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**The influence of the family support interventions on re-integration of ex-combatant children in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the Central African Republic (CAR).**

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**ABSTRACT**

Some children join an armed group to fight for a cause or to be among their peers. Others are forcibly abducted from their families. The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of the family support interventions on re-integration of ex-combatant children in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the Central African Republic (CAR). The study objective was to investigate influence of the family support interventions on re-integration of ex-combatant children in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the CAR. The study employed a descriptive survey design in which data were collected through questionnaires and interviews from 101 respondents. The study indicated that family support services affect re-integration of ex-combatant children in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the CAR by 16.4%. The study concluded that family support services were not well oriented to respond to the need of the children involved in the armed conflict. Sensitization and mobilization of the community to promote income generating activities need to be enhanced. In the end, efforts to develop mechanisms required to enable the integration through tracing of families of the children and or creation of the families for such children in the communities is recommended.

Keywords: Influence, family, support, interventions, ex-combatant and children

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**INTRODUCTION**

The plight of former child soldiers has also received significant attention in the academic literature. This is likely due to the assumption that this is a particularly vulnerable population given their traumatic experience during recruitment and conscription, which is substantiated by several studies [1]. In 2017, there were 48 ongoing civil

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wars, that is, armed conflicts taking place within the borders of a state. In that year alone, an estimated 68,851 people lost their lives due to violence resulting from clashes between government forces and non-state armed actors and tens of thousands more became the victims of other forms of organized violence such as the deliberate targeting of civilians and communal conflicts [2]. How many more were injured, abused, or traumatized remains unknown. [3], identifies a number of activities as supporting healing by fostering ex-combatant children in a sense of purpose, self-esteem, and identity. These include establishing daily routines such as going to school, preparing food, washing clothes, and working in the fields; providing ex-combatant children with the intellectual and emotional stimulation through structured group activities such as play, sports, drawing, drama and storytelling; and providing the opportunity for expression, attachment and trust that comes from a stable, caring and nurturing relationship with adults [4]. Demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers is often portrayed as hopeless especially where child soldiers have been forcefully recruited and made to participate in atrocities. Yet, this study portrays that ex-combatant children involved in armed conflict can re-engage positive and social relations and productive civilian lives. It is not easy however, and it depends crucially on the political will and resources to include child soldiers in peace agreements and demobilization programs and to support their reintegration into family and community [5]. The 1996 United Nations study on the impact of armed conflict on ex-combatant children, backed by extensive research from nongovernmental Organizations, played a crucial role in demonstrating the global problem of child soldiers [6]. Most welcome is the May 2020 Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which raise the minimum age from participation in armed conflict from fifteen to eighteen years [7]. Determining best practice with ex-combatant children associated with armed conflict is an ongoing processes as well an ongoing effort. For the case of program practitioners, it is often difficult to translate a list of best practice principles into local application. In addition to disseminating program experience, that of program practitioners should also be supported in staff and program exchanges [8]. From the researcher's perspective; this would be more, in terms of sharing experience with countries, communities; and families that have undergone successful reintegration programs. New ideas would then be used to design appropriate social interventions for reintegration of ex-combatant children in CAR.[9], discuss school wide PBIS as an educational practice and the evidence base for primary (school wide) interventions, as well as secondary and tertiary interventions. Schools that implement PBIS may involve individual parents or adopt specific homeschool collaboration practices to support their students. Few schools integrate parent management training or other parenting supports into their portfolio of strategies but features of the tiered behavior support systems may serve as ideal points of entry for more intensive parenting and family management services. [10], found to be effective in evidence-based programs into a delivery system that improves the workflow and ecology of the school environment. In systemic concatenation with the FCU model, the scope and sequence of family supports align neatly within the context of the PBIS system. [11], found reductions in youth antisocial behavior through high school for a high-risk sample. In a replication of the multilevel FCU approach, effects were not found on reductions in student problem behavior in middle school, but complier average causal effect (CACE) analyses, which estimate a treatment effect among those families that engaged in the FCU, revealed decreases in substance use initiation, antisocial behavior, deviant peer affiliations, family conflict, and risk behavior.

[12], found that teaching parents emotional communication skills (e.g. active listening, helping children to identify and label emotions and to appropriately express emotions), positive interaction skills (engaging in positive, non-disciplinary interactions with child, engaging in child selected and directed play activities, demonstrating enthusiasm and providing positive attention for appropriate child behavior), and responsively, sensitivity and nurturing (responding sensitively to child's emotional and psychological needs including soothing, and providing developmentally appropriate physical contact and affection) produced strong effect sizes. A meta-analytic study by [13] found for programs designed to reduce disruptive child behavior, individually delivered compared to group delivered parent training produced greater child change, especially for economically disadvantaged families. Finally, [14] examined the effectiveness of parent training programs designed to reduce the risk of child abuse. Moderator analysis revealed significant effects for behavioral orientation, use of a home visitor, delivering services in both the home and office, and use of both individual and group sessions.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of the family support interventions on re-integration of ex-combatant children in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the Central African Republic (CAR).

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### Research Question

The following research question was tested: What is influence of the family support interventions on re-integration of ex-combatant children in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the Central African Republic?

### Geographical Scope

The study was carried out in Haute-Kotto Prefecture because most of the main armed groups' headquarters are located in this region or Prefecture. Additionally, it is in this same Prefecture that several children have joined and thereafter separated with armed groups, for reintegration [14]. Haute-Kotto Prefecture is also the largest of the 16 Prefectures within CAR which is located in the east of the country [14]. The choice of Haute Kotto is due to the presence many ex-combatant children in the area hence the need for establishing the social support.

### Time Scope

The conceptual focus took into account data from 2017 to 2020; this is because it is in period whereby the United Nations High Commission for Refugees documented the highest impact of conflict in CAR. Over 6,000 internally displaced persons and 480,000 refugees, most of whom were ex-combatant children and women [15]. Since it is academic research and given the time limits to submit the thesis Report; data collection, analysis and report writing was expected to be completed mid-October 2021 after the proposal presentation was approved. However, due to the governments' lockdown policy to avoid the spread of Covid-19 Virus in the community, the research delayed and did not meet the time framework.

### Conceptual Scope

The study primarily focused on the influence of social interventions on re-integration of ex-combatant children in Haute Kotto Prefecture of the CAR. In this regard, the social interventions were viewed in terms of Family support interventions, Health service interventions and Education Service interventions. These social interventions were investigated against re-integration of ex-combatant children, which was the Dependent Variable in this study. Re-integration of ex-combatant children was addressed specifically, in terms of the provision of food, family acceptance, community re-integration and right to economic integration. [16], contends that social interventionism is an action which involves the deliberate intervention of a public or private organization into social affairs for the purpose of changing them. In other words, it is a deliberate attempt to change society in some way, "an alteration of the social structure". [17], contend that social interventions are programs designed to deliver social benefits and develop human capital of specific target groups (referred to as beneficiaries). Social interventions can be any of the following: social welfare, safety net, and social protection. While each of these has its own definition and unique characteristics, they are sometimes interchanged unknowingly.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The researcher used descriptive cross sectional survey research design that focused on investigations which was majorly quantitative to collect and analyze data in order to describe the specific phenomenon in its current trends, current events and linkages between different factors at the current time. The study was connected to social interventions and reintegration of ex-combatant children. Descriptive research design was used because it enables the researcher to generalize the findings to a larger population. The researcher was based on both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The combination of Qualitative and quantitative research approaches helped the researcher to develop a mix of relevant tools to give a dynamic and contextual understanding of the problem under investigation. The main goal of the qualitative research approach was obtained from in-depth descriptions and an understanding of actions, events and expressions of words as indicated in [18].

### Research Population

The targeting population in this research work comprised the individuals that were selected randomly from Haute-Kotto Prefecture especially (25) Government officials, (25) humanitarian representatives (such UNICEF, UNHCR, etc), (25) United Nations multidimensional integrated Stabilization Mission in Central African Republic (MINUSCA) agents, (35) ex-combatant children and (25) Focus groups or community members from the area of investigation. These individuals were selected randomly among a targeting population estimated to 135 individuals as described in the following table:

**Table 1 Showing the description of the population distribution**

N/s	Categories of the population	Target population
	MONUSCA agents	25
	Humanitarian representatives	25
	Ex-combatant children	35
	Government officials	25
	Focus groups or community members	25
<b>Total</b>		<b>135</b>

Source: Survey research, 2020

#### Sample Size

The sample size is determined using Slovenes formula, i.e.,  $n = N/1 + N(e)^2$ : Where; n is the sample size, N is the Target population, e is at the level of significance (0.05). The formula arrives at a sample size of 100 respondents as follows:  $n = 135/1 + 135(0.05)^2 = 101$  respondents.

**Table 1. Showing the description of the sample size distribution**

N/s	Categories of the population	Target population	Sample Size	Sampling techniques
	MONUSCA agents	25	19	Random sampling
	Humanitarian representatives	15	11	Purposive sampling
	Ex-combatant children	35	25	Random sampling
	Government officials	15	11	Purposive sampling
	Focus groups or community members	45	34	Random sampling
<b>Total</b>		<b>135</b>	<b>101</b>	

Source: Survey research, 2020

#### Sampling Techniques and Procedure

The researcher used two sampling techniques namely purposive sampling and Random sampling of which were used to select the targeting population and purposive sampling which was used to select the sample size in this research study that is to say (11) Government officials, (11) Humanitarian representatives (such UNICEF, UNHCR, etc.), whereas random sampling was used on (19) United Nations multidimensional integrated Stabilization Mission in Central African Republic (MINUSCA) agents, (25) ex-combatant children and (34) Focus groups or community membersto participate in the study to whom an interview instrument were applied to collect data of which a questionnaire was used to collect data.

#### Data collection Methods

In mixed methods approach, the researcher used different tools to collect data on the same topic as was clearly highlighted in [19]. In this study, the researcher developed two separate tools: one for each level of the data collection process (Quantitative and qualitative). Broadly, the researcher also made use of both primary and secondary data collection methods. Survey research collections methods for this study included: questionnaires, interviews; and Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) while the secondary data collection methods involved the review of Literature, reports from the UN, and Civil Society Organizations.

#### Questionnaires

A Self-administered questionnaire was developed to guide the quantitative data collection process. Questionnaires were developed based on the review of literature, research objectives, and theoretical framework. The researcher developed a structured questionnaire with items based on a five-point likert' point style (strongly agrees, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. The researcher also took for other tools which have been used by other investigators in related studies and selectively adapted some of the questions that deemed to be appropriate for this study. Most of the questionnaire items were close ended and worded in such a way that the participants were limited to specified mutually exclusive response options. Close options were facilitated coding and statistical analysis of data. As pointed out by [20]. Once the questionnaires were designed, pretested, and amended, they were delivered to the participants for data collection. The researcher delivered the self-administered questionnaire to the participants and collected them in the period ranging between one to two weeks. This period was given participants enough time to answer the questions.

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### Interviews

The structured interview involved the use of formal and written questions, which questions was asked face to face with interactions between the researcher and the participants. Questions was asked orally; in the form they appeared on the interview schedule and the responses were recorded both in audio and writing. Before the interviews, the researcher explained the purpose and procedure for the interview; and requested for permission to use an audio tape recorder. The interviews were conducted at the respective offices or residences of the participant depending on the nature of participants. The interview guide was developed based on the theoretical framework, literature review, and the objectives of the study. The structured interview guide was meant to solicit in depth information about social Interventions and reintegration of ex-combatant children. By probing and repeating, the researcher elicited more useful information regarding the subject of investigation.

### Data Analysis

This section introduces the setup of the data process. It presented steps to be taken to structure and analyze the collected material. Because of the mixed quantitative and qualitative approach were used in this study, it was needing a combination of different methods in data analysis. Data from questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively using the Scientific Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). In contrast, data from interviews were analyzed using the thematic analysis in order to gain insights in reintegration process and mechanisms in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of CAR. As suggested by [21], jot notes were taken in the field and then turned into categorized notes, which were partially narrative. Data were categorized in accordance with the objectives of the study in order to create a systematic approach to analyzing it. Further, Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) was used to gain insight and to establish the relationship between social Intervention and reintegration of ex-combatant children in the Haute-Kotto Prefecture of CAR. The researcher established a set of categories and then compiled the information logically. The data were codified and organized according to the relevant themes. Respondents' views were then be analyzed, compared; and contrasted in line with the literature and objectives of the study.

### Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

#### Validity of Research Instrument

To ascertain the validity of the questionnaire and interview guides, a pilot study was carried out. This was done by administering the two instruments onto a pilot group. This group was selected from the above categories of respondents (table 3.1) in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of CAR. The questionnaire was filled by both civil servants and businessmen. Here the questionnaire was given to experts to judge the validity of questions according to the objectives. After the assessment of the questionnaire, the necessary adjustments were made bearing in mind the objectives of the study. A minimum of 0.75 of Content Validity Index (CVI) was used to test validity of the research instrument. Then a CVI was computed using the following formula:

$$CVI = \frac{\text{No. of questions declared valid}}{\text{total No. of questions in the questionnaire}} = \frac{39}{50} = 0.78 \text{ or } 78\%.$$

This result is an outcome of a pretest made by the researcher on the consistency of data that provides answers to the research questions based on the objectives. According to [22], if tested results on the validity are equal or felt above the level of acceptance (0.75) was maintained. Since the CVI responds to this rule, the answers on the research questionnaire werereliable and consistent.

#### Reliability of Research Instrument

Reliability of the data collection instrument is the consistency of measurement and frequently assessed using a test-retest reliability method [23]. Reliability enabled the researcher to identify the ambiguities and inadequate items in the research instrument; where the instrument reliability is the dependability, consistency, or trustworthiness of a test. The test-retest technique was the measure, where questionnaires were administered to a group of individuals (according to the tested number) with similar characteristics as the actual sample. Tests were repeated at intervals of one week. The scores obtained from each test correlated to get the coefficient of reliability. If the Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient falls at an average of +1 to -1. Ars of +1 indicated a perfect association of variables, a rs of zero indicates no association between variables and a rs of -1 indicates a perfect negative association of ranks. The closer rswas to zero, the weaker the association between the ranks as reflected from the following formula:

$$P = \sum_a^n d^2$$

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Whereby P: Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient, n: Selected sampling size and d: Number of cases tested.

**Table 2. Showing the Correlation Coefficient**

Variables	D	d <sup>2</sup>
Health Service interventions	23	529
Education Service Interventions	20	400
Family support Interventions	17	289
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1,218</b>

Source: survey data, 2022

Where d = difference between ranks and d<sup>2</sup> = difference squared.

We then calculate the following:  $\sum_d^n d^2 = 1,218$

$$P = 1 - \frac{6 \sum_d^n d^2}{n(n^2-1)} = 1 - \frac{6 \times 1,218}{60(60^2-1)} = \frac{208,632}{215,940} = 0.97 \sim \text{to } +1$$

Yet, the Spearman correlation coefficient,  $r_s$ , takes values from +1 to -1. A  $r_s$  of +1 indicates a perfect association of variables, a  $r_s$  of zero indicates no association between variables and a  $r_s$  of -1 indicates a perfect negative association of ranks. The closer  $r_s$  is to zero, the weaker the association between the ranks. Therefore, it predicted that there was a relationship between social interventions and ex-combatant childrenreintegration that is to say social interventions impacted positively ex-combatant childrenreintegration in haute-Koto Prefecture of the Central African Republic (CAR).

#### Ethical Considerations

The researcher made effort to adhere to ethical standards. Permission to undertake the study was obtained from the university. Further permission was obtained from the authorities of Haute-Kotto Prefecture of CAR before data collection. [24], indicated that every researcher was ethically sound in order to protect the participants from any physical or psychological harm and treat participants with respect and dignity. Further, before data collection, the researcher attempted to clarify the nature of the study. Participation in the study was, therefore, voluntary and based on informed consent. [25] and [21] posit that a critical issue in every study; is that participants should be granted informed consent.

#### Limitations of the study

In view of the following threats to validity, the researcher claimed an allowable 5% margin of error at the 0.05 level of significance. Measures also were in order to minimize the threats to the validity of the finding of this study. Extraneous Variables that might be beyond the researcher's control was managed by the researcher trying to explicitly explain the real purpose of the study. The researcher emphasized the purpose of the study as only academic; hence requesting the participants to be unbiased in giving responses. The use of research assistants might bring about inconsistencies especially regarding some instrumentations in terms of time and administration, understanding of the items; as well as explanations given to the participants. To minimize this threat, research assistants were prepared through thorough orientations on prior to the actual data collection process.

### DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

#### Response Rate

The data from the study was from 75% from the respondents Even [26] as well as [27] suggests that a response rate of 50% is adequate when quantitative data is manually collected.

**Table 4: Response rate**

Questionnaires distributed	Questionnaires returned	Response rate
101	100	$\frac{100}{101} * 100\% = 99\%$

Source: Primary Data (2021)

The table above indicates that out of 101 questionnaires distributed, only 100 of them were returned and this implies that the response rate was 99% which is relatively good. This implies that the response rate was high.

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**Demographic characteristics of the respondents**

The demographic information was deemed necessary because the researcher wanted to show that respondents with different profile characteristics were represented in the study implying that the findings were not only for a particular group or category of respondents.

**Table 5: Demographic characteristics of respondents**

Main category	Sub-category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	70	70
	Female	30	30
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Marital status	Married	35	35
	Single	65	65
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Education level	Primary	42	42
	Secondary	30	30
	Tertiary	28	28
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Age of respondents	Below 20 years	55	55
	20-39 years	24	24
	40-59 years	12	12
	Above 60 years	9	9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 5 illustrates that in respect to gender, the males were 70 (70%) and female 30 (30%), this implies that the number of men was higher than that of women since men are usually the majority in military. This is because when fleeing, it is usually men who go with their ex-combatant children to the military. This is in line with [28] who noted that ex-combatant children continue to face risks to their lives, safety, security and dignity. They are disproportionately at risk of gross abuses of human rights, especially women and unaccompanied ex-combatant children. Furthermore, sexual and gender-based violence is widespread within the reintegration and recovery camp. Many ex-combatant children from minority clans suffer pervasive discrimination since they often lack vital clan protection and connections despite the existence of NGOs [29]. On the marital status of the respondents, the majority respondents were single who constituted 65(65%) of the respondents of the study while the married respondents were 35% respondents. The study findings from the study indicate that data was attained from both married and unmarried respondents, information on responsibility grounds is not doubted for the purpose of the study. With regard to education level, 42 (42%) were at primary school level, 30 (30%) were at secondary school level, 28 (28%) were at tertiary level. This implies that most of the respondents were relatively educated and thus they might be very well informed about protection of rights of ex-combatant children. The results indicate that the information was attained respondents across a wider education grid, it nevertheless implies that the data is attained from moderately informed respondents of the study. In the aspect of age of respondents, 55(55%) were aged between 20-39, 12(12%) were between 40-59 years and lastly, only 9 (9%) were above 60 years. This implies that the majority of the respondents were middle aged adults i.e., between 20-39 years. The results indicate that the information was attained from mature and understanding respondents, therefore information attained from the study is deemed fit for the study since the providers of the information are mature and understanding in nature.

The objective of the research was to assess the effect of family support interventions on re-integration of ex-combatant children in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the CAR. In order to fulfill the objective, the researcher first conducted a descriptive statistics of the study based on mean and standard deviations for family support interventions and thereafter conducted simple linear regression analysis to determine the effect of family service interventions on re-integration of ex-combatant children in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the CAR.

Descriptive statistics of family support interventions in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the CAR

**Table 6: Descriptive statistics of family support interventions in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the CAR**

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
Family support Services providers support the establishment of security facilities to ex-combatant children	2.701	1.389	Fairly good
There is family psychological support Services to ex-combatant children	2.908	1.409	Fairly good
Families provide shelters to ex-combatant children for their safety	3.115	1.338	Fairly good
Humanitarians provide to families funding for welfare of ex-combatant children	3.007	1.241	Fairly good
Humanitarian shelters' services are well provided to ex-combatant children.	3.093	1.349	Fairly good
The distribution of tailoring machine to ex-combatant children is fully implemented	2.948	1.209	Fairly good
The government of CAR supports ex-combatant children demobilization	3.474	1.357	Fairly good
<b>Overall means</b>	<b>3.035</b>	<b>.456</b>	<b>Fairly Good</b>

**Source: Field data survey, 2021**

The study results concerning the descriptive analysis of the Family support Services on Economic re-integration provided to the ex-combatant children in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the CAR, based on the mean response, the average mean was 3.035, SD=.456 indicating that family support Services provided to the ex-combatant children in CAR were quite fair. Although some response items present negative responses, the average reveal that family support Services in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the CAR has reached some levels.

The first item set to determine whether family support Services providers support the establishment of security facilities to ex-combatant children, the mean response was 2.701, the standard deviation was 1.389 interpreted as fairly good. The findings for the study indicate that there are limited in fair mode of the family services in Central African Republic. On whether there are family psychological support services to ex-combatant children, the mean response was 2.908, the standard deviation was 1.409 interpreted as fairly good meaning that there is limited psychological support to the children. On whether there are families provide shelters to ex-combatant children for their safety, the mean response was 3.115, the standard deviation was 1.338 interpreted as fairly good. The results indicate that there are some shelters for the children. On whether humanitarians provide to families funding for welfare of ex-combatant children, the mean response was 3.007, the standard deviation was 1.241 interpreted as fairly good meaning that there is some minimal funding provide to the children in the community of Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the CAR. Findings on whether humanitarian shelters' services are well provided to ex-combatant children, the mean responses were 3.093, the standard deviation was 1.349 interpreted as fairly good meaning that

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there are humanitarian shelter services in the children environments in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the CAR. On the distributions of tailoring machine to ex-combatant children is fully implemented, the mean response was 2.948, the standard deviation was 1.209 interpreted as fairly good meaning that there are tailored mechanisms for the ex-combatants in the communities. On whether the government of CAR supports ex-combatant children demobilization, the mean response was 3.474, the standard deviation was 1.357 interpreted as fairly good meaning that there is support of the communities in demobilizations. The data collected based on the field findings on the third objective is presented in the regression analysis below.

**Table 7: Regression analysis on Family support Services and re-integration of ex-combatant children in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the CAR.**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.164 <sup>a</sup>	.027	.024	.46197

a. Predictors: (Constant), Family Service Interventions

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.174	1	2.174	10.185	.002 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	78.749	369	.213		
	Total	80.923	370			

a. Dependent Variable :ex-combatant children.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Family Service Interventions

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.481	.117		29.840	.000
	Social Livelihood services	.147	.046	.164	3.191	.002

a. Dependent Variable: Re-integration of ex-combatant children.

**Source: Field data survey, 2021**

Results in table above regarding the effect of Family support interventions on re-integration of ex-combatant children in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the CAR presents the R-square value of 164<sup>a</sup>. The value indicates that family support services affect re-integration of ex-combatant children in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the CAR by 16.4%. The presence of the error estimate reveals that .462 reveal the closer scatter of data. The ANOVA table reveal that there was a significant effect of Family support Services on Economic re-integration provided to the ex-combatant children in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the CAR, and the Sig value of 0.002 indicates that there was a significant effect between social protection services and Economic re-integration provided to the ex-combatant children in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the CAR. Concerning the coefficients, the study revealed that both coefficients of significance are below the level of significance with the constant at 000 and that of Family support Services was at 0.000. The results imply that there is a significant effect of social protection services on Economic re-integration provided to the ex-combatant children. The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and concluded that there was a significant

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effect of Family support Services on ex-combatant children in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the CAR. It means that improving the state of social protection services can enhance ex-combatant children in Haute-Kotto Prefecture.

*Economic re-integration has been inspirational in defending the rights of our ex-combatant children; this encouraged the Ex-combatant children to report cases of abuse or violation of their rights, and also encouraged them to always confide in their elders they trust in situations of torture, denial of food, clothes, water and all other basic needs they require.*" (Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the CAR resident, 2021)

In the same scenario, one of the children (an ex-combatant in Haute-Kotto Prefecture) emphasized that:

*"The people working in social organizations normally visit our Reintegration and Recovery Camps to inquire if we are being physically beaten, discriminated or sexually abused by older people in the Reintegration and Recovery Camps especially men..."* (Roger Haoumi (Child)-Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the CAR, 2021)

### DISCUSSION

The study established that Family support Services had an effect on economic re-integration provided to the ex-combatant children in Haute-Kotto Prefecture of the CAR. These findings indicated that there was a significant effect of social protection services on the protection of ex-combatant children of which was undisputable. The findings are in agreement with those of [28] identifying a number of activities as supporting healing by fostering ex-combatant children in a sense of purpose, self-esteem, and identity. These include establishing daily routines such as going to school, preparing food, washing clothes, and working in the fields; providing ex-combatant children with the intellectual and emotional stimulation through structured group activities such as play, sports, drawing, drama and storytelling. The findings are in agreement with those of [10] who found that to be effective in evidence-based programs into a delivery system that improves the workflow and ecology of the school environment. In systemic concatenation with the FCU model, the scope and sequence of family supports align neatly within the context of the PBIS system.

### CONCLUSION

This study concluded that Family Support Services were not enough to respond to the need of the children involved in the armed conflict. In this context therefore, the researcher concluded that limited livelihood led to the poor state of ex-combatant children as parents go unable to access the required resources.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) Finally, the study recommends for the strengthening families and caregivers to be the first line of protection and care for ex-combatant children by growing social support networks, and linking them to economic and social assistance, and other family support systems
- ii) Community sensitization and mobilization towards income generation activities and family acceptance need to be developed and enhanced.
- iii) There is need for an effort to develop mechanisms needed in enabling the integration through tracing of families of the children and or creation of the families for such children in the communities.

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