



EORE GAME CHANGERS

EORE implemented by Police forces. © CMAA.

Meet the people in explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) who will not stop until the world is safe.





EORE GAME CHANGERS

MARIO QUIÑONES



Mario Quiñones's journey into Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) began in 2009, by chance. An unexpected encounter at a peacebuilding conference in Cúcuta, Colombia, triggered not only his curiosity, it changed his life. The dangers of explosive ordnance he discovered in his home region, Norte de Santander, inspired him to take action. More than that, mine action became his mission. Since that day, Mario has dedicated his career to empowering local communities and creating innovative, sustainable solutions. His relentless commitment to localization, capacity building, and integrated approaches has helped shape the future of risk education, ensuring its long-term impact in conflict-affected areas.



With the DRC EORE teams, after a day of awareness sessions in communities affected by explosive ordnance in Maiduguri, Nigeria, 2019 © Mario Quiñones.

From chance to calling, there is only a step — or perhaps an opportunity waiting to be seized. At least for Mario. Confronted with the reality of the devastating effects of explosive ordnance in his country, he felt naturally compelled to make a difference when he was recruited by the national advocacy and mine action organization, Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas (CCCM). Little did he know then that he would soon meet his mentor, the advocate, Luz Estela Navas, and find his bliss. Mario was not only taught the technical aspects of risk education but also the importance of connecting with communities. Luz Estela's

passion for supporting those affected by conflict inspired him, shaping what would become a transformative approach to risk education. He would focus on localization and integration to maximize impact. Mario understood there and then that he would work for and with the people.

Feeling he had been part of a constructive change in Colombia, Mario moved to Nigeria in 2019, embracing his first international role. Although the countries are different in many ways, he felt that he could adapt and apply what he had learnt to a new context. With the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), he refined his approach, focusing on practical solutions

that made risk education more accessible and efficient. He worked with volunteers, local teachers, students, and community leaders to ensure that risk education reached even the most remote areas, rarely accessible for formal teams.

“Our goal was to empower communities to protect themselves,” Mario explains. **“By working with people on the ground, we were able to deliver EORE in ways that were relevant to their daily lives.”**



When Mario transitioned to DRC's Yemen program, he was faced with a new challenge: underfunding. As EORE is rarely considered a priority, he saw the constraint as an opportunity to innovate. By integrating risk education with other essential activities, such as protection services along migration routes, Mario and his team ensured that risk education reaches those who need it most and framed EORE within an educational context, focusing on the safety of children on their way to school. This approach not only led to a fully funded project but also positioned risk education as a critical component of broader humanitarian efforts.

For Mario, localization is key to long-term success. In Yemen, he spent the past three years mentoring his colleague Faten, who has now taken over his role as NTS/EORE Manager. This is the first time, a Yemeni national holds this position, a milestone that reflects Mario's commitment to building local capacity.

“ We are very proud of this process, she is a very qualified woman that has all the expertise, experience, accreditation, she deserves to be in this position.”

“ I would like the donors to be able to see those new initiatives made by volunteers in the local contexts that are now under development”

Mario stresses, “they are working and they are approaching the communities that are in need.”

Sharing thoughts with fellow EORE/NTS Officer and Assistant colleagues after a training Mario gave. In the photo appear the two gender focal points that helped promote the concepts of gender and mainstreaming in mine action. 2023, Mocha, Yemen. DRC. © Mario Quiñones.



Having breakfast with community leaders from Taiz, Yemen, before starting an EORE session. Adapting the EORE to local contexts is essential for building trust and community liaison. 2023, Taiz, Yemen. DRC. © Mario Quiñones.

With Faten leading the way, Mario feels happy to move to the next step in his journey: Ukraine.

Reflecting on his work, Mario takes pride in the progress achieved in each country he's served, yet his focus remains firmly on the future and the next steps ahead. His strong belief in the possibility for change is contagious.

Mario's journey is a testament to the impact of practical, community-centered solutions. More than that, his work has saved lives, built local capacities, and shaped the future of risk education in ways that go beyond borders and budgets. Through his efforts, he has shown that with the right approach, even the most complex challenges can be met with lasting results.

“ The only way we can innovate in the sector is by sharing experience and committing.”

“ Reinforcing advocacy is key. Let's be the echo of its benefits.”

DARA SENG



Dara Seng had another life before mine action. He was a teacher in Cambodia. There, he found his passion for education and community engagement. The transition into Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) thus felt natural. It reflects his deep commitment to ensuring the safety of his fellow Cambodians. Today, he is Deputy Director of the Public Relations Department at the Cambodian Mine Action Authority (CMAA) and coordinates risk education activities across the country. More than anything, Seng cares about saving lives and wants to promote safer behaviour to truly make a difference.



Born and raised in a country plagued by remnants of war, Seng is deeply committed to the people. His people. His careful choice of words and the seriousness with which he seeks to innovate in his role at the CMAA is moving; because he has first-hand experience of the dangers that still lie hidden in Cambodian territory. So, he believes in the power of collaboration and the lasting impact of effective, localized risk education. Seng works closely with government agencies, international organizations, and local communities to ensure that information reaches those most in need. He is responsible for overseeing the planning, communication, and effectiveness of risk education campaigns, making sure they align with Cambodia's National Mine Action Strategy, which prioritizes reducing the number of accidents in rural areas where the threat from explosive ordnance remains high.

Seng's passion for risk education stems from his belief that it is not just about education — it's about saving lives. That is the very reason why he chose this path.

“ I believe that you can save people's lives through providing awareness to the impacted population, especially in the rural areas through raising awareness to support behavioral changes.”



EORE Assessment in 2022. © CMAA.

One of Seng's key accomplishments has been improving the coordination of risk education efforts in Cambodia. He played a pivotal role in establishing the Technical Reference Group, a national working group that brings together operators and development partners to share best practices and enhance the effectiveness of risk education activities. This group meets several times a year to ensure that Cambodia's approach to risk education is not only aligned with international standards, such as the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), but also tailored to the unique challenges faced by local communities.

Although, risk education has been provided for over 30 years in Cambodia, Seng does not feel it is over, the sector needs to innovate.

“EORE is still needed in Cambodia,” he says. “We must adopt different strategies and approaches because mines and explosives continue to cause accidents and endanger our affected populations daily.”



EORE Training of Trainers (ToT) session provided to the Police. © CMAA.

Looking ahead, Seng is especially focused on the role of risk education in managing residual contamination. He recognizes that even after clearance operations are completed, the risk of encountering explosive ordnance remains. To address this, he advocates for sustained partnerships with sectors such as education, community development, and law enforcement to ensure that risk education continues and that communities have the tools they need to report residual contamination.

Seng is also a strong proponent of localization in mine action. He highlights the work of organizations like the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) and the Cambodian Red Cross, which have developed networks of community volunteers who not only provide risk education but also serve as vital links between affected communities and clearance operators.

As Cambodia prepares to host the 5th Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty in November, Seng sees it as an opportunity for the country to showcase its progress and strengthen international collaboration.

“This is a big deal for Cambodia,” he says. “We’ve come a long way, and we’ll be able to highlight the progress. The Review Conference will be an important platform for us to share our experiences and an opportunity to engage in international collaborations to continue these life-saving initiatives.”

EORE GAME CHANGERS **DARA SENG**

This has been Seng's driving force: remembering where he comes from, his work as a teacher, and why he cares so much. He has remained dedicated to one core principle throughout his career: the belief that education, when carried out with the right partners and the communities, can transform lives. More than that, it can change the world.



EORE Media Campaign 2023. © CMAA.



EORE GAME CHANGERS

MYRIAM

Myriam's story with Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) is one of a kind, unexpected from the start but so full of meaning looking back. She was destined to be a game changer in mine action, because it was already in her blood. From the corporate world, she transitioned to humanitarian action with dedication, resilience and deep personal connection to the reality of conflict affected communities. As a Community Liaison Technical Advisor with Mines Advisory Group (MAG), she contributes to work towards standardization in risk education through integrated innovative approaches with one goal: giving people the tools to rebuild their lives.



Colleagues from MAG's different Middle East programmes participate in a practical exercise on mapping hazardous areas — regional NTS training, Iraq, MAG. ©Myriam

Visiting CL and NTS activities in Ras Baalbek, Lebanon, MAG. ©MAG



Myriam was born in Beirut, Lebanon, a city marked by the scars of conflict. For long, she was no stranger to the impact of war, but was not fully aware of what wars leave behind. It wasn't until much later, when her mother, working with MAG, began sharing stories about explosive ordnance contamination and safety messages, that Myriam's understanding of the long-term effects of war truly deepened. This stark realization planted the seeds for her eventual pivot away from her initial career in the corporate world.

“My mother had many inspiring stories, and no matter how tired she was I could see her eyes sparkle. One day, I was ready. I wanted to wake up feeling I could contribute to the world in a more meaningful way.”

Initially, she ventured into the Shelter and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sectors, supporting development and humanitarian projects, but in 2017, an opportunity with MAG in Iraq opened a new chapter in her life. “What an eye-opener it was,” she recalls of her first expatriate experience. Working as a Community Liaison Manager, she came face to face with the realities of explosive ordnance contamination and its devastating effects on communities. In one powerful example, she recalls a visit to a village in Iraq, recently liberated from ISIS.





MAG team provides EORE to a new generation of school children in Sri Lanka. © Myriam.

“It was very eerie, it was the first time I felt it in my stomach. I could feel that life had stopped.”

The village was riddled with improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and had it not been for MAG's EORE intervention in a school attended by the villages' displaced children, many families would have returned home to a "death trap." Her first experience was a door opening to a world she didn't know enough of, but that she's very proud to be a part of now.

Over the past two years, as a Community Liaison Technical Advisor with MAG, Myriam has supported mine action programmes across continents, from Africa to East Asia and beyond. Her role allows her to not only influence global mine action strategies but also remain grounded in the realities of the field.

“One of the reasons I love this job is that I can think globally but act locally, ensuring that what we do is relevant and adaptable to the specific needs of each community we work with,” she explains.

Myriam emphasizes that MAG's pioneering work in the community liaison approach to mine action is one of the keys to its success. It's about more than just clearing land; MAG ensures that communities are empowered with the knowledge to stay safe, and engaged in the identification, prioritization, and delivery of interventions that affect their lives and futures. Moreover, she believes that holistic collaborations and enhancing integration of EORE across various sectors are essential to respond to the increasing



University students receive an EORE session in Ukraine ahead of their summer break, MAG. © Myriam.

complexities of conflict affected populations' needs. She insists that building trust with field teams, working closely together, and engaging them in EORE development is crucial for adapting to changing contexts and fostering innovation: the teams are multi-skilled, making them highly versatile. They do it all; from assessing needs, establishing solid relationships with communities, authorities, and stakeholders, delivering EORE, to supporting clearance, supporting referrals and assessing impacts.

“They are the first in the field and the last out,” she explains proudly.

This collaborative environment, where diverse perspectives are embraced, is what fuels meaningful change. Myriam's journey is equally rich and varied. Her personal experiences have deepened her understanding of human suffering

and strengthened her empathy, while her corporate background has equipped her to lead ambitious global projects. Despite her accomplishments, she remains humble, emphasizing the need for continuous growth and adaptation; because what matters is to inspire, think creatively, and explore what truly works best.



Leading and co-delivering a regional NTS training of trainers for the Middle East Region — Iraq, MAG © MAG



EORE GAME CHANGERS

FURAT AL-MALKAWI



Furat Al-Malkawi radiates joy and a passion for life. Her dedication to her work brings hope and opens doors wide to new possibilities in the field of explosive ordnance risk education (EORE). In Syria and beyond, she looks for every opportunity to innovate, empower others, and ensure critical information reaches affected communities. In just four years, Furat has grown tremendously as a professional, now making a meaningful impact in North-West Syria as a Program Officer with the HALO Trust. More than just a dedicated advocate, Furat is a true leader — one who inspires others, finds the right words and true intention, making people stop and listen.

Furat is what one would call “a natural”. Although her journey with the HALO Trust began only four years ago, her path towards becoming a leader in EORE was paved much earlier. After completing her studies in social work, she joined the Lazord Fellowship, a program designed to equip graduates with professional skills through mentoring and job placements. That’s when she discovered the HALO Trust. Their collaboration marked the start of her career in mine action — a field where her passion for connecting with groups and communities found a new dimension.

“ I vividly remember my first experience working directly on EORE,” Furat recalls. “It was months after I joined HALO, and I was asked to support teams using focus group discussions. That was when I realized the power of integrating social work principles with EORE.”



She soon became a driving force behind refining Monitoring & Evaluation tools, collaborating with HALO's global team to enhance pre- and post-tests, and developing focus group methods to better capture the social norms and behaviors of at-risk communities in North-West Syria. Today, Furat supports EORE projects in the region, ensuring their implementation with a focus on innovation and community engagement. Her work involves developing new approaches and materials that resonate with the local context. She remains careful to avoid awareness fatigue, by combining methodologies and using multiple approaches for a greater impact. Her goal is not only to share messages, it is to generate behavioural change and transform lives.

“EORE offers a unique space for innovation,” she explains. “It’s not just about educating people, but about building trust and engaging communities in multiple ways that empower them to protect themselves and others.”

Her educational background has been invaluable in shaping her approach. She emphasizes that EORE, much like social work, is about understanding the human experience, building relationships, and fostering change from within.



Lazord fellowship programme annual international conference. The Lazord Fellowship is a program that equips recent graduates with professional and civic skills through year-long job placements, mentoring, and training. Furat's placement was with the HALO Trust as a Junior M&E Officer. After her fellowship year, HALO offered her a position. © The HALO Trust.



EORE session by HALO teams in northwest Syria. ©The HALO Trust.

The trust that is achieved directly influences both collective and individual safety. This became particularly clear to her in the aftermath of the 2023 earthquake that struck Southern Turkey and Syria. Furat and her team had to rapidly adapt their emergency response for displaced people who might travel through contaminated areas. The teams themselves were impacted by the earthquake, so they had to rely on previous focus group results and materials that could quickly reach communities.

“It was a challenging time, but seeing how the team came together made me incredibly proud.”

In June 2023, Furat's expertise gained global recognition when she was elected co-chair of the EORE Advisory Group. This new role has broadened her perspective, inspiring her to think beyond local contexts while bringing her deep understanding of her region, language, and culture to a new stage. Furat is a dedicated professional, ensuring that she contributes as much as her peers. Alongside them, she feels honored and excited to shape the future of risk education and to highlight its role as a core pillar of mine action. Furat embodies that future. Her commitment to making risk education accessible, culturally sensitive, and community-driven continues to define her work. She has the determination and skills to overcome any challenge, and one thing is certain: she will not stop until the world is safe.

MAMADY GASSAMA



In front of the ICRC car, Mamady is about to take the road for a field visit in Casamance. ©ICRC

Mamady Gassama has lived many lives. He has worked in finance and served as an interpreter. He also had a life changing experience at the age of 14, which would in time reveal his true calling. Mamady, like many others in Senegal, had a landmine accident; but unlike some, he was fortunate to survive. This pivotal moment became a catalyst for change and marked the start of his journey into humanitarian work. He founded and volunteered for ASVM (Senegalese Association for Mine Victims), a groundbreaking achievement in a country where risk education was nonexistent. Since then, he has made a significant impact in transforming the field. His unwavering commitment to integrating survivors into mine action efforts, alongside his emphasis on sustainable, localized solutions, makes him a true force for change.

Behind a somewhat serious expression, Mamady's eyes gleam with passion. He is inspired and inspiring, as his life is a story to be told. He is no stranger to the devastating effects of explosive ordnance (EO). Hailing from Ziguinchor in the Casamance region, his life took a dramatic turn when he became a mine survivor. He had heard about mine accidents, but in 1998, without risk education, people did not know what behaviour to adopt. Rather than letting this tragedy define him, he harnessed his experience to shape his life purpose: dedicating his time and

energy to prevent others from enduring the same fate. In 2005, alongside other mine survivors, he co-founded ASVM, an organization that would play a key role in making risk education a reality in Senegal.

“I'm motivated by bringing lifesaving messages to people. As a mine survivor, I don't want to see people suffer the way I did.”





Meeting with the Burundi Delegation with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. © ICBL

Mamady's trauma became his strength, his driving force. He recognized the critical need for risk education and community outreach, especially in a region where the too frequent and high number of mine accidents resulted from a lack of awareness. It was time to act and make a difference. Mamady and his community volunteers used their own stories to highlight the harsh realities of contamination. Their efforts have contributed to a decrease in accidents, year after year. Since 2017, not a single child has fallen victim to a mine in the country.

Initially, ASVM was created without any external support or funding, but its efforts soon caught the attention of international organizations like UNICEF and Handicap International (HI), ICRC, ICBL etc... Despite a long-lasting partnership with HI, funding still remains a challenge, as gaps can last up to two years. However, Mamady's motivation never falters. He brings forward innovative approaches to ensure the organization's continued presence in the field. One of his strategies for overcoming the financial uncertainties has been to train local community members as "relais communautaires," or community focal points. These individuals live near affected villages and can deliver risk education when and where it is mostly needed.

“It is better to be in the field to promote risk education. When people see us with our disability, they understand that what we are talking about is a reality.”

EORE GAME CHANGERS MAMADY GASSAMA

“Even if we don't have funding, they do dissemination, and are working closely with the community,” Mamady explains. “People trust them as experienced supports in the area.”

Mamady is now a Weapon Contamination Field Officer for ICRC sub-delegation where he advocates for an integrated, multidisciplinary approach to EO management. Beyond delivering safety messages, Mamady and his team have implemented complementary measures, such as constructing wells to prevent people from venturing into contaminated areas in search of water and supporting alternative livelihoods, like oyster fishing, to reduce exposure to dangerous agricultural lands. He also emphasizes the crucial importance of integrating risk education into national programs, as true localization cannot be achieved without this support.

“You are not just delivering the message; you are saving lives.”

Mamady is a survivor, who carries with him a unique kind magic marked by dedication and resilience, which he shares with those around him. People see him for who he truly is, welcoming him into their homes with respect and admiration for his work. They listen to his powerful words, because, above all, they carry his love for life. And that is the most profound message he can share.



Installing EORE posters in Diocadou, Ziguinchor, in 2018. © ICRC



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