

Gender and Landmines

from Concept to Practice



Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines

Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines

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Preface

There is no long-term security without development. There is no development without security. And no society can long remain secure, or prosperous, without respect for human rights and the rule of law.¹

Landmines continue to constitute a barrier for development in more than 80 countries and territories worldwide, affecting the lives of women, men, girls and boys in the communities long after the conflict is over. Key land is being blocked and access to services limited, creating obstacles for livelihood activities and not allowing people to work themselves out of poverty.

Women, men, girls and boys are affected differently by the threat posed by the presence of landmines in their communities. Gender impacts the likelihood of becoming a victim of landmines, accessing medical care, reintegrating into society after being injured, and accessing mine risk education.

There is growing awareness within the mine action sector that including a gender perspective to its activities will not only allow an inclusive approach to gender equality, but also make mine action have greater and wider impact. Various mine action actors and stakeholders have developed and adapted gender policies resulting in fruitful and inspiring initiatives within different pillars of mine action. However, improvements in terms of gender equality in one area of mine action are not necessarily being replicated into others, and there are still many gaps to fill. Standards, for example, still do not include gender sensitive data or underline that women, men, girls and boys may be affected to various extent and in different ways by landmines.

This publication will show that when a gender perspective is applied on mine action, all actors generally benefit. It will emphasise how little it takes to gender mainstream, and how gender is doable by small means.

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Coordinator Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines



¹ The address by then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the United Nations Association of the United Kingdom, Central Hall, Westminster, United Kingdom, 31 January 2006.

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The main editing was undertaken by Ami Evangelista Swanepoel, New York. Comments and feedback were provided by Justina Demetriades at BRIDGE Institute, Catherine Cecil and Kristen Rasmussen at International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) in Cambodia, Amy Delneuve at the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in Laos and Justin Brady from UNMAS, New York. Substantial input has also been provided by staff from Geneva Call. As this publication also is available in French and Spanish, translations have been carried out by Cyril Amberg (French) and Maria Pares (Spanish). Technical support provided by Stefano Campa (layout).

This publication is moreover the result of a consultation with 20 key actors within gender and mine action. The content and layout of this publication were discussed among a network during a workshop² organised by the Swiss Campaign in January 2008 and during the following consultative editing process.

Last but not least, this publication would not have been possible without the input from the 80 persons interviewed in the five countries studied, the 66 organisations who participated in the electronic consultation and the organisations that, through their successful gender initiatives in the field, provided the Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines with inspiring good practices.

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² At the workshop in Geneva on the 15th of January 2008, the following organisations were represented: Bradford University, BRIDGE Institute, Geneva Call, Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), International Women's Development Agency (IWDA), Landmine Action, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO), the Swiss Federal Department for Foreign Affairs, United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF, United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UNINSTRAW) and UNMAS.

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Abbreviations

APM	Anti-personnel landmine
CCCC	Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Pakistan
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
HALO	Hazardous Area Life-Support Organisation
IASC	The Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICBL	International Campaign to Ban Landmines
IKMAA	Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
IND	National Demining Institute, Mozambique
IWDA	International Women's Development Agency
LMAD	Linking Mine Action and Development
LSN	Landmine Survivors Network
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MAG	Mines Advisory Group
MRE	Mine Risk Education
MSSU	Mozambique Social Solidarity Unity
NCDR	National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation, Jordan
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NMAC	National Mine Action Centre
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
NSA	Non-State Actor
OSAGI	Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues
PKK	Kurdistan Workers Party
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SPLA/M	Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement
SRSA	Swedish Rescue Services Agency
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNCPRD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNINSTRAW	United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
UNMACC	United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
UNMEE	United Nations Mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Background and Objectives

The Gender and Mine Action Programme

In December 2006, the Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines (hereafter “the Swiss Campaign”) launched the programme “Improving the effectiveness of mine action through initiatives to support and encourage the inclusion of the gender perspective”. The long-term objective of the programme is to:

[...] contribute very significantly to the reduction of suffering faced by landmine victims, survivors, their families and communities and those threatened by the presence of landmines. It will also increase the number and effectiveness of women receiving and providing advocacy, victim assistance, MRE and demining, whilst integrating and stressing a culturally sensitive approach to the feasibility and benefit of doing so in each individual situation. The programme objectives complement current efforts within the UN system to integrate a gender perspective throughout mine action projects.³

During 2007, the Swiss Campaign conducted global research on the importance of gender in the impact and effectiveness of mine action (the research process is further described in appendix 1). Through this process the Swiss Campaign gathered data on various gendered aspects of the different pillars of mine action. Mine action builds on the five pillars of demining, mine risk education (MRE), victim assistance, advocacy and stockpile destruction. However, this publication follows the United Nations (UN) Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes⁴, which suggest that there are clear gender aspects of the four first mentioned, leaving out stockpile destruction.⁵

³ The Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines, “Improving the effectiveness of mine action through initiatives to support and encourage the inclusion of the gender perspective”, project document, 2006, p. 9.

⁴ The United Nations Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes (2005) can be downloaded in five languages from: www.mineaction.org/doc.asp?d=370.

⁵ Following UN’s Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes the fifth pillar, stockpile destruction, is excluded from the analysis as “no relevant gender considerations have yet emerged for inclusion” p. 2.

In its second phase the programme will empower and build the capacity of women's organisations active in mine affected locations, notably in their advocacy activities. The programme will furthermore advocate to governments, as donors and programmers of mine action, on the importance and effectiveness of including a gender perspective in policy-making, programming and funding of mine action.

Objectives

This report studies the significance of gender in the impact and the effectiveness of mine action. It aims at giving the reader an overview, together with concrete examples, on how gender can be mainstreamed in mine action.

This publication was developed to guide staff within the mine action sector, including policy makers, programmers, donors and implementing organisations, and is available in the three languages English, French and Spanish.

By addressing organisations and bodies on all sides of the relevant spectre, this programme has the potential of building bridges between perspectives that are now far apart and holding internally conflicting priorities.⁶

We believe that involving different stakeholders will help in reaching a common perspective on gender issues and gender mainstreaming within the mine action community. Moreover, a truly successful and effective gender mainstreaming process within the sector is dependent on the practitioners' interest and comprehension of the importance and necessity of gender issues. At the same time donors have a great responsibility; by conditioning funding with reports of how gender mainstreaming efforts have been implemented, mine action programmes simply have to perform. Targeting only one of these actors would only be a half-hearted attempt to integrate gender in mine action programmes.

Cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) will not be specifically discussed. Yet, as there are great similarities between the two sectors, the recommendations and good practices generated in this publication could be applied in the cluster munitions context as well.

⁶ Hilde Wallacher, "Gender mainstreaming in mine action: a critical background analysis", Assistance to Mine affected Communities (AMAC), 2007, p. 6.

Good Practices

During the first phase of the Gender and Mine Action Programme, the Swiss Campaign noted that many positive and practical gender initiatives within mine action had already been carried out by various organisations worldwide. However, these ideas were only sporadically shared among mine action actors. Through a call for contribution, some examples of good practices were collected and are presented in this publication. The call also requested examples of “worst practices”, i.e. initiatives that have not had the expected positive outcome. None of the Swiss Campaign’s collaborating partners submitted examples of unsuccessful projects. The call was distributed globally in three languages (English, French and Spanish) to a variety of actors.

Structure and Design of Publication

This publication consists of four main parts:

- The first segment introduces the reader to the **issue of gender and mine action**; and why gender matters in mine action.
- The second chapter presents the **in-depth country profiles** of Colombia, Lebanon, Mozambique, Sri Lanka and Sudan. These snapshots from five different mine affected countries show how gender mainstreaming is understood, recognised or rejected, implemented and doable.
- The third section discusses **gender in each of the four selected pillars within mine action**. Each pillar discussion includes **good practices** on gender initiatives from the field, collected from the Swiss Campaign’s collaborating partners working within the different areas of mine action. **Suggested recommendations** are presented at the end of each pillar discussion. In order not to duplicate the information given in the Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes, this publication should be seen as a complement providing readers with concrete examples.
- Concluding thoughts and some **suggestions for further research** are found in the fourth and final chapter.

Gender and Mine Action

What is Gender? Basic Concepts

The term “gender” refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations

between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a women or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities.⁷

Gender is not only about **individual identity**, it is also **a way of structuring relations of power**, whether that is within families or in societies at large.⁸ In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities.

It is a common **misunderstanding that gender means women**, and that gender initiatives or projects only target women and girls. This falls short of realising how the impact landmines have on individuals changes based on gender. However, seeing that most societies have a patriarchal structure where the man constitutes the norm, women's initiatives need to be highlighted and brought forward to remedy the imbalance. This is also the rationale why this publication has more photos of women than men, to counter balance typical mine action publications.

Gender is also a language in which one can identify the norms in society.⁹ The term “deminer” often refers to a man, whereas the prefix “female” has to be put in front of the word to indicate that it is a woman clearing a mine affected area. This pattern is visible in other traditionally male-dominated occupations, generating terms such as “female police” or “female fire-fighter”. The Swiss Campaign does not want to reinforce this stereotype terminology, but as it is a commonly used term within the mine action sector, this publication will use the term “female deminer”.

⁷ Definition given by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the UN and is available at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>.

⁸ Carol Cohn, Felicity Hill, Sara Ruddick, “The relevance of gender for eliminating weapons of mass destruction”, *Disarmament Diplomacy*, n°80, Autumn 2005. Available at: <http://www.acronym.org.uk/dd/dd80/80ccfhsr.htm>.

⁹ The recent Human Rights Council Resolution 6-30 “reiterates the need for integrating a gender perspective through using gender-inclusive language in the formulation (...)”, Human Rights Council Resolution 6-30, “Integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system”, December 2007, p.3.

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development.¹⁰

A majority of landmine affected countries have ratified such conventions and treaties that constitute the legislative framework upon which gender equality rests. The following list presents a sample of some of the key principles:

- **The International Bill of Human Rights** (consisting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two Optional Protocols (1966)) recognises the formal equal status of women and men¹¹.
- **The 1978 UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** is the first legally binding international instrument for the protection of women's rights¹².
- **The 1995 Beijing Platform** establishes gender mainstreaming as a major global strategy for the promotion of **gender equality**. Relevant to mine action, § 143e recommends to governments the need for *“recognizing that women and children are particularly affected by the indiscriminate use of antipersonnel landmines [...]”*.

¹⁰ Definition given by OSAGI, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the UN and is available at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>.

¹¹ “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.” in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 2.

¹² When it comes to the five countries the Swiss Campaign studied for this publication, all have ratified CEDAW except for Sudan. Sri Lanka ratified in 1981, Colombia in 1982 and Lebanon and Mozambique in 1997. Solely Lebanon has made reservations to CEDAW (regarding the right to choose a family name).

- **Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security** calls for the full protection of women in wars and conflicts, impunity for gender based violence, and for women’s participation in all levels of peace processes. Regarding mine action, it insists in *“Emphasizing the need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes take into account the special needs of women and girls”*¹³.

The Human Rights Council has adopted a resolution calling for the integration of the human rights of women throughout the UN System. This resolution acknowledges *“the need for a comprehensive approach to the promotion and protection of the human rights of women and the need to integrate a gender perspective in a more systemic way into all aspects of the work of the UN system [...]”*¹⁴.

The strategy for promoting gender equality is gender mainstreaming, which entails ensuring that the analysis of issues and the formulation of policy options are informed by a consideration of gender differences and inequalities, and that opportunities are sought to narrow gender gaps and support greater equality between women and men.¹⁵

Why Gender Matters in Mine Action

Mine action traditionally is divided into five pillars: demining, MRE, victim assistance, advocacy and stockpile destruction. All mine action has a common goal. No matter what activity is carried out this should always be kept in mind; reduce the human, social, economic and environmental impact of landmine contamination. This goal is clear-cut but what might be less clear or given less consideration is that **to be comprehensively fulfilled this goal needs to be gender mainstreamed**.

The relevance of gender has taken time to impose itself clearly to programmers, decision-makers, implementers, donors, and stakeholders working in the area of mine action. The main treaties regulating general mine action activities (the Mine Ban Treaty, also called the Ottawa Convention,¹⁶ and the Conven-

¹³ A simplified version of UNSCR 1325 can be found in appendix 2.

¹⁴ Human Rights Council, Resolution 6-30, “Integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system”, December 2007, p. 2.

¹⁵ OSAGI, “Gender Mainstreaming, an overview”, 2002, p. 1-2.

¹⁶ Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (1997) can be downloaded from its website: www.apminebanconvention.org.

tion on Certain Conventional Weapons¹⁷ and its additional Protocol II) are **gender blind** and do not explicitly discuss the different impact landmines and ERW can have on women, men, girls and boys. Moreover, mine action belongs to a **traditional “masculine”, technical sector**, one of war and weapons, in which the relevance of gender might not appear clearly at first sight.

However, there is now general recognition that there are **significant gender dimensions to mine action**: women, men, girls and boys are affected, and best assisted, in different ways. As stated by Hilde Wallacher:

Landmines don't discriminate on the basis of gender; they will kill or maim anyone unfortunate enough to cross their path, regardless both of gender and of other characteristics. [...] However, mines don't exist in such a vacuum. They are a risk factor which will affect one's life disproportionately, and in different ways, based on one's social status, age and, indeed, gender.¹⁸

As the country profiles and good practices in this publication will show, the inclusion of a gender perspective within the four selected pillars of mine action **reduces the risk of exacerbating gender based injustices and inequalities**. More importantly, mainstreaming gender within mine action policies, programmes and operations guarantees that the contributions, concerns and needs of all components of society are acknowledged and addressed **without bias**, and **benefits the community as a whole** by ensuring a more **coherent, holistic, multi-dimensional response** to the different needs of women, men, girls and boys affected by landmines.

¹⁷ Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (1980).

¹⁸ Hilde Wallacher, “Gender mainstreaming in mine action: a critical background analysis”, p. 1.

The concept of gender might seem difficult to grasp and it is not abundantly obvious how it is to be transformed from lip-service into practice and reality. However, gender does not have to be a complicated or an abstract issue. It often suffices to ask one more question when planning or managing a mine action programme.

An example that comes to mind from another sector is the organisation that was to construct a bridge in a developing country. How could a gender perspective be included? First of all, what type of bridge was to be built? It was a bridge that cars were supposed to cross. The extra question that was needed to integrate a gender perspective was: Who is driving the cars? The answer to that question was “men”. Women and children mainly would use the bridge on foot. So, in order to build a bridge that both boys, girls, women and men could use, it would be wise to also plan for a pedestrian lane.

Chapter 2 – Country Profiles

In this chapter the findings from the Swiss Campaign's field research will be presented country by country. Each country profile (Colombia, Lebanon, Mozambique, Sri Lanka and Sudan) contains information regarding gender awareness and exposure to risk, female employment, demining and surveying, MRE, victim assistance and rehabilitation and are concluded with general findings. All of the countries studied are considered to be heavily contaminated by landmines and ERW. As such they have extensive ongoing mine action activities carried out by a variety of organisations, which may explain why these countries had higher reply frequencies. Despite the higher response rates, the country profiles will not include information on advocacy as there was insufficient material submitted to draw any conclusions.

Some of the views that are presented in this chapter are the views of the respondents and do not necessarily coincide with the Swiss Campaign's views. To present the respondents' views in spite of this is a deliberate choice – it is not the Swiss Campaign's voice but the respondents' voices that are to be heard and communicated.

The research methodology is further described in appendix 1.

Colombia

In Colombia, 14 organisations were interviewed including governmental agencies, international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), women's organisations and local and national actors from civil society. Additionally, five organisations submitted 11 questionnaires in the electronic consultation. The interviews were carried out in July 2007 by an independent consultant.



Map provided courtesy of the ReliefWeb Map Centre, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*

Introduction

Colombia has been a State Party to the Ottawa Convention since 1 March 2001. Within ten years from signing, according to article five in the Treaty, States Parties are obliged to have cleared all confirmed contaminated areas.

States Parties are also, within that time frame, obliged to survey all areas suspected to be mined. Mine clearance is almost exclusively conducted by the Colombian army and a majority of the cleared areas are in military bases.¹⁹ The Colombian government made an official statement at the 8th Meeting of the States Parties in Jordan in November 2007, underlining that they will not be able to meet the deadline of being a mine free country in 2011.

Colombia is considered one of the most anti-personnel landmine (APM) and ERW contaminated countries in the world and the most contaminated in the Americas, as a result of over 40 years of internal conflict. Colombia is one of the few countries where accidents constantly continue to increase. In 2006, 1106 accidents were reported, which is more than twice as many compared to the reported figure in 2003 (530).²⁰ Alarmingly, there have been 23 people injured and six dead during the first 48 days of 2008.²¹

¹⁹ ICBL, Landmine Monitor Report 2007.

²⁰ ICBL, Landmine Monitor Report 2007.

²¹ Press release Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines, 18 February 2008, "Alarming increase of landmine casualties".

*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Gender Awareness and Exposure to Risk

The degree of gender awareness is relatively low among those interviewed in Colombia. With regards to gender in mine action, the links between these two issues have not been examined in depth by many of the interviewed actors, and gender is generally not seen as a priority. As the pillar section on advocacy will show, the Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines has just introduced a programme studying these aspects. One women's organisation reported having other priorities on their agenda: *“female movement is trying to articulate peace processes, land ownership, humanitarian agreements and forced disappearances”*. Other organisations elaborated on the issue by declaring that more important than increasing gender awareness is the abolishment of political and religious discrimination as these play an important role when deciding the allocation of assistance among landmine victims.

On the question of what gender implies and how this perspective might contribute to more effective mine action activities, it was noted that despite the lack of activities on gender, some organisations provided relevant ideas of how to approach gender in mine action. For example, several organisations mentioned the need to evaluate the impact of landmines on women, men, girls and boys in a disaggregated manner.

With regards to gender roles in society, many respondents agreed that patriarchal structures remain in place. Women participate extensively in the political and economical life of the country, though they more rarely hold decision making positions. In contrast, when examining the role of women and men within the family, disparity between both sexes is very present. One respondent put it in these terms: *“our society is still very male dominated (‘machista’)”*.

Few organisations interviewed had ongoing gender initiatives within their mine action activities. Following the Swiss Campaign's electronic consultation the national mine action authority was inspired to develop a programme to sensitise their staff on gender issues. At present they are trying to identify the strategies that should be adopted to achieve this objective. Several organisations stressed that if gender initiatives are going to be more widespread in the mine action sector, donors need to demand more in terms of gender mainstreaming.

Regarding the impact of landmines on the population, the national mine action authority, Antipersonnel Mines Observatory²², stated that the armed forces are the more at risk of being caught in a landmine accident (65%) while civilians are exposed to a lesser extent (35%). The reason for this is that civilians no longer live in most mine affected territories; peasants have left their land and only paramilitaries and governmental armed forces have access to these areas. This has a direct link to gender, as women within the army hold only administrative positions and therefore the affected military population is 100% male. To further explain the difference in risk of landmine injury between women and men, organisations said that men are most likely to be caught by mines because of their daily activities, such as construction, farming and herding livestock. In some places, women perform agricultural tasks and in other places their everyday jobs are limited to household activities, search of water provisions and walking with their children to schools.

Female Employment

On the issue of employment opportunities for both women and men in mine action, several organisations had difficulties with providing reliable data. This was mainly due to the fact that the majority of the employees work on a voluntary basis without salaries. Paid positions require that a satisfactory system is in place from which one can derive basic statistics such as the number of women and men working, and how much they are paid. A labour market in mine action almost totally dependent on unregistered volunteers may not be able to provide these data. With respect to this, one organisation wishing to advocate for the rights of women raised its concern about the lack of relevant data: *“without accurate statistics it is impossible to implement public policies”*.

Demining and Surveying

Colombian surveying teams consist of representatives from governmental bodies, such as the police and the army. Not all groups in the community are represented in these teams. Moreover, the fact that women’s roles within military forces and police bodies are restricted to logistics and administrative affairs implies that survey teams collecting field data are mainly composed of men. In the light of these situations, respondents expressed their regret about the absence of women: *“experience has shown us that females have better attitudes to gather this type of information. They go more into details!”*. The An-

²² In June 2007 the Presidential Program for Integrated Action against Landmines was created, replacing the Antipersonnel Mines Observatory (Landmine Monitor Report 2007).

tipersonnel Mines Observatory recently started to organise meetings with landmine victims to get information from the civil population, both women and men. However, it was difficult to evaluate the quality of the information provided since only two events had been arranged at the time of the interviews. **In the Colombian case, despite the growing number of women participating in the army today it is only men that perform clearance and demining activities.**

Many of the respondents were similarly unsure of the data collected by the Antipersonnel Mines Observatory. There are independent monitoring mechanisms such as the Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines and Landmine Monitor, but these are not considered official data.

Mine Risk Education

Both women and men participate in MRE activities: *“we try to make mixed teams, 50-50, as equal as possible”*, one organisation assured. However, in some cases there was resistance to involve women in these activities, *“including women in these activities is like including them in the conflict”*. Worth mentioning on this point is that women already are involved in the conflict in Colombia, for example with the governmental and paramilitary forces or as victims.

In the Colombian context, the growing national literacy rate of the population (female 92.9%, male 92.8%)²³, especially in rural areas allows for the spread of MRE messages. The majority of children, both girls and boys, can read and write and go to school. However, despite this widespread literacy, parts of the population are still illiterate, making written materials inaccessible. Most respondents agreed that access to radio and television is possible throughout the country allowing MRE messages to also be conveyed through these media. **As in some other countries, MRE materials are developed to fit the local context and do not target any sex in particular.** Organisations develop these materials taking into account different activities carried out in the communities in question. One example mentioned by the respondents are posters showing children picking fruits from trees without knowing that the area could be contaminated by landmines. Whether these children are portrayed as both girls and boys is not mentioned.

With regards to the methods used by trainers to disseminate MRE messages during the sessions, one respondent stressed that organisations need bilingual trainers with the skills to spread MRE in Spanish and in indigenous languages.

²³ UNDP Human Development Report 2007.

Other methods highlighted included interactive games, presentations by witnesses of landmine accidents, the use of mine field models, and the facilitation of workshops.

Women's organisations reported identifying female leaders in the relevant communities who could potentially become future MRE session facilitators. Through these workshops the organisations try to empower other women's capacities within these communities. **As the respondents acknowledged, female participation is undeniably needed in order to generate more accurate information about the socio-cultural and economic context in which they live.** Furthermore, female participation can be useful in identifying other gender related issues and target groups.

Victim Assistance

The research in Colombia indicates that both female and male victims of landmines suffer principally from their incapacity to continue life as before, either because of physical or psychological changes following the trauma. Furthermore, outcomes such as mobility restrictions, stigmatisation and difficulty in taking on economic activities lead survivors to be marginalised and, in some cases, medically under-assisted.

Within Colombia, medical attention is said to be universal and non-discriminatory. However, some respondents observed that some rural areas are not being covered. According to some NGOs most efforts are oriented towards increasing mine awareness and not in the direction of improving victim assistance services. **Despite the fact that services are made available equally to women and men, and despite women having access to both female and male doctors, it seems that women often get less benefit from these services.** Respondents observed that women cut down on their own treatment as treatment implies costs and time away from their family. In contrast, because members of the army (as mentioned earlier, consisting mostly of men) work for the state, they receive more rapid attention from public health institutions than other sectors of the population.

On the question of psychological support provided to survivors, the availability seems to be low despite some NGOs' efforts at the local level. One NGO is working on the identification of female leaders within local communities to create groups that they call "Psychological First Aid". These groups are designed to provide legal and psychological support to female victims of conflict.

One of the major impacts of a landmine accident on an injured person's life - whether male or female - is mobility. A disabled person living in the rural ar-

eas may be unable to travel to the villages where he or she can get medical assistance. Living in cities does not resolve the problems associated with mobility given that many urban structures are not designed to host people with disabilities.

Some respondents brought up **the issue of domestic violence** as they had observed linkages to landmine injuries. One organisation spoke in terms of injured men becoming “*depressed, aggressive and in some cases use violence against women*”. The Swiss Campaign’s research did not include questions on this aspect, and hence further research is needed before any conclusions can be drawn.

General Findings

The degree of gender awareness was relatively low among the interviewed in Colombia. With regards to gender and mine action, these issues’ links had not been examined in depth.

In Colombia the context is different from the other countries studied. This is mainly due to the fact that the army exclusively undertakes demining (not taking into account the clearance that rebel groups undertake).²⁴ Since the army is still considered a male domain where women only work in administration and logistics, one can assume that female deminers in Colombia are rare, if not non-existent, although some organisations affirm that women’s involvement in mine action activities would be more effective because of their knowledge and capacity to collect and gather information.



Credit: Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines

²⁴ As for example the Geneva Call report “Armed non-state actors and landmines, Volume II: A Global report of NSA mine action” from 2006 p. 90 shows, NSAs are undertaking clearance activities in Colombia.

Lebanon

In Lebanon, 14 interviews were conducted with governmental institutions as well as with different actors from civil society, including international organisations working at the local level in mine action and grass roots organisations focused on women. In addition to these in-depth interviews carried out in October 2007 by an independent consultant, one organisation also submitted one questionnaire in the electronic survey.



Map provided courtesy of the ReliefWeb Map Centre, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*

Introduction

Mines and explosive ordnance were extensively used in Lebanon from the beginning of the civil war in 1975 until the end of the Israeli occupation in 2000. Due to the conflict with Israel in 2006, new landmines were reportedly deployed, and previously demined land can no longer be used.²⁵ Today, ERW are one of the major obstacles to resumption of normal life in the affected areas.

Until 2004, the casualties were decreasing every year, a trend that unfortunately changed during 2004, 2005 and, due to the conflict, in 2006. Since the end of the 2006 conflict to date, ERW have led to 27 civilian fatalities and 209 civilian injuries, as well as 14 mine clearance fatalities and 34 mine clearance injuries.²⁶ According to Landmine Monitor Report 2007, the estimated contaminated area in Lebanon is 91.3 km². Lebanon is not a State Party to the Ottawa Convention.²⁷

²⁵ ICBL, Landmine Monitor Report 2007.

²⁶ UN Secretary General's report S/2008/135, "Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)".

²⁷ ICBL, Landmine Monitor Report 2007.

*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Gender Awareness and Exposure to Risk

Generally, the majority of interviewees had not investigated or discussed the issue of gender thoroughly. Thus, it was not surprising to find that many organisations did not know how to relate gender to mine action activities. On the question of the overall views of what gender is, many organisations misinterpreted its meaning: *“We have no problem with gender. We do not leave women out [...]”*. This **common misconception of the meaning of gender creates limitations in what concepts people bring into the discussion.** If gender repeatedly is interpreted as women only, the debate will miss out on the core aspects of the issue. The picture blurred even more when respondents were asked to make linkages between gender and mine action and asked how to integrate gender in mine action activities: *“I do not know how to mention gender in mine action”*.

With regards to the roles of women and men in Lebanon, the answers differed from one organisation to another. However, there seemed to be a consensus among organisations that people today are more willing to talk about gender roles and that some changes are gradually emerging:

Stereotyping has been something existing in the history of our culture. But nowadays you find that even old people say: ‘women and men now are alike’. With this statement you feel that the stereotyping issue is less but when it comes to certain topics like sexual education and what relates to reproductive health and decisions about marriage you still have certain concerns. We are not yet as open as other countries but we still find in Lebanon developments in this.

Only in some cases would people be reluctant to address the issue of gender. As one organisation put it:

In some communities people will not be open to talk about gender because of the very poor living conditions. In a society where there are no human rights and no infrastructures, talking about gender provokes people. When the whole society does not enjoy any rights, gender is not a priority.

The degree of openness in talking about gender varies from one region to another within Lebanon. In some parts of the country, for example the south, it was stated that communities still follow traditional patterns: *“it depends where we are in the country and how people treat this issue and their value system”*.

On the question of whether the organisation has a gender focal point, only three organisations among the respondents in Lebanon responded in the affirmative. Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) Lebanon has a person within its staff whose role is to build the capacity of partners in gender issues. The aim of this work is to integrate gender issues in their projects by, for example, allowing women to train staff in mine activities. Lebanon Landmine Resource Centre has employed a gender focal point whose work reaches even outside the organisation by the introduction of population courses at the university that include gender issues and development concerns. Lebanon Mines Advisory Group (MAG) also has a gender focal point, working mainly with the development of a gender policy.

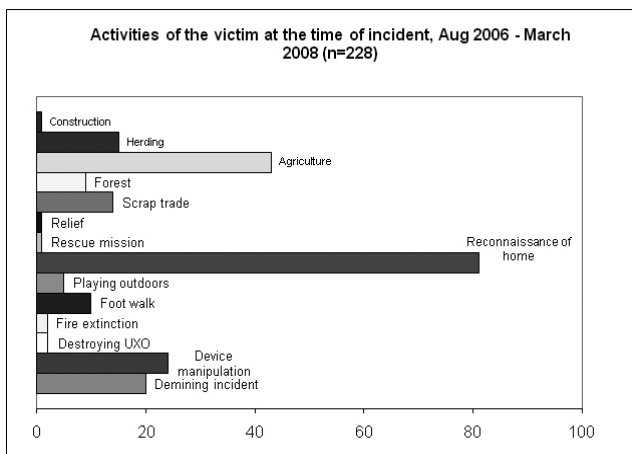
Other organisations have not specifically looked into how gender could be relevant for their work. Many of them argue that gender is already part of their structures and that it does not need to be specifically highlighted: "*Our organisation does not have gender focal points but focuses on employment opportunities for women*". **This statement brings to light two common misinterpretations; firstly that gender is about female employment and secondly that a gender focal point works with women only.**

Looking at the daily activities women and men perform in the mine affected areas, it was observed that men work as farmers, school teachers, technicians, government officers and scrap metal collectors. Women's daily work includes household work, agriculture, school teaching, aid delivering and social work. In this regard, some organisations emphasised that the role of women is limited to housework, while others included land cultivation with the caveat that the "*fields [are] located next to the house*". A third category said: "*In Lebanon we don't have these problems. If women stay at home it is basically their decision even in the most traditional areas*". **This diversity of opinions shows again that women's situations in mine affected areas depend tremendously on location and community values.**

Men aged between 19 and 51 are most likely to be caught in a landmine or ERW accident followed by the group of young males 13-18 years old.²⁸ As some organisations have observed, this is mainly because adult males work in the fields while farming and hunting and children are exposed to risk when playing in the fields. Other organisations stated that adult males are particularly at risk because they collect scrap metals as a source of income. In terms of women, the respondents agreed that "*women are also vulnerable for injury*" as women also perform agricultural activities, especially in the south

²⁸ According to United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre, United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre (UNMACC) statistics.

of Lebanon. One factor that could make the number of male victims higher is that they seem to take greater risks in order to generate income to support their families. Some organisations mentioned: “Men deprived of their source of revenue go back to the land before the clearance”, or “Iron collection is a typical daily activity of men in mine affected communities”.



Source: Lebanon Mine Action Centre

Female Employment

The issue of female employment in mine action in Lebanon seems to be somewhat controversial. Some respondents stressed that female employment has increased because many men have emigrated to other countries due to the war, “only two persons in fifteen applying for a position are men”, according to one organisation. However, despite the high number of female applicants for positions, it appears from the interviews that women in Lebanon have limited access to high profile jobs. The respondents do not anticipate any major changes in the near future:

This year we have women as ministers for the first time. But, if you want to evaluate if it has opened the door for a change, I do not think so. During the last parliamentary election women were asking for quotas and the answer was: ‘if you are human being and have capacities; if you are apt to work and meet the requirements, go ahead! Why to have a quota to impose men to elect women?’

Within mine action, women are involved primarily as MRE trainers and victim assistance providers. Many of the people interviewed stated that women are more likely to spread the message of MRE to the families. According to one organisation the percentage of women engaged in civil society is up to 70%. One reason provided to explain this trend referred to the low wages in civil society organisations, saying “*this is a patriarchal society where men look for well paid jobs*”. The discussion did not include anything on women’s limited choices of employment.

Demining and Surveying

Female participation in demining activities, on the contrary, is very low. There is a belief that “*demining is hard work that is not for women*” and that “*women are not so strong physically to perform this job*”. Furthermore, it seems that **some organisations do not want to displease the communities where they work by engaging women in the field**, as one of them stated:

We don’t employ female deminers. We could if we were in Christian communities. Our own communities are culturally and politically sensitive. I’m not willing to compromise our work. I like the job to be done, I like implementation and I don't feel that for visibility and public relations it is necessary and cost effective.

There seems to be a belief among the organisations interviewed in Lebanon, as well as the other highlighted countries, that there are religious or “cultural” barriers for integrating a gender perspective in mine action in general and for hiring female deminers in particular. Religion is not necessarily an obstacle for engaging women in demining. For instance, female deminers have proved successful in Muslim territories such as Somaliland (see Good Practice in chapter 3). A non-implementing NGO in Lebanon said in this regard that communities can change their mind about the idea of having female deminers: “*Some organisations have female deminers. They operate in the South with clusters bombs and feel part of the society. It is perceived as unusual but then people get used to having them around*”.

As seen from the statements above, the reasons for women’s high participation in development, humanitarian and social issues is two pronged. It is not only due to the societal norm of women to perform these tasks and their wish to work for a cause. Equally important is the fact that access to other activities such as demining is limited.

On the question of the extra costs that might occur from hiring female staff, most of the groups interviewed did not understand the question or were not aware of any issues. Some said: *“There are no extra-costs, women and men have the right to the same benefits”*, or *“Only if women get pregnant, there are more costs”*. Only one organisation whose partners employ female deminers in the south seemed to be conscious about this matter:

Our partners observed minor financial costs in order to buy tents; one for separate field toilet and another one to change clothes. Moreover, operations were slowed down because there was a big interest from the press to see and interview the women.

Both costs mentioned are related to equipment and are initial costs which can be seen as investments. Some organisations viewed interest from the press as negative, because it slowed down work. However, these are also initial consequences of being news-worthy stories, and such reporting would most likely decrease if more female deminers were employed, especially if their number began equalling those of male deminers.

Concerning the turnover rate, the majority of those interviewed agreed that men in local organisations change their jobs more often than women. From their viewpoint, men have greater responsibilities when it comes to generating income and must go where more revenue is offered. With regards to women, some organisations connected the issue to projects: *“The number of ladies working with us depends on programmes and projects”*, or *“European people are always asking for those things but I don’t feel we have problems here. If people change their job it is because of projects and not because [they are] men or women”*.

Mine Risk Education

Almost all of the interviewed mine action organisations in Lebanon carry out MRE activities. According to them, **MRE is accessible to all; women, men, girls and boys. However, the methods they employ to educate people do not take the specific needs of the different groups into account.** Rather, they are conceived depending on the educational level of the receiver: *“methods are the same for women and men with the same educational level”*. For people who are illiterate, for example, organisations use different approaches (pictures, performances and home visits). The literacy rate in Lebanon is high within both sexes, even among displaced populations living in refugee camps. No recent statistics are available but according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation UNESCO (2003), the literacy rate for both males and females were 93.6%. However, the majority of women do

not receive higher education. The main reason for this, as one organisation asserted, is that: *“women do not always go to secondary school because they get married very young at the age of around 16 years”*.

Both women and men are usually present during MRE sessions. Not all organisations arrange separate sessions since mixed groups are fully accepted and commonly used. However, one organisation highlighted that **separate sessions add value, as some women are still not comfortable talking about certain subjects in the presence of men.**

Interestingly, there was consensus among the sample that MRE covers the whole society and that no organisation experiences great difficulties trying to reach men, women or children with MRE. One of them put it: *“if we have still mine/ERW victims in Lebanon it is not because MRE is missing but because of the economic situation that obliges people to perform risky activities such as the collection of scrap metals”*. In contrast, in other countries studied, men who work outside the home can be hard to reach because they are absent from home as they work. In other settings, women are also seen as a difficult group to reach with adequate MRE, especially if organisations lack the means for house-to-house visits or have no female MRE trainers.



MRE targeting children. Credit: ICRC/Johan Sohlberg

Victim Assistance and Rehabilitation

The main difficulty the organisations have identified for victims of landmines are primarily that persons caught in mine accidents - either women or men - *“are not perceived anymore as persons but rather as victims [by their communities]”*. These changes in how they are perceived by society appear to be a barrier for these people to reintegrate into their communities. Another barrier the respondents identified is that *“society is not equipped to include people who are disabled”*. The health and social welfare systems in Lebanon are not sufficient to meet the needs of the disabled. Furthermore, one organisation noted that *“the will to act in their favour is lacking”*. Unfortunately, donors were said to be reluctant to fund NGOs working in victim assistance and therefore provide very little sponsorship. As a consequence, landmine and ERW victims in Lebanon do not get sufficient rehabilitation.

According to those interviewed, the impact on the life of a person injured by a mine or ERW varies depending on whether the person is male or female. The injured person may face problems keeping their original jobs or have difficulties finding other jobs, which leads to income loss. They furthermore stated that psychologically some men become very affected and have great difficulties in accepting their new life circumstances. One organisation witnessed *“some men even 20 years after an accident are unable to go back to their normal life”*. Single women may have difficulties to marry because an injured female who is still unmarried is perceived as someone *“bringing bad luck”*. Other problems such as stigmatisation, isolation, repudiation, poverty, increased risks of domestic violence might also occur against injured women.

Regarding the consequences for women or men who have an injured husband or wife, there are also significant differences. In Lebanon there seem to be a societal tendency to arrange income-generating activities for men: *“from the point of view of men there is much more focus on income given their role as providers for the family”*. The same cannot be said for women: *“women do not become breadwinners [...]”*. However, other organisations had conflicting views: *“if men are not able to provide for the family, women work”*, *“it is not easy to find a job. But if they own some land they make it useful to them”*. With regards to income-generating activities and microfinance, some organisations provide language and computer training as well as vocational training (for example carpentry and marketing) and help landmine victims to start up small shops. **Specific income generation activities for mine injured women are almost entirely lacking in Lebanon.** Many organisations also stated that the psychological impact of income loss, and thus the inability to support the family, is far greater for men than women. There is a clear need

to thoroughly study both men's and women's experiences in order to design projects that will address all segments of society.

In addition to rehabilitation services and income generation activities, some organisations arrange sports activities for disabled men such as football and basketball tournaments, swimming, table tennis and marathons. The organisation of such events not only provides a good source of motivation for the participants, but also *“allows the enhancement of victim assistance activities, advocacy and MRE all at the same time”*. **Regrettably, these activities have not yet been made available to women.**

General Findings

As in other countries where interviews were conducted, the respondents in Lebanon appeared to have low gender awareness. Moreover, when linking the issue of gender to mine action, organisations had difficulties in defining how gender could be integrated into their mine action activities.

Despite this low level of gender awareness, respondents are convinced that initiatives about gender mainstreaming in mine action would be welcomed within their projects and organisations. It would seem that there is not a lack of will to include a gender focus in their programming, but rather a lack of knowledge of how to integrate gender policies to practical projects. At the community level, respondents stated that it is possible to engage in the subject since people are willing to talk about gender roles. Their degree of receptiveness will depend on the value system of their community and their economic situation. One organisation stated: *“the discussion about gender is not appropriate in a situation where people's basic rights and needs are not met”*.

Mozambique

13 interviews were conducted in Mozambique, the majority of organisations representing the field of demining. Only one organisation delivering MRE was interviewed, resulting in too limited a sample for any extensive analysis. Moreover, the Mozambican government and one women's organisation were interviewed. The interviews were carried out in July and August 2007 by an independent consultant. In addition to this, one organisation submitted questionnaires in the electronic consultation.



Map provided courtesy of the ReliefWeb Map Centre, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*

Introduction

Because of nearly thirty years of conflict that ended in 1992, both landmines and ERW affect Mozambique. The exact extent of the contamination is disputed and to reduce the uncertainty, the National Demining Institute (IND) engaged the Hazardous Area Life-Support Organisation (HALO) Trust to conduct a technical review in the southern and central regions. Results were due by the end of 2007.²⁹ Preliminary results indicate a significant reduction in mine-contaminated areas from the 160 km² reported in 2006.³⁰

According to Landmine Monitor Report 2007, Mozambique had 35 landmine/ERW victims in 2006, of which 16 were injured and 19 killed. The report further estimates that there are 30,000 landmine survivors in the country.³¹ Mozambique is a State Party to the Ottawa Convention and since they were one of the signatory states in 1997, it entered into force on 1 March 1999.

Gender Awareness and Exposure to Risk

Some of the interviewed mine action stakeholders have gender focal points in their organisations. The government, for example, has an extensive programme for gender equality with training sessions both at headquarters and in the field,

²⁹ ICBL, Landmine Monitor Report 2007.

³⁰ E-MINE, Electronic Mine Information Network, Mozambique summary.

³¹ ICBL, Landmine Monitor Report 2007.

*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

sensitising their staff on gender issues and how it is relevant both at work and in family life. **The government's approach is interesting since it talks about gender in a wider perspective without limiting it to just employment. Therefore, it also makes people aware of multiple gendered dimensions in life, even outside work.** Others combine gender trainings with information on HIV/AIDS. This is a positive step, and the practice of combining issue areas or using existing structures for building gender awareness should be encouraged to continue.

Mozambique has a gender policy at the national level, a female prime minister and a government that advocates mainstreaming of gender in all aspects of Mozambican life. The sample agreed that Mozambique is at the forefront compared to other African countries when it comes to gender parity, especially in employment³². However, there seems to be an urban/rural disparity, with less knowledge of gender issues in rural areas. One organisation noted: "*They [the local communities] have probably not heard the term before*" or "*Gender is still a cultural problem in rural areas*". Another statement that seems to allude to this divide is:

At the provincial level issues on gender and equality are still new and it will take time before this information is internalised at the local level due to cultural prejudice. There is now a move by the government, to offer publication of the Gender plan of Action to educate all levels of society on gender issues.

Generally, the term "gender" seems to be misunderstood in the mine action context. Linkages between gender and mine action are unclear and, as in other countries researched, viewed as an add-on to existing processes. However, some of the people we interviewed had a clear picture of how gender and mine action are interrelated:

For example, in the communities once the land is cleared of mines it is given back to the community or original owners. The women and their children are deprived of this land ownership opportunity if the husband died during the war or before owning the land. The woman has no power to claim for ownership whatsoever. [...] Ironically women derive no benefit from cleared land.

³² According to The World Bank Group's GenderStats, women represent 54% of the total labour force in Mozambique.

This respondent raised an issue beyond the scope of this study – landownership. The right to use the cleared land could be a critical concern, not only from a gender perspective but also from class, caste or other social hierarchies. **Generally women have a subordinate position in ownership, and are much more likely to lose out in transference of land, may it be from inheritance, land disputes or after the land has been cleared from landmines.**

While women and men share some daily activities such as farming on the machambas (fields) and other livelihood activities, most other labour is assigned according to the traditional gendered division of labour; women do household work, fetch water/firewood and take care of children, whereas men do “heavy work” such as construction, fishing and hunting or migrating into neighbouring countries for work. Both women and men are involved in activities outside the home. Women, for example, are active in local churches, although they are rarely involved in any decision making processes in their communities. *“When I have visited the mine affected communities we are always welcomed by the men. Women don’t say anything, not even if I ask them something.”*

There is no consensus on what kind of person is most likely to be caught in a landmine accident. Some believe accidents happen more to men, since they are deminers, soldiers or migrants. Others think women are more susceptible because of their farming work, and because some think that women are more uninformed with regards to landmines. Finally, some think children are more likely to encounter accidents, as they play in fields without knowing the risks of landmines and other ERW.

In support of the view that women tend to lack information about mines, one interviewee stated:

Women are mostly affected, because they do not know how to interpret the danger mines signs due to lack of awareness. Men can listen to radio as a group but the women do not have that luxury because there are very busy. If they do listen it is as secondary while doing other duties.

There are others who believe the opposite: *“Women know their environment better and know where to avoid going”*.

There seems, however, to be a consensus that women are much more burdened after a landmine accident, whether as a victim or as a caretaker. Though both women and men find themselves in new roles within their fami-

lies after an accident, the changes that these new roles entail seem to affect women more than men. The following statement supports this suggestion:

There are changes that meet both men and women. The men's situation does not change much; he will be head of the household, husband and father. His duties will be taken over by the wife; his sons or his brothers will help him out. For the women their total life changes, depending on the accident; if the woman cannot carry out her domestic chores and duties as a wife then a replacement is brought in. This then leads to further psychological problems for the women and the whole family. This could lead to divorce or abandonment, women try to cope despite their handicap and continue to care and bring up the family. For boys the family and immediate relatives will try to rehabilitate him so that he will lead an almost normal life and a wife being given to him. For girls their life is as difficult as that of the woman, but more painful because at that young age they have no access to education or skills training that will help them in future. Most of the time they are not married because they are considered to bring no added value to the spouse's family, but rather a burden.

Poverty is often mentioned by the sample as an obstacle of successful gender mainstreaming. *"Before we address gender issues, we have to tackle the poverty."* This is a common view in the sample; that one issue has to be dealt with before the other. Gender and poverty are strongly linked and affect each other simultaneously. This is what is often referred to as the feminisation of poverty and is defined through three criteria: that women have a higher incidence of poverty than men, that their poverty is more severe than that of men and that there is a trend to greater poverty among women, especially in female-headed households.³³ Thus, they should be addressed jointly and concurrent.

Female Employment

Both women and men are generally involved in mine action activities, but in different roles. Women work in offices doing what are perceived to be less dangerous tasks and men do mine clearance or interact with the communities. Women's alleged lack of relevant qualifications, their lower level of education and "cultural reasons" are the main arguments put

³³ BRIDGE Institute of Development Studies, "Briefing paper on the feminisation of poverty", 2001.

forward for not engaging women in all parts of mine action. These are some views expressed on female employment:

- *“Few women participate in mine action, because during recruitment they say only those who were former soldiers and know how mines and ERW look like can get a job”.*
- *“Our organisation is an equal employer but it is very difficult to find women who are qualified for the jobs”.*
- *“In some kind of jobs it is very difficult for women to leave their families. Women can perform equally, or better, than men, but family and social life holds them back”.*

Interestingly, the “cultural” situation frequently described as an argument for not integrating a gender focus is not often explored or questioned. The argument becomes a mantra, constantly repeated by organisations to explain why gender has not been taken into consideration. Often, the real obstacles are lack willingness, lack of dedicated people and a lack of resources rather than the “cultural” excuses. Moreover, many believe that gender is a Western or European concept that is not be suitable for other regions.

Demining and Surveying

When undertaking a survey, the team consults with the village leader (usually a man) who will gather a group (of more men) to discuss which areas are blocked by landmines. **Women are not formally involved in surveying, but engaged through informal talks on the side.** *“If women are alone they will talk. When men arrive they will be silent.”* Some of the information provided by respondents indicate that women are more accurate and skilled in collecting data than men are, and that they have access to other women and groups who may not attend public meetings. Given this information, surprisingly few organisations employ females as surveyors in Mozambique. One respondent exclaimed, *“That would be a revolution!”*.

Only one out of the six demining organisations interviewed, Mozambique Social Solidarity Unity, (MSSU) employs female deminers. Out of their 56 deminers, 16 are women. MSSU says that female deminers are more productive than their male counterparts, but that they are absent more than men if their children are sick or if there is a family emergency. **MSSU has developed a schedule making it possible to combine work and family life,** and allows the women to visit their families on a regular basis. They work for two weeks and thereafter have three days off. It is not known whether this schedule is offered to male deminers. **Female deminers act as role models** and *“[a]re viewed as change bringers. The female deminer has the economic power to*

improve the family's economic status. These women are educated and continue to improve their literacy". Moreover, these women go through the regular recruitment process: "[t]hey meet the requirements and apply". One of the interviewed organisation's theories, that "*Demining is a male task and it is dangerous for women*", does not seem to find any support when actually tested.

In spite of this, many organisations have not and do not plan to employ female deminers as the general consensus is that there are some jobs that are not suitable for women. As in other cases they describe this as a cultural phenomenon, which should not be disturbed. However, in most cases when women are hired as deminers, these supposed "cultural clashes" do not occur. On the contrary, widening the criteria of necessary qualifications required, and changing attitudes in order to value accuracy and carefulness as much as physical strength, the number of possible candidates for this work would increase. Unnecessary demands directly or indirectly exclude one of the sexes:

We will not hire female deminers. We tried it in country x_1 where it was successful. Then we tried in country x_2 where it was very unsuccessful. People were having sex with each other, problems with the both sexes. It became costly, not cost efficient. Have to do a totally separate camp for women. And to be honest with you, most women in Mozambique would not be interested anyway. Their role is as homemakers. A Western viewpoint that is not good, but here it is. It is not feasible.

The issues raised here should be addressed in a **code of conduct**, i.e. a set of rules and ethical principles the staff are obliged to follow to establish common standards on which the work should be based. A code of conduct would discuss matters such as **improper behaviour, discrimination, sexual abuse, trafficking, use of drugs/alcohol and corruption**, to mention some. A code of conduct is about a non-discriminatory approach, respectful attitudes and respect of local customs and cultures, in order not to insult people or to violate the rules.

Reflecting on the quotation above on "problems with both sexes", it is noteworthy that the solution for this was to dismiss the women. It is also unfortunate that one event seems to have set the standard of not introducing the initiative of female deminers again. Additional initial costs can occur as for all changes, for example separate camp facilities as mentioned above, but these costs occur only once and do not have to be expensive. Regrouping of tents, walls or tarpaulins to separate different facilities, or strengthening camp security are some of the practical measures needed. Good practices from **gender**

aware camp management are available from the sector of humanitarian aid. For example, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) has developed the “Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action”³⁴. Even more important is to work with changing attitudes, gender roles and to make sure that both women and men have access to all facilities, positions and decision-making spheres.

Mine Risk Education

Only one organisation interviewed in Mozambique, UNICEF, provides MRE. Because their main target group is children, the information they gather generally does not include data on adult women and men. UNICEF did state that **women are less likely to receive proper MRE and information on landmine threats due to their lower literacy levels**. The male literacy rate is more than twice as high as the female equivalent – 55% compared to 25%³⁵. Women in mine affected areas do have access to radio programs in local languages, but have minimal access to television and newspapers. And as previously noted by several organisations, despite having access to radios, **women rarely have time to listen to programs due to their household duties**:

Due to unbalanced education for men and women and socialisation, women are very much uninformed of their basic rights and this is why a lot of organisations are involved in offering basic rights information. If gender parity equity is to be achieved men will have to be the key players and cooperate for gender issues to succeed.

Since Mozambique has a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS many organisations carry out extensive awareness programmes in the country. These structures, often with separate groups for women and men, could also be used for successful MRE, as indicated above. Generally, using existing structures is highly advisable because these have already gained the communities’ confidence and have developed successful distribution channels for information.

Victim Assistance and Rehabilitation

According to the sample, not all people have access to victim assistance and rehabilitation services after a landmine accident. This is mainly due to a lack of resources in rural areas and low awareness of what facilities and services are

³⁴ The “Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action” can be downloaded from [http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/content/documents/subsidi/tf_gender/IASC%20Gender%20Handbook%20\(Feb%202007\).pdf](http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/content/documents/subsidi/tf_gender/IASC%20Gender%20Handbook%20(Feb%202007).pdf).

³⁵ UNDP Human Development Report 2007.

available. If a person is injured when demining an area, the demining company provides rehabilitation either by an internal programme or by issuing insurance which makes it possible for the injured person to access available community services. If the person is injured doing other activities, such as daily livelihood tasks, the assistance may not be equally available.

One of the NGOs interviewed provides rehabilitation services in the form of “listening groups”. **In these groups, mixed or separated by sex, members are encouraged to discuss issues such as stigmatisation and marginalisation as amputees.** For example, in Mozambique there is a cultural belief that when a person loses blood, the person also loses intelligence. This organisation, POWER, works under the slogan “Ability, not disability” and also provides other services to landmine victims. **They have a specific gender program targeting women that provides training on leadership skills and loans for income-generating projects.**

Generally, families or the community at large undertake much of the rehabilitation and care. There was a consensus among the sample that great improvements are needed in increasing victim assistance resources and services in the country.

In terms of the impact on a victim’s life, the respondents agreed that women face greater difficulties than men in reintegrating in society after an injury. Mobility concerns (transportation) and lack of time were raised as crucial obstacles for women to actively participate in rehabilitation or in social activities. **Despite the recognition that women and men face different problems after an injury, very few services are developed with these different needs in mind.**

General Findings

Many mine affected parts of Mozambique have been cleared and the general notion among the respondents is that landmine contamination is no longer a problem. With regards to services, MRE and victim assistance are generally inadequate and insufficient in rural areas, and there is no integrated gender focus in any of these activities.

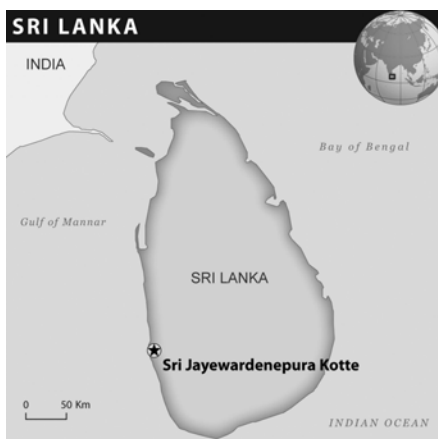
Despite a national gender policy and many successful efforts by the Mozambican government to put gender on the agenda, the awareness of gender in mine action is still low in the country. Mine action still remains a male-dominated area where women are only partially involved, mainly on an informal, voluntary basis. Traditional patterns of labour division are visible;

men dominate income-generating activities and women take care of the household and the family.

On a positive note, and probably as a consequence of national awareness raising campaigns on gender in general, the will to look into the issue of gender, or to reformulate projects and programmes to better suit both women and men, exists, and few organisations encounter obstacles for this. However, there was a consensus among the sample that there are other more important issues, such as poverty and illiteracy, to address before dealing with the issue of gender.

Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka 22 interviews were conducted with actors from the government, UN agencies, mine action organisations, and women's organisations. Additionally, one of these organisations also submitted four questionnaires in the electronic consultation. The interviews were carried out in July and August 2007 by an independent consultant.



Map provided courtesy of the ReliefWeb Map Centre, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*

Introduction

Sri Lanka is extensively affected by both landmines and ERW but is not a State Party to the Ottawa Convention. The country's contamination is a legacy of twenty years of armed conflict between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Since no comprehensive national survey has been conducted, the extent of the contamination is unknown.³⁶ Because many people from northern and eastern Sri Lanka are displaced due to the conflict, resettlement becomes difficult when there is no valid information on where landmines are placed.

In 2006, UNICEF recorded 64 casualties in 23 incidents, which was a large increase from 2005 (38 casualties). Casualties in 2006 included 27 killed and 37 injured: 48 were males (33 men and 15 boys) and 16 were female (12 women and four girls).³⁷

Gender Awareness and Exposure to Risk

Gender awareness and especially its linkages to mine action, was very low among the sample. Many respondents referred to stereotype gender roles in society, especially in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka where the mine affected areas mainly are:

No one has been thinking on gender in landmines, they think that a mine is a mine. It is not gendered. No clarity on gendered

³⁶ ICBL, Landmine Monitor Report 2007.

³⁷ ICBL, Landmine Monitor Report 2007.

*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

dimensions of landmines; how it affects men and women. Agencies need to be more sensitive.

However, there seemed to be a consensus that the conflict in Sri Lanka has set the scene for new roles and has created a window of opportunity to change patriarchal structures: *“The war has given the opportunity [for women] to go into new spaces because of lack of men”*. The conflict has, for example, created a large number of female-headed households. However, these female headed households do not fit the usual definition of a household and are not considered “real households” in Sri Lanka. As one organisation put it: *“Even our internal report talks about the absence of the head of the household when the man is not there. But if he is not there, isn't she the head of the household?”*.

The organisations interviewed had very different views on women’s mobility and access to information, education, and employment. One respondent stated:

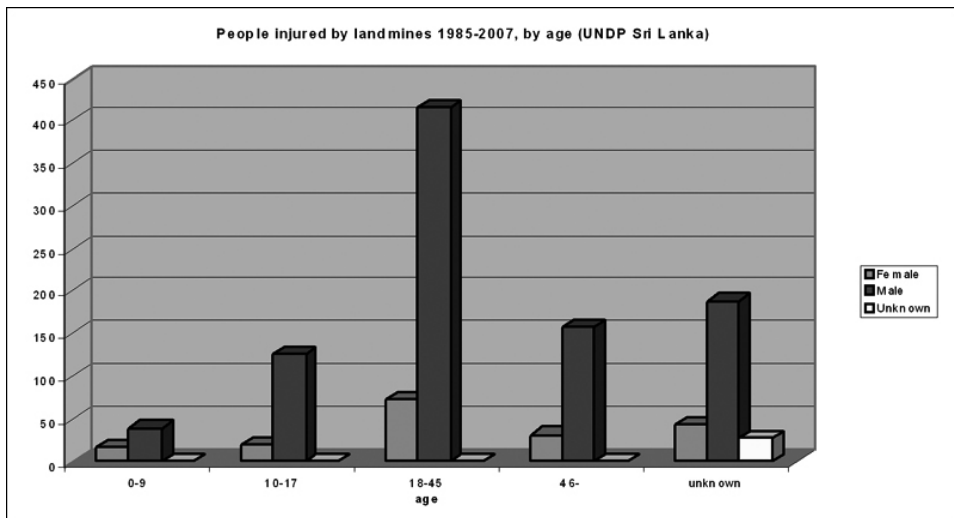
Women are able to move freely in forests and fields to collect fodder, food, firewood and water from ponds and wells. They have enabled themselves to attend to their cattle, markets, see off their children to schools, carry out small economic activities, access to medical facilities and attend social and community activities freely. Now they are participating in social, economic educational programmes freely.

According to the respondents, both women and men do farming and take care of the family’s animals, but in different ways. Generally, men do agricultural activities in the fields, whereas women grow crops in the garden or in the immediate surroundings of the home. The same difference is also observed in other activities, such as men undertaking herding and women looking after the animals that are kept closer to the living environment. In addition to these tasks, women fetch water and firewood, take care of the family, and do household chores and laundry, among others. Men’s additional tasks include going to the market, fishing, hunting and doing casual labour.

Different duties also entail different exposure to risk. Men (aged 18-40) are most likely to be caught in a landmine or ERW accident.³⁸ According to the sample of interviews, the main reason for this is men’s mobility in their daily activities mentioned above. According to the respondents, men also take higher risks: *“You have to do this even though you know it is a mine area. These things need to be done”*. Women do mainly household duties in or

³⁸ According to statistics from Information Management System for Mine Action, IMSMA.

around the home, and are therefore not as exposed to landmines as men. However, those interviewed gave contradictory information on mobility and risks seeing that many stated that women go out to collect firewood and water for the household. Moreover, women are involved in agricultural activities and look after cattle. This challenges the main argument of restricted mobility for women. One organisation even said that “*women are more exposed to landmines than men*”. Another important factor is whether the victim is a civilian or works for the army. Seeing that the Sri Lankan army mainly consists of men, the large majority of soldiers injured are men.



Source: UNDP, Sri Lanka

Few organisations have employed gender focal points. UNICEF Sri Lanka has a gender focal point whose main responsibility is to ensure that all activities have a gender perspective, but UNICEF constitutes an exception. Most organisations either answered “no” to the question of whether they have a gender focal point, or they listed how many women they have employed. Typical answers were: “*Our manager is a lady*” or “*There was one lady but she left*”.

Female Employment

Generally, both women and men have remunerated jobs in Sri Lanka, with women representing 30% of the total labour force.³⁹ There are however great differences between urban and rural areas. In the capital, Colombo, women

³⁹ The World Bank Group, GenderStats.

work in various sectors, but in the rural mine affected areas, their employment is limited. **Women's access to the labour market is moreover constrained by the amount of tasks at the household level:** *“At the end of the day, even how much you talk about women being empowered, women do a bigger part of the household work”*.

In terms of female employment in mine action, the main sectors where women are involved are MRE, victim assistance and psychosocial support. There are many **generalisations and stereotype statements** concerning the employment of women within mine action: *“Mine Action Programmes are not very popular with women folk perhaps due to hard living conditions”*. Some organisations go even further saying that it is impossible for women to fill certain positions such as being deminers. Being away from their homes and families and living in camps are mentioned as the main reasons for why women are not able to work as deminers:

Can't have female living in camps, because people assume things happen if women stay away from home. It is out of the question. Even if you travel in the day time, you will be alone. It would be difficult for females to be accepted.

Only one organisation in the sample, NPA, has employed female deminers in Sri Lanka. NPA describes their operations as very successful and further mentions that they have not experienced any problems with camp life referred to above. NPA's initiative indicates that cultural barriers could be overcome if adequate measures are taken.



Deminer, Sri Lanka.
Credit: NPA

All organisations found it important to increase the number of women working in their organisations, but not in actual mine clearance. Linking it back to the fact that “gender” is mainly understood as ‘employment’, this is where organisations make their effort to “gender mainstream” (by headcount). Measures have been undertaken to increase female employment, for example by offering special incentives for women such as offices closer to their homes, having the work place accessible to their families, being paid wages comparable with men’s, providing vehicles or transportation, and providing medical facilities and services during pregnancy.

With regards to female and male turnover rates, organisations found that the turnover rate for women was lower than for men as “*finding a job for a woman is not easy. That is why they stay*”. However, others mentioned that women were more likely to leave work once married.

Despite the majority of respondents identifying advantages of employing both women and men within mine action’s five pillars, very few have taken active measures to ensure a sound gender balance and to challenge the gendered division of labour.

Demining and Surveying

The majority of respondents had not reflected upon whether their surveys and assessments included both women and men’s views in the community. By meeting the village leaders it was assumed that results would take the whole communities views and opinions into consideration. However, this is by no means a given outcome and an active approach is needed to ensure that viewpoints from the entire community are included. Some of the organisations mentioned that when communicating with women in the community, they articulated the needs of the whole family. Hence, they found that **discussions with women gave them useful additional information as compared to only speaking with men. These organisations also found it successful to have female surveyors:** “*Females are most suitable to collect field data. They can interact and communicate with females in communities while men are out for work*”. Moreover, women who have participated in surveys, either by being interviewed or as a survey team member, stated that they gained confidence in talking to people in the community on these issues. However, women’s specific needs are not mentioned in the fact finding reports: “*If women are mentioned it is only in relation to their children, as mothers. Nothing on themselves*”.

They [women] gained knowledge about the life and activities of the affected people. They were able to put their education and experience to better use for the community and society. Financial gains gave them a sense of usefulness for self, family and the society as a whole. They became capable of participating, influencing and guiding economic, social and community activities. A sense of achievement, confidence in approach, direction of purpose and a clear goal for the job in hand were some of the abstract gains for the female participants.

Mine Risk Education

Women and men in Sri Lanka are involved in MRE, both as trainers and receivers of information. The most common form of MRE is separate sessions for women and men in order to “*create a safe place to discuss these issues freely*”. However, because most service providers believe that men and children are more landmine accident prone than women, most MRE groups do not target women.

Some organisations use different methods and media for women and men to convey the message in MRE, whereas others use the same method regardless of sex. House-to-house visits and informal community briefings are mentioned as two examples of methods specifically used to target women in MRE. Other methods include drama, radio, posters, lectures and mobile TV-shows. Most of the women in mine affected areas have access to both national and community radio, but not to television and newspapers. Sri Lanka has a high literacy rate (national female literacy rate is 89.1% and the male equivalent is 92.3%)⁴⁰, even in the rural mine affected areas of the northern and eastern parts of the country. A high literacy rate is not necessarily needed to convey MRE messages but people who can read have access to written information (pamphlets, brochures etc.) which enables them to receive MRE messages from a variety of sources.

There are many views and opinions among the sample regarding women and MRE that are difficult to find evidence for. One example is that “*women are much more receptive to MRE, which is visible in the statistics [on landmines accidents] where you have an obvious connection*”. As pointed out above, women and men conduct different chores, which could affect the statistics. Others discussed the **access issue, saying that women have access to other women through, for example, local women’s groups or at informal school meetings for mothers, and could pass the information on to each other in**

⁴⁰ UNDP Human Development Report 2007.

these venues. Men generally do not have the same access to these groups of women. However, some concerns were raised, including whether or not women are allowed to speak with their own voices in MRE sessions. “*Women want to consult their husbands.*” On the one hand, one organisation said that it would not be successful to employ female MRE trainers because men simply would not show up if the session were to be held by a woman. On the other hand, many women are successful working in the MRE sector, especially those women who conduct MRE in the “house-to-house” form. There is a general notion among the sample that women are more suitable for this than men, since people are generally more comfortable opening the door to an unfamiliar woman than to an unfamiliar man.

One organisation talked about the **difficulty of reaching men with MRE.** Men are absent during most days for outdoor work. Women normally work in the vicinity of their homes and are hence easier to reach. Even though there is a difficulty in reaching all men and despite the fact that this was identified as a key issue of accessibility, none of the organisations interviewed had specifically targeted men in their outreach campaigns or taken special measures to remedy the current situation.

Victim Assistance and Rehabilitation

Regardless of whether it is a man or a woman, if a person is injured by a landmine, there is a tremendous impact on the family. Income loss, mobility limitations and victim stigmatisation are only some of the consequences these families face. At the governmental level in Sri Lanka there is a 3% reservation quota for disabled people in recruitment for jobs, but the social sector lacks these kinds of means.

Some organisations have identified differences between women and men in the victim’s chances of reintegrating in society. Most state that an injury has **far more consequences for a woman, regardless of whether it is herself or her husband who is injured.** If the woman herself is injured she is obliged to carry on with the same amount of household duties as before, even if she has lost a limb. As the wife of an injured or deceased man, the woman has to find income for her family in addition to continuing with her household duties: “*A good woman takes care of her family. It doesn’t work the other way around*”. A husband to an injured wife would hopefully take on some household duties, although it is more likely that these duties would be carried out by the wife’s family; her mother or sisters. According to those interviewed, when men are affected, the main consequence is the loss of income. However, men can be trained in other skills or change occupations. A few organisations mentioned the psychological impact on men of not being able to financially sup-

port their families anymore. **Several organisations stressed the importance of providing income-generating activities for both female and male victims.**

There are services and benefits available for landmine victims in Sri Lankan society, including free artificial limbs, but not all people have information about these services. **A lot of work needs to be done to create a greater awareness of services that the government and various NGOs provide.** Even when many services are free, access to them is not. Transportation costs are substantial and are not accessible to all people or places. One organisation stated: *“We treat everybody that comes to the door. We do not discriminate”*. While positive that this kind of statement has gendered dimensions, this statement also reflects the low levels of awareness that not all people have access to that door. As another NGO put it: *“For prosthesis you need to stay at the hospital a couple of days. Women are not able to spare that time. They also have difficulties with access”*. The problem of access could be partly solved, as many organisations indicated, either by providing transportation or by using mobile devices. Many respondents stressed that lack of access is a problem regardless of the victim’s sex.

General Findings

All respondents consider the issue of landmines a major problem in Sri Lanka. The government has set a goal of a “Mine Free Sri Lanka” in 2008, which several organisations doubt is possible to reach.

Among the Sri Lankan sample there is generally a **low level of awareness and knowledge of how gender is relevant for mine action. Gender is either interpreted as “women” or as “female employment”**. There is also a tendency to see the mine action sector in a vacuum, with no clear linkages to the bigger picture of development and how landmines hinder a country’s or a community’s development by, for example, blocking agricultural land. Without seeing these linkages, most organisations do not see how gender is relevant either. This is visible in statements such as *“no need to talk about gender”* and *“I don’t think the mine action field is the correct sector to ask [about gender]”*.

If there is a resistance to integrate a gender perspective in mine action in Sri Lanka, it is not at the community level, where most initiatives are welcome, but rather at the implementation level, for example in international demining organisations. *“Some organisations use wrong approach and create more resistance than change. Alien, Western concept being enforced upon them. The work has to come from within the community. Input from the outside – process from inside.”* However, the interviewed organisations often use the

argument that it is not possible to integrate a gender perspective in the field due to the traditionally structured society or patriarchal gender roles at the community level. As other cases show, for example the female deminers working for NPA, these notions seem to be unexplored myths, and in reality can be challenged if correct, gender sensitive measures are adopted.

Sudan

In Sudan 17 in-depth interviews were conducted in August 2007 by an independent consultant with governmental institutions as well as with different actors from civil society and grass roots organisations focused on women. In addition to these, six organisations also submitted questionnaires in the electronic consultation.



Map provided courtesy of the ReliefWeb Map Centre, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*

Introduction

Sudan has suffered from conflicts for an extensive period. In the southern parts of the country, the signing of The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (9 Jan 2005) ended 20 years of conflict between government forces and rebel groups (mainly The Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement or SPLA/M). In Darfur, despite the Darfur Peace Agreement in 2006, forces supported by the government and rebel groups have been in conflict since 2003. The Republic of Sudan is a State Party to the Ottawa Convention and ratified it on 13 October 2003.⁴¹

The extent of mine contamination is unknown and estimates vary greatly. In July 2007, the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), reported that mines and ERW may affect 21 of Sudan's 25 states (compared to previous estimates in 2005 of one third of the country being affected). The borders with Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya and Uganda are all considered mine affected areas. According to the Landmine Monitor Report 2007, there were at least 135 new mine/ERW casualties in Sudan during 2006. This represented a significant increase from 2005 and 2004 when 99 and 73 casualties were reported, respectively. Due to the size of the country and slow data collection, the 2006 casualty number is likely to increase, as in previous years.⁴²

Gender Awareness and Exposure to Risk

Generally, **awareness of gender issues varied among the respondents**, with some organisations having gender focal points with clear defined tasks to

⁴¹ ICBL, Landmine Monitor Report 2007.

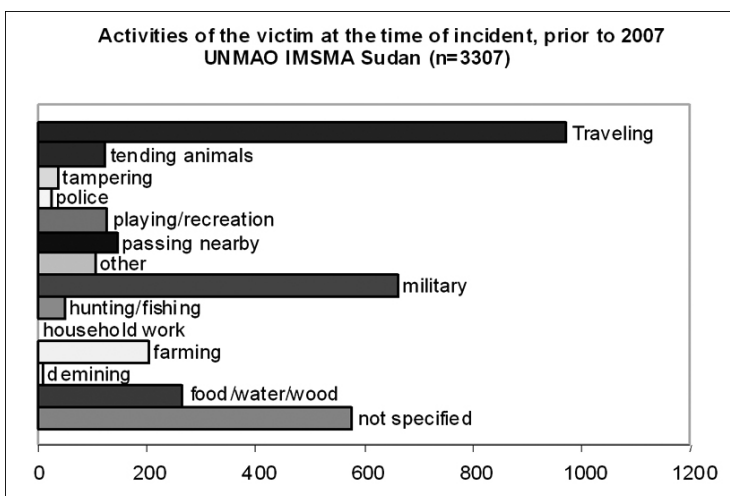
⁴² ICBL, Landmine Monitor Report 2007.

*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

mainstream gender in all activities and to train their staff on gender sensitive approaches, to other organisations with very limited knowledge of the topic. One organisation focused on women said: *“The gender issue is a new concept in Sudan and different approaches need to be used due to the cultural perception and religious views of women’s place in society”*. Others said: *“The problem is that women do not see themselves as equal to men. They accept the role society and culture has destined for them”*.

Sudan is a vast and regionally-varied country, with southern Sudan being an autonomous region since the peace agreement that was signed in 2005. The gender roles also differ greatly between the different parts of the country, and it is therefore difficult to generalise on women and men’s roles in the Sudanese context.

Due to the conflicts, Sudan has many female-headed households as men take part in the conflicts or have been displaced as refugees in neighbouring countries. Female-headed households often represent the poorest in society. A large proportion of these households is very poor and has limited access to many parts of mine action such as healthcare, MRE and various kind of information, such as which services are available. Restricted by lack of financial resources, time and mobility, these women tend to be left out of the main mine action activities.



Source: UNMAO IMSMA, Sudan

Men are more likely to be caught in a mine accident in Sudan. This is mainly explained by the respondents as due to the activities men carry out in these communities. The only area in which women and men's daily tasks intersect is with agricultural activities. Apart from this women do household work, hand-crafts, fetch water, collect firewood, and take care of children, whereas men are soldiers, go fishing, hunting or are engaged in commercial activities, such as scrap metal collection. Men's greater mobility and movement across larger areas, in contrast to women's sometimes limited mobility, is also stressed as one key factor for men being caught in landmine accidents. On the contrary, some argued that women's restricted mobility made them more susceptible to landmine accidents: *"A woman will not be respected if she is with men, and to avoid this she uses alternative routes which could be mined"*.

Women in mine affected areas are usually illiterate in Sudan, with limited access to radio, television and newspapers. The use of radio is widely discussed among the respondents although there are different views on accessibility for all groups in society. While some stated that *"radio is the best medium to pass on information"*, others made statements such as *"Radios belong to men, radios do not belong to the women. You never will see a woman walking/working with the radio, women [only] have access to the radio indirectly"*.

Generally, illiteracy and poverty are depicted as key causes for women, men, girls and boys being caught in landmine accidents, emphasised in statements such as *"Awareness on landmines is compounded by illiteracy. Even when there are markings, people cannot read"* or *"Poverty makes them go to areas they know are mine affected. They go there for the survival of the family"*. More men than women are literate. The ratio of national female literacy to national male literacy is 0.73⁴³.

Female Employment

Both women and men work within all pillars of mine action in Sudan, but with disparities between the different sectors. The strongest resistance to engaging women in mine action comes, as in the other cases studied, from the demining organisations. One Sudanese NGO argued that: *"[There are] challenges rather than resistance. Culture dictates in many ways and limits people's thinking in the sense that it begins to allocate certain jobs to women and certain to men. Authority has not been aggressive in addressing social and community problems"*. However, communities' attitudes on working women were positive. As one NGO said: *"The community is happy, because landmines are problem and this will help to solve it"*.

⁴³ UNDP Human Development Report 2007.

The organisations interviewed did not find it more costly to employ women in their organisations. Minor costs such as transportation and arranging separate accommodation facilities could initially occur, but these were not seen as an obstacle for engaging women in mine action. Some organisations provided maternity leave for their female employees, and one hour free per day for breastfeeding mothers. There seemed to be a notion that Sudan is ahead of its neighbouring countries in female employment in general, with women working in high positions within governmental institutions.

Demining and Surveying

Both women and men carry out assessments and surveying according to the interviewed organisations. Some organisations have a specific strategy of including at least one woman in every team of two to three people, while others use a more random approach. *“Women must be involved in data collection in order to reach all sectors of impacted population.”* Few of these women, however, work as team leaders. There is a great variety between the northern and southern parts of Sudan, with a higher proportion of gender-balanced teams in the south.

With regards to who is targeted for the impact surveys, the respondents generally approach the community leaders. *“We ask for information and they send their experts.”* Few organisations actively reflect upon whether these experts are men or women, or if they in other ways represent all segments of the community. The sample agrees that house visits are one way of reaching a larger part of the community, especially women who could have restrictions on their mobility. However, resources often create a barrier for this method: *“we don’t have time to go to all houses, so we meet only community leaders”.*

Very few organisations in the sample have female deminers. *“Few women enter into demining. Not only because of their own fears, but because of community’s views on demining as a job for men.”* However, when organisations actually hire female deminers, they operate successfully with the community’s approval. **Women and men work in mixed teams, although with very few female team leaders.** Women and men undergo the same recruitment process, and **no special arrangements or facilities are given to either sex.**

As in other countries studied, **these female deminers become role models in their community for other women and girls by demonstrating that it is possible to break gender structures that initially seemed unbreakable.** One organisation interviewed was optimistic on the future for a better gender balance among deminers in Sudan: *“we plan to have 50-50 gender parity soon”.* Obstacles mentioned for hiring women in the demining sector are culture, tra-

ditions and the community's views on the gendered division of labour. Interestingly, there seems to be a tendency among international NGOs to discuss culture in terms of the "Other" by saying that "they have a culture that doesn't allow this". This information is often not investigated, and is perfunctory and used as an excuse to not mainstream gender.

Any new ideas like women deminers which are seen to be a male job would be viewed as foreign influence which goes against the cultural norm. So to be on the safe side especially as a foreign INGO it is not to change the rules or norm already existing.

The same arguments are found with those responsible for gender mainstreaming. The international organisations often defend their lack of gender perspective in "they don't want it", as in:

The change and improvement on gender parity will have to come from within inside Sudan, among the government institutions and local civil society organisations. Only then will this change be acceptable, rather than if it comes from outside and is introduced or advocated by foreign organisations.

Mine Risk Education

Both women and men are involved in MRE, as trainers and receivers. One of the women's rights based organisations interviewed has initiated a committee with the main objective to ensure that the MRE reaches all people in the community. This committee carefully scrutinises all MRE activities carried out in the area to investigate who receives MRE. There was a consensus in the sample that the most efficient way to reach the society is to target the key people first; teachers, midwives, and local leaders, among others. When the key persons' confidence is won, they can convey the message further in the community.



MRE session in Sudan.
Credit: Ruth Evans

The majority of organisations carrying out MRE use a common strategy; they start with separate groups for women and men in which they build the participants' confidence in talking openly about these issues, and thereafter the groups are merged. The process in the separate groups for women is described by one of the people interviewed:

We meet in small groups of 6-8 persons and start with questions and answers. If they don't want to ask openly, we encourage them to write down their questions, or if they are illiterate, to ask someone to write it for them. I [the MRE trainer] dress like them and speak their local language to win their acceptance.

Some organisations pointed out that the most difficult group to reach with MRE is men, as they are absent during the day for work. No specific strategy had been identified to minimise the risk of leaving men out of MRE, even though they face a higher risk of injury or death.

The material used in MRE varies between the different regions in the north and south. One NGO stressed the importance of having pictures and photos that the target group can identify with. *"We draw people in pictures to look like the people there so that they feel familiar."* This could mean, for example, that in some regions women are wearing veils in the pictures, whereas in others they are not. The MRE material is also constructed to show different people performing different tasks; men that are working in the field, women fetching water and girls and boys playing. Another organisation emphasised that the material needs to be simplified if MRE is to be effective and to have greater impact. The language and terminology could be unfamiliar to parts of society who are not exposed to this vocabulary on a daily basis.

Victim Assistance and Rehabilitation

The respondents agreed that there are not enough victim assistance services or rehabilitation provided for landmine victims in Sudan. In large cities, as Khartoum, there are a variety of services, but this is not the case in rural areas. There also seems to be a difference between northern and southern Sudan in the range of facilities.

Not many organisations do house visits, which limits the number of people the services reach, which consequently has an especially high impact on women who may have restricted mobility. The outreach is also limited by poor infrastructure and difficulties in conveying messages: *"Access is very limited because of distances, conditions of the roads, sometimes it is the lack of knowledge of the population about the facilities of the services"*. Some or-

organisations provide mobile services to overcome these barriers, but these services only cover parts of Sudan. As mentioned before, poverty is also an obstacle for successful inclusive rehabilitation of landmine victims. Seeing that some services are not free, not all people are able to use these. Moreover, even in the cases where services are available, access to these may be limited due to the ongoing conflict in Sudan.

In analysing what impact a landmine injury has on an individual and his/her family, there was a **consensus among the sample that women are much more burdened**. This was both as victim and as the caretaker of another injured family member. They distinguished a difference between female and male landmine victims in **marriage prospects**, with women tending to have greater difficulties in finding a partner. *“Women need to have their full capacity to get married.”* Others raised the concern that **reintegration in their communities** is harder for women than men:

[Landmine injuries have] more impact on women than men, psychological impact. Women tend to be more marginalised, men would easily be accepted. Boys have an easier time than girls. For the boys there is more opportunity for acceptability and reintegration back to society than for the girl. We are still a male-dominated society and all advantages unfortunately go to boys and men, especially if there are limited rehabilitation services.

Regardless of who is injured, men or women, the respondents agreed that an injury affects the whole family. In some extreme cases, the family gets isolated and stigmatised, with no possibilities of earning enough money to pay for the daily basic needs of the family. Rehabilitation and care are not always provided free to the victims, leaving families spending a large proportion of their limited income on medicines, transport and training:

Everybody gets affected but in different ways. When the husband is the one who is injured there is loss of income. Providing for the family shifts to the woman. She has to work for long hours and support the whole family. This may force the woman to engage in illegal work or activities [...]. Children become deprived and will lose out in going to school.

One interviewee could distinguish a difference in being a landmine victim or being injured in other kinds of accidents. *“Being a mine victim is less discriminatory, because it is not my fault, I got an accident going to my job, then I'm not responsible and there is less discrimination than other types of disabilities.”*

A large proportion of caring for landmine victims is done by immediate family. There was a disparity among the sample in responses to who performs the most care, men or women? Some organisations stated that it is women in their traditional caretaker roles, whereas others indicated that men's mobility and freedom to travel would make them more active in the caring process. There seems to be a difference with women performing most of the home-based caring and men taking the injured person to a hospital, rehabilitation centre or other service provider. This question of gender and family care might deserve further study.

Undercounting of females in the national statistics was a concern raised by one respondent who stated that there are more female landmine victims than what the numbers show. This topic needs further research before any conclusions can be drawn.

General Findings

Awareness on gender issues varies among the respondents. What is clear is that women and men have different gender roles but that these roles also differ greatly between the different parts of the country. Women in mine affected areas are often illiterate but because of their restricted mobility, it is men who are more likely to get caught in mine accidents. **Whether it is a woman herself or her husband who is injured, the sample agreed that the women were most burdened,** either as a victim or as a caretaker.

With regards to employment, Sudanese women and men work in all four pillars of mine action. **As is often the case, women are not as represented in demining and clearance as in MRE.** The main resistance comes from demining organisations stating that the Sudanese do not want women working as deminers. At the same time, those female deminers that do exist become role models showing that traditional gender structures are possible to break.

Informing the men on the risks of landmines constitutes another challenge: due to their daily activities, men are both highly vulnerable to landmines and difficult to reach for awareness raising sessions.

Chapter 3 – The Pillars of Mine Action

Demining

The first pillar of mine action, demining, is defined as “*activities which lead to the removal of mine and unexploded ordnance (UXO) hazards, including technical survey, mapping, clearance, marking, post-clearance documentation, community mine action liaison and the handover of cleared land*”.⁴⁴

There are several important questions one can raise on gender and demining:

- Do assessment and survey activities reach women, men, girls and boys in the community?
- Are both women and men trained and hired to conduct surveys and assessments?
- Are both women and men part of demining teams?
- Are both women and men involved in the process of prioritising which areas to clear.
- Are both women and men involved in the process of how the land, once cleared, should be handed over?
- Do procedures required to receive land certificates or post-clearance titles act as barriers for women receiving land?

Women’s Participation in Assessments and Surveys

Due to their different roles and responsibilities in society, women, men, girls and boys may have different information on land mine threats or where accidents have taken place. For example, as men are generally responsible more often than women for income-generating activities which involve expanding to larger areas, men could possess information regarding the areas they encounter as they conduct those activities. Similarly, women in many societies are responsible for collecting water and firewood, and they can provide information on these routes. Likewise, children have information on areas they cross on their way to school or when playing.

In order to collect the whole community’s knowledge on where landmines are placed, the survey team needs to make sure that women, men, girls

⁴⁴ International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) 04.10 Second Edition, definition 3.53. IMAS definitions are available at www.mineactionstandards.org.

and boys are all given the opportunity to provide information. Meeting the community leaders or local authorities does not necessarily mean that all views are reflected. As most societies are patriarchal, local authorities to a large extent consist only of men, and women's views or specific information they have are not always included. In the Swiss Campaign's electronic consultation, only four organisations out of the total 12⁴⁵ (one third) specifically target women and girls in the impact assessments carried out to ensure that their experiences are included in the assessment interviews. As the case from Sudan in appendix 3 shows, the whole community benefits from adopting a gender sensitive approach to community meetings.

To ensure this, surveys and assessments need to be conducted during different hours of the day and in different settings, as men or women may have difficulties accessing areas in the communities which are specifically reserved for either sex. Moreover, it is highly important to collect sex-disaggregated data in the surveys. In order to design and develop programmes that will reach all members in a community, one needs to know who is affected.



Children informing surveyors. Credit: MAG/Sean Sutton

⁴⁵ The total sample is 66, but seeing that different organisations answer different questionnaires, only 12 replied to this specific question.

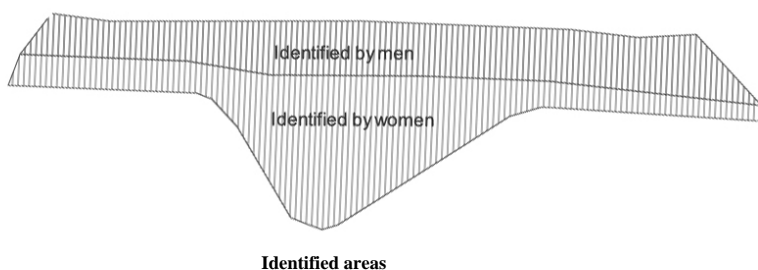
Gender Balanced Survey Teams

In addition to taking gender into consideration when conducting survey interviews, it is important to have survey teams that consist of both women and men. Although this may vary between different contexts, it is still a crucial factor for successful surveying in many societies. Not all men have access to all women in society, and vice versa. Another approach is to hold trainings for women so they can practice speaking in meetings or drawing on a map.

Good practice 1 – Gender Sensitive Assessment Survey

In Jordan, the National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation (NCDR⁴⁶) and NPA undertook a Landmine Retrofit Survey with a clear gender perspective. Information was gathered from women and men in the communities by survey teams which also consisted of women and men surveyors. Convenient times and locations for the meetings were chosen to make sure all segments of society could participate. By discussing how minefields threaten lives and block development and how the clearance would improve life for women, men, girls and boys, people submitted information on where landmine accidents had taken place.

The technical assessment results showed that males and females identified different areas as contaminated by landmines. As the picture below indicates, women and men may have access to different information depending on mobility patterns, daily tasks and knowledge. One of the main conclusions drawn from the experience was that clearance recommendations have to take into account the needs of both women and men, and that female participation is not only relevant for gender balance, but also for obtaining relevant data.



⁴⁶ For more information about NCDR's work, please visit www.ncdr.org.jo.

Prioritisation of the Land to be Cleared

Another aspect of demining which may have gender implications is the prioritisation process of which land to clear. In an ideal situation all areas would be cleared, regardless of location, use or contamination. In reality however, resources are scarce and time limited, leading to a need to prioritise. **In this regard, it is important to review the possible effects the prioritisation may have on women, men, girls and boys in the communities.**

Handover of Cleared Land

Once the land is cleared from landmines and ERW it is handed over back to the community. In this process it is very important to **ensure that all people, women and men, have information about that the area has been cleared and ready to be used.** Moreover, it is crucial to study who has access to the cleared land.

Employment of Female Deminers

Once surveying and marking of mine contaminated land is done, the actual removal of landmines from the ground, or the clearance, is undertaken. **In terms of gender this is often linked to employment; whether it is appropriate to engage female deminers or not.** The Swiss Campaign has come across various arguments throughout this study referring to the local context saying that it is not possible to employ women as deminers. The collected good practices below show that these obstacles could easily be overcome, if adequate measures are taken.

Good practice 2 – Female Deminers in Somaliland

In Somaliland, HALO⁴⁷ has successfully employed female deminers to operate in the mine affected areas. The initiative came from the local women themselves approaching HALO asking for jobs. This started an internal process at HALO making it possible to employ women as deminers in Somaliland.

After first briefing and receiving approval from local authorities and having consulted with our national senior staff, HALO decided to invite the women to join our intensive training programme. The trainees successfully completed the course, thus creating Somaliland's first female demining sec-

⁴⁷ For more information about HALO's work, please visit www.halotrust.org.

tion. The section of female deminers was incorporated into a full manual mine clearance team.

The local authorities warmly welcomed the initiative and accepted the proposed female deminers, currently a group of 11 women. As these women have performed very well and constitute an “*excellent addition to HALO’s operation in Somaliland*”, HALO plan to recruit and train more female deminers in due course, as donor funds become available.

On the question of whether the initiative increased the costs for the organisation, HALO answered: “*HALO has budgeted for the increase in all current donor contracts. Other changes included purchase of uniforms, separating the tents of women deminers, and modifications to the employment contract to cover maternity leave etc.*”.



Demining team, Somaliland. Credit: HALO Trust

Good practice 3 – Seeing is Believing

Noimany Pialeuxay is the driver for MAG⁴⁸ Lao's all-female demining team and transports the team to and from UXO clearance sites. Despite some men believing she could not do it or would not get the job, she applied because she likes driving. Several candidates were interviewed and tested but MAG's staff were impressed by her confidence and experience. *"I'm not nervous driving a four-wheel drive car, in the past I have driven a Russian six-wheeler truck!"*

MAG Lao based the recruitment of Noimany on her actual skills, rather than perceived prejudices or notions of what is acceptable. MAG was the first organisation in the province of Xieng Khouang to hire a female driver and in doing so created a lot of attention. Employing women in what are traditionally believed to be "male occupations" is a good way to convince those who doubt their ability to work. While some men said to Noimany that she would not get the job, others doubted that women could carry out the demanding work of UXO clearance. *"That is one benefit of our team. When people see us at work, they realise that we can do it."* Seeing certainly is believing.



Noimany Pialeuxay. Credit: MAG/Nick Axelrod

⁴⁸ For more information about MAG's work, please visit www.maginternational.int.

Good practice 4 – IWDA⁴⁹, Cambodia

During 2007, IWDA in Cambodia undertook a study with the purpose to “*analyse existing MAG clearance data to test the hypothesis that there are differences in mine clearance rates of mixed-sex and single-sex-mine action teams*”. The study also explored the perceived impact on host communities, the deminer’s spending and saving habits, their coping with separation from families and their perceptions on gender similarities and differences. The results showed that female teams reported finding more scrap metal than all-male or mixed teams. The collected data also indicated that male teams cleared more land per week than female teams - which does not automatically mean faster work or equal efficiency, and that mixed teams cleared more mines than any other team. However, because the sample only included one all-male team and two all-female teams, no generalisations can be drawn.

The project also indicated changes in the community’s view on gender roles and the various expectations on women, men, girls and boys. The communities were initially surprised to find women doing mine clearance in the field, as the following quotation shows:

We thought they were cooks or nurses or something. /.../ [But now] I have asked them and they told us they do the same things. I asked them if the men come and destroy the mines when they find them, but the women even do that on their own.

IWDA’s research shows that all-female teams can act as role models that promote an image of women being just as competent and equally strong and brave as men. When people notice that there are no men in the team, they ask the women what they are doing. This leads to conversations where it transpires that female deminers have the same training, perform the same tasks and are paid the same salary as their male counterparts.

Gender Sensitive Employment Offers

When discussing gender and mine action in general and demining in particular, employment is often brought up and separately addressed. In the Swiss Campaign’s electronic consultation, the organisations were asked if they take active

⁴⁹ For more information about IWDA’s work, please visit www.developmentgateway.com.au.

measures to **make sure that their vacancy announcements are available⁵⁰ to both women and men.** The results show that 40% (34 out of 83 organisations) seek to ensure this. Some examples of measures organisations can take include posting vacancy announcements that mention that both women and men are encouraged to apply. Job descriptions should not contain qualification demands, characteristics or experiences that are alleged as gender neutral, but in reality could be perceived as connected to only one sex, for example military background or physical strength. **Vacancy announcements should be distributed to a wider network of recruitment channels** than what is usually used, to make the information available to both women and men. Finally, **advertisements should use photos of both women and men.** When advertisements only show male deminers, women may be discouraged and choose not to apply.

Good practice 5 – Informal Structures

In Tyre in southern Lebanon, the Swedish Rescue Services Agency (SRSA⁵¹) had a clear gender strategy in the employment of clearance teams. Instead of using formal recruitment advertisements in local newspapers, they spread the message among their employees, stressing that they were encouraging women to apply. This strategy was very successful, and they received a great number of female applicants. *“It is difficult to know for sure if this outcome is as a direct result of the informal recruitment process as we don’t know which results a formal recruitment process would have given”,* said Marie Mills at the section for Mine Action at SRSA. She continued: *“It is my personal view that informal processes which don’t list demands and requirements that could have a discriminatory effect on women (use of a special jargon or demanding military background, for example) turn out more successful”.*

When designing the project, SRSA wanted to make sure that they were being culturally sensitive. They decided to have all-female teams, which turned out to be unnecessary in the Lebanese context, as women and men can work side by side. The project was and continues to be a success, and today has mixed teams. The only adjustment they had to make was to create separate changing rooms for women and men.

⁵⁰ Availability could in this case have diverse meanings, it could for instance mean equal access to vacancy announcements, that vacancy announcements are not directly or indirectly aimed at men, or that organisations actively encourage women to apply.

⁵¹ For more information about SRSA’s work, please visit www.srsa.se.

Recommendations

- Collect and analyse all data, whether from casualty rates or in assessments, technical surveys or tracking the beneficiaries of cleared land, in a disaggregated manner by sex and age.
- Keep the data disaggregated throughout the analysis.
- Consult each component of the society – women and men – for assessments and surveys.
- Conduct house-to-house visits to reach women, men, girls and boys who are not able to participate in public survey meetings. Spread information on assessments and surveys objectives, time, and location, to ensure that both women and men understand the importance of bringing up their views and delivering their information on landmines. Ensure that community meetings are held at times and locations that are appropriate for and accessible to both women and men.
- Link with women's organisations to organise childcare support at the community level to enable women to attend meetings, training sessions and other activities outside home.
- Train and hire both women and men to conduct assessments and surveys.
- Enact a Code of Conduct to be respected by demining teams to prevent inappropriate behaviour.
- Consult both women and men in the process of prioritising the land to be cleared.
- Train and hire both women and men in all demining activities. Provide separate facilities needed for women and men to carry out the work. Train local deminers to overcome mobility obstacles for women. Provide appropriate facilities for women to come with their children during training sessions.
- Revise job requirement profiles, assess and select on the basis of qualifications – not perceptions. Ensure that employment offers welcome both women and men.
- Expand recruitment channels, use local networks to spread information about equal employment of women and men in demining activities.
- Ensure that both women and men are informed about and involved in the process of hand over of cleared land.
- Highlight concrete examples on how integrating gender is possible, including facilitation techniques to ensure that all voices are included.
- Share successful examples of gender mainstreaming with programs and organisations in other sectors.

Mine Risk Education

MRE is defined as “*activities which seek to reduce the risk of injury from mines and ERW by raising awareness and promoting behavioural change, including public information dissemination, education and training and community mine action liaison*”.⁵²

There are several important questions one can raise on gender and MRE:

- Do MRE activities reach women, men, girls and boys in the community?
- Are separate sessions provided for women and men, when needed?
- Are both women and men becoming MRE trainers and do both sexes convey the MRE messages?
- Is the MRE material gender sensitive, and include information on, for example, women’s and men’s daily activities and their exposure to risk?

Female MRE Trainers

MRE is the mine action pillar where most gender efforts have been made, especially in terms of participation. Many organisations have adopted strategies that include explicit measures to make sure that MRE reaches women, men, girls and boys in society and that both women and men work as trainers.

Good practice 6 – Zahra and Saba

In Eritrea, the United Nations Mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE⁵³) carries out an extensive MRE programme. One of its key success factors has been engaging women as trainers of MRE, which came as a direct result of taking active measures to adopt the recommendations of UNSCR resolution 1325 on women, war and peace. Zahra and Saba are two Eritrean women who work as MRE trainers for UNMEE. The fact that Zahra and Saba are female trainers is beneficial in many ways.

⁵² IMAS 04.10, Second Edition, definition 3.168.

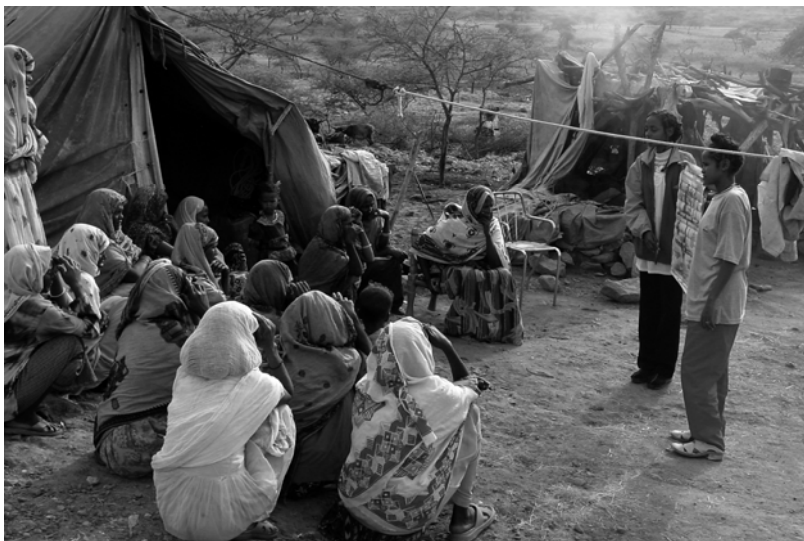
⁵³ For more information about UNMEE, please visit www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unmee.

The Mine Education Coordinator of the Force Mine Action Center, Major Shakil Siddiquee, explains:

When the teams are sent to more conservative and Muslim communities, the women in these communities often do not feel at ease either to appear in public alongside the male members of their community, or to receive mine education sessions from male counterparts. In such cases, it is opportune to have the female facilitators, as they are able to conduct, in a culturally sensitive manner, separate sessions for women and girls only. This is critical, as effective mine education involves communication among different individuals and different groups or audiences.

The involvement of women has moreover led to changes in these women's lives, including increased confidence: *"I have learned to speak loud and clearly. I am no longer the shy type of girl that I used to be"*, says Zahra.

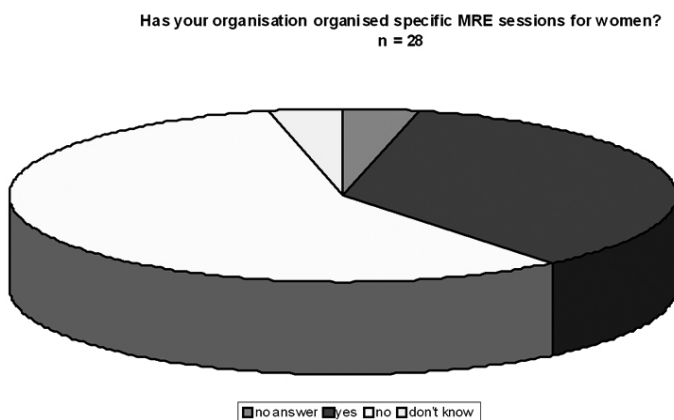
From January 2001 to January 2008, a total of 466,249 local civilians received MRE briefings from the UNMEE. Of these, nearly half were women and girls.



MRE Team, Eritrea. Credit: UNMEE MACC

Separate MRE Sessions

The diagram below shows that 10 out of 28 organisations who participated in the Swiss Campaign’s electronic consultation, reported having separate MRE sessions for women. Organizations that reported not having separate sessions are not necessarily lacking a gender perspective. In their particular countries, there may be no obstacles for women and men to participate in the same MRE sessions and separate sessions may not be necessary. However, it is important to investigate the need and make sure separate sessions are available where needed.



Obstacles to Women’s Participation

Activities to combat the global scourge of landmines must take gender into account if they are to reach every individual in need – regardless of their sex. For example, **several factors may impact heavily on a woman’s ability to access MRE**. Globally, **illiteracy rates** are much higher amongst women and girls than amongst men and boys⁵⁴. Due to **restrictions in mobility** outside of the

⁵⁴ For example, BRIDGE notes that “About two thirds of the 872 million illiterate people in developing countries are women” in H Wach & H Reeves, “Gender and Development: Facts and Figures, Report No. 56”, Institute of Development Studies, February 2000, p. 22.

private sphere, the **apportioning of domestic work including childcare**, and **restrictions on communication with unrelated males**, women can face physical or temporal obstacles to accessing MRE.⁵⁵ One crucial obstacle to female participation is the caring and upbringing of children. Who takes care of the home and the family when the women are attending survey meetings, MRE sessions or receive rehabilitation? In most countries, including those studied, women are traditionally the main caretakers of children. To arrange with childcare might thus be one way of encouraging and enabling women to participate in activities and work on the same conditions as men. Such arrangements can be: train local deminers whom can go back to their house at night; arrange suitable timetables, for instance when the children are at school; link with women grassroots organisations which could provide mothers with alternative ways for childcare within the community.

Gender Sensitive Awareness Raising Material

To make sure all people understand the message of MRE, different material is used to reach different groups. The most common division is material that targets children versus adults, but one can also distinguish a difference in material used for women and men. Seeing that 85-90% of the landmine victims, injured or killed, are men, many organisations focus their MRE work on these. Within this group of men, teenage boys have been further identified as a high risk group, having a different risk behaviour and respond to warnings in other ways than girls in the same age or adults. MRE should be tailored to both women and men to modify their behaviour.

Literacy, language and local customs are crucial factors when deciding which materials to use for conveying the messages of MRE written materials, posters, videos, dramas or other methods. Radio, television, and other audio or visual media have been proven effective ways of communicating messages of mine danger to women, but in many places, no such media is accessible or available.⁵⁶ As the country profiles in the previous chapter showed, access to these kinds of media varies greatly, not only due to gender, but also because of factors such as poverty and living in rural areas.

⁵⁵ For example, see M. Ruberry, "The Effects of Landmines on Women in the Middle East", *Journal of Mine Action*, April 5, 2001.

⁵⁶ For example, see M. Ruberry, "The Effects of Landmines on Women in the Middle East", *Journal of Mine Action*, April 5, 2001.

Good practice 7 – “That is me in the picture!”

The National Mine Action Centre (NMAC⁵⁷) in Sudan stresses the importance of making MRE materials which people can relate to and feel familiar with. For example, the materials used in northern Sudan differ from those in the south, with regards to how people are dressed and how the drawn characters look. The pictures are drawn to make sure the local context is captured in the pictures. The drawings also show different people performing different tasks: “*There are some posters which show a woman going to fetch water. Or IDP:s [internally displaced people] coming back going on safe roads*”, says Sylvia Michael, MRE Project Manager.

Building on Local Resources

Some organisations train people with influence in the village, such as traditional birth attendants (TBAs), teachers and medical staff, to become MRE trainers. As the advocacy section will show, **making use of people who have gained the confidence and trust of the local population can be a successful means of conveying messages**. In some countries, for example Cambodia, MRE training is occasionally combined with sports event or entertainment.

Good practice 8 – Minor Instructors, Major Messages

Children, both girls and boys, influencing and teaching their peers, siblings and parents about the dangers of landmines and ERW – that’s the key component in the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency’s (IKMAA⁵⁸) Child-to-Adult method. Children have access to parts of groups in the community that usual MRE in this area cannot reach due to occupational, social or religious reasons. In some communities children either go out individually or accompany their parents to graze animals, collect herbs or wood and even dismantle mines or ERW to sell for scrap metal. An informed child can thus help his or her parents and teach them safer behaviours. This can be done by making parents aware of mined areas by pointing out and explaining mine warning signs or telling them not to touch mines or ERW. In areas with high illiteracy this method provides parents and communities with a valuable source of information. This has direct implications for women, as women often constitute the majority of illiterate

⁵⁷ For more information about NMAC’s work please visit www.sd.undp.org/projects/main.htm.

⁵⁸ This good practise is a summary from a longer article “The Child-to-Adult Method in Mine Risk Education” written by Mudhafar Aziz Hamad from the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency, published in *Journal of Mine Action* N° 11.1 2007. For more information about IKMAA’s work, please visit www.ikmaa.org.

people in developing countries. In addition, involving children also has the benefit of this information being disseminated over long periods, as children will retain the information as they age. Other reasons for involving children are that, in some settings, they are available for training and have more time to meet and participate in different activities. It is also a way of empowering children, and allowing them to participate in decisions that affect them, a right that is formulated in the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Making use of existing relationships between parents, siblings and children or between child instructors and other children, is an advantageous practice. Trust and credibility are vital components when delivering information or conveying messages. Another advantage of training children is that since they live in the communities, they are able to answer questions that may not emerge until sometime after a usual MRE session. After an external MRE instructor has left the community, there is frequently no one to direct questions to. Finally, because they are children, it may be possible for child instructors to facilitate more questions and communication from their communities, thus creating more meaningful dialogue and learning.



Children receiving MRE, Afghanistan. Credit: ICRC/Marko Kotic

Recommendations

- Train and hire both female and male MRE trainers.
- Highlight concrete examples on how integrating gender is possible, including facilitation techniques to ensure that all voices are included.
- Ensure quantitative participation of both women and men in MRE sessions: ensure suitable timetables and locations for women and men.
- Ensure qualitative female and male participation in MRE sessions: conduct separate MRE sessions for women and men.
- Link with women's grassroots organisations to organise childcare support at the community level to enable women to attend meetings, training sessions and other activities outside home.
- Make sure that MRE is available and appropriately targeted to women, men, girls and boys: use gender sensitive awareness material for women and men: use locally produced material with which the community feels familiar and which portrays women, men, girls and boys in situations they recognise. Avoid using gender stereotyped pictures and/or material (showing for instance only male deminers).
- Ensure that community MRE meetings are held at times and locations that are appropriate for and accessible to both women and men.
- Train people with influence in the village such as TBAs, teachers or medical staff to become MRE trainers. Ensure gender balance amongst identified leaders.
- Use existing relationships between parents, siblings and children to spread information on landmines risks.
- Share successful examples of gender mainstreaming with programs in other sectors.

Victim Assistance

According to International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) victim assistance: “refers to all aid, relief, comfort and support provided to victims (including survivors) with the purpose of reducing the immediate and long-term medical and psychological implications of their trauma”.⁵⁹

There are several important questions one can raise on gender and victim assistance:



MRE Session,
Afghanistan.
Credit: Jannice
Gardmo

- Do women and men have equal access to assistance facilities: emergency relief as well as long-term rehabilitation?
- Do women and men have same access to information on which services are available and how to access them?
- Are there both female and male doctors and nurses?
- Do women and men benefit from equal psychological assistance?
- Do women and men have equal access to economic assistance and reintegration measures?”
- Are there assistance and support provided for victims as caretakers?

Access to Assistance

Some reports indicate that women may not be receiving timely or adequate victim assistance. Social norms regarding what economic roles are appropriate for women and men can give rise to the belief that men are typically the primary income providers. This in turn can lead to **prioritising male mine survivors** for emergency medical assistance, prostheses and rehabilitation – a significant problem for female-headed households. In 2006, 5 751 casualties from landmines and ERW were identified, of which males constituted 89% of all cases where gender details were known.⁶⁰ However, the female fatality rate from a mine accident is estimated to be 43%, with the fatality rate for men be-

⁵⁹ IMAS 04.10, Second Edition, definition 3.281.

⁶⁰ ICBL, Landmine Monitor Report 2007.

ing much lower at 29%⁶¹ - largely due to inequalities in victim assistance provision.

Women may face restrictions in mobility and hence have greater difficulties in accessing adequate victim assistance. Transportation may not be available for both women and men.



Do men and women have equal access to victim assistance? Credit: ICRC/Marko Kocic

Good practice 9 – Landmine Survivors Network, Bosnia Herzegovina

Landmine Survivors Network (LSN⁶²) in Bosnia Herzegovina has a clear gender perspective in their victim assistance programmes. They have made special efforts to increase the number of women receiving prompt mine/ERW victim assistance by assessing women's needs and by tailoring adequate assistance projects.

This is done through providing both female and male medical and psychological service staff privacy for female patients during their physical exams, sex-segregated accommodation in medical facilities and training/education opportunities for both women and men.

⁶¹ Adopt-a-Minefield, Landmine Facts, available at www.landmines.org/crisis/landmine_fact_sheet.cfm.

⁶² For more information about LSN's work, please visit www.landminesurvivors.org.

LSN also collects and analyzes information on female victims and include them into program data base and enable women to know and realize their rights and support their inclusion in society (participation in raising awareness and public events - sport activities, art colony, exhibition of survivors' arts, advocacy and human rights training).

On what challenges they faced in this process, LSN answered:

In most cases women victims are left to their own devices and struggle in making enormous efforts to remain functional in their social roles of mothers, wives, daughters and, often, emotional and instrumental pillars of the family, despite the insufficient support and lack of understanding. Their needs are many and diverse.

LSN Bosnia Herzegovina monitors these activities through regular follow-up and peer support visits, and through evaluations of women's groups for psychosocial integration.

Victims as Caretakers

IMAS definition of "victim" is not only referring to "*an individual who has suffered harm as a result of a mine or ERW accident*", but also notes that "*in the context of victim assistance, the term victim may include dependants of a mine/ERW casualty, hence having a broader meaning than survivor*".⁶³ This added definition is important to underline, as **it traditionally is women who have a larger responsibility for caretaking within families**. Women, as wives to landmine injured husbands, may have to take on the role as the main breadwinner of the family, adding more duties and putting her in an even more vulnerable position.

Psychological Trauma

On the psychological effects following a landmine injury, women and men may have different experiences, as the country profiles have indicated. **As men more often than women are responsible for income-generating activities, men tend to suffer more from not being able to provide financial security for the family.**

⁶³ IMAS 04.10, definition 3.280.

Female Doctors

Additionally, male doctors may be forbidden from examining women and women may be restricted from practicing as doctors.⁶⁴ Women may also not be allowed to leave the household or the immediate surroundings without a male relative or chaperone, which again compromises their access to health-care.

People with disabilities in general face difficulties in entering the open labour market, but, seen from a gender perspective, men with disabilities are almost twice as likely to have jobs than women with disabilities. When women with disabilities work, they often experience unequal hiring and promotion standards, unequal access to training and retraining, unequal access to credit and other productive resources, unequal pay for equal work and occupational segregation, and they rarely participate in economic decision making.⁶⁵

Good practice 10 – Female Medical Staff, Pakistan

Response International⁶⁶ has recently concluded a multi-sector mine action project in the Federally Administrated Tribal Area (FATA) of Pakistan, in tribal agencies adjacent to the Afghan border. This society is male-dominated, with women subject to strict Parda (veiling) and restricted to their homes or the fields for agricultural work. Health and educational resources are limited and the lack of access to clean drinking water is a major public health concern. In order to ensure that women and men have equal access to medical care and rehabilitation after a land mine injury, the following improvement was introduced:

A female nurse was recruited and trained [...]. This was designed to enhance female access to the services, as in certain areas there is still resistance to the idea of women receiving health care from male health workers.

There seemed to be a consensus among the sample the Swiss Campaign surveyed that women and men are equally likely to receive medical care after a landmine injury, regardless of type of care (treatment by medical staff, tradi-

⁶⁴ Ruberry, “The Effects of Landmines on Women in the Middle East”, 2001.

⁶⁵ International Labour Organisation, “IFP/Skills Working Paper No. 14”, 2003.

⁶⁶ For more information about Response International’s work, please visit www.responseinternational.org.uk.

tional doctor, family member, or others). As mentioned, this sample is too small for generalisations (n=15), but indicates that the surveyed organisations believe that there is no discrimination in access to or provision of rehabilitation services. Further studies with larger samples are needed to verify these findings.

Legal Instruments

In the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) article 6, women and girls with disabilities are recognised to be multiply disadvantaged. They face greater risk of violence and abuse, and take care of children and other adults with disabilities, which increases their workload and can push them into further destitution.

Good practice 11 – Voices, Mozambique

POWER⁶⁷, a British NGO working on disability in Mozambique, runs a project called “Voices Programme”. The “Voices Programme” objective is to give voices to people with disabilities (PWDs) in Mozambique through the establishment of listening clubs in the northern and central regions of the country. The Listening Clubs (radio clubs) consist of people with disabilities who get together and produce record and listen to radio programmes and use these as starting points for discussions on human rights issues. Topics on gender, domestic violence and discrimination are regularly included in their discussions. Some groups are separated by sex and age while others are mixed.

Through these groups people with disabilities not only get training in new skills (broadcasting, report writing, and interviewing techniques to mention a few), but are provided with a platform for discussing sensitive issues on disability, such as stigmatisation, dependency and attitudes. The Listening Groups of Nampula, in northern Mozambique, witness that this initiative has “*changed the mindset of the community in general*”. The communities’ awareness on the different rights of people with disabilities has increased and there is now a general acceptance of including PWDs in various events and networks.

In Quelimane, the women’s clubs (a section of listening groups) show great awareness of their rights as a direct result of the radio programmes. These women claim that disabled women face more discrimination than disabled men, as they have the main responsibility for taking care of the family and es-

⁶⁷ For more information about POWER’s work, please visit www.powerinternational.org.

pecially the children. The trained women are thus a source of inspiration for other women to participate in these, or similar, events.

Recommendations

- Collect and analyse all data from casualty rates in a disaggregated manner by sex and age.
- Keep the data disaggregated throughout the analysis.
- Make sure that all services for victim assistance are available and appropriately targeted to women, men, girls and boys. Ensure sex-segregated accommodations for women and men in medical facilities and training/education opportunities.
- When possible, ensure free transportation for victims to overcome financial obstacles.
- When possible, favour mobile clinics to overcome mobility obstacles.
- Ensure gender balance amongst medical and psychological staff.
- Ensure gender equity in the allocation of reintegration activities.



Income-generating activities are important for reintegrating landmine victims.
Credit: ICRC/Jessica Barry

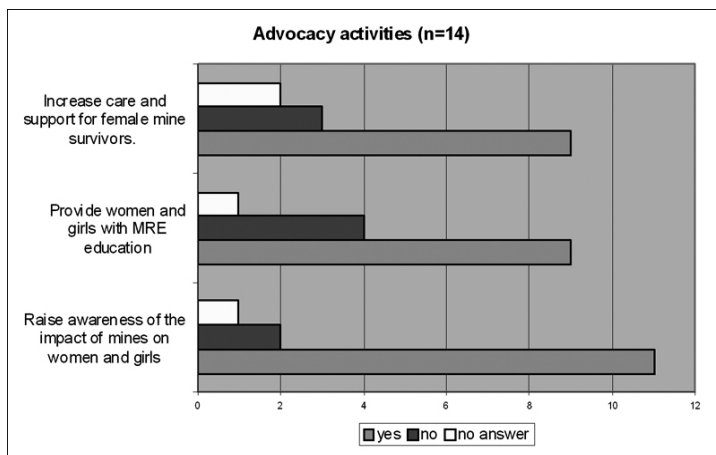
Advocacy

The advocacy pillar of mine action includes a wide range of activities: “*public support, recommendation or positive publicity with the aim of removing, or at least reducing, the risk from, and the impact of, mines and ERW*”.⁶⁸

There are several important questions one can raise on gender and advocacy

- Do advocacy campaigns reach both women and men?
- Do advocacy campaigns include gender information?
- Do advocacy campaigns use gender sensitive awareness raising material?
- Are both women and men visible in the advocacy campaigns carried out?
- At the policy level, do advocacy campaigns targeting organisations, governments, and donors stress the importance of including gender perspective in all mine action activities?

Looking at former and ongoing advocacy campaigns on landmines and ERW, many of these still focuses on men. Seeing that men constitute the main risk group this may be appropriate depending on what you advocate. In terms of employment however, both women and men are involved in advocacy activities. However, as the diagram below indicates, special efforts to discuss how women are affected by landmines are not completely ignored in the context of mine action advocacy. In the sample (n=14), in the Swiss Campaign’s consultation, the majority of groups had carried out initiatives on various gender aspects. These could be further elaborated upon and duplicated in other areas.



⁶⁸ IMAS 04.10, Second Edition, definition 3.7.

Gender Sensitive Awareness Raising Campaigns

Good practice 12 – Women and Cluster Munitions

As part of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom's (WILPF⁶⁹) advocacy programme on gender and cluster munitions, a pamphlet was developed in 2007 which highlights various gendered aspects. The pamphlet was distributed to a variety of mine action actors. In this, WILPF calls for:

- More extensive research on the effects of cluster munitions and gender;
- The collection of disaggregated data, by sex and age, in order to gain a more comprehensive and representative picture of the effects of cluster munitions on all individuals in affected communities;
- Equal access and opportunity for the employment of women in cluster munitions clearance and risk education programs;
- Greater awareness of the unique problems facing women in affected communities - in barriers to medical care and risk awareness, social stigmatization and psychological trauma, divorce and abandonment, providing for dependents with little access to employment, and risks of extreme poverty; and
- Making gender mainstreaming and gender balance priority considerations in formulating and implementing cluster munitions policies and programs at all levels.

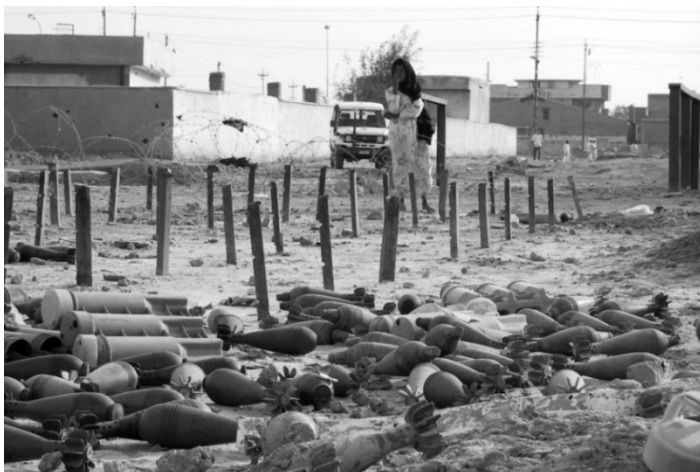
Because cluster munitions and landmines have many similarities, these recommendations are also applicable in the context of mine action.

Good practice 13 – International Women's Day - An Important Day for the Mine Action Sector

International Women's Day is marked annually on 8 March. Worldwide, various organisations and movements organize campaigns and seminars, publish articles and carry out other activities to raise awareness on women and girls' situation in the world today. The celebrations of 8 March are not reserved for a limited selection of organisations, and could in fact constitute an important advocacy day for the mine action sector. On 8 March 2005, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) published an article entitled "*Women's own struggle against landmines*", which looked at the threats faced by women

⁶⁹ For more information about WILPF's work, please visit www.wilpf.org.

and girls in mine affected countries. In 2008, WILPF organised a two-day seminar in Geneva entitled “*At What Cost?: Women, Wars, Weapons and Conflict Prevention*”. These are two of many successful and positive initiatives carried out on gender and landmines/cluster munitions on International Women’s Day.



UXO in Iraq. Credit: ICRC/Johan Sohlberg

Good practice 14 – Gendered approach to advocacy, Colombia

In Colombia, the Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines (Campaña Colombia Contra Minas, CCCM⁷⁰) has launched a gender programme to ensure that the information used is gender sensitive and that it reaches both women and men. CCCM arranges awareness-raising workshops on various dimensions of mine action, which are gender mainstreamed through the following process:

- Register data on landmine victims disaggregated by sex and age;
- Collect information on how women, men, girls and boys are exposed to the risk of landmines;
- Hire local, well-known and well-respected facilitators, both women and men, for workshops and training sessions, who have been trained by CCCM; and
- Ensure that both women and men participate in the workshops; as trainers but also as receivers of information.

⁷⁰ For more information about CCCM’s work, please visit www.colombiasinminas.org.

Gender Sensitive Advocacy Material

Mainstreaming gender in advocacy could be done through examining the materials that organisations use. What kind of pictures and photographs are used? Are the photos only showing **stereotyped gender roles; women as victims, men as deminers**? Surprisingly few organisations, both within and outside mine action, seem to reflect upon the importance of pictures which images they use. As in all advocacy efforts or public relations campaigns, it is very important that the target groups recognise themselves in the posters, videos, pamphlets or other media being used.

Using Existing Channels of Communication

Good practice 15 – Hakamas - New Messages, Existing Structures

Hakamas are a group of influential women, who would sing and dance to encourage soldiers to move forward and fight while on the front lines during the war in Sudan. Nowadays their influence and activities are the same although their message has changed. The North Sudan Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) Commission and UN DDR⁷¹ Unit initiated a project with these women where instead of motivating soldiers to fight, they now promote peace through their songs. The Hakamas get training on a variety of topics, such as conflict resolution and reconciliation and HIV/AIDS awareness, and then compose songs to spread these messages to grassroots communities.

Using existing structures, such as information channels or respected groups of people, can save energy and time. Established structures already have credibility and societies' confidence. Moreover it can be easier for individuals to identify with trainers who are also locals or with whom they have similar traits and a shared history.

The utilization of existing, well established and popular information channels can be applied to mine action. For example, these channels could spread MRE messages, information about survey teams coming to visit or information on victim assistance.

⁷¹ For more information about UN DDR, please visit www.unddr.org.

Mainstreaming Gender at Policy Level

Good practice 16 – Gender mainstreaming at policy level

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) is developing policy and programming guidelines to assist key mine action and development stakeholders (e.g. government officials, mine action organisations, official development cooperation agencies, development NGOs) in linking mine action with development more effectively.⁷² The Linking Mine Action and Development (LMAD) guidelines are underpinned by the recognition that mine/ERW contamination affects women, men, boys and girls in different ways, and that failure to consider the significance of gender during mine action planning and implementation will reduce the overall effectiveness of both mine action and development interventions. Gender considerations are therefore integrated throughout the guidelines. Examples of the gender sensitive guidance provided to key stakeholders include:

- When undertaking or commissioning comprehensive surveys and assessments, ensure that the survey methodology results in a clear understanding of the impact of mine/ERW contamination on affected communities, including the different impacts on women, men, girls and boys, and survivors.
- When setting priorities for clearance, ensure that the needs and views of affected communities, including men, women and children, as well as survivors, are actively sought through the use of participatory, bottom-up and transparent processes, and that they are able to participate meaningfully in the decision-making process .
- Ensure that post-clearance assessments are systematically undertaken, in part to ensure that cleared land is used as intended by target beneficiaries, and in particular, to ensure that women and men are equally involved in decisions relating to land use.

As this 16th and final good practice example shows, gender mainstreaming in mine action is also about integrating gender at the policy level. **If gender is integrated in the planning phases, no separate “on-top” guidelines on gender are needed.**

⁷² The LMAD guidelines will be published by June 2008 and can be accessed through www.gichd.org. For more information about GICHD’s work, please visit www.gichd.org.

Recommendations

General

- Collect and analyse all data, in a disaggregated manner by sex and age.
- Keep the data disaggregated throughout the analysis.
- Train staff at all levels on the importance of gender mainstreaming in mine action. Highlight concrete examples on how integrating gender is possible, including facilitation techniques to ensure that all voices are included.
- Create budgets for gender initiatives. If donors are serious about gender equality, they will realize the costs of these initiatives and will allocate sufficient funding.
- Use existing structures, policies, guidelines or channels and incorporate them into the mine action context. Do not hesitate to replicate successful methods or programs, whether it is Hakamas singing their messages or adopting the IASC's gender guidelines. There is no need to reinvent the wheel.
- Mainstream gender into all laws, policies, planning activities and documents, including sector-wide efforts.
- Analyse all programs from a gender perspective to identify specific areas where further efforts are needed to maximize effectiveness of mine action.

To donors

- Have ongoing dialogue with the implementing mine action partners on how gender can be successfully mainstreamed.
- Enforce stricter policies and guidelines making gender mainstreaming mandatory, not only “desirable” – a conditional funding. Demand measurable outcomes.
- Train staff at all levels on the importance of gender mainstreaming in mine action.
- Set a good example in gender balance and gender equality within your organisation. You cannot demand of others that which you are not implementing yourself.
- Share successful examples of gender mainstreaming with programs in other sectors.

To supporting organisations (for example, women’s rights organisations and organisations providing technical assistance)

- Support mine action organisations with relevant channels, networks and contacts and provide access to female leaders and women’s groups to facilitate the integration of gender in mine action.
- Design and develop gender programmes within all pillars in collaboration with mine action actors. Include concrete examples and integrate them with local cultural values and programming priorities. Demonstrate how gender mainstreaming adds value to the mine action sector.
- Share role models and lessons learned from gender mainstreaming – including efforts targeted to men and boys – with policy makers and program officials in other sectors.

Chapter 4 – Conclusion

This publication has reviewed gender mainstreaming efforts in the sector of mine action. Our initial impression was that gender awareness seemed to be low among the respondents. Gender is perceived as irrelevant, unnecessary, unpractical, not viable, and unrelated to mine action. It is often seen as a foreign concept imposed by outsiders.

However, not only is the **integration of gender viable**, but **many organisations are already executing successful gender mainstreaming activities**, sometimes without labelling them as gender projects. By specifically addressing the needs of women, men, girls and boys, these efforts helped mine action programs in achieving their overall goals. Moreover, as the discussions with the consultants went further and the organisations elaborated on possible gender mainstreaming within mine action, all of them came up with interesting suggestions⁷³. **The collection of good practices shows that gender, despite its conceived complexity, is universally applicable in mine action, regardless of pillar, region or culture.**

In general most women within the mine action sector are involved in victim assistance and MRE whereas men work as deminers and hold decision making positions. With reference to UNSC resolution 1325, which among other things calls for an increased number of women at decision-making levels, **this traditional division of tasks** shows that there is still a lot to be done to promote equality between women and men and fight discrimination against women.

It is worth noting that non-state actors (NSAs) also carry out mine action activities. Examples of such NSAs include Hezbollah, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Research on gender and NSAs show the same result as for state actors - that women often hold traditional roles in mine action as caretakers or providing MRE.⁷⁴

Discriminatory Demining

The good practices presented demonstrate that gender sensitisation is highly important in surveying as well as in clearance.

⁷³ A full list of examples - the Inspiration Board – can be found at the Swiss Campaign’s web portal, www.scbl-gender.ch.

⁷⁴ Geneva Call “Armed non-state actors and landmines, Volume II: A Global report of NSA mine action”, 2006, p. 47.

Women, men, girls and boys have different information on landmines. Having a comprehensive approach including both sexes in assessments and surveys not only reduces the risks of getting injured by landmines but also means addressing the security of all members of society. Specific arrangements – such as **appropriate communication** of the objectives of assessments and surveys, **adequate timing and location**, and **house-to-house visits** – improve efficiency through community ownership of the process and collection of accurate data.



Surveyor making a house visit in Cambodia. Credit: MAG/Sean Sutton

Training and hiring both female and male surveyors represents another effective way of gathering information from different segments of the population. Be it through informal talks with women, or through formal hiring of women, most organisations which have used female surveyors portrayed the experience as being successful, as women have access to other women and different information channels.

With regards to mine clearance and female deminers, resistance was strong in some countries. Yet, in countries where our sample showed the most resistance in hiring women in demining activities, there are some organisations that successfully employ female deminers. Some organisations claimed that female deminers were more productive than their male counterparts; others reported success and community approval. This later factor is sometimes specified as a reason for not employing deminers of both sexes. Culture and

religion is frequently mentioned as an excuse for “*not going there* [hiring women]”. However, few organisations actually investigate this cultural argument more deeply to find out whether or not it has any support in reality. In fact, where empirical research is conducted, the results seem to support the opposite, and, **generally speaking, demining seems to benefit from involving women.**

This raises an important question; **is it “the culture” of a country that hinders more widespread employment of female deminers or is it the implementing organisations’ views that get in the way?** In this study’s very limited sample, there was no opportunity to trace this relationship or to generalise. However, one could look at countries with different cultural contexts and see if common implementing organisations have successfully employed female deminers.

Mainstreamed MRE

The initiatives collected in this publication not only highlight the **importance of involving women as MRE trainers**, but also the **importance of using different material to different target groups in order to make the MRE message clear to all components of society.** The child-to-adult method of conveying MRE shows that alternative structures can be used.

One interesting fact emerging from this study is that **difficulties to reach women and men for MRE sessions differ according to gender.** Women if **properly targeted** are easily reachable: this implies **available and appropriate communication material** that takes into account **potential female illiteracy, suitable timetables and locations** that allow women combining child care and domestic duties with attendance to MRE sessions, and the **inclination to be addressed by a female interlocutor.** This supports the idea that there is a necessity to ensure a **gender balance amongst MRE trainers** as a means to enhance **women’s effective participation.**

With regards to men, though they encounter less obstacles to employment than women, be it mobility, literacy, or occupational restrictions, they appear to **be less easily reachable** than women, as they work far from their homes, even during weekends. No existing good practice directly addresses this finding.

Varied Victim Assistance

Medical care and rehabilitation after a landmine injury should be a universal right, regardless of sex, age, class, caste, region or any other variable. To ensure that these services are available and appropriate for both women and men,

various initiatives have been presented throughout this publication. One key success factor mentioned is **carrying out in-depth studies on the needs of injured women, men, girls and boys and not clumping them together in one group.**

Regarding access to victim assistance and rehabilitation services, many of the respondents argued that their approach of “treating anyone that comes to the door”, would not discriminate any group in society. **Yet, instead of being “gender neutral”, this approach is “gender blind”**, and doesn’t take into account the fact that though the door is open to them too, women might face difficulties in accessing that door because of mobility restrictions, financial restrictions, and because they cannot leave their children behind while they search for care.

Capacity building of PWDs should also be looked at from a gender perspective as it has been showed that rehabilitation and reintegration opportunities differ depending on the sex of landmines survivors. Because of gender roles, **survivors of landmines see their life affected not only because of physical damage but also because of social expectations in relation to their sex:** injured men feel humiliated by not being able to remain the breadwinner of the family. Injured women become vulnerable to poverty, stigmatisation, and isolation because of their potential incapacity to take care of their children and domestic work. Single injured female households might encounter even more difficulties in having their status as primary breadwinner recognised, or in marrying.

It is worth noting here that **“victim” does not necessarily only mean injured by landmines, but also refers to the caretaker or family member of an injured person.** In this regard, important differences between women and men have been identified. A man, as husband to an injured wife, might more or less continue life as before with assistance from female family members for the household duties. In contrast, women, as wives to injured men, have to take up the role of being the family’s main breadwinner, in addition to completing her household tasks and taking care of the children.



Overcoming the obstacles.
Credit: MAG/Sean Sutton

Added Advantages of Appropriate Advocacy

This study has showed that **gender is not completely ignored in the context of mine action advocacy** and that the majority of groups have carried out initiatives on various gender aspects. The featured good practices show a variety of inspiring and interesting angles on integrating gender in mine action advocacy, ranging from using local resources (singers for instance), to educational pamphlets or stressing the importance of including gender perspective in the process of developing guidelines for mine action already from the beginning. Gender sensitive advocacy has a great role to play by promoting the **systematisation of extensive research on the different effects of APMs on women, men, girls and boys and the systematic use of sex and age disaggregated data**. Gender sensitive advocacy can also encourage policy makers and implementing organisations to make gender mainstreaming and gender balance priority considerations in formulation and implementation of mine action policies, programmes and operations.

Facing the Future

Gender – which refers to the different roles that women, men, girls and boys are expected to play in society – was **frequently misunderstood as “women”** in the research. To the extent that organisations do think in terms of gender, this is **often limited to ensuring gender balance among staff**, and even in this case women and men are usually assigned typical roles within the mine action system, reflecting stereotypes and “cultural” norms. It is noteworthy that respondents reported on an environment in which **landmines affect women and men differently**, and where the **differing concerns and needs of women and men receive unbalanced attention**. As such, it is clear that gender is an integral part of mine action that must not be neglected.

The survey and the field interviews clearly demonstrate that awareness with regards to gender in mine action varies between organisations and between countries. While the research showed some cultural arguments for not recruiting and engaging women in various parts of the mine action sector, it also **highlighted some very good examples of how stereotyped images of men, women and cultures can be challenged**.

Social changes that challenge dominant patterns of power and influence are bound to meet resistance or confusion. **To date, the absence of gender mainstreaming in mine action has been explained by some in the international community as resulting from local customs and culture, whereas local organisations say they have not received any training and that they lack resources**. There is a clear disconnection between some of the rhetoric from

international organisations and the realities in the field which call for further investigation.

Further Research

During the interviews and the electronic surveys, several interesting topics were raised which are beyond the scope of this report. These need further research and analysis before conclusions can be drawn:

- What are international mine action organisations views on local cultures and “the Other” (local population in the mine affected areas) and what are the implications for successful mine action activities?
- Can and should poverty be dealt with, before or in isolation of gender? Can both issues be dealt with in unison? What impact do landmines have on poverty levels among women and female-headed households? Are they more affected? How do they fare as beneficiaries of cleared land?
- What existing networks or structures can be used to enhance messages of mine action (MRE or advocacy) or provide victim assistance?
- Are there linkages between mine injuries and domestic violence?
- How could gender sensitive indicators be applied to mine action? The following example illustrates how relevant gender sensitive indicators would be for comprehensive mine action policy making, implementation and evaluation:
 - *Risk/enabling indicators*: e.g. measuring men’s willingness to have female deminers.
 - *Input/resource indicators*: e.g. building separate facilities for female and male deminers, provision of mobile clinics for victim assistance.
 - *Process/activity indicators*: e.g. number of house-to-house visits during surveys and assessments, number of visits to mobile clinic, by sex and age.
 - *Output indicators*: e.g. satisfaction of women with house-to-house visits and mobile clinics.
 - *Outcome/impact indicators*: e.g. reduced landmines injuries on men, improved access to assistance for women.



Demining team, Cambodia.
Credit: MAG/Sean Sutton

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Good practices – The contributing organisations

www.colombiasinminas.org
www.developmentgateway.com.au
www.gichd.org
www.halotrust.org
www.ikmaa.org
www.landminesurvivors.org
www.maginternational.int
www.ncdr.org.jo
www.powerinternational.org
www.responseinternational.org.uk
www.sd.undp.org/projects/main.htm
www.srsa.se
www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unmee
www.unndr.org
www.wilpf.org

Appendix 1 – Methodology of research

Electronic Consultation

The electronic consultation was launched on International Women's Day 2007 and sent to a wide range of organisations working within the mine action sector worldwide. It was distributed to organisations representing different pillars of mine action, grass root organisations focused on women, governments, UN agencies, and other relevant stakeholders. The electronic consultation included nine different questionnaires which aimed at studying gender in all relevant mine action pillars.⁷⁵

In total, 66 different organisations together representing 36 countries participated in the consultation. As shown in the table below there was a great variety in responses between regions and individual countries. There was also a difference in the number of questionnaires each organisation submitted, ranging from one to six completed questionnaires. The largest sample came from Africa where 28 organisations from 14 countries responded, of which Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ethiopia constitute the majority of responses.

In-Depth Interviews

In addition to the electronic consultations, field research missions were carried out in Colombia, Lebanon, Mozambique, Sri Lanka and Sudan, to get a deeper understanding of the issue. These countries were selected because they are heavily mine affected and represent a good geographical spread. Other heavily mine-contaminated countries such as Cambodia and Vietnam were deliberately left out of this study, given that these countries have already been subject to studies and articles on gender and mine action.⁷⁶

In each country, representatives from national governments, mine action organisations, UN agencies and women's organisations were interviewed to get a

⁷⁵ These questionnaires - gender and mine impact, MRE, victim assistance, impact surveys, clearance and demining, advocacy, gender and employment, women focussed activities and donor perspectives – can be downloaded from the Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines' web portal www.scbl-gender.ch.

⁷⁶ See for example: Hilde Wallacher, "Gender Mainstreaming in Mine Action", 2007 and Suzette Mitchell, "Gender Mission Report: UXO Clearance and community development in Thua Thien Hue Province", 2003.

variety of views and standpoints on the issue of gender and mine action. In total 80 interviews were conducted, divided as follows:

Colombia	14	(65% women, 35% men)
Lebanon	14	(56% women, 44% men)
Mozambique	13	(40% women, 60% men)
Sri Lanka	22	(46% women, 54% men)
Sudan	17	(25% women, 75% men)
Total	80	(46% women, 54% men)

The interviews were conducted by independent consultants familiar with the Swiss Campaign's work and with extensive experience working in the field of gender. The interviews were semi-structured following seven different transcripts (clearance/demining, mine impact surveying, survivor assistance, MRE/mine awareness, advocacy, organisational structure/function and women's grass roots and civil society) and two procedural forms.⁷⁷ The interviews, with a few exceptions, were recorded. The respondents were allowed to be anonymous, and it was decided not to identify the sources to any of the quotations in this study, given no added value in doing this. All interviews were conducted in English, apart from the ones in Colombia that were carried out in Spanish. Quotations from the interviews in Colombia were translated by the consultant who conducted the interviews.

Data Analysis Methodology

When all data had been gathered, a data analysis strategy was developed to facilitate the transformation from raw data to the final product. Two databases were created, the first for the electronic consultations. The questions were differentiated by colour, according to the type of data (qualitative, quantitative and quotations) together with a codification key. The questionnaires were thereafter coded and all data inserted in the database. For each country or organisation short analytical notes (summaries) were written. From the quantitative data pivot tables, diagrams and graphs were created. For the semi-structured interviews another database was developed using the same method as for the questionnaires. The recorded interviews were transcribed and data that was relevant for the study were inserted in the database. Thereafter a thorough analysis on each of the five countries was done. Lastly, the two databases and data from the printed materials (such as sex-disaggregated statistics on the impact of landmines) were merged for the final analysis.

⁷⁷ These interview templates can be downloaded at Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines' web portal www.scbl-gender.ch.

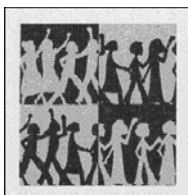
Limitations

Information has been gathered through an electronic consultation and through field interviews, as described above. An electronic consultation includes some uncertainties, including a **respondent misunderstanding a question**, and receiving **surveys with incomplete or inconsistent information**. The number of questionnaires completed was not necessarily a marker of the amount of relevant information on gender. Some organisations submitted only one questionnaire, but replied in length and gave detailed descriptions on the impact of landmines on women and men, female employment, possible resistance to talk about gender and other valuable data. Moreover, an electronic consultation requires that the respondent have access to a computer and reliable internet connection. The information collected from the electronic consultation should therefore be seen as data that can guide and facilitate the analysis of the field interview data, instead of comprising the main part of this study. The interviews generally took place in the capitals of the countries, and may not capture the views from the field, or more rural areas. However, all organisations included have field representation or implementing partners in the field, from whom they collect their data.

Respondents and submitted questionnaires

Region	Country	Number of Organisations that Responded	Number of Questionnaires Submitted
Africa	Angola	2	5
	Burundi	2	3
	Cameroon	1	2
	Ethiopia	3	8
	Eritrea	1	1
	Mali	1	1
	Mauretania	1	3
	Mozambique	1	1
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	4	10
	Senegal	2	2
	Somalia	2	2
	Sudan	6	9
	Uganda	1	4
	Zimbabwe	1	3
Asia	Afghanistan	2	7
	Cambodia	1	6
	Laos	3	2
	Sri Lanka	1	4
	Tajikistan	1	4
	Thailand	1	1
	Vietnam	3	3
Europe	Albania	1	5
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	2	2
	Kosovo	1	1
Middle East	Iraq	2	8
	Jordan	2	2
	Lebanon	1	1
	Syria	1	2
	Yemen	1	5
Central/ South America	Colombia	5	11
	El Salvador	1	1
	Guatemala	2	6
	Nicaragua	1	1
Regional/global	Reg. African org.	1	2
	UN-agency	1	2
	International NGO	1	1
Donors	Austria	1	1
	Italy	1	1
	Switzerland	1	1
TOTAL		66	134

Appendix 2 – Simplified version of UNSCR 1325



Simplified version of UNSCR 1325 on women,
peace and security prepared by the
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S TRIBUNE CENTRE

1. Increase the number of women at decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions involved in preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts.
2. Increase participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes.
3. Provide women candidates from a regular-updated, centralized roster for appointment as special representatives and envoys to facilitate the appointment of more women in these positions.
4. Expand the numbers and roles of women in UN field operations, such as military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel.
5. Ensure that a gender component is included in field peacekeeping operations.
6. Provide training guidelines and materials on (1) the protection, rights, and needs of women, (2) the importance of involving women in peacekeeping and peace-building measures, and (3) HIV/AIDS awareness in national training programs for military police, civilian police and civilian peacekeeping personnel.
7. Increase voluntary financial, technical and logistical support for gender sensitive training.
8. Adopt a gender perspective when negotiating & implementing peace agreements in areas like:

- Special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction.
- Support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution and involve women in all of the peace agreement implementation mechanisms.
- Ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly relating to the constitution, electoral system, the police and judiciary.

9. Respect international law regarding the rights and protection of women and girls, especially as civilians, during armed conflicts.

10. Take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse and violence in situations of armed conflict.

11. Put an end to impunity and prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls, and exclude these crimes from amnesty provisions.

12. Respect the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements and, in their design, take into account the particular needs of women and girls.

13. Consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and take into account the needs of their dependants.

14. Give consideration to the potential impact of UN Charter Article 41 on the civilian population, keeping in mind appropriate humanitarian exemptions and the special needs of women.

15. Ensure the Security Council missions take into account gender considerations and the rights of women, including through consultations with local and international women's groups.

16. Conduct a study on (1) the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, (2) the role of women in peace-building and (3) the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolutions. Submit the results to the Security Council and make the study available to all UN Member states.

17. Report progress to the Security Council on gender main-streaming throughout peacekeeping missions and all other aspects relating to women and girls.

Adopted by the UN Security Council at its 4213th meeting, on 31 October 2000.

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Appendix 3 – Example on gender sensitive approach to community meetings⁷⁸

Why take a gender sensitive approach to community meetings?

- To know who is in the area, consult them and their representatives on how the threat of mines impacts them.
- To ensure that all individuals have access to the benefits of mine action activities.
- To improve efficiency and ensure better planning and actions.
- To know if humanitarian mine action is successful by taking into account all groups of beneficiaries.
- To adhere to UN Security Council Resolution 1325.
- To identify threats and opportunities.
- To ensure community ownership of the process and the data collected.
- To gain further confidence and satisfaction from local population.

Beneficiaries of the approach

- Local population, women, men, girls and boys: e.g. clearance of areas that will impact their daily lives and long term lifestyle; less disruption if information is collected comprehensively.
- Staff doing impact assessment have a clearer basis to work on when assessing the satisfaction of local population.
- Those involved in prioritizing tasks.
- Deminers may clear smaller areas with better targeting.
- Those involved in budgeting (programme managers).

Key challenges to getting comprehensive data from both women and men

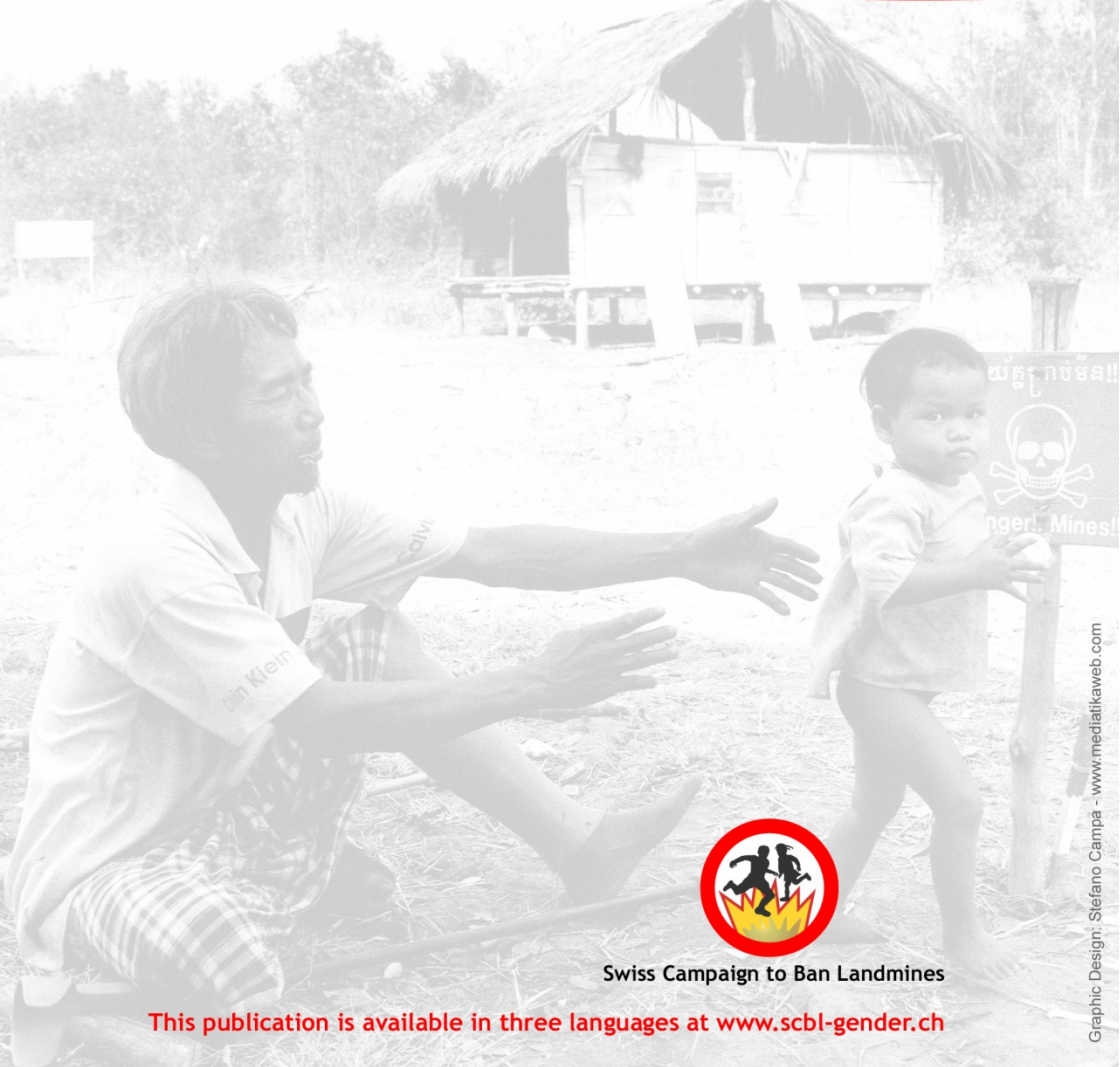
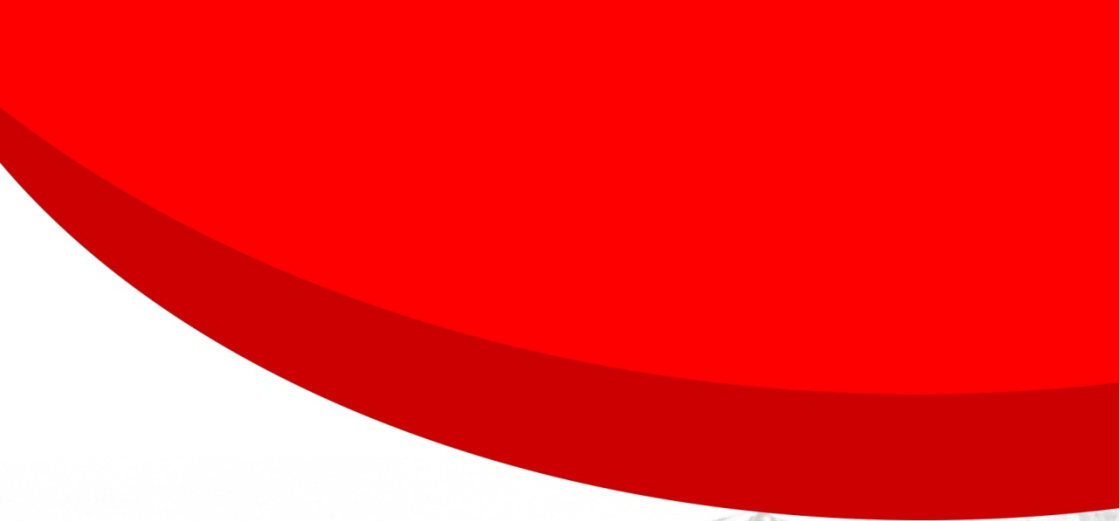
- Men tend to dominate the meetings.
- Women may be shy and might think that if they raise their voice men will judge them.
- For married women - local custom suggests that they should not attend mixed meetings when their husband is not around.

⁷⁸ Prepared by Justina Demetriades, BRIDGE, Institute of Development Studies, for NPA Mine Action in South Sudan.

- Lower levels of education among women and girls.
- All female meetings cannot be conducted if conducted by a male surveyor.

Process	Objectives	Activities	Inputs	Indicators	Evaluation
Task Impact Assessment (TIA)/ Survey/task prioritization stage/	<p>Collect and use information from both women and men in the assessment and prioritization phases through community meetings - by increasing participation of women in meetings</p> <p>Ensure that the most <i>comprehensive</i> and <i>representative</i> information on the threat of mines and ERW is collected (from UNMAS gender and mine action guidelines)</p> <p>Ensure that when prioritizing areas for clearance, needs of adults and children of both sexes are taken into consideration (UNMAS)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consult census data - if available - to know what proportion of women and men respondents you are looking for (e.g. UNHCR records of returnees) 2. Pay attention to gendered roles and responsibilities which act as barriers to participation in public meetings 3. Decide on flexible times and places for meetings to suit women and men 4. Consider holding all female meetings/focus groups with at least one female facilitator 5. Liaise with community leaders to ensure buy-in for all female/predominantly female meetings 6. Ensure interviewers are available to conduct meetings in local languages/get reliable translators 7. Encourage women to participate <i>when in</i> meetings 8. Use appropriate communications to inform people of meetings e.g. radio announcements in local language. Don't rely on English or text based materials in meetings. 9. Ensure safe transport is available 10. Ensure questions are asked of women, men, boys and girls on how mine threat affects daily life, and how they expect their lives to change if you clear the area they identify as contaminated – what impacts them most e.g. collecting water and fuel (Include women in groups to prioritize clearance work) 11. Provide gender training for assessment teams. 12. Disaggregate all data by sex and age of informant or informant group. 13. Inform local community members about processes to register complaints about the work and practices of the demining teams 14. Use data to inform clearance. 	<p>Translators where appropriate.</p> <p>Female team members</p> <p>Transport</p> <p>Access to other communication techniques e.g. radio</p> <p>Gender advisor and gender training</p>	<p>Process - Assessments have been made of the local situation and meetings are planned around women's and men's daily tasks and in appropriate locations</p> <p>Transport is available</p> <p>Alternative communications used where appropriate to inform people of meetings</p> <p>Facilitators have been provided gender training and have an understanding of local gender issues – trained male and female facilitation staff are available</p> <p>Female facilitators are available to conduct consultations in local languages</p> <p>Gender guidelines are available to facilitators</p> <p>Good understanding by mine action staff of land use by women</p> <p>Women are encouraged to participate once at meetings</p> <p>Outcomes - Increased participation of women in assessment and prioritization of mine clearance:</p> <p>A) Increased number of women at mixed community meetings.</p> <p>B) Women's participation has increased (speak and are heard more)</p> <p>Availability of sex and age disaggregated data on: - location and prevalence of mines - impact of mine threat - perceived impact of clearance of areas prioritized by group has been collected including time-use.</p> <p>Men, women, boys and girls know how to register complaints</p> <p>Women and girls' needs have been taken into account in prioritization of tasks</p> <p>More community satisfaction.</p>	<p>Adapted work practices will be monitored through existing and updated monitoring and reporting channels.</p> <p>Where appropriate – records of transport laid on</p> <p>Gender guidelines available to facilitators</p> <p>Facilitators have gender training attendance and evaluation records are available</p> <p>External observation plus more representative data</p> <p>A) Attendance records</p> <p>B) Consultation forms represent women and men more. Minutes.</p> <p>Sex and age disaggregated data available on perceived impact of clearance of areas prioritized by group</p> <p>Availability of time use information by sex</p> <p>Task prioritization teams can demonstrate taking on board new data</p> <p>An external audit of impact may be commissioned in the long term to assess progress on modified procedures and impact on demining processes and outcomes.</p>

Retro Cover Photo: MAG/Sean Sutton



Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines

This publication is available in three languages at www.scbl-gender.ch