. Portugal's repressive policies and its powerful secret police prohibited the formation of any political opposition, causing a number of Mozambicans to go into exile where they established the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo). Frelimo began a war for independence in 1964. Portugal bitterly resisted but acquiesced after a ten-year war. The overwhelming majority of Portuguese colonists fled, taking or destroying what they could and leaving Frelimo very little with which to rebuild the country.

In 1975, the minority regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia looked on in alarm when Mozambique declared itself an independent nation. Rhodesia, in particular, viewed this as a threat, since it shared its eastern border with Mozambique and feared its own indigenous population would fight similarly for independence. The Rhodesian secret police began to organize, train, and arm anti-Frelimo groups and disgruntled ex-Frelimo soldiers into an organization called the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo). In 1977, after Mozambique had begun to give sanctuary and support to guerrillas fighting the Rhodesian regime, Renamo infiltrated into Mozambique to begin its own guerrilla operations.

By early 1980, however, things were going poorly for Renamo. It lost its sponsorship in Rhodesia after the minority regime fell and the country was reborn as Zimbabwe. After losing clashes with the Mozambican army, the remnants of Renamo were on the verge of capture. Then, the South African government intervened. It offered its territory as a sanctuary and training ground and, by 1981, Renamo had returned to Mozambique in greater numbers, this time under the direction of the South Africans. Since it lacked the manpower to directly challenge the Frelimo government, Renamo waged a guerrilla campaign to undermine both the country's infrastruc-

*Throughout the rest of this paper, the Frelimo government will be referred to as the Government or the Government of Mozambique. Because many children use the word Frelimo rather than Government, quotations will continue to refer to Frelimo.
ture and the government's ability to govern by destroying factories, schools, health clinics, and stores. This campaign assisted South Africa's aims, which were to cripple Mozambique's economy and to deny Zimbabwe its access to the sea.

Renamo initially received some support in rural areas where government policies had alienated the local populations. For example, the Government had imposed a collective system of agricultural production which was both unpopular and unproductive. The Government also tried to reform the traditional power structure in rural villages by removing the local tax collectors and by attempting to reduce the powerful role played by traditional witch doctors, known as curandeiros. This latter policy particularly alienated many Mozambicans, who for centuries had relied upon curandeiros to provide vitally needed medical treatment and spiritual guidance. Renamo effectively exploited Frelimo's rejection of the curandeiros by proclaiming its own faith in them and by reinstalling curandeiros to positions of prominence in areas it controlled. Renamo also used the issue of tribalism to win support from the diverse Mozambican population, pointing out that the majority of Frelimo government leaders were members of a single tribe from the southern part of the Mozambique.

Whatever popular support Renamo achieved in the early 1980s had eroded quickly, primarily due to its own brutal treatment of civilians. All along, Renamo had preferred to control and exploit local populations rather than seek their support. Using hit-and-run tactics, it had established itself in each of Mozambique's ten provinces. Yet Renamo also was powerful enough to stage a major offensive in the central part of the country in late 1986, permitting it to establish control over vast areas. Throughout this period, Renamo's effective disruption of the economy gave South Africa considerable economic leverage over Mozambique. In hopes of ending the war, Mozambique agreed to a treaty with South Africa in 1984 whereby South Africa would end its support for Renamo if Mozambique would cease lending sanctuary and assistance to the African National Congress, which had been using Mozambique as a staging area to infiltrate South Africa. Mozambique stuck to its obligations under the treaty, but irrefutable proof revealed that the South Africans continued their support of Renamo.

South Africa's duplicity and the evidence of Renamo's continuing brutality eventually helped turn international sentiment solidly in favor of Frelimo. Mozambique had been receiving assistance from the Soviet Union since its independence, and it also began to receive support from Great Britain and the United States, whose suspicions about the government's Marxist orientation were allayed as Frelimo adopted economic policies that were increasingly more pragmatic. Mozambique was thus the unusual beneficiary of assistance from both superpowers before the recent steps to end the Cold War occurred. As international support for Mozambique coalesced, South Africa felt greater pressure to cease its support for Renamo. By the end of the decade, South Africa claimed that all official government support for Renamo had been eliminated, though it admitted that nongovernmental South African sources continued to assist Renamo.

On the battlefield, the Frelimo government was able to halt Renamo's offensive in 1986 and, with the invariable assistance of Zimbabwean and Tanzanian troops, it reclaimed much of the territory Renamo had seized. Nevertheless, Renamo remains active in all ten provinces. The Government controls practically all of the nation's cities and towns, but Renamo still controls blocks of territory in central Mozambique and remains a pervasive presence throughout the country, roaming the countryside freely at night and causing millions to fear for their safety.

In short, after a decade of war, Mozambique and its children still are in desperate straits. Over a million Mozambicans have fled to neighboring nations. As of the end of 1990, over 909,000 Mozambicans resided in refugee camps in Malawi alone. Even more have been internally displaced. Forced from their native villages, they can be found huddled together in displaced camps outside many of the country's provincial and district capitals. They remain in limbo, unable to return to their villages, dependent upon the government for food and protection and, in many areas, still vulnerable to Renamo attack.

**METHODOLOGY**

The gathering of information for this report stems from the ongoing work of the Save the Children Federation (SCF) in Mozambique. In 1988, Mozambique's National Director of Social Action (DNAS) requested that SCF develop a research program to examine the effects of the war on children. Two of the authors began to collect data in June 1989. Midway through the study the third author...
came to Mozambique to assist with the latter phases of the effort, which concluded in March 1990.

This report, an outcome of that research, is based on interviews with 504 children from war-affected areas of Mozambique. All the children had personal war experiences, and DNAS social workers asked them to describe their experiences in detail. These open-ended interviews were guided by a set of questions; the compiled and quantified answers are presented later in this report.

In addition, the parents, teachers, and caretakers of 105 of these children were interviewed by DNAS workers about the children's current mental health and behavior. A second questionnaire guided these interviews.

DNAS staff initiated all interviews of children under the direct supervision of the three authors. The sessions were conducted in native languages unless a child preferred to speak in Portuguese; the sessions took place in the most private conditions possible within deslocado camps, orphanages, schools, or individual homes. In many cases, the interviews of the children have undergone two translations (native language to Portuguese to English), and certain word choices and linguistic nuances have been affected accordingly. The children's narratives represent the authors' best efforts to recreate the their accounts, given these impediments.

Children selected for this study were between the ages of 6 and 15; a few older children whose war-related experiences occurred between these ages were also included. Two factors determined the focus of this age range. First, five years generally is accepted as the lowest age limit at which children can be reliable witnesses. Second, 15 years is the age at which international legislation ceases to consider children to be entitled to special treatment in situations of war.

By the age of five, children in most cultures have progressed developmentally to the point that mental images of parents and other close family members have been firmly established. When tragedy occurs—or when other loved ones are harmed, killed, or separated from them—children over five retain memories of such events, although they may repress certain details. By age nine or ten, children are capable of recalling events and their details to about the same extent as adults. For the purposes of the study, then, increasing weight was given to the testimonies of children ten years and older.

The upper age limit of "childhood", on the other hand, has been the subject of considerable debate over the years. Both the Geneva Convention Protocols and the Convention on the Rights of the Child established 15 years as the age limit at which individuals are no longer exempt from participation in combat by virtue of their status as children. In compliance with this international standard, this study excluded children over 15 from consideration, despite the authors' personal belief that 18 years is a more appropriate upper age limit of childhood.

The 504 children interviewed for the study come from 49 districts representing seven of Mozambique's ten provinces and covering a broad geographical range, from Maputo in the south to Nampula Province in the north. Children from the provinces of Manica, Niassa, and Cabo Delgado are not included in the report because SCF was not working with DNAS in these provinces.

A third criterion was direct experience of war. All children interviewed for this study had experienced the war first-hand. This report thus is not representative of the larger number of Mozambican children from major urban centers, such as Maputo, who have not come under direct attack. Nor does it include rural children who fled to safer locations before attacks or escaped the war in other ways. Instead, the report focuses on those Mozambican children living in the many areas of the country that have become the battlefield of the armed struggle. According to official estimates, 4.6 million people have been directly affected by war, though not all of them have faced armed conflict. About 45 percent of Mozambique's war victims are children under the age of 15.

PART I
A NUMERICAL SURVEY OF ABUSES AND ATROCITIES

Every child interviewed as part of this study had suffered from a range of traumatic and abusive experiences:

- More than three-fourths have witnessed killings;
- Almost 90 percent have seen people beaten or tortured;
- More than half have been forcefully separated from their families and used in a number of abusive ways; and
- About one in ten of those children abducted from their families have been forced to kill other human beings.
Children described serious abuses committed by both Renamo and Government soldiers. The proportionate breakdown of abuses attributed to Renamo and to the Government is similar to that reached in a study of adult refugees commissioned by the United States Department of State. All the children (100 percent) reported they had witnessed or were personally subjected to abuse by Renamo. Fewer than ten percent (9.4 percent) of the same children reported they had witnessed or were subjected to abuse by Government troops.

What follows is a summary of the abuses inflicted by Renamo and the Government upon the 504 children interviewed for this study. The questions were taken from the Childhood Trauma Profile. In addition to tabulating children's responses, this report has noted significant impressions or patterns revealed by their collective responses. Percentage totals are rounded off to the nearest whole number.

ABUSES BY RENAMO FORCES

-- 77 percent witnessed killings.

The majority of deaths witnessed by children were not the result of civilians caught in the crossfire of the two opposing forces. Rather, most were intentional; the victims ranged from adult civilians to infant children. The methods used to kill ranged from beatings to decapitations.

-- 37 percent witnessed family members killed.

A minority of children's slain family members were killed for political reasons—they were Government officials or soldiers, community leaders, teachers, or health workers. Most children reported that their family members were killed for other reasons—they tried to protect themselves, their families or their property, or they displeased their Renamo captors in other ways.

-- 88 percent witnessed physical abuse and/or torture.

Abuse and torture, including public beatings, are common in Renamo control zones and base camps. Beatings are intended to intimidate civilians into compliance with Renamo's will. During public beatings, Renamo combatants monitor children to make sure they watch the beatings without displaying emotion. Children who fail this demand themselves are beaten.

-- 51 percent were physically abused or tortured.

Renamo beats and tortures children with the same frequency as adults. The range of abuse and reasons given for it are the same as described above.

-- 7 percent suffered permanent physical injury.

A smaller percentage of children became physically impaired as a result of Renamo abuse. Children were permanently injured during Renamo attacks; others suffered physical impairment when they refused or were not able to perform Renamo commands. Noncompliance has resulted in the mutilation of ears, noses, fingers, genitals, and other body parts.

-- 63 percent witnessed rape or sexual abuse.

Rape and sexual abuse are common occurrences wherever Renamo is found. Girls as young as ten have been raped; a majority of girls 13 years and older in Renamo control zones, base camps, or captivity are used sexually by Renamo combatants. A high incidence of venereal disease is reported among this population, although the extent to which AIDS is present is not known.

-- 16 percent admitted to being raped.

Most girls interviewed described having seen other women and girls raped. Many gave detailed descriptions of how Renamo takes girls from their families to use as sexual objects. Considerably fewer admitted to having been raped themselves, even though they were in the same circumstances in which rape and sexual abuse were common. It was the opinion of DNAS interviewers that the number of girls who have been raped is considerably higher than reported.

-- 64 percent were abducted from their families.

Renamo requires children as young as six years old to serve as porters, laborers, guards, or combatants. In Renamo control zones, the forced separation of children from their families is common. In areas where Renamo does not control the territory, children are abducted from their families during hit-and-run raids on local communities. There are reports of Renamo raids on schools in which only children are kidnapped.

-- 75 percent of the abductees served as porters.

Portering is one of the most dreaded functions required by Renamo. Porters must travel for days, weeks, or months, carrying heavy loads up to 50 kilos.
(110 pounds), usually with little food or water. Children have been kept portering for months without being permitted to return even briefly to their families. Those who fall behind are beaten or killed. Infants have been murdered when they hindered the progress of these human caravans.

---28 percent of the abductees trained for combat. Young boys in the south run the greatest risk of being kidnapped by Renamo to serve as combatants. The average age of boys interviewed who trained in the south was 11.5 years. In other parts of Mozambique, where Renamo has established control zones, boys are trained for combat starting at the ages of 13 to 15. In communities under Renamo control, *madjubas* (Renamo collaborators) supply the base camps with required quotas of child recruits.

During training, children are drilled for long hours and beaten when they do not perform as commanded. Boys are often forced to kill civilians in base camps as a test of loyalty. Those who refuse are beaten or killed.

---9 percent of the abductees admitted to killing. Boys interviewed were able to provide descriptive accounts of the training process, including how other boys were required to kill. However, few admitted to killing. It would appear, as with rape victims, that these numbers are likely to be higher.

**ABUSE BY MOZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT FORCES**

---4 percent witnessed Government troops kill or abuse civilians. The majority of reported abuse and killings by Government soldiers occurred during combat, either during the Government's response to Renamo attacks or during the Government's response their attacks on Renamo-held targets. Government soldiers were also reported to be responsible for raids on towns and deslocado camps under Government control where civilians were killed and goods stolen.

---6 percent were abused or tortured by Government soldiers. The most serious abuse by Government forces was reported by boys who had been captured with guns, while serving as Renamo combatants. Once captured, many of these boy soldiers were taken to army intelligence centers, where they were interrogated and beaten or tortured before being released. Despite the national amnesty policy, there were reports that captive child soldiers were executed or have disappeared.

**A DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT OF RENAMO ACTIONS**

Renamo's actions take on identifiable patterns, depending on where in the country its forces are operating. Since its stated objective has been to undermine the country's infrastructure and the Government's ability to govern, much of Renamo's military prowess and strategic acumen is expended on victimizing Mozambique's civilian population. As a result, children and their families are perpetual targets of Renamo's actions.

The children's narratives that follow are organized according to the basic themes that dominate their struggle for survival: coping with fear, Renamo attacks, portering, surviving in Renamo control zones, life in Renamo base camps, military training and indoctrination, and escape, capture, and return to civilian life.

Renamo is known by a number of different names. It is called the "MNR," which is its English acronym; within Mozambique, Renamo members are generally referred to as either the "bandidos" (bandits) or the "matsangas" (from Andre Matsangaiza, the first Mozambican leader of Renamo). Most of the children interviewed called Renamo combatants either bandidos or matsangas. For the purpose of uniformity, Renamo will be referred to as "bandits" in the narrative accounts presented in this report. The selection of that term should not be construed as a reflection of the authors' preference—in fact, the term appears to be deceivingly mild. To those outside Mozambique it could imply, for example, that Renamo is a disorganized collection of ruffians, lacking coordination and a clear hierarchy. Interviews and field experience, however, revealed the opposite: Renamo was found to be an internally well-disciplined military organization that conducted its operations with confidence and skill.

**COPING WITH FEAR**

I lived in Alta Lighona with my parents and older brother. For as long as I can remember, I stayed away from the house at night. My parents took us to a hiding place in the bush and dug a cave where my brother and I slept every night while my parents stayed at the house.
For children in rural areas of Mozambique, the initiation into war often begins before actual exposure to it, usually when their community learns that Renamo is active in the area. The children hear stories, often conveyed by survivors, of how Renamo attacked a neighboring village, robbed houses, carried off inhabitants, and killed others.

While some members of the community flee at this news, most of the children interviewed said their families chose to stay, at least until the first attack. While waiting, many families do what they can to protect themselves. The above statement by Aurelia, a 12-year-old girl from northern Zambezia Province, is typical of the precautions families take in hope of reducing the risks of remaining on their land.

Fear dominates the imaginations of children forced to live under the threat of Renamo attack. Rural children recalled the attackers as a "lion-like spirit," a "ghost," a "dreaded black thunder cloud," a "hurricane," and a "monster with enormous blood-soaked claws." Often, these images emerged in nightmares and dreams.

A 12-year-old girl from Sofala Province described a dream she often had before coming into contact with Renamo:

(In the dream) I am sleeping on a mat above the ground. I wake up and see a monster with the head of a man crawling towards me. I know if I scream others will hear me and come help. But I cannot scream. The monster has cast a spell and my voice is stuck in my throat. I realize that it is my last chance to survive—the monster is about to attack me. I reach down deep inside my stomach and cry out with all my strength. I do cry out because my brother always wakes up frightened and asks what is wrong. I would think about this sometimes at the end of the day and wonder how near is Renamo?

Children are consumed with fear before they actually encounter Renamo. Latent fear has led to sleep disorders, nightmares, depression, anxiety, an inability to concentrate, and pessimistic notions of what the future will bring. When Renamo does attack, families are forced into desperate acts of survival. An 11-year-old girl explained how her family responded to a Renamo attack on her village in southern Nampula Province:

I am from a government "communal village." Because of this, we were afraid Renamo would come and attack us. But my village was not attacked until three years ago. At that time, I was living there with my parents and brothers and sisters.

One night the bandits attacked, and we fled into the bush. I saw some people shot as I ran, but I managed to get away with my family, and we gathered together in the bush. We knew that Renamo was burning the village and were scared they'd come after us. We walked into the bush for a long time and stopped about 30 kilometers from our village. We were afraid to go back and didn't know where to go for help. We were too afraid to look for Frelimo soldiers. We decided to stay where we were.

We lived in the bush for two years. Our life was very hard. We knew we could not survive if we didn't plant some fields, but we had no tools. My father tried to return to the village where he could get his knife and whatever else the bandits didn't steal. He left one day and didn't come back. Some people decided to go look for him. They found his body near a road and thought he had run into some bandits. He had been stabbed with a bayonet.

After that, we were afraid to leave our place in the bush. We did not build houses there. We made small huts and survived on roots and whatever food we could find. We barely had enough food, and we didn't have any salt or clothes. Two of my uncles and one of my sisters died of sickness... We stayed in the bush because we didn't know where to go.

THE RENAMO ATTACK

The vast majority of children interviewed came face-to-face with Renamo; from that point on, most were face-to-face with death. The following account was reconstructed from a series of interviews with Franisse, an eight-year-old boy from the southern province of Gaza:

Franisse was five or six years old when Renamo attacked his village. The bandits captured him and took him to his family's house, where he lived with his parents and five brothers and sisters. The bandits forced Franisse to set fire to the house

Children of Mozambique
while his family was still asleep inside. The bandits made Franisse watch as his father, a local Frelimo official, and his mother ran outside where they were stabbed to death by the bandits. The bandits then chopped off his parents' heads, jammed them on stakes and planted the stakes in front of the burning house. The bandits also killed other people from the village, including his brothers and sisters.

Later, Franisse watched as the bandits hacked his parents' decapitated bodies into small enough pieces to throw into a large pot in which they were cooking a goat. The bandits also threw his little brother's body into the pot and ate and drank from the pot. The village was burned to the ground and a base was established nearby that has since become Renamo's provincial base for all of Gaza.

Elements in this account typify Renamo attacks: at first, Renamo seeks out local villagers affiliated with the Government and demonstrates to the rest of the community the fate that awaits Government collaborators. Often, before an attack, Renamo uses informants to identify community leaders and their families. Aurelia, the 12-year-old girl from northern Zambezia who slept in the cave at night, spoke about what happened when Renamo finally did attack her village:

I was in the bush at the time, but my brother had gone into the village to see my parents. Our house was near the Frelimo Secretary's house, and that is the part of the town that the bandits attacked. They went to the Secretary's house and grabbed him and seven other men, including my father and brother. They lined all the men up and shot them. Everyone died except my brother who was shot in both legs and pretended he was dead. Then the bandits rounded up other people, including my mother, and took them away...

Francisco, a 12-year-old boy from the southern province of Inhambane, stated:

I was in my house with my parents and my older brother. My brother was a Frelimo soldier but was not wearing his uniform. Suddenly the bandits arrived and grabbed us all. Somehow they had found out my brother was a soldier, and they killed him with axes in front of us.

Renamo is, first and foremost, an anti-Frelimo Government organization with no clearly stated ideology of its own, beyond a professed opposition to communism and a preference for democracy. Yet while carrying out its operations, Renamo does not make its ideology known. As a U.S. State Department report found, Renamo makes "virtually no effort...to explain to the civilians the purpose of the insurgency, its proposed program or its aspirations." After ten years of war, there are no political rallies, meetings, lectures, discussions, or other such attempts to explain Renamo's goals or treatment of the civilian population. Instead, Renamo appears to use terror to assert its control and undermine whatever links the Government may have with the rural population. A 16-year-old boy from northern Zambezia described an atrocity he witnessed that indicates the extremes to which Renamo will go to terrorize local populations:

I saw a group of bandits go to the house of a Frelimo official. They told him he had to give them his daughter, who was about 18 years old. He wouldn't, and the bandits pulled out their knives and threatened the man and his daughter. They said they would kill his daughter if he didn't do what they wanted. They made the father and his daughter have sexual relations together, then they carried the daughter away...

Renamo's efforts to eliminate opposition do not end with officials of the Frelimo Government. Many of its combatants carry with them an intense suspicion that much of the population is tied to the Government. Atisha, a teenage girl from Nampula, described one of the ways Renamo combatants acted upon this suspicion:

We were working in our field when a group of bandits appeared. Some of them accused my husband of being a Frelimo soldier. He told them that wasn't true but they didn't listen. One of the bandits took my nephew's "catana" [long, thin knife] and cut my husband's throat. As he lay on the ground dying, another bandit poked my nephew's head with his bayonet, saying he was going to kill him because my husband was a Frelimo soldier. I begged the bandits to let my nephew live, but they still cut his head.

Seeking out Government officials and collabo-
ators is by no means Renamo’s sole objective. During attacks, villages are systematically plundered, as this account by a 14-year-old boy from Gaza Province demonstrates:

I was at a traditional ceremony when the bandits came and captured me and some of the other people. They beat me, tied me up, and asked me questions. They wanted me to show them the houses of Frelimo officials and men in the village who had worked in the mines in South Africa... The bandits forced me to take them to the houses. They went into the houses, robbed all the food and nice things, and burned the houses down. They captured many people from the village and killed some of them. They took a 50-kilo sack of maize from one of the houses and made me carry it back to their base.

Plunder serves the dual purpose of destabilizing the lives and local economies of its victims while supplying Renamo with much of the food and supplies it needs to continue operating. In the south and parts of the north, where Renamo has not asserted control over large areas of land, stealing cattle and food is the primary way Renamo feeds itself. It also relies on raids against civilian communities for clothing, cooking utensils, soap, tools, and other material goods. Even in central Mozambique, where Renamo confiscates much of its food from civilians in its control zones, it continues to attack towns to seize civilian captives and to replenish its supply of food and material goods.

Having little or no interest in occupying most of the towns and villages it attacks, Renamo is content to loot and destroy civilian and commercial targets. Renamo typically attacks its targets, destroys and plunders what it can, and then retreats to its base camp with captured local inhabitants carrying the goods it has stolen. Yet even though Renamo abandons its targets, it may nonetheless return again.

Whether exposed to a first or subsequent attack, children and families are placed at grave risk. Murder is common and is accomplished in a variety of ways. Augustin, a 15-year-old boy from Nampula Province, described what had happened to his family: Our town had suffered two attacks by the bandits, but my parents and most of the other people in the town decided to stay. There was a large group of Frelimo soldiers stationed there, and we thought they would protect us.

One night we heard a loud knock on the door. We didn’t open it, so it was kicked in. Bandits burst in. They used the bayonets attached to their guns to stab my mother, father, and brother. I ran into the bush where I hid until the next day. When I returned I found that my parents and my brother were dead and that the bandits burned our house down. I don’t know why they killed my family. We weren’t members of Frelimo; we didn’t have money; we didn’t do anything to make them mad at us.

Another boy from Nampula, 10-year-old Fernando, witnessed the following:

One night my family was at the funeral service of our cousin. Suddenly bandits began shooting at everyone inside the church. Two bandits burst into the church. I saw one of them stab my older brother with a bayonet. My aunt ran towards him as he fell and was stabbed by the other bandit. I saw her intestines spill out of her wound.

I ran out of the church into the bush. When I came back, the bandits were gone, but some houses near the church had been burned down. Someone told me the bandits had captured one of my brothers. One held my brother down while another scalped the skin off my brother’s head... Both my brothers and my aunt were taken to the hospital in Nampula, but they all died there...

Neither Augustin nor Fernando knew why their families were singled out. Their confusion underscores the fact that Renamo’s killing of civilians is often random. A 13-year-old boy who joined Renamo described the fury of his fellow Renamo combatants during an attack on a village in Gaza:

We went into the house where a woman was there with her baby. The bandits gave her a knife and ordered her to kill her baby. She refused and the bandits screamed and screamed at her. Finally, she stabbed the child... While we were returning to the base, the bandits got angry at captives who couldn’t keep up. Some of the bandits took axes and killed those who couldn’t continue. They chopped off arms or legs and cut up the rest of their bodies until they were dead.
In addition to injury and death, children also risk being separated from their families during Renamo attacks. One 14-year-old boy from northern Sofala described his experience:

The bandits attacked the Frelimo base at Inhaminga. Then they attacked the entire town. My family ran into the bush, but we [my brothers and sisters] lost our parents. As I ran I was shot in the leg. It went through the side of my leg and left a deep scar. My brothers and sisters and I met up with people from the town, and everyone decided to stay in the bush for the night. We hoped the bandits would leave. But the next morning we realized the bandits were coming after us, and we ran deeper into the bush... But we were caught by another group of bandits.

Farther south, in Maputo Province, a 13-year-old had a similar experience:

Our town had been attacked twice. Both times we ran to the bush and came back when it was safe. This time, the bandits attacked close to our house. We tried to run but the bandits shot at us. I saw my mother fall. I kept running into the bush where I would be safe. I didn't know what happened to my father and sister, and I still don't know. I found some other boys who were hiding in the bush too... But bandits came and grabbed us and took us to their base...

Being captured by Renamo is one of the greatest risks faced by children in rural areas. Indeed, well over one-half of the children interviewed had been forcefully abducted from their families by Renamo. It appears that, lacking much popular support, Renamo sustains itself by continuing to capture civilians to serve in a number of capacities. This need for captives, along with food and material supplies, is what fuels Renamo's raids against civilian communities. Chichone, a 14-year-old boy from Sofala, described what Renamo did when it attacked Marrumeu:

In 1986, the town was attacked by bandits who defeated the Frelimo soldiers and took over. Some families ran away during the fighting, but we did not. The bandits began to destroy the town. They destroyed its stores and the factory and all the cars. The killing of people didn't stop either. After several days, the bandits began to organize people. Many were put into groups and sent to other bandit zones with goods taken from our town. I saw men and boys carrying large sacks of food. Bandits sent groups of 40 or 50 people to the sugar factory where they were given sacks of sugar to carry to bandit zones. Later, I saw some of those people come back. I don't think they could carry their heavy loads because the bandits beat and killed them...

The bandits also began using children. Many older boys [between 15 to 19] were sent to bases for military training. They also sent off some younger boys and girls, but I don't know why. My parents worried we would also be carried away, so they made us stay in the house. A number of people from the town were able to sneak away from Marrumeu. When the bandits saw they had left, they brought people into the town from nearby villages and moved them into the houses of the people who escaped.

A week later, Frelimo helicopters and soldiers attacked the town. There was a lot of confusion, but the bandits gathered many of the captured people and made them go with them to the other side of the river [Zambezi River] to areas the bandits already controlled. They shot people who tried to get away... I lost my family when they ran in a different direction. I ran outside the town and hid until the next day. When I came back I saw that Frelimo was in charge again but many people, including my family, had been taken away by the bandits.

Marrumeu was a large-scale Renamo action. They took over the town, plundered it, destroyed it, and kidnapped many civilians. Renamo's decision to stay in Marrumeu was atypical, but its reaction to the Government's counter-attack demonstrated its discipline. Renamo did not panic. It staged an orderly retreat, taking a large group of captives with them.

Renamo's action at Marrumeu also reveals the age at which boys are seized and trained for combat. According to Chichone, teenagers from 15 to 19 were separated from their community and sent to Renamo base camps to train. In other parts of Sofala, Tete, and Zambezia (the country's central zone), interviews indicated that Renamo has used children as young as
13 for combat.

In the south, Renamo uses even younger children to fight for them. A significant percentage of teenagers and young men from southern Mozambique migrate to work in the mines of South Africa, eliminating many potential older recruits. As a result, the average age of boys Renamo abducts for combat in the south (Maputo, Gaza, Inhambane provinces) is approximately 11.5 years. A teacher in a rural school outside Chockwe, in Gaza Province, discussed Renamo’s preference for child soldiers-to-be:

The bandits arrived just before midday. Normally, they attack late at night when everyone is asleep. But they only attacked our school and left quickly. Maybe they were scared because it was light, and Frelimo soldiers were not far away.

One group of bandits, the same age as our own students, starting shooting into the nearby houses, killing women and children. When others escaped, the bandits did not follow. They surrounded our school [which was outdoors under the trees]. They took all of our boys (ages 7 to 13) back with them... Nobody else was taken... Just the boys.

Portering

Ten years of war have destroyed much of Mozambique’s communication and transportation systems. Renamo’s constant attacks on traffic have made most roads too dangerous to travel. Much of the railway system has been destroyed; much of what remains is no longer in use. The Government must rely on airplanes for its urgent transport needs, such as emergency food shipments, while the majority of ground transport must be accomplished by convoy, with military vehicles and armed soldiers accompanying caravans of trucks to their destinations.

Renamo has its own transportation and logistical problems. Most of its base camps throughout the country are located far from main roads. At best, the camps are connected by interlocking trails that wind through vast expanses of scrubland or forest. Despite the distances between them, base camps are interdependent and in need of a system to transport goods from one to another. Like colonial administrations of the past, Renamo relies on human beings, many of them children, to provide basic transport. An 11-year-old boy from northern Zambezia described how the system works:

I was recruited to be a porter with a group of boys and adults. We were given food and sacks of flour to carry, and we would leave for other bases. The bandits guarding us made us walk fast; when someone slowed down or fell he was beaten. Sometimes we traveled more than 100 kilometers, going from Maneia to Gile, then to bases in [the districts of Ile and Alto Molocue, and then we would go back. During longer trips, the guards sometimes would not let us eat, and people died. I made the long trip five times, traveling with about 35 to 40 other people. We usually were guarded by about ten bandits. Sometimes we dropped off our loads at one base camp, got new loads, and went to the next base without any rest. Other times there was nothing to carry and we waited outside the base until the next trip.

Nearly all children kidnapped by Renamo served as porters; those who had not, knew someone who had. For most children, portering began immediately after capture. A 16-year-old girl from Inhambane Province spoke about her brief experience as a Renamo porter:

...I was living with my grandmother, aunt, and two brothers when the bandits arrived at night. They took all of us but my grandmother with them. We joined a group of other people from the village who had been captured to carry things the bandits had stolen. I carried a sack of flour that must have weighed 30 kilos. My aunt carried a pig... The bandits beat people and told them that if any cried out they would be killed. They kept telling my aunt that she was pretty and that she was going to become the chief bandit’s woman... I saw some of the bandits take some of the girls and rape them... While we were walking at night, there was gunfire and the bandits began shooting at what must have been Frelimo soldiers. I was able to escape but not my aunt and my brothers... I haven’t seen them since...

This girl managed to escape soon after her abduction, but most children were not as fortunate. Most had to endure portering for much longer periods. Two boys from Sofala, Mario, who is 12, and Matias, age 13, spoke about what they saw:
Mario: I lived with my parents and four brothers until Renamo captured us and forced us to travel to their base. We joined a larger group of people. Everybody was carrying things the bandits had stolen. The bandits made us walk fast, and it was hard to keep up. The bandits started beating those who were slow... They beat me twice with a stick. When one man could not walk any farther, the bandits asked him whether he wanted to die by the gun or by the knife; when he said by knife the bandits stabbed him to death. Then the bandits began to kill more people. They stopped the march and separated those who were too old or too tired to go on and killed them all.

Matias: The bandits kidnapped my family and took many other people from my village to march to their base. They made everybody carry something... It took two days and two nights to reach the bandits' base. Along the way, my father was ordered to carry more, and when he refused, they took him into the bush. When they came back, my father wasn't with them... The bandits killed more people. When they couldn't walk any farther, they were killed... The bandits beat them, stabbed them, or shot them and then cut off their heads and put them on poles. When we got close to the base, there were many bandits carrying poles and, for some reason, they turned all the heads on the poles in the same direction so that they looked back in the direction of [the city of] Beira.

When civilians cannot porter any longer, their "usefulness" is at an end. Many who cannot keep up are killed along the way. As is the case during attacks, there seems to be little or no reason for these murders. A 13-year-old boy from Zambezia described what he saw while serving as a porter in Nampula Province:

The bandits set out for their base with many kidnapped persons who were carrying things the bandits robbed. I carried a bag of salt and a sack of peanuts. I think the bandits beat every person and killed about ten people with bayonets. They killed about five people because they cried. They killed another five people because they'd spoken badly about them. I saw the bandits rape girls and women while we were resting.

Many children, particularly teenage girls, were subjected to sexual abuse while portering. Renamo's treatment of girls and older women indicates that infants, younger children, and older women were expendable. A 16-year-old girl from Tete spoke about her experience while portering:

When I carried things, the bandits pushed me and everyone else to go faster. I was always hungry and tired, and my feet kept swelling. I didn't have anything to wear except a sack... I was afraid of the bandits, and I kept going. I saw the bandits beating and killing people who couldn't keep up... I saw the bandits kill infants and young children who were of no use to them... I saw the bandits carve unborn babies out of pregnant women's bodies... I was raped by many different bandits as I went from base to base... I was too afraid to escape...

Some children were forced to porter for months or even years at a time. Another 16-year-old girl from Tete who endured four years of portering told of her experience:

The bandits came to my area a long time ago. At first they left me and my family alone. But a few years later, when I had grown taller, they started coming to my house and taking me away to porter... I spent most of the next four years as a porter. I carried things from base to base. I was usually part of a large group of people—as many as 50. Once in awhile, after maybe a year of portering, they would let me go home. But then someone else would come and make me go again...

Life as a porter was so hard. The bandits always pushed us to go faster. Sometimes they made us walk day and night without food, water, or rest. I saw so many killings; I can't begin to guess how many. I saw the bandits kill people when they could no longer carry their loads or when they slowed down the rest of the group. When women with baby children were captured, or when pregnant women had to give birth to a baby while portering, the bandits would take the babies and
smash them against trees. Or they stabbed the children with knives or bayonets or shot them... I was beaten a lot. They beat me with sticks and rifle butts and poked me with knives and bayonets... I walked barefoot and naked from base to base. Nobody had shoes or clothes. I went as far as Gorongoza. I usually carried sacks of food... When I arrived at a base I tried to rest, but sometimes we would have to start again... The bandits made me and the other girls sleep with them. When we stopped at night the bandits gave me a choice: I could sleep with a bandit or sleep tied up the whole night...

The demands of portering varied from one part of Mozambique to the other. In the south, where Renamo could move about less freely, children were forced to porter after their capture but were normally used in other ways after reaching the base camp. This was not the case for children in the regions of central Mozambique under Renamo's control. Since it controlled these large areas and the civilians within them, Renamo could transport food, goods, and weapons from one end of its control zone to the other. Children in these zones, such as the girl from Tete, often portered for long periods, sometimes for months or years on end. Because Renamo used teenagers and young men as combatants in this area, women of all ages, younger boys, and older men were used as porters.

The youngest child interviewed who was forced to porter for an extended period of time began at the age of eight. She is now ten years old:

The bandits made me porter. I usually carried a basket of corn on my head. Sometimes I carried it to a base close to my house, and sometimes I was gone [for weeks]. We went in a long line from base to base. The bandits never gave us enough food or water. If someone didn't walk fast enough, the bandits made them sit on the ground and beat them in the back with a heavy stick... [One time] I lost my balance and my basket fell on the ground. Some bandits came up and one held me while the other beat me on the behind with a stick. I cried and wanted to stay there, but they made me keep going. My behind hurt for days...

Within its control zones, Renamo's human transport system is efficient and well coordinated. Children reported that they served in or knew of caravans linking Renamo to Malawi, where Renamo would do business. A 12-year-old boy from Zambezia described what happened after Renamo occupied his village:

The bandits made all the people who lived in houses with corrugated zinc roofs take their roofs off so they could take them to another bandit zone. All the men left, carrying their roofs with them, and they didn't come back for a long time. I heard they had been forced to carry their roofs a long way to a bandit base in another zone. People say they left the roofs with the bandits who took the roofs to the Malawi border where they traded them for other things they needed.

Another 12-year-old boy from Tete Province who lived near the Zambezi River and the Malawi border recalled portering in a Renamo caravan to Malawi, where “the bandits traded fish for money and clothes.”

The demands to porter placed great pressure on families. Some families responded by hiding their children despite the high risk of punishment. This was the case with a 15-year-old boy from northern Zambezia:

I was afraid to work as a porter because the bandits forced people to carry heavy loads, and those who don't keep up are beaten. My mother worked out a plan. My house was in town, but I slept in the bush so the bandits would not find me. I stayed in the bush most of the time... My younger sister would bring food to me.

SURVIVING IN THE CONTROL ZONES

When it occupies a large area and supervises the area's civilian population, Renamo establishes a control zone. In organizing a control zone, Renamo first sets up its own military bases within the zone and appoints members of the local population to become “madjubas”, the equivalent of powerful local police who serve as Renamo's eyes and ears in each community.

The first thing the madjubas and Renamo do in a new control zone is to warn the community of the dangers of disobeying them or trying to escape the zone. A 15-year-old girl described how the madjubas and
Renamo established their authority in her town: Once the madjubas began to guard us, the bandits were free to go out on attacks and raids. The madjubas guarded us and demanded food from us. When the bandits wanted to make examples of people who were caught fleeing or refused to give them food, they tied them to trees where everyone could see. Then they beat them with heavy sticks and belts. They beat some people until they almost died and left them tied there to warn everyone not to help them and not to escape. Others were tied to the tree over a day and night and died of their wounds after being released... The bandits treated people connected to Frelimo the worst. They took axes and long knives and cut their bodies apart. They began with their chests. People who were tied up at night died during the night of their wounds being left untreated. Some were left tied up, some were beheaded, and others were shot. A 15-year-old girl from northern Zambezia told what madjubas were like where he lived:

The bandits brought some people with them who were already madjubas and they chose some people from my village to be madjubas. Then all the madjubas began to go among the people of the village and tell them that Renamo had won the war and that the country now belonged to them. The madjubas made all the people of the village bury their clothes so that if anyone appeared in the area wearing clothes they would be identified as Frelimo people and shot...

I saw a madjuba and a bandit go to the house of one of my neighbors who owned a pig. They demanded he give them a pig, but he refused. The bandit stabbed the man in his throat and cut down from there to the man’s stomach, slicing his chest open.

Some madjubas carried guns, though most carried bayonets or knives. They lived among the people and forced the people to work in the fields. Those who refused were beaten and taken to the bandit base.

Within its control zones, Renamo and madjubas organize the population, including children, according to how their needs can be served best. A 15-year-old girl explained what Renamo did with some children from her town:

The bandits separated older boys and girls and sent boys (over 15 or 16) to the provincial training base. They forced the prettiest girls to become the women of the bandit chiefs and soldiers. When the bandits (sexually used) the girls, some ran away. Then the bandits set up full-time guards around the town.

Another 15-year-old boy described how Renamo reordered his town:

The bandits forced everybody to give them their chickens, goats and pigs. The bandits sent men and boys (over the age of 14) to their big base to get military training. They took my uncle away, and I never saw him again. The madjubas went to people’s houses to take girls and women they thought the bandits wanted for themselves. They chose other people who were sent to the bandits’ base to work gathering water and wood, cooking, and cleaning.

Renamo has organized control zones so that civilian populations become ready sources of food and labor. In some zones, Renamo employs public displays of punishment to ensure obedience. A 12-year-old boy described one method used in his town:

The bandits...called for meetings where all the people were required to come and give food to them. I saw what the bandits did to people who refused to go to meetings or didn’t bring food. A man they wanted to punish was brought to the middle of the meeting place. The bandits pulled his arms over his head and tied them to his legs. They took heavy sticks and hit him over his back. They beat the man until their sticks broke... They forced the man’s own family to do the beating. If they didn’t beat hard enough they would be stretched out and beaten too... I saw this punishment often.

In control zones, Renamo combatants and madjubas make unannounced visits to houses, where they demand food and household goods. A 10-year-old girl from Tete Province remembers these visits:

Ever since I can remember, the bandits and the madjubas have come to our house and told my parents to give them the food or clothes they had. I remember when the madjubas came to the house and took all our chickens. One time when we had no food they beat my father and my brothers. Two of them were going to beat my...
mother but were stopped by the bandit in charge...

Renamo uses the labor of the people to work in the fields and raise food for them. A 14-year-old girl from northern Zambezia told what her family was forced to do:

The bandits and madjubas made the older people work in the fields from early morning until night. But they didn't let us keep the food we managed to grow. Instead, they left just enough to keep the family alive. Anyone who complained or asked for food was beaten. My mother, who was pregnant, got sick and died.

Many children stated that Renamo combatants demanded sex from whomever they wanted. A 12-year-old boy from Sofala told what he saw while he was living in a house near a Renamo base:

I saw the bandits rape older women, and I saw them rape many girls who were just beginning to grow breasts. The bandits raped the girls and left them there. Some girls were used by many different bandits; when one bandit finished with a girl, another one took his place. I think some of the girls got sick and died of sickness because they were raped. I also saw bandits at the base send for many women to bring them food. About 20 to 30 women who were living outside the base went into the base where the bandits raped them.

Renamo's use of the population even extended to younger children who, in some areas, were forced to attend “schools”. An 11-year-old boy described his “school” in northern Zambezia:

The bandits ordered all the younger boys [around the ages of seven to ten] to go to a school where a man told us what to do. The man had never been a teacher. He made us hunt rats which we brought to him. He ate some of the rats but took most of them to the bandits’ base. He also made us build houses and haul water and wood... He never gave us any school materials, and we never studied anything.

Another boy, Batino, now 12, said he also attended a school in northern Zambezia where he and other boys “mostly hunted rats.” Batino said, however, that sometimes “we would try to learn and we would try to write on leaves since we didn’t have any school materials.”

Since no one was permitted to leave a zone, the civilian populations did not have access to outside food or goods. Most food and all goods they possessed were confiscated by Renamo. Renamo did permit most families to have a small “machamba”, or plot of land, on which they could grow some food; but often that food was confiscated by the madjubas or Renamo combatants as soon as it was harvested. An 11-year-old boy from Sofala recounted what happened to him and his family while they were living in a control zone near a Renamo base:

The bandits came to our house and told my mother to give them food. My mother told them we didn’t have any. They beat her until she died. All this time they were holding my father back. They left and took my father with them. He didn’t come back... I think they killed him.

I was alone with my younger sister and four brothers. I couldn’t get other people to help us get food because nobody had any. I began to go into the bush and search for roots that I brought back to feed my sister and brothers. I had to keep going farther and farther into the bush to find enough roots. While I was away, my sister died. Then my brothers began to die one by one. Then my last brother died. I left that night. I walked for two days and two nights until I was safe...

Juma, a ten-year-old from Nampula Province, whose father was killed during his family’s march to the control zone, explained what his family’s life was like after their arrival:

When we arrived in the zone, we settled underneath some trees and stayed there without a house for the next two years. I never saw bandits, but I knew they were near. The madjubas watched us. They carried bayonets and said they would kill anyone who tried to flee. We barely survived. We didn’t have any clothes. At first our neighbors gave us food. Then nobody had any. The only thing we ever ate was manioc.

From the moment Renamo establishes its domain over what is to be a control zone, it warns the inhabitants against flight. The threats and beatings
and public executions are designed to deter escape. A 12-year-old from northern Zambezia remembers how Renamo specifically tried to discourage both escape and civilian collaboration with Frelimo:

We had been living in the control zone for a long time when Frelimo airplanes began to fly over my town and drop pieces of paper that talked about Government amnesty for us if we escaped. The bandits were very angry at this. They threatened that if anyone was caught holding those papers, everybody in the town would be killed. One time I saw the bandits catch a man they said was trying to escape. They called all the people to a meeting and everybody watched as a group of bandits shot him. Afterwards, all the other bandits walked up to the man’s body and shot into it over and over again.

A 13-year-old girl from Tete Province had been made to porter for over a year and “saw much death.” Still, she would not attempt an escape:

I was beaten all the time. I was beaten when I couldn’t keep up during the marches. I was beaten when I refused to sleep with bandits... I couldn’t stand all the beatings and I was raped... My mother and I barely survived. We had little food and few clothes. I wore torn cloth that only covered the bottom part of my body. We wanted to flee but were afraid we would lose our way or be caught.

Those who did think about escape also had to contemplate leaving other family members behind. Ramos, who is now 15, remembers the worries that preoccupied his family before his escape from northern Zambezia:

My mother was afraid I would be sent away for military training with the bandits and said we should escape. But she said that most of the family should stay behind since we would be caught if we all tried to escape at once. She believed we should escape in small groups and always leave behind two family members. She was firm about this because she knew of a family of seven and when six of them escaped the bandits went and killed the one person who stayed behind. Since I was most at risk, I fled first with my older sister and my brother-in-law. My mother stayed behind.

Families often were forced to separate. Batino, the 12-year-old boy from northern Zambezia who described the Renamo “school”, said his parents encouraged him and his brother to flee but that they could not go with them because “it would be too dangerous if they went along” and they “said they were too old to make the journey anyway.” Carlota, also from northern Zambezia, would have fled earlier, but she “had to stay in order to care for her grandfather.” Eventually, she was able to persuade him to come along on her successful escape.

Not everyone was able to get away. A 12-year-old boy from Sofala spoke of what happened to his family:

My family was kidnapped and taken to a place near a bandit base where we were told to build a house near the houses of others who were living there. We planted rice, but when it was ready to be harvested the bandits came and took it. My father brought the family together and told us we were going to flee. But some neighbors must have found out about our plan because bandits came to our house and took my father to their base where they killed him.

In recent years, the Mozambican army has established footholds in Renamo control zones by seizing towns within the zones. The towns become safe havens to which people caught in the zones can flee. They also serve as a base from which the army can penetrate into more isolated areas inside control zones and escort the people found there back to safety. The Government conducts these operations during the day to avoid staying in the rural areas at night, when Renamo is more likely to attack. As a result, the operations are swift: Government troops rush in, sweep up the inhabitants, and return to their own town base. This tactic also has led to the separation of families. A 10-year-old girl from Tete described what happened to her family:

Frelimo soldiers appeared near our home. I was there with my parents, but my brothers were away from the house. The Frelimo soldiers told my parents that we had to leave with them right away. My parents knew my brothers were not far away, but they were too...
afraid to tell the soldiers. We went away with the soldiers, but my brothers were left behind...

The family of a 15-year-old boy from Tete Province had a similar experience:

The news spread that Frelimo soldiers were coming. My family and I ran into the bush where we talked about whether we should give ourselves up to the soldiers. While in the bush, my father had a [epileptic] fit and burned his leg so badly he couldn’t travel. We decided we had to turn ourselves in, but we had to leave my father behind...

INSIDE THE RENAMO BASE CAMP

Kidnapped children interviewed for this study were used by Renamo for a variety of purposes. Some had been sent to control zones where they were subjected to the hardships already described. Many, however, worked directly for Renamo, usually as servants or combatants. Those with Renamo for more than a few months spent most of their time in base camps. The following two sections review the various functions these children served, including the progression some of them underwent as they rose from servant to positions of greater authority within the Renamo hierarchy.

The base camps are the backbone of Renamo. In the northern and southern provinces, where Renamo controls few civilian populations and little land, these military encampments are the headquarters from which Renamo coordinates its operations, including its raids against towns and villages. In its control zones in central Mozambique, Renamo uses strategically located base camps to monitor civilian populations and to direct the allocation of the zone’s physical and human resources.

Renamo base camps differ somewhat from region to region. The security of an area determines whether civilians reside inside, nearby, or far from a base. For example, in parts of Sofala, Tete and Zambezia, where Renamo controls large areas presided over by madjubas, civilians are permitted to live in their own communities within the control zone and are not allowed in Renamo’s base camps. Porters deposit their loads outside the base, and Renamo combatants carry them inside. The only civilians permitted inside are servants and the women and girls whom Renamo exploits sexually.

In less secure areas, civilians are forced to reside just outside the base, where they are guarded by madjubas and Renamo collaborators. Renamo wants civilians nearby as a ready source of labor and as a human buffer or shield in case of a Government attack. Children described seeing populations used in this manner around base camps in parts of Nampula, Sofala, Zambezia and northern Inhambane.

In areas where the danger of a Frelimo ground or air attack is greatest, Renamo obliges all civilians to reside inside their base camps. Interviews suggested that by mixing civilians among its combatants, Renamo hoped to discourage Frelimo jets or helicopters from bombing or strafing the bases. Keeping civilians inside bases also allowed Renamo to keep a close watch over people who, once out of the base camp, would have an easier escape route than their counterparts residing in control zones. Children stated that civilians are kept inside base camps in the southern provinces of Maputo, Gaza, and Inhambane, as well as in Nampula. A 14-year-old boy from Nampula described the base he was taken to after his capture:

When we got near the base, the bandits made our group get off the path and go around the base so that we entered on the other side. This was to confuse us if we wanted to escape back in the direction we had come. There was no one living outside the base... The bandits made all of us take off our clothes and live in the center of the base. The bandits and madjubas lived in houses that were in a circle around the center where we were... One time while I was at the base, we heard that Frelimo soldiers were coming. The bandits gathered all the civilians together and hurried everyone into the bush. There was no attack, but the bandits were ready if there ever was one.

Another child who was trained and sent on combat missions described the inner workings of an important Renamo base at Nhanala, in Gaza Province:

...The chief was in the center of the camp. He made all the decisions. Other bandits brought the new arrivals to him. He decided which would be killed and which would live. He divided the girls between the bandits. He chose the pretty ones for himself. He had many wives. The other girls were given to other bandits...
Older people were put in certain parts of the camp or in huts just outside it. On the first or second night, boys were taken from their families and put in huts guarded by bandits. Some of these boys were killed. The rest were trained to fight...

On our way back from raids, I saw other groups of bandits stationed along the way to the base. People also lived with them. They were always watching for Frelimo. If there ever was an attack, we were told to push the people forward to protect ourselves.

Child soldiers are not the only children allowed inside Renamo base camps. Renamo uses children in a variety of capacities; they must cook, clean, wash clothes, haul water and wood, tend cattle, hunt for food and game, build huts, care for the families of Renamo combatants, and work as porters. Maganizo, a 13-year-old boy from Tete, described the roles children played at the base where he worked:

There were many people who had to work at the base. I had to care for the cows. Other children and women washed and cleaned the base and the bandits' clothes. Others prepared and cooked the food and carried water and wood... I saw boys older than me carrying guns. They were bandits. They didn't have to work.

While many children may not become Renamo combatants, they are nevertheless subjected to life inside the base camps, including Renamo's punishment of those who tried to escape. A 12-year-old boy from northern Inhambane described what happened after being kidnapped along with his father:

When we arrived, the bandits made me stay outside the base in a hut with other boys my age. They tied us up at night so we couldn't escape. During the day, we went into the bush and picked coconuts. A bandit always guarded us... A few days later, my father was caught escaping. The bandits called all the people together. A bandit said my father tried to escape and that anyone who tried it would get the same punishment. They beat my father with guns and stabbed him with bayonets. When they finished, they told some people to take him away, and I helped them bury him... Later, two boys about my age were caught trying to escape. The bandits called another meeting and beat the boys with heavy sticks and gun butts until they were dead.

A 10-year-old girl from Tete described what she saw at the base camp where she worked:

Three times I saw bandits grab men who had done something wrong. They pushed their heads into big vases of water until they drowned. I think they were caught trying to escape, but I'm not sure. Two other times, I saw bandits beat men with sticks and guns until they were almost dead. Then a bandit used an axe to chop off their heads. I know these men tried to escape...

A 13-year-old boy spoke about what Renamo did to people who tried to escape a base camp in Gaza:

I was too afraid to flee, but others tried. Some were able to get away, and some were caught. Two boys I knew tried to run but were caught and brought back to the base. The bandits called everyone together and said they should watch while they "educated" the boys. The boys were surrounded by bandits holding knives and bayonets. They stabbed the boys and slit their throats. As the boys fell to die, the bandits continued to stab them...

Children and adult civilians who did not directly serve Renamo combatants were low priorities. When there were shortages of food or clothes, which was often, civilians ate what Renamo gave them or went hungry. Orlando, a 14-year-old who was a Renamo chief's bodyguard in Gaza Province, recounted what happened at his base camp:

I was kidnapped from my school along with my 10-year-old sister... I stayed with my sister at the base camp until a chief chose me to be his bodyguard. I left my sister and went to live near the chief and other bandits in their part of the base... Many times there was food for us but no food for my sister and the other civilians. Sometimes the only food she and the others got was parts of the bodies of people who died or
were killed trying to escape. She was forced to eat that "food"... Some bandits ate it because they enjoyed that kind of meat. I never ate it, because a bodyguard gets to eat good food...

A 12-twelve-year old boy, also from Gaza, described what life was like for him and his family at a base camp:

I lived at the base camp with my mother and grandmother. I worked carrying water and cooking for them [the bandits]. My mother and grandmother collected water and wood and cooked too. Whenever I didn't cook right, the bandits beat me furiously with big sticks... There was little food for us to eat. The bandits always had food, and they always ate meat. The only time they gave us meat, it was just the skin or they would not let us cook it. We had to eat it raw.... I saw the bandits kill many people. They killed many people just because the people were thinking... The bandits made sure everyone in the base was busy all the time so they couldn't plot their escape....

Many civilians had no clothes—either because of shortages or by Renamo design. Atisha, a 17-year-old girl from Nampula, explained the problem at her base:

We had enough food to eat, but we didn't have enough clothes. When the bandits came back from raids with clothes, they kept them for about a month and then gave them to the people who had been at the base the longest. Whenever the bandits brought new people with them, the bandits always took their clothes. They thought people would not want to escape without any clothes on. Most of the people didn't have any clothes or they wore sacks....

Younger girls, those under the age of 12, helped the older girls and women to prepare food, haul water, wash and clean; otherwise, they were generally left alone. But once a girl in a base camp reached the age of 12, and sometimes before then, she usually was exploited sexually by Renamo combatants. A 13-year-old boy from Gaza told what happened to these girls at his base camp:

The girls and women at the base were expected to clean and cook for the bandits. They had to lie down with the bandits whenever a bandit wanted them. All of the girls [who were around the age of 14] were forced to be with the bandits if they wanted them. I saw these girls and older women raped all the time.

Some girls, according to interviews, were "proud" of their position when they "married" bandits. Most girls, however, were passed from Renamo combatant to combatant or had experiences similar to that of a 15-year-old girl from Nampula:

When we arrived at the base I was brought in front of the chiefs along with other girls. One of them chose me to be his woman. He took me to his house, and I found he already had four other wives. His wives told me that I could not cry in front of him or I would be killed. If I cried he would think it was because I wanted another man. The chief didn't speak my language. He spoke Portuguese. I stayed with him at the base camp for a year. I cried a lot to myself, but the chief never caught me crying and never beat me... [Later]...I was able to escape.

MILITARY TRAINING AND INDOCTRINATION

Younger boys in base camps did the same type of work as girls, though only boys performed tasks such as tending cattle and hunting for food. A boy's position in the base camp hierarchy was determined to some extent by where the base was located. In the south, boys were at a greater premium and became combatants at a younger age. This was the case two years ago with this small, 12-year-old from Inhambane:

One night, my mother and I were grabbed by the bandits. They left her but made me come with them. They went from house to house in the village looking for things to steal... Out of all the people in the village, they only took me and boys my age with them. They made me carry a container of cooking oil on the way. Once we got to the base, they put us in a house [for a week] and didn't let us leave it. Then they began to train us to be soldiers....

In the southern province of Gaza, boys as young as six or seven might carry guns and thus be
exempt from doing any camp chores. A seven-year-old related his experience:

...when we got to the base camp, they took me from my mother and put me with some other boys. [Then] some bandits came and began to train us. The training was for two or three weeks. Then we went on raids. [At first], I just carried a gun. After a while, I began to shoot it...

In Mozambique's central and northern regions, boys seldom were forced to become combatants until they were about the age of 15. A 15-year-old girl explained the roles boys played in a base camp in northern Zambezia:

Boys [around 15 to 16] were sent to the bandits’ [provincial] base for military training. Younger boys [around the ages of 11 to 12] were used by the bandits as servants. Each bandit had servants. Some servants carried arms and served as bodyguards, which was the highest honor. Other boys started by carrying the bandits’ equipment and stolen goods on raids and hoped they’d move up to bodyguard. Others stayed in the camp to serve the bandits’ women. The women made the boys do all the things they normally do, like hauling water and wood and cleaning and cooking. The boys had to do a lot of work because each bandit usually has two or three women. Most of the boys wanted to flee because the work was so hard and they were beaten so much....

Children in base camps were expected to serve Renamo without question or emotion. The reward was extra food, comfort, and promotion. Franco, a tall 13-year-old from Zambezia abducted by Renamo in Nampula Province, described his experience as he moved up the Renamo ladder from servant to bodyguard to combatant:

I was chosen by a bandit chief named Johanes to be his servant. I washed and ironed his clothes and did whatever was necessary... The chief liked my work and made me his “guardacostas” [bodyguard]. He gave me a pistol and a bayonet and told me to guard his belongings while he was away on raids. I also watched his three women to make sure they did not get approached by other bandits or go with them.

[As a guardacostas], I wasn’t equal to regular soldiers. But once I became the chief’s bodyguard, he gave me another boy to be my servant, and I watched over him to make sure he did the washing and ironing and other chores. There were many boys in the camp who were bodyguards, but only a few became one as fast as me.

The chiefs wanted boys who showed them respect and carried out commands. They chose boys who spoke Portuguese because some chiefs [including Johanes] did not speak the language of the people... One way the chiefs tested our loyalty was to have us go to the houses of people and demand food to take back to the base.

The chiefs told us to look at the people when they are beaten and to never act like we don’t like it. They told us we could not cry or be sad when people were killed... I think the bandits had a desire to kill. I saw them kill people when they tried to escape. I saw them kill people when they wouldn’t follow an order. They killed people if they didn’t cook their food a certain way or if they complained. The bandits killed people because they didn’t show them the respect they thought they deserved...

At the base, there were more boy bandits than adults. Most of the chiefs were from Zambezia, and they preferred boys from Zambezia over boys from Nampula. I think the boys from Zambezia joined because they liked their position. There was nothing to do in their own village, and it made them feel important. Most were 16 and had women; some had more than one.

Boys from Zambezia didn’t like boys who lived in cities. They didn’t like them because the boys from the city had money to get documents they used to get better jobs. They told me that you didn’t have to have those documents if you lived in the country and that I shouldn’t worry about not getting them...

I had been at the base for five months when
Johanes made me kill a man. A madjuba who was put in charge of some captured Frelimo soldiers was caught killing some of them without permission. The madjuba said the soldiers killed a family member. But the chiefs decided to find out if the madjuba was lying. And when they found out he had lied, Johanes told me to kill him. I took my bayonet and stabbed him in the stomach.

The chiefs called all the bandits together for a special ceremony for me. They told me to drink something that included the blood of the madjuba. They gave me special things that only bandits can have. They told me that I was now one of them....

Children in base camps are subjected to a socialization process that is brutal and systematic. One of its main components is physical abuse and humiliation. A 14-year-old from Inhambane talked about what happened to him when he first reached a Renamo base camp:

The bandits put me and the other boys--there must have been 30 of them--in the middle of the base. They tied us up at night and always made us request permission if we wanted to urinate. But when we asked to urinate they said we couldn't. Then we would have to go, and once we did the bandits beat us. This happened to me many times....

Although the following 14-year-old boy from Gaza was a bodyguard, he described the humiliations he and other civilians were subjected to:

Sometimes, just for their entertainment, the bandits forced children to fight each other in front of them. I was considered a good fighter because I was strong and I fought to win. [But] one time they forced me to fight against an adult, and he beat me...

As Renamo breaks down children through beatings, it also hardens them by punishing them if they offer help or display feelings for others subjected to abuse. A 12-year-old boy from Tete discussed how Renamo programmed him not to show fear or emotion:

When one of us didn't perform a task the right way, the bandits tied up and hung the person upside down from a tree and beat him with sticks and their hands. The bandits would gather all of us around and if any of us showed any sorrow or fear they made us go through the same punishment.

They told us that we could not be afraid of violence or death and tested us to see if we could follow this command... Three different times people who had tried to escape the base were caught and brought back. The bandits brought all the children, including me, to witness their punishment. The bandits told us that we must not cry out or we would be beaten. Then a bandit struck the man in the top of the head with his axe, and after he split his head open he drove the axe down until it went into the man's chest...

If any of us were too happy or talking too loud, the bandits hit us. The youngest bandits, those who were just a little older than me, were the worst at doing this...

By beating and exposing children to violence, Renamo conditions them not to question its authority. The next step is to have children become abusers themselves. Alfredo, a 12-year-old boy from Gaza Province who spent six months in a Renamo base camp, talked about how this happened:

The bandits beat us almost every day. They even beat us if we played or laughed or sang. Sometimes I would sing a song to myself. They couldn't hear it, and it made me feel better sometimes. This was one of the ways I tried to fight them...

The bandits assigned other boys our age to watch over us. They were once part of our group and had also been beaten. Now, they were put in charge and were even worse...they enjoyed hurting us...

When one of us was caught doing something, the bandits made him stand in front of us. They asked us what the boy had done wrong. The first one of us to answer correctly was brought forward too. He was given a stick or a bayonet to punish the other boy... The rest of us were told to answer quicker next time or we'd be beaten too.
The dynamics of training boys for actual combat are similar to what has been described above. Boys are put through daily drills and combat exercises. They learn how to march, attack, retreat, and shoot weapons. Many are required to kill captives as a rite of passage into Renamo’s ranks. Traditional ceremonies and traditional healers also are used to usher children into Renamo’s inner circle.

An 11-year-old boy from Gaza described his military training:

_The training took place in the morning before the sun was up. It lasted until midday and sometimes longer... We were taught how to march... We were beaten if we made mistakes. They taught us how to run and how to attack... During an attack, the first group is supposed to kill people... the second group takes whatever it can... the third group is supposed to capture people and bring them back to the base..._

Most of the boys were young and had not shot a gun before. The bandits taught us to take the gun apart and to put it back together. They lined us in rows and fired guns next to our ears so we wouldn’t be afraid of the sound. Then they had us shoot the guns and kill cows...

_Boys who were the best at this were made chiefs of the group. When other people did something wrong, the bandits told these new chiefs to kill them... This is how boys become Renamo chiefs..._

Requiring children to murder others as a part of training is a step in the formation of the child soldier. Estevan and Orlando, two 12-year-old boys from Gaza, explained how this happens:

**Estevan**: Three boys from a different village [than the rest of us] were making mistakes and falling behind. The bandits asked us what we should do with them. Jorge said they should be sent back to the base to work with the women. The bandits said no, that they should be killed. They gave Jorge a bayonet and told him to kill them. When Jorge didn’t move, one of the bandits cut his stomach with the bayonet. He gave him the bayonet back. This time he killed the three boys...

**Orlando**: The bandits caught an old woman trying to escape. She was brought [to the group of us that] was being trained. The bandits pointed to Manual and told him to kill her. He took his bayonet and stabbed her in the stomach. The bandits told Manual to cut off her head. He did it, and they saw he was brave and made him the chief of our group...

Boys described how a set of formal rites, appearing to mark a transformation from civilian to Renamo combatant, followed a child’s first murder. There are numerous variations on the ceremonies, according to the different testimonies of Carlos and Domingo, 13- and 15-year-olds from Gaza, and Lorenzo, a 12-year-old from Inhambane:

**Carlos**: There was a ceremony after that [another boy’s first killing] and the healer poured out the blood of an ostrich into a gourd. He announced that when the boy drank this he would never fall in battle because he would be strong and able to run as fast as an ostrich.... The boy drank from the gourd, and then other bandits drank... The music and singing lasted all night, and everyone smoked marijuana.

**Domingo**: After the killing, body parts were cut up and cooked with other meat. The bandits got a healer who told me to eat the stew. Then he called for demons and asked them to make me safe from Frelimo’s bullets. The demons agreed. But I would have to drink the blood of the next three people I killed before I would be safe from the bullets. If I didn’t, I would be killed.

**Lorenzo**: The (boy) cut the man’s throat and then stabbed him in the stomach. Then the bandits took him to see the healer. Afterwards, there was a party, and they gave him a girl to be his wife...

Dehumanizing actions such as these carry with them significant psychological and moral consequences. At the moment a child is forced to kill, he feels fear. He is alone and vulnerable and knows he will be beaten or killed if he does not comply. This vulnerability becomes too much. It turns into anger and then into rage. Once rage develops, the child is no longer capable of moral reasoning; the other becomes the “enemy”, the “devil”, a “demon”. The process of breaking the child has been accomplished, at least to some extent. At this point too, Renamo
helps to seal the child's allegiance through formal ceremonies promising status, sex, and invulnerability. As one 15-year-old boy put it:

*Even if I could have escaped, I couldn't imagine going home again. Not after what I had done. I was reborn in that camp. I'll never be the same...*

**A DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT OF FRELIMO GOVERNMENT ABUSE**

Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of the children interviewed for this study were abducted by Renamo and taken to either a base camp or a control zone. All these children were in Renamo custody for differing periods of time, and all, one way or another, found their way back to civilian life. Some escaped Renamo on their own, others escaped with the assistance of the army; a smaller number were captured by Government forces while fighting for Renamo. Children who escaped were usually released after questioning, while those who were captured or had been Renamo combatants were more likely to be interrogated and mistreated by Government forces.

The Government's treatment of former child soldiers varied. Consider the case of Jose, a 14-year-old from Inhambane who, after he had been abducted from his family, served with Renamo for at least a year and was trained for combat:

*I went on many attacks with the bandits. I was wounded twice. The first time I was shot in the leg after we ambushed some Frelimo soldiers. The second time we went to dig up a road so we could trap a caravan of trucks... There was a battle, and my right hand was shot. When this happened I picked up my gun and ran. I hid until the battle was over. I hid my gun, walked to the nearest village, and told the people I wanted to give up to Frelimo. Frelimo soldiers told me to take them to where my gun was buried. I took them there, and then they took me to Inhambane to ask me questions about bandits. I told them what I knew.*

There was no reason to doubt Jose. The wound on his hand was fresh, and he spoke of his experience with Renamo in great detail. Yet a different version of Jose's surrender was offered by a military authority. Jose was suspected of being a Renamo spy; of having entered the village to collect information in advance of a Renamo attack. When confronted by the military authorities, he confessed and led Government soldiers to the place where he had buried his gun. Though he may have been a spy, Jose was released after questioning and sent to the local orphanage where he awaited his return to his village. Those at the orphanage estimated his wait would be lengthy; his village was in an area controlled by Renamo, and even if his parents could be notified that he was safe, it was too dangerous for them to travel to Inhambane.

Regardless of which version of the story was true, Government forces had not mistreated Jose. This was a positive sign, but there were other cases in which the Government was less humane in its treatment of child soldiers. Fernando is a 14-year-old from Gaza Province. He was abducted by Renamo and, after military training, had performed well enough to be named a chief of other child soldiers. Fernando spoke of what happened when he was captured by Government forces:

*We went to attack a [Frelimo] convoy of trucks. There was a big battle, and the soldiers from Frelimo fought well. I knew that if I didn't do something I would be killed with many other bandits. I decided to change sides, and I began to shoot at the other bandits. I shot two chiefs and some others... I was still alive when Frelimo soldiers captured me... They beat me with rifle butts. I was lying on the ground, and they surrounded me and talked about what they were going to do with me. Some wanted to kill me and others said they should wait... They decided not to kill me. They took me to their base and they put me in a jail.*

*While I was in the jail, they beat me again and again. They asked many questions about me and the bandits. They told me they were going to kill me. They took me from the jail to a place where they killed others. Some soldiers lined up so they could shoot me... [But] a Frelimo official arrived and said that instead of shooting me they would send me to Maputo. So here I am.*

Despite Mozambique's national policy of amnesty for former Renamo participants and captives, 30 children interviewed for this study (approximately 6 percent of the total sample) stated that they had been detained in Government military centers or other kinds of jails. One 15-year-old boy described what
happened to him after DNAS returned him from Maputo to his family in Chokwe (Gaza Province):

I had been back [with his family] for two months... I was going to visit my mother who was working on our farm outside the center of town... A man [security force] stopped me at the checkpoint and asked questions... I told him everything that happened to me with the bandits...like they [Ministry of Education staff] encouraged us to do at orphanage in Maputo... I told him I was at a bandit base and that [now] I lived here with my family. They put me in jail and asked me more questions... They told me I had to become a Frelimo soldier. I didn't know what to do...

The boy's family informed a DNAS social worker about the problem, and the Provincial Director of Health secured the boy's release two weeks after he had been put in jail. Other children, however, were imprisoned for longer periods of time. In Magude (Maputo Province), one 18-year-old youth interviewed for this study was imprisoned for three years even though he had been with Renamo for only one day. By the time he was released, his family had left Magude:

Yes, I was in jail for three years...[After] the bandits took me [from Magude], they ran into Frelimo and there was a fight. I ran away, but Frelimo caught me and put me in jail. Yes, I was with the bandits for only one day... Yes, I heard about the amnesty program... No, I don't know why they kept me in jail. I never knew why... I don't want to talk any more... No more trouble...please go way...please...

During the interview, the boy appeared distraught and fearful. He refused to speak about what happened to him while in prison. Others in the community confirmed that he was abducted by Renamo when he was 15 years old, and he returned home one day later. They stated that the military then took him away.

Finally, there were several cases in which former child soldiers disappeared from Frelimo military detention centers. In September 1988, before the study formally began, the Governor of Gaza Province asked several SCF and DNAS staff to meet with 12 child-soldiers who were in a military detention center in Xai-Xai. The Governor wanted to develop a rehabilitation program in Xai-Xai for these and other former Renamo combatants. When SCF and DNAS staff went to the detention center, however, the 12 boys were no longer there, and the military authorities refused to discuss what had happened to them. During this study (June 1989-March 1990), SCF and DNAS staff received further accounts of disappearances of former Renamo child captives from Government detention centers in Sofala, Inhambane, and Maputo provinces.

PART II
PSYCHOSOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Every morning I wake up and remember the dreams from the night before. I always see my mother's face and it is looking out at me. When I think about these dreams I get sad. Then I get angry. Then I start to fight with the other boys.

These are the comments of an eight-year-old boy who watched Renamo murder his mother. They were recorded by a Mozambican social worker during a Ministry of Education training program at an orphanage in Maputo. At the orphanage, participants discovered through their work with war-affected children that many of them retained images or memories of what can be referred to as "worst moments." In the midst of a sequence of terrifying experiences, there often will be a particular moment or event--the cutting of a throat, the splash of blood, a cry from the victim--that for the child was especially traumatic. But because the event was so horrific, the child feels he cannot talk about it with anyone.

The worst moment for the boy quoted above was when Renamo impaled his mother's decapitated head on a stake. Through drawing and quiet conversation, a gifted Mozambican social worker enabled the boy to discuss this troubling moment for the first time. The combination of pain and guilt caused him to withdraw and, at times, lash out at those around him. The social worker helped the boy to realize there was nothing he could have done. He began to open up, and to understand how the memory of this painful event had influenced his present feelings and behavior.

The mother's death, however, was only one aspect of the boy's traumatization. After seeing his mother murdered, he was taken to live with her killers at a Renamo base camp. During the two years he lived there, there was virtually no violence or cruelty he did not experience or witness firsthand. His
survival depended on the whims of leaders who were impulsive, unpredictable, intensely suspicious, and quick to react to the slightest provocation. They boasted about their sexual prowess and their power over life and death, setting an example most Renamo combatants followed. Simultaneously, the leaders practiced a hybrid religiosity. The boy, for instance, heard one Renamo leader refer to his gun as his "guardian angel." Another talked about a pact he had made with a "devil" in order to attain fortune, invulnerability to bullets, and invisibility from his enemies.

How does a child endure two years of this? "I guess I just got used to it," is how this boy answered this question put to him by the same Mozambican social worker. He would appear to be correct: getting used to horror may be a necessary internal defense against being overwhelmed by fear, but it is also an alarming sign. One of the boy’s caretakers at the orphanage, a volunteer from the Mozambican Women's Organization (OMM), offers her observations on how the child’s adaptation to violence and terror affected his development in many ways, mostly negative. She also offers valuable insights into what she and her colleagues did to help nurture him and other children like him back to civilian life.

[When he first arrived] he was quiet and withdrawn. He talked with some of the boys from Gaza [where he was from] but not with boys from other provinces [Inhambane and Zambezia]. All the boys were frightened of the director and us [OMM women]. They didn’t know what we wanted and they didn’t trust us.

At first, there was fighting between the different groups. Some of the boys continued to act like the [Renamo] leaders, intimidating other children to get them to obey or to steal for them. A lot of boys lied to get their way and stole whatever they could. They didn’t stop to think whether it was right or wrong. It was what they learned with Renamo.

At night, when the lights went out, they’d pull out homemade knives to protect themselves. The fighting lasted until the boys went to [the neighborhood] school and other students started calling them “bandidos.” Then they stopped fighting each other and joined together to protect themselves against the other students.

...When I think back, I realize that we [their caretakers] were frightened of the boys too. None of us wanted to work with them at first. We thought they were going to hurt us... But little by little, each side began to get to know the other better. After a couple of months, the situation improved. I guess the boys realized we were different than Renamo. I guess we realized they weren’t going to hurt us either.

...After a while, we started treating them as our own children. We joked with them, watched their soccer games, encouraged them to do their homework. It was difficult because some of them cursed at us, or fought when they didn’t get to do what they wanted. Some of us also got angry and wanted to quit. We didn’t think the boys or the ministries appreciated our efforts. But we continued to care for them, and after a while most of them got better...

During their work at the orphanage, social workers and OMM volunteers identified a number of social and psychological problems associated with children’s war-related experiences. These included:

- nightmares;
- sadness/depression;
- aggressive/oppositional behaviors;
- stealing/lying;
- lack of trust in adults/children; and
- social isolation.

Some of these problems appeared to result from exposure to specific traumas, and the psychological support offered by social workers and educators helped them to come to terms with the pain associated with those events. Other problems appeared to result from the children’s efforts to cope in a violent and abusive world; many of the attitudes, values, and behaviors the children needed to survive in Renamo became dysfunctional once they left base camps. Children’s efforts to re-enter civilian life after dehumanizing experiences in Renamo camps were facilitated not through psychological intervention per se, but through their relationship with OMM caretakers. In the final analysis, it was the ability of the OMM women to withstand the children’s initial aggression that enabled them to begin to re-establish trust in other human beings.

The patience and dedication of OMM caretakers enabled this boy to reorient various aspects of his
MAJOR SYMPTOMS (N=105)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
<th>PROBLEM REPORTED/OBSERVED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>experiences nightmares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>has recurrent dreams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>has trouble concentrating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>experiences loss of energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>experiences feelings of guilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>experiences feelings of sadness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>is often aggressive with other children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>is often aggressive with adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>is often disobedient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>often lies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>often steals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>is often sexually provocative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Translated from a previous page)

mental, social, and moral development in a more coherent, adaptive manner. He became trustful of adults and more communicative, engaged constructively with other children, and began to make substantial progress in school. Placed in an orphanage, however, he was still without a family of his own and isolated from the larger community.

As part of its family tracing and reunification program, DNAS, with assistance from SCF, initiated an intensive search for surviving family members. Searching for relatives scattered throughout a nation as large and as troubled as Mozambique is difficult, exhausting work. It entails flying in small airplanes 60 or more hours a month to war-affected areas where DNAS and SCF workers locate children who have been separated from their families and communities. The workers photograph and take down biographical information about each child and, with this information, prepare posters to take to villages or refugee centers where relatives might have fled. When matches are made, the children are taken to join their families. Despite the logistical nightmare, DNAS and SCF have reunited several thousand children with their families. Though no relatives were found for this boy, workers were able to locate a neighbor from his former village in Gaza. He now lives with this neighbor's family on the outskirts of Xai-Xai.

THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

There are inherent limitations in fully conveying the psychosocial dimensions of a child's exposure to war. One who suffers a number of the problems listed above may be experiencing what western psychology has termed “post-traumatic stress disorder” (PTSD), a syndrome whose symptoms include, among others, nightmares, depression, and an inability to concentrate. Yet these problems are difficult to detect because they do not directly manifest themselves or affect other people in obvious ways. Nevertheless, by observing and talking to war-affected children and those close to them--their family members, close community members or teachers--certain symptoms and behaviors emerge that can be linked to their war-related experiences.

How common are these kinds of problems? DNAS social workers participating in this study examined the psychological health and behavior of 105 children (approximately one-fifth of those interviewed) by questioning their parents, caretakers, or...
teachers. An assessment of these children showed they suffered major symptoms of psychological distress, which varied from nightmares and depression to more aggressive and socially troubling behaviors. The preceding chart reports the numerical results of this survey.

Mozambican children face a range of traumatic, war-related experiences that affect their development in different ways. The types of trauma represent the full spectrum of harmful events children have suffered. This continuum of trauma ranges from acute or short-lived events to multiple events repeatedly experienced over extended periods of time. The intensity, duration, and number of traumatic events children are exposed to are among the factors that must be taken into account when attempting to determine the psychosocial impact of war on children.

ACUTE TRAUMA

Clinical observations indicate there is a difference between the effects on children exposed to acute trauma and those faced with chronic stress and violence. An acute reaction represents a normal shock reaction to a single, highly stressful event. It generally lasts for only a few days and is marked by severe anxiety. When the trauma is brief and experienced in the presence of parents, the extended family or other community members, most children manifest fear and anxiety which subside rapidly. If the trauma is intense enough, however, it may lead to permanent psychological scarring, especially if children lose their parents or extended families.

Developmentally, exposure to acute trauma requires children to make situational adjustments. When family and community bonds are not disrupted, basic values and assumptions about life remain intact. This stability enables the child to assimilate the traumatic event into his existing world view. There is less psychological disturbance because the child experiences the traumatic event as an accident similar to other accidents of life.

CHRONIC TRAUMA

Chronic reactions, on the other hand, are those that endure beyond a brief time span and include a persistence of often debilitating symptoms. This chronic reaction can be marked by features of PTSD (including a persistent re-experiencing of the trauma, re-duced involvement with others, and diminished expectations for the future), as well as by more diversified, age-related symptoms of distress. Profound alterations in personality, behavior, and moral development often result.

Developmentally, children must adopt different behaviors and beliefs in order to survive chronic trauma. This requirement for developmental adjustment is greatest in situations where day-to-day human values and traditional support systems are turned upside down, and where it is impossible for parents and other community members to protect children from serious physical and psychological harm. In Renamo camps, children who committed acts of violence initially were reluctant participants. Without family support, however, their initial feelings of fear and guilt were transformed into amoral rage under the watchful eye of Renamo overseers. While children do learn to survive Renamo camps, it is the accommodation to chronic danger that is the most dangerous aspect of their exposure to war.

THE TIME FACTOR

This study found that the length of time spent with Renamo was a major factor related to children's varied psychosocial problems. In general, children who spent less than six months with Renamo (about 60 percent of the total sample) appeared to emerge from these experiences with their basic trust in traditional tribal and social values more or less intact. Although some members of this group had participated in acts of violence, throughout their ordeal they continued to identify themselves as victims of Renamo rather than as members. "We were forced to do it; we didn't have a choice," was how most of these children viewed their involvement with Renamo.

After liberation, some of these children displayed aggressive or disobedient behaviors. These behaviors subsided quickly, however, and early recovery efforts were marked by nightmares, sadness, depression, and guilt over having survived events that others did not. Antisocial behaviors, on the other hand, were not commonly reported by parents, caretakers, or teachers.

One 12-year-old boy, for example, lived with his family in a Renamo control zone for approximately one year. During this time, he witnessed Renamo physically abuse many civilians. He was separated from his family for one month when Renamo used him as a porter. He was able to escape, and he spent...
several weeks in an orphanage in Gorongoza District (Sofala Province) until a DNAS social worker reunited him with his mother, sisters, and brothers who also had managed to escape. A follow-up visit later revealed he was having only minor problems readjusting to family life. According to the social worker:

The mother stated that the boy had only two problems since he returned. He was more quiet than she had remembered, and for a few weeks he fought with his brothers and sisters... But she said that he's still a good boy and that these problems didn't go on for very long.

I talked with the boy myself and found that he has had frightening dreams since returning home. His brothers and sisters also tease him about being a “bandit”... These problems can be solved by explaining that they are hurting their brother by calling him a bandit...

The main problem [the mother identified] was her family doesn't have a good house. They don't have land to grow food on, clothes for their children or blankets, pots and pans, or soap. This is what makes their lives difficult...[but] these problems are shared by all deslocados.

It is likely this boy experienced additional psychological problems that neither the social worker nor other members of the research team detected. The ridicule directed at him by his siblings (a social consequence of his experience) also contributed to both his depressed, withdrawn state--his “quietness,” in his mother's words--and the sporadic fights with his brothers and sisters. Nonetheless, there was no evidence to suggest this child had been severely harmed by his comparatively brief involvement with Renamo. The fact he was with his family while in the control zone and reunited with them after his portering experience enabled him to better withstand the negative effects of Renamo's actions.

Parents, teachers, and caretakers described a different picture, however, for children who were separated from their families and spent up to two years alone under Renamo control. This group of children (40 percent of the sample) commonly exhibited aggressive feelings and behaviors. They appeared to have crossed a kind of identity threshold in which their self-image became more solidly bound up with the persona of their captors. This group of children had come to identify themselves as members of Renamo.

Despite their ability to articulate the belief that the everyday use of violence was "wrong", these children often continued to use aggression as a principal means of exerting social control and social influence. One 13-year-old boy, for example, told a social worker that Renamo was not concerned about people's well-being; instead, they used them "like animals" to achieve their objectives. He stated that he thought this was wrong. The next afternoon, however, this same boy was observed beating up a smaller child because this child refused to steal food and other goods for him. He knew the difference between right and wrong; nevertheless, he continued to use force and intimidation to manipulate others.

Individuals interviewed for this study stated that the aggressive feelings and behaviors of this second group of children began to subside at the same time they started to show increased attachment behavior towards parents or other caretakers. Indeed, the adjustment period after liberation from Renamo and before solid attachments evolve with new caretakers emerged as one of the most crucial periods in the entire recovery process. Sometimes, the child's family was unprepared to tolerate this initial aggression. A grandfather talks about how his 13-year-old grandson's behavior disrupted family cohesion when he returned home after two years with Renamo:

I am old, and I had hoped [he] would be my arms and legs... But he wasn't the same boy as before. He didn't do anything I asked... He lied to us about everything... He stole money from me... He bought cigarettes and beer... He had such strange ideas... He talked about things I couldn't understand...

...He couldn't stay with me anymore. He moved in with his sisters. But they had problems with him too... I guess he's still there.

Child survivors often manifested troubling behaviors when they returned home; these behaviors caused anger and resentment among receiving family members. Transitions back to families and communities have not always occurred quickly or smoothly. Some child survivors have felt compelled or been asked to leave home.

Teachers also noted significant problems among child victims of war. Teachers in the hardest hit districts reported that as many as one-half of their students were
having problems concentrating on their schoolwork. Social problems also are common. A teacher from Chokwe (Gaza Province) commented on how war-related experiences have affected student performance in her class:

...Many children are very sad. They sit in class with their heads turned to the side and stare at the wall. At first, I thought they couldn't hear... I finally realized they were able to hear, but were unable to concentrate. I wonder what's going on inside of them... They're distant...in a world far away.

...Many didn't know how to sit at a desk, or hold a pencil, or recite lessons, or answer questions, or speak Portuguese. Some were with Renamo so long they didn't know many of the simple facts of village life. Some had no respect for me as a teacher... They fight other students... I'd say about one-half of the students are like this... We have to begin at the beginning...

PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENT IS NOT SUFFICIENT

The treatment of choice for children exposed to acute trauma is "reassurance", where the basic message imparted to the child is that he is safe again and things are back to normal. Reassurance is best accomplished by providing children structured opportunities to discuss and better understand their fears and anxieties. Storytelling, role-playing, and projective drawing are among the kinds of activities that enable children to gain a measure of control over the troubling event. Group approaches are especially effective for large numbers of children exposed to the same trauma.

This treatment method, however, is based on the assumption that the affected child will continue to live in a stable environment. This promise is what enables the child to feel reassured: that everything can return to normal. Such an approach would be effective for children living within major cities or other locations not directly affected by war. But what happens when there is no guarantee that Renamo will not return?

At the large Benga deslocado camp in Tete Province, a 15-year-old girl explained what happened after Government soldiers rescued her family from a Renamo control zone:

We went to Mutarara [the district capitol], and then they sent us to Benga deslocado camp in Moatize [district]. We thought we were safe here. There were many people. We built a house. One day my father went outside the camp to cut straw to build our house better. We waited for him to come back but he didn't... People told us there were bandits near the camp, and there are bandits helping them inside the camp...

In Gaza Province, a 12-year-old boy told recounted his story after he escaped a Renamo base camp:

I turned myself in to Frelimo soldiers. After awhile they sent me to an orphanage in Maputo. I stayed there for awhile. Then they found my mother. She was living in our house [in Manjacaze District]. I couldn't go live with her because the bandits were still around there. I went to live with my uncle in Aldeta Fidel Castro [in Xai-Xai District]. I stayed there but I was always afraid the bandits would take me. My uncle was afraid too. He took us to Xai-Xai [the district capitol] and said it was our new home. Two days after we left, the bandits went to the aldeia and killed many people...

When a DNAS team interviewed children in deslocado camps outside the city of Beira (Sofala Province), they had to stop their interviewing well before darkness because Renamo had been attacking areas near the camp at night. Similarly, thousands of persons living outside the city of Inhambane conducted their everyday lives in their villages, where a number of children were interviewed. As darkness approached, however, they all walked to the perimeter of the city where they spent every night. The closer they were to the city, the better Government soldiers could protect them.

Clearly, the current reality in Mozambique does not provide the kind of stability necessary for treatment approaches typical of western psychology. Such approaches--where mental health professionals intervene with patients on an individual or group basis--are not realistic, particularly given the nation's severe shortage of human and financial resources. A treatment approach based on reassurance will not suffice for children still in endangered areas. Under
the circumstances, what can be done? Available resources should concentrate on supporting community efforts to create a more positive reality for children. To the extent possible, broader assistance efforts must try to help children reestablish their primary relationships with parents, families, communities, and, in some cases, their tribal group. Throughout the chaos of the past decade, families and communities have responded remarkably well to their children's needs. For example, despite the widespread destruction of communities and massive displacements of people, the majority of the nation's orphaned and unaccompanied children have been absorbed by extended families or by members of former communities or tribal groups. But these hard-hit communities desperately need material support and guidance. The major thrust of primary mental health initiatives thus needs to be oriented towards the family and community, rather than the individual child per se. Children need certain minimal conditions if they are to progress developmentally. These conditions include the presence of caring adults who provide protection, affection and nurturance, who encourage participation in structured situations such as school and recreational programs, and who have an understanding of the origins of the conflict and the child's relation to it. For children suffering from past trauma and a fear of the present, returning to communities where these conditions exist is vital.

Despite the continuing war, there are numerous ways in which programs can help bolster these communities. Government ministries and their counterparts in international organizations already have implemented a number of programs. Before introducing new programs or concepts into communities, however, there must be careful examination of how a given population is coping on its own. New programs or concepts must not be at odds with local custom and practice. Outside influences can tilt a local population's own precarious balance of survival away from local solutions to centralized and institutionalized alternatives that ultimately are less responsive.

In Gaza Province, for instance, a narrow river separates two districts that are equally affected by the war. On one side of the river, an orphanage had acted as a magnet and was stuffed full of children; on the other side, there was no orphanage, and there were no children living apart from their families. Along with undermining traditional community coping mechanisms, poor quality institutions of the kind found in Mozambique can produce intellectual and developmental retardation in children whose period of placement is such a setting is an extended one. On the other hand, with the support of DNAS' family tracing and reunification program and through broader assistance initiatives to provide family care for large numbers of unaccompanied or orphaned children, communities could close many of these orphanages. Much of the work in Mozambique needs to be oriented in this direction.

SECURITY AND PROTECTION

Without a political settlement between the Mozambican Government and Renamo, little can be done at this time to improve the security of endangered populations. Until such a settlement is attained, many people in rural communities and deslocado camps will remain vulnerable and insecure. Nevertheless, people living in these areas could benefit from information about how their own responses to these dangerous circumstances affect their children.

Ministry-led discussions or seminars could be designed to inform parents, teachers and other caretakers how their own emotions, attitudes and actions affect their children (for better or worse). Sessions should focus on the ways in which adults transmit fear to children through hidden and mixed messages, their tendency to be overprotective, or through anxious discussions from which children are excluded. Parents, teachers, and caretakers should understand that their children's emotional reactions are closely linked to their own. Children are keen observers. Adults should recognize that if they are more conscious of the messages they are transmitting to their children, the negative effects on children will be less severe.

These discussions could also help devise appropriate strategies to prevent children from suffering further physical and psychosocial harm. Families in endangered zones are already employing a number of measures in their attempts to protect their children from Renamo (see Part One). Family responses range from hiding children at night to sending them to safer districts, provincial capitals, or even to neighboring countries. What are the costs of these responses? Are there less harmful options available? Communities would benefit from ministry-led seminars that discuss the relative costs and benefits of these and other kinds of protective measures.

While it is difficult to devise measures that can protect children from Renamo, current measures can be strengthened to protect former child captives of
Renamo from possible government mistreatment. Specifically, the nation’s amnesty program should be more justly applied. The amnesty program is supposed to be the cornerstone of the nation’s commitment to help former child captives rejoin society. As noted in Part One, however, a significant percentage of former child captives have been imprisoned and abused by government forces after coming into Government custody. Furthermore, many children who do manage to return to their homes and communities without being imprisoned by Government entities still find it impossible to talk about their experience for fear of detection and reprisal by local security forces.

The need for these children to hide their identity for reasons of personal security is especially detrimental. On the one hand, these children must rediscover and reforge their tribal and national identity to begin living active, productive lives. On the other hand, they find they must assume a different personal history—sometimes even a different name and family—in order to avoid punishment or imprisonment. Under these conditions, it is unlikely they ever will be able to rediscover who they are, what is important, and what they count for.

Recognizing this dilemma, DNAS began to work with the military and the police, encouraging them to be more responsive to these issues. In 1989, seminars were held in Inhambane and Gaza provinces where the abuse of former child captives was discussed openly, and procedures were established to ensure that the police and the military turn them over to local child-care groups. Since then, the situation has improved in these two provinces. Similar efforts need to be undertaken in other provinces.

**AFFECTION AND NURTURANCE**

Parents usually are able to provide children relatively stable and sensitive routines of daily care, particularly when they receive support from their extended family and community. A family’s need for support becomes especially great when its members are subjected to the kind of instability and chaos the war has caused. In addition to raising children in a time of great poverty, caretakers must constantly worry about the threat of Renamo attacks and their consequences (see Part One). Parents who face these kinds of dangers alone are at increased risk of depression, family discord, alcoholism, and other forms of dysfunctional behaviors. These problems can impair their ability to maintain close family relationships or to recognize their children’s own anguish and deal with it in appropriate ways.

The vulnerability of the Mozambican family unit is a major reason why primary mental health initiatives need to be directed to them and their communities. One way to facilitate a group oriented mental health program is to train individuals from the community to create a more positive social environment for isolated and marginalized families. The creation of a positive reality begins with efforts that support pro-social forces within a community in order to strengthen traditional ways of coping with problems. For instance, strategies that incorporate traditional healers into official health programs would be more appropriate than strategies that rely solely on institutionalized treatment programs. Most rural Mozambicans trust traditional healers more than western style doctors or social workers; what is more, traditional healers offer mental and spiritual remedies within the context of family and community life.

DNAS’s family tracing and reunification program is another essential part of creating a more positive social reality for war-traumatized children. During the past three years, provincial workshops have involved hundreds of Mozambican social workers, teachers, OMM volunteers, and community leaders in efforts to reunify children separated from their loved ones because of the war. The program has reunified several thousand children with their families and, at the time of reunification, provides the receiving family with material assistance (family kits). The provision of this material assistance is in recognition of the potential financial strain an additional member places on many families already struggling to survive.

The Government is also active in training community members to work and communicate with returning children who have been with Renamo. Parents, teachers, and caretakers have found many of these children display aggressive feelings and behaviors due to sustained trauma or abuse. Adults need to understand that the initial aggression often is a child’s effort to reestablish trust as well as to test the appropriate limits or boundaries of behavior. A nationwide training program has taught teachers how to identify and deal with these potentially troubled children. DNAS teams working on this study frequently conducted interviews at schools where it was obvious the teachers and principals knew these children well and had gained their trust and respect. Encouraging and expanding this kind of program, perhaps to parents and community workers, would be important steps in aiding the transition of war-trauma-
tized children back into family and community life.

EDUCATION AND RECREATION

The assumption that the war will end cannot be used as a reason for delaying the provision of relevant education to children still in endangered zones. This delay would be a mistake not only because of the need to prepare children for a better future, but also because education can help children deal with the present. Participation in school for children who face real fears and danger can have important therapeutic benefits. It provides them a renewed sense of order, predictability, and control, and allows their world to return to normal.

The Ministry of Education's therapeutic teaching (drawing, sociodrama, song, dance, etc.) offers a sound, child-focused response to children affected by war. Equally important is the development of relevant vocational skills training programs needed to build a peaceful future. Indeed, the hope that education engenders in children will turn to despair if they do not have skills to progress with their lives or opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills they have gained.

Athletics and recreational games (such as soccer, basketball, tchuva, dama, and muravaravca) are especially important for children living in situations of latent fear and stress. They provide outlets for children's physical energy, develop physical fitness and allow children to learn in a positive way how to interact in a group and follow rules. Working with communities to establish appropriate play space and to organize games for children can also develop discipline and self-confidence, and relieve mental and physical stress.

For Mozambican refugee children growing up in neighboring countries, living in the artificial confines of refugee camps has produced deficiencies in their general knowledge, even knowledge of the most basic things children in Mozambique take for granted. Most have not had sufficient opportunities to grow food, raise livestock, or practice other skills associated with village life. Reports from Zimbabwe and Malawi indicate many refugee children do not know the difference between a dog and a goat, or where milk comes from, or many other simple everyday facts of life in Mozambican villages. Appropriate education must be extended to these refugee children; at some point in the future, they too will demand the opportunity to acquire and practice traditional skills when they return to Mozambique.

UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL CONCEPTS

Psychosocial recovery for children affected by war cannot take place through attempts to cover up, deny, or suppress what has happened to them. On the contrary, they must be helped to remember what they have experienced and to understand their past and present. Educational efforts must strive to return to these children the history, culture, and traditions of their people. Open discussions about the origins of the war, its various participants (including outside collaborators and supporters), and current efforts to bring about a just and lasting peace should also be a part of these children's education.35

CONCLUSION

Mozambican children who were born and grew up during the 1980s, especially during the second half of the decade, have experienced severe hardships. Thousands died, were handicapped for life, orphaned, forced into militarized zones and base camps, or exposed to sustained violence and abuse. Many of these children are now experiencing at least short-term psychological problems due to the physical and psychological trauma they suffered. In many regions, guerrilla warfare and terrorism continue to subject children to the additional dangers of armed conflict.

Nothing is known about whether or to what extent such psychological effects might hold long-term repercussions for these children or, as future parents, for future generations of Mozambicans. There were unconfirmed reports throughout the country that many young adults who spent significant periods of their childhoods inside Renamo camps continue to suffer psychological distress. These unofficial reports, offered by community leaders and district-level social workers, suggest that young women have been most affected; they now find it difficult to raise children in traditional ways. A study of their situation is needed to examine the possibility of providing remedial measures for parents and preventative services for their children.

On the other hand, and in spite of the almost unimaginable tragedies witnessed and experienced, most Mozambican children interviewed for this study appeared to be remarkably sturdy and self-reliant. Even children who have been cursed with the worst
possible circumstances were able to manage moments and longer periods of good humor and optimism. They appear to be able to go on; to live one day, then the next, so long as living is allowed. Still, it is not an exaggeration to say that the identity of nearly all of these child survivors now includes the dead.

Mozambique's former President Samora Machel, perhaps in recognition of this persistent resiliency, called his nation's children "flowers that never wither." What also needs to be stressed is that Mozambican survival is a collective act, rooted in community compassion and care. It is this collective act that must be the chief focus of Government policy and foreign aid assistance.

Along with a continuing commitment to bring down the very high rates of infant and child-mortality, equal support for primary mental health initiatives is also needed. Such initiatives, aimed at improving the quality of life for those children who do survive, need to take into account the differing cultural and sociopolitical characteristics of each region of the country. They should give priority to assisting children within displaced populations as they often are the most vulnerable. Programs should promote training and participation of community members and emphasize group over individual intervention methods. PTSD treatment models are not appropriate.

Finally, children's physical well-being and psychosocial development are not separate. They are interwoven components of the same function, mutually interacting and reinforcing each other. Biological and psychosocial growth unfold hand-in-hand, and both aspects of development must be supported at the same time, at the same pace. Mental health initiatives thus need to occur within a broader health framework of primary health care, nutrition, prenatal care, early childhood stimulation, and treatment of common diseases. Only in this way will adequate attention be paid to both lowering infant and child mortality rates as well as to improving the quality of life for those children who do survive this brutal conflict.
REFERENCES

3. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
15. UNDP, op. cit.
16. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
29. Ressler, E. Boothby, N. and Steinbock, D., op. cit.
32. Boothby, N., op. cit.