**SPECIAL NEEDS:**
It includes, general health and mental assessments through mobile medical teams; awareness raising and sensitization on HIV-AIDS, drug counselling and psychosocial reintegration support, to assistance to traumatized former combatants.

ICRS supports the training and capacity building of local structures and personnel at different levels. The linkage of counselling activities with available services within the community facilitates the continuity of support and a better understanding of the problems faced by former combatants, without excluding the needs and resources of the communities in which they reside.

**OUTREACH AND MOBILE TEAMS:**
Outreach refers to grass-roots verification & monitoring mechanism. It serves as the backbone of ICRS field operations, strengthening community participation, working to reconcile differences, identifying problems to reintegration & supporting the administration of solutions. It also serves as programme and feedback component that keeps the delivery of assistance in tune with the beneficiaries’ transitional needs & changing realities.

Mobile Teams are used as out-stations in areas where IOM does not have a sub-office and broaden the geographical coverage of the ICRS.

**ADDITIONAL SERVICES**
**IOM’s Reintegration Framework of Former Combatants**

Since 1992, IOM has supported the design and implementation of some of the largest Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) operations in the world. These operations have assisted thousands of former combatants and their dependents to return to normal civilian life after many years of conflict and as such, have contributed to national and regional reconciliation and stabilization, preventing further negative migration.

DDR operations are complex and are often characterised by continuing security risks, weak or absent public administration and protracted discussions over issues that are not sufficiently explained in peace negotiations or agreements.

DDR operations comprise many inter-related tasks, which include political, military, humanitarian, security and socio-economic activities. Experience has shown that neglecting one of these components can quickly lead to the failure of an entire process.

There are fundamental reasons why former combatants and their dependents need to be categorized as a special vulnerable group in need of support.

For the former combatants, the arrival of peace, despite all its positive aspects, does not immediately translate into a “peace dividend.” Peace ushers in new social realities that can have traumatic impacts on all those for which war has become a way of making a living. For many of them, a peace agreement signifies giving up their uniforms, their identity, their status and their former survival strategies.

During protracted conflicts, most former combatants may have spent more than ten years in the military and often have no immediate marketable skills and little or no training other than using a gun and fighting. Often blamed for the excesses of war and unable to find alternative employment, they can easily become marginalised and disgruntled. If left unchecked, security conditions can very quickly deteriorate and may end up serving as the catalyst for a return to armed conflict. Thus, their reintegration within the host-community is a key component for community stabilization and prevention of forced displacement after peace agreements.

In addition to this, most combatants, their families and host communities may have also had limited access to basic health and social services. Loss of life, disrupted family and social support mechanisms contribute to heightened health risks and vulnerability to develop health problems. Thus, addressing their general and mental health needs, will also ensure their meaningful reinsertion and reintegration.

IOM’s view on social protection is through an operational perspective and focuses on the return and reintegration phases whilst mitigating the factors that cause tension and displacement.

**IOM Return and Reintegration Programmes developed in East Timor, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Cambodia through the implementation of the ICRS mechanism.**

**DISARMAMENT DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION (DDR)**

**Why Do Former Combatants Need to be Supported?**

**IOM’s Reintegration Framework of Former Combatants**

**GUATEMALA:** A group of supporters with peace slogans cheer the demobilization of former combatants of the civil war.

**Mozambique:** Former soldiers register with IOM officials for their return home. Mozambique Demobilization and Return Programme 1994 - 1996 - IM02005
**ICRS COMPONENTS**

**ICRS** contributes to a positive environment by peace making available timely, accurate and unbiased information, to and from the former combatants and all other relevant stakeholders, including the humanitarian agencies, educational institutions, potential employers, their communities of absorption and other stakeholders, as to on-going reintegration initiatives and how to access these.

It seeks to dispel misinformation and close information gaps through media and all available networking systems and promotes successful reintegration stories that are acting as an outlet for peace advocacy.

ICRS, in close cooperation with other partners, supports the registration process and engages in public awareness campaigns and civic education initiatives that are implemented and monitored, grass-roots upwards.

At the heart of the Information component, a Database and Data Management System serves as the central depository for all related information. This, not only, allows for the best cost-effective management of IOM’s own programme resources, but also supports the development of a transparent and strategic system of monitoring and information sharing amongst all relevant partners and stakeholders.

**COUNSELING**

ICRS facilitates personalized and confidential counseling that serves to highlight and address, through direct dialogue and discussion, the identification of the socio-economic and demographic obstacles faced by the former combatants and their dependents, along with the administration of reintegration solutions that will include the direct participation of the community as a whole.

Counseling serves as a vital confidence-building tool that supports the establishment of grass-roots networks to bridge gaps and build consensus amongst the concerned beneficiaries: informing, advising, listening, collecting and updating data for transformation into easily digestible information for action and prioritization of direct micro-project assistance for those most in need. Counseling is not just a one-time event but a continuous process throughout the life of the reintegration programme.

**REFERRAL SERVICE (RS):**

The RS serves to support economic sector identification, analysis and development and through this, map-out preferential opportunities that are available within the programme, but more significantly links these to other external activities, such as those undertaken within the public and private sectors, including health, legal support, housing services, education, training and other general business and development initiatives.

The RS not only ensures access to immediate opportunities available within the programme, but more significantly links these to other external activities, such as those undertaken within the public and private sectors, including health, legal support, housing services, education, training and other general business and development initiatives.

The RS also includes the analysis of labour market trends by sector and the provision of new employment opportunities for skilled and unskilled labour in both urban and rural areas.

**REINTEGRATION FUND (RF):**

The Reintegration Fund (RF) is used as a flexible-funding instrument; it is utilized to finance potential reintegration opportunities, whenever such opportunities can be created for the former combatants and their communities.

Sub-grants (in the form of in-kind donations) are facilitated to those programme beneficiaries who have not chosen another particular reintegration opportunity, or, are finding it difficult to overcome certain reintegration problems due to a lack of absorption capacity within the community.

RF works to dampen competition between civilians and former combatants through the rapid reintegration of traditional patterns of productivity and through the reinforcement of rural and grass-roots communal structures. It serves as a catalytic component that enhances investment opportunities and reconstruction possibilities, including assistance in the establishment of sustainable gainful employment, encompassing self-employment and micro-enterprise development, fellowships, training and capacity building.

It is important to note that the RF does not constitute an entitlement, rather, it offers additional opportunities when specific criteria are met.

In tandem with the Referral modality, the RF identifies and monitors community profiles, along with those of the former combatants. It establishes linkages between the communities and development agencies, thereby balancing the flow of available resources and manpower of the communities with the available resources of the assistance agencies. At all times, the RF ensures that the needs of the community are taken into account whenever considering assistance to be delivered to the former combatants and their dependents.

**CAPACITY BUILDING (CB):**

The CB component ensures the direct presence and ownership of the process by the government and all other relevant national stakeholders.

Either through the creation of the Employment Assistance Service (EAS), the set up of Disaster Management Teams or Civil Defence training programmes, or any other initiative, the mechanism works to enhance the participation of local authorities and community structures, at large, emphasizing community organization and civic participation that will work in tandem with the reintegration needs of the former combatants.

Capacity building aims at pooling into the reintegration effort, the direct participation and ownership of the process by the society at large and enhances their intervention as stakeholders to the process of pacification, reconciliation and economic revitalization.

By linking counselling activities with available services within the community the ICRS facilitates continuity to the support given, as well as a better understanding as to the problems faced by both direct and indirect beneficiaries and the socio-economic solutions to be administered, beyond the direct participation of IOM.