USING MINE ACTION EXPERTISE TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND REDUCE VIOLENCE

Drawing on experience gained in a range of conflict-affected contexts, several mine action organisations are using their technical expertise and capacity to go beyond clearing mines and ERW, and are addressing wider threats to security posed, for example, by small arms and light weapons (SALW) and ammunition. This is largely in response to observed needs on the ground and direct requests for assistance made by national authorities in affected countries.

Mine action organisations are well-placed to respond to wider security issues given their weapons and munitions experience. They are able to work in unstable contexts, alongside security actors such as the police and military. Using experience from implementing mine action programmes, many operators have been able to establish good working relationships with authorities, which have helped to facilitate the establishment of programmes that address wider security challenges.\textsuperscript{16}
Examples of the range of programmes being undertaken include:

- **SALW collection and destruction activities** which may be part of wider Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) efforts in a country. Several organisations (NGOs, UN and multilateral agencies) are working with national police and militaries to develop national capacities to collect arms that have been turned in through DDR programmes or criminal operations, and safely destroy them using mobile equipment or through weapons destruction facilities. Some are also providing assistance in the development of SALW registries and armoury storage and management.

- **Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) programmes** which typically involve several components: developing national standards; strengthening ammunition management capacity; safe destruction of excess, degraded and unstable ammunition and surplus or damaged arms; and the construction or refurbishment of ammunition management stores and armouries.

- **SALW risk awareness education campaigns** delivered through the media, schools and community institutions to promote awareness about the risks of SALW and risky behaviour. In some contexts, eg Somaliland, awareness-raising also includes delivering messages about how to store personal arms and ammunition safely.

- **Community safety programmes** that involve the development of community safety plans in association with conflict-affected communities in rural and urban contexts. The delivery of a range of activities identified as priorities by local communities and authorities and in national plans, such as: conflict management education, SALW risk awareness, dialogue meetings and enhanced cooperation with security providers, and capacity development of community and local government institutions.

In several mine/ERW-affected countries, mine action has also contributed to peace-building and DDR programmes through the provision of training and stable employment to demobilised ex-combatants. For example, lessons learned from Afghanistan indicate that by training former ex-combatants in mine action and providing them with alternate employment options, they are less likely to return to armed conflict.

Mine action efforts to strengthen the capacity of the police and military in mine action, as well as ammunition safety management and SALW control, also contribute to wider efforts to reform the security sector in affected countries.
As mine action typically involves the military or police working alongside civilian actors such as UN/international agencies, NGOs and commercial operators, these programmes can help to restore trust in security providers as well as the state as a whole.

ENDNOTES

1 See also Figure 5, The Architecture of Mine Action: Actors, Arenas, and Linkages in Chapter 4, Management of mine action programmes.

2 Commitment in this context refers to the willingness of a government to assume national ownership of the mine action programme and actually deliver the required mine action services.

3 Outputs in this context refer to the products, capital goods and services which result from a mine action intervention, for example the number of square kilometres of land that is released. Outcomes refer to the likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention’s outputs. Outcomes are related to the ‘effectiveness’ of an intervention.


5 See Chapter 7, section on Community liaison 2.2.3 for a more in-depth examination of community liaison.

6 For a more in depth discussion of priority-setting, see the series of Issue Briefs produced by GICHID on Priority-setting in Mine Action.

7 A tolerable level of risk is defined in IMAS 01.10 as ‘risk which is accepted in a given context based on the current values of society.’


10 For example, see the Landmines and Livelihoods Surveys undertaken in Afghanistan and Yemen, which were conducted by GICHID in association with the Afghan and Yemen national mine action centres.

11 Risk education can help to address high-risk behaviour, but in stable communities where certain groups engage in high-risk behaviours as a livelihood necessity, it is helpful to share this information with other NGOs that may be able to offer alternative livelihood strategies. During Risk Reduction Education (as opposed to MRE) safe alternative and risk mitigation behaviours that are appropriate for the context are explored.

12 See for example: UNMAS (2010) UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes; and the Gender and Mine Action Programme (GMAP).
Chapter 9

IMAS 5.10 on Information Management encourages data collection that is disaggregated based on sex and age.

The ‘do no harm’ framework was developed in the early 1990s by several international and local NGOs who were interested in looking at how the assistance given in conflict settings interacts with the conflicts. The ‘do no harm’ framework was developed to help NGOs providing assistance better understand the conflict environments where they work, and to deliver assistance in a way that ensures better outcomes. See Collaborative Learning Projects (2004). The ‘Do No Harm’ Framework for Analyzing the Impact of Assistance on Conflict: A Handbook.


For example, see: Sharmala Naidoo (GICHD) (2012). OAS SALW and Munitions Destruction Programme, Guatemala: Mine Action and Armed Violence Reduction Case Study.


For example, see: See Albert S. Mülli (GICHD) (2012) Handicap International’s SALW Risk Awareness Project in Libya: Mine Action and Armed Violence Reduction Case Study.
