



Sign of mined area (Cambodia)

inform their operations. Outreach activities could include:

- Finding out which humanitarian/development actors are working in contaminated areas and encouraging them to work in affected areas where communities require assistance.
- Providing regular updates on contamination, casualties and current/planned mine action activities that they can use for planning their assistance programmes.
- Sharing information on the location of damaged infrastructure and inaccessible assets (eg, agriculture, grazing land), communities requiring development assistance and vulnerable groups engaging in high-risk behaviour¹¹ (eg, foraging or farming on suspected hazard areas).
- Sharing information about available mine action services, including timeframes and processes for requesting mine action assistance.
- Consulting with relevant stakeholders on priority areas for survey/clearance.
- Participating in relevant coordination bodies at national and sub-national levels.
- Considering integrated mine action and development projects.

ADDED VALUE OF USING GENDER-SENSITIVE APPROACHES

Gender equality is a precondition for sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty. All development programmes, whether focused on mine action or other sectors, benefit from gender mainstreaming. Given that mine/ERW contamination affects women, men, boys and girls in different ways, there

are clear advantages in ensuring that mine action operations are carried out using participatory, inclusive and gender-sensitive approaches.¹²

As a result of their gender-specific mobility patterns, roles and responsibilities, women, girls, boys and men often hold different information on areas that are contaminated, or suspected of being contaminated, in their communities. Vital, life-saving information may be lost if not all groups in an affected community are consulted during information gathering activities.

Gender-specific mobility patterns also mean that women, men, boys and girls benefit in different ways from released land. For example, if women and girls are responsible for collecting water and firewood, and water points and forested areas are prioritised for land release, then they are less likely to encounter mine/ERW-related risks while carrying out these activities. Similarly, in countries where young boys are often responsible for herding animals, they are more likely to benefit from the prioritisation of grazing/pasture land.

In some contexts, women can be hard to reach when implementing surveys as a result of gender-based discrimination. This means that their priorities – and frequently the priorities of their children – may be excluded. Depending on the cultural context, it may be appropriate to consult women and men separately, as well as to hold separate meetings with other vulnerable groups (eg, people with disabilities, minority ethnic groups) to ensure that their needs are taken into account.

Collecting high quality sex and age-disaggregated data (SADD)¹³ enables mine action organisations to:

- Monitor community participation in data-gathering meetings and handover ceremonies, to ensure a full range of stakeholders are consulted.
- Clarify who has access to and control over resources, labour patterns, the distribution of benefits between and among women, girls, boys and men, and who is most at risk from mines/ERW.
- Identify and understand the different capabilities, responsibilities, needs and priorities of different groups.
- Mainstream gender throughout project phases (planning, design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation) by assessing the different implications for women, men, boys and girls of any planned actions, and taking steps to prevent gender inequality.
- Provide concrete evidence for the formulation of policies and measures and design of projects; if statistics do not reflect the relevant gender

issues, policies and measures might not be appropriately tailored and could perpetuate or worsen inequalities.

- Ensure that employment opportunities are accessible to all individuals within the community to promote equal access to income generation and to facilitate the consultation of women, girls, boys and men in a community.

LAND, CONFLICT AND MINE ACTION: IMPORTANCE OF A 'DO NO HARM' APPROACH

Landmines and other remnants of conflict typically block access to, and use of, agricultural land, public services (such as schools and clinics), markets and infrastructure, among other things. The intrinsic value of mine action cannot be disputed in that it removes these barriers, saves lives and limbs, and restores safe access to key assets, in particular land.

However, in conflict-affected contexts, where land and access to other natural resources are common drivers of conflict, releasing land, which was previously inaccessible, changes its status and value. Doing so can have unintentional negative consequences. Mine action operations can potentially:

- Undermine food security, if clearance methods or their timing negatively impacts topsoil or damages crops.
- Lead to competition and disputes over ownership and use of land.
- Increase the likelihood of land being 'grabbed' from the vulnerable by powerful elites or commercial interests.
- Create or exacerbate conflict if clearance is done in areas where land ownership or boundaries are disputed.
- Reinforce or exacerbate gender inequalities in accessing land if women's rights to land tenure and use are not recognised and respected.
- Put mine action staff and equipment at risk, if caught in the middle of a land-related dispute.
- Suffer delays to survey/clearance operations if operations need to be suspended as a result of a land-related dispute.

Mine action organisations need to ensure that they adopt the humanitarian principle of 'do no harm'¹⁴. This involves:

- Understanding the operational context – for example, finding out who has what rights to the land, how land is, and will be, used post-clearance.