



## GENDER AND MINE ACTION

The ultimate goal of mine action is to reduce the human, social, economic and environmental impact of landmine/ERW contamination. To comprehensively achieve this goal, the interests, needs and priorities of men and women living in mine-affected communities must be considered. In other words, a gender perspective should be included or “mainstreamed” in all five pillars of mine action. Rather than specifically targeting girls and women, gender-sensitive mine action takes into consideration the different impact landmines have on individuals based on their gender. This ensures better results and that the community as a whole benefits from mine action.

For example, conducting broad based consultations with mine-affected communities on the location of mines/ERW is extremely important for efficient mine action. Due to their different roles and daily tasks, men and women often have access to different information regarding contaminated areas. For instance, men typically have information on areas where they conduct income-generating activities, while women are active in other areas when collecting water, firewood etc. If survey teams only consult community leaders or local authorities and conduct survey activities in homes during the day, crucial information from either boys/men or girls/women may be lost.



women participating in a world vision community meeting in Cambodia

Likewise, both men and women need to be part of the prioritisation process, participate in decision-making about how cleared land will be used and have access to cleared land. To ensure that all members of the community benefit from victim assistance, the mobility and financial restrictions of survivors and their families must be addressed. For example, women may face additional obstacles in reaching rehabilitation centres because they cannot leave their children at home unsupervised. Such gender-related issues should be considered when planning and implementing comprehensive mine action programmes.

Issues of gender in mine action as described above have received increased attention of late. This is due in part to the efforts of organisations like the UN and the Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines to promote a gender-sensitive approach to mine action. While the GICHD does not have a specific gender and mine action programme, it supports gender mainstreaming efforts. The GICHD is currently in the process of ensuring its external programmes and internal policies/processes are gender-sensitive.

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