

# *Maximizing the Impact*

*Tailoring Mine Action to Development Needs*

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# FOREWORD

**T**HIS REPORT IS A TRIBUTE to innovation in the mine action sector. It proves what can be achieved when local, national and international actors come together, with the shared objective of making the largest possible difference for people living with landmines. The report also underlines how important it is to make the response fit the problem and the resources that are locally available, rather than to be applying a predefined package. Both of the cases that this report builds on – Rebecca Roberts’ account of Locality Demining in Cambodia, and Gary Littlejohn’s discussion of mine action planning at the local level in Bosnia and Herzegovina – are eminent illustrations of this. Encounters with practitioners who have the unique ability to combine experience with an open mind was one of the main inspirations when the Assistance to Mine-Affected Communities (AMAC) project was set up in 1999.

Mine action is coming of age, and it has indeed moved a long way since the first non-military demining initiatives in Afghanistan of the late 1980s. The maturing of mine action, of course, may be both for good and for bad. It may be that as mine action matures, and more experience is gathered, there is an increasing ability to use and adapt what we know in ways that pay respect to the particularities of each situation. It may also be that with age, mine action becomes increasingly rigid, with new standards and routines serving as a blockage to innovation and adaptability, so that the response is seen as increasingly irrelevant by those it was supposed to serve. Both lines of argument can be heard in the mine action debate today, and elements of both the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ trend are observable in the field. If we get the mix right, however, it is exactly the basis in experience and routines that allows us to be flexible and innovative.

Within the next few years, we are approaching some significant deadlines in mine action. The Landmine Convention has its tenth anniversary in 2007, and two years later the first state parties have to report on its fulfilment on the treaty obligation to clear all mines within their boundaries (article 5). It is hard not to be reminded of those deadlines, as I am writing this from Mozambique, where all major operators are now in the process of closing down demining operations, while no credible database of cleared areas and areas suspected to be mined is in existence. At the time of writing, it is unclear what capacity will remain in Mozambique to deal with known minefields and to map the unknown. This opens up some serious discussions – which go beyond the question of whether article 5 of the Convention means only ‘impact-free’ or if it

means mine-free in a literal sense – not the least to include the question of what capacities will be needed to respond to the needs of mine affected populations in the long term. The report at hand does not provide all the answers. It does, however, present examples from which a lot can be learnt, and it does indicate what some of the important elements are to be successful in the long-term, beyond those fast approaching deadlines.

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*Maputo, 15 November 2005*

# INTRODUCTION: MINE ACTION AND DEVELOPMENT

REBECCA ROBERTS & GARY LITTLEJOHN

USING TWO VERY DIFFERENT CASE STUDIES, this report examines how mine action can maximize its impact on development by tailoring its approach to the specific needs of a mine-affected population. It is widely acknowledged that mine action benefits development in numerous ways and that mine action interventions should be conducted to support development processes.<sup>1</sup> Although studies exist to demonstrate the development impact of mine action at the macro and meso levels,<sup>2</sup> there have been few studies to illustrate the impact of mine action on development at the micro level. Drawing on findings from studies of Locality Demining in Cambodia and the Task Assessment and Planning (TAP) methodology from Bosnia and Herzegovina, this report attempts to redress that balance. It argues that sound knowledge of the context in which mine action is being conducted enables actors to modify or fine-tune their activities to maximize the development benefits of mine action.

## Mine Action, Development, and Context

Mine action is an umbrella term for activities designed to reduce the threat or impact of landmines. These include advocacy; stockpile destruction; victim assistance; mine risk education; and demining. The case studies in this report are concerned with the demining and mine risk education aspects of mine action. The relationship between the mine threat, mine action, and development varies from country to country, region to region, and from one community to another, depending on the extent and location

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<sup>1</sup> See 'Mine Action: Time to Move On?' PRIO/PRDU Roundtable Report, May 2005 available at: [http://www.prio.no/page/Project\\_detail/9244/42370.html](http://www.prio.no/page/Project_detail/9244/42370.html).

<sup>2</sup> See GICHD (2001) *A Study of Socio-Economic Approaches to Planning and Evaluating Mine Action*, Geneva: Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining; Kristian Berg Harpviken & Jan Isaksen (2004) *Reclaiming the Fields of War: Mainstreaming Mine Action in Development*, New York: UNDP/PRIO; and UNDP (2004) *Mainstreaming Mine Action Into Development: Rationale and Recommendations*, New York: UNDP.

of mine contamination, the level of development and prevailing socio-economic conditions, and the nature of the other challenges facing a particular mine-affected population. Therefore, it is imperative that mine action actors understand the context in which they are working to target mine action effectively. The following section provides an overview of the links between mine action, development, and the context in which mine action is taking place.

This report uses the concept of development in its broadest terms applying it to economic, social, and political arenas at the individual, community, regional and national levels. The development process is about creating a situation in which people have improved access to resources to enhance their standard of living in a way that is sustainable and helps them to fulfil their potential. It is generally argued that development interventions should be sustainable, be culturally appropriate, use suitable technology, and encourage active participation. Unfortunately, for political and financial reasons, and sometimes as a result of lack of competence, development interventions can fail to fulfil the criteria identified as best practice.

The presence of landmines has an impact on development because it prevents access to natural resources such as water and agricultural land, services such as schools and medical care, and markets for exchange of goods. Landmines prevent a return to normality following conflict, and inhibit the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. Communities live with the daily fear of landmines and are forced to modify their livelihood activities and lifestyles accordingly, although they may still be forced to live in or enter suspected mined areas in order to pursue livelihood activities. The injuries caused by landmines can result in the loss of the main income provider and create an additional financial burden for families taking care of a landmine victim. However, the linkages between mine action and development can vary considerably, as can be seen by the contrast between the impact in Mozambique, where land is plentiful and market access depends on the presence of roads, and Cambodia, where land is scarce and the economy is more dependent on agriculture (Harpviken & Isaksen, 2004). Therefore, it is important for mine action operators to understand the context in which they are working, and the particular development needs of that community, to ensure that mine action has an impact on development. It is also necessary to understand the nature of a mine-affected community, so that mine action interventions can be designed to enhance existing resources and capacities as well as supply additional resources, build capacities and reduce vulnerabilities.

Despite the acknowledgement of the inter-relationship of mine action and development activities, it is still very much the case that they take place separately.<sup>3</sup> The main challenges for mainstreaming mine action into development are building development expertise within the mine action sector, of coordinating mine action with other development activities, and of securing appropriate funding which allows mine action and development activities to be integrated. Funding of mine action and

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<sup>3</sup> Some consequences of a lack of integration were illustrated in Chapter 5 of Harpviken & Isaksen (2004).



development activities is rarely coordinated at the donor, international agency, or national level, and that funding is seldom flexible. The result is that mine action and development projects may occur either sequentially, or in parallel but with little coordination.

The need to understand the working environment, overcome funding restrictions, identify development needs, and integrate mine action and development activities has led to mine action organizations trying to acquire development expertise or pursuing relationships with development organizations or both. The following case studies illustrate the benefits of acquiring development expertise and working closely with development organizations. They demonstrate how mine action and development can be integrated, despite the challenges, and tailored to the specific needs of the mine-affected population to maximize the impact of mine action on development.

## **The Case Studies**

The studies from Cambodia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, provide contrasting examples of how mine action can have an impact on development, at the same time as responding to local concerns and encouraging participation at the community and local government level.

The Cambodia case study discusses the challenges posed by the mine threat to the development needs of the country, and argues that grassroots rural development is necessary for development at the national level. The study examines the impact on development of the Locality Demining model which has been introduced in Cambodia by the Mines Advisory Group (MAG). The Locality Demining model involves training individuals from mine-affected communities as deminers to be deployed in their local area, which is a departure from the standard practice of using mobile demining teams. The research was conducted in March 2005 mainly in the Northwest provinces of Cambodia. With the exception of interviews at NGO offices in Phnom Penh, Battambang, and Baval, the majority of interviews were conducted in villages with the inhabitants or mine action staff. To maintain an informal atmosphere, and obtain as accurate information as possible from the community perspective, most visits to villages were made independently and were not prearranged or accompanied by NGO staff. Interviews were unstructured and held with individuals or groups in 17 villages. The Locality Deminers were interviewed individually and in private. As the Locality Demining project is new, the available documentation is limited, so the research has involved extensive discussions with those involved in initiating and implementing it.

In the case of Bosnia, the study focused on the Task Assessment and Planning (TAP) methodology of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (BH MAC) and on the experience of Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) in conducting TAP. TAP integrates community liaison and mine risk education closely with the demining process. It includes data collection from the local authority and from selected households, together with informal ongoing contacts with individuals, voluntary associations and

other interested parties. In addition to following the NPA teams in April at the start of the 2005 mine action season and observing some of them at work, the fieldwork also included interviews with senior personnel in BH MAC at the national and regional levels, with Civilian Protection personnel at the regional level, and with senior NPA personnel, especially those involved in the community liaison aspects of TAP. It also involved interviews with senior personnel in various Bosnian and International NGOs, and in Bosnian and international commercial demining companies. No Bosnian military deminers were interviewed, owing to lack of time. Documents from BH MAC and Bosnian NPA were also scrutinized and included in the research. There was an interactive relationship between interviews and document collection, in that some documents obtained prior to fieldwork informed the questions raised in interviews, while the interviews themselves often prompted the handover of further documentation or demonstrations of the IT systems and databases.

### **The Structure of the Report**

The report begins with Key Points which summarize the main findings from the case studies to highlight factors that play an important role in maximizing the impact of mine action on development. The two case studies examine the interaction between mine action and development at different levels: the first from Cambodia concentrates on the grassroots level; and the second from Bosnia and Herzegovina, concentrates on the local and regional levels. The choice of case studies demonstrates how the challenges facing mine action and development differ from a developing to a developed country. These differences are discussed in the concluding chapter along with the analysis, which expands on the issues raised in the Key Points on how mine action can maximize its impact on development.

# **CAMBODIA: LINKING MINE ACTION AND DEVELOPMENT AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL**

REBECCA ROBERTS

**D**ESPITE POST-CONFLICT DEVELOPMENT initiatives and more than 10 years of mine action, Cambodia remains one of the worst mine-affected countries in the world (ICBL, 2004: 31) and one of the poorest economically and developmentally (IMF, 2004a; UNDP, 2005). The landmine contamination and the lack of development are a direct result of the years of conflict, and the continued presence of landmines hinders many aspects of development. Mine action operators in Cambodia claim that it is becoming more difficult to secure funding and fear that as the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary approaches of the Mine Ban Treaty coming in to force, funds will become more limited. Within this context, it is important to maximize the impact of mine action to make the most of available funding resources and facilitate development processes. The following discussion explores some of the development challenges and the impact of the mine threat to examine in detail how one mine action initiative, ‘Locality Demining’, can support development at the same time as being a cost-effective and efficient method of demining.

## **The Importance of Development for Cambodia**

Unfortunately, efforts which began in Cambodia in the 1990s to alleviate poverty and promote economic growth have had limited success. It is feared that in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century there is a greater percentage of the population living below the \$1 a day poverty line than in the mid 1990s (IMF, 2004a: 34). With the exception of Myanmar, Cambodia has the lowest gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of the surrounding countries. (EIU, vi: 2004). Other indicators of development such as infant mortality rates and life expectancy are also among the lowest in the region (IMF, 2004a: 35). As a result of the conflict and policies of the Khmer Rouge, the education and skills level of the population is low. The high mortality rates reflect the poor state of public health and healthcare provision (EIU, 21: 2004). The infrastructure is undeveloped and communications are poor. In 2000 less than one third of the

population had access to safe water and only about a fifth was connected to an electricity supply (IMF, 2004a: 34).

Over 80 percent of the population is rural and dependent predominantly on agriculture for survival. In 2002, it was concluded that around 42 percent of the population lived below the \$1 a day poverty line and that the vast majority of this group lived in rural areas (IMF, 2004a: 20). Currently there is a significant economic gap between the population of Phnom Penh and those living in the rest of the country (EIU, 2005: 25). Although there do not appear to be any tensions at the moment between the regions and the capital caused by the economic gap (EIU, 2005: 25), the Government is anxious to avoid an increase in rural to urban migration, which it fears may lead to social discontent and unrest. Research published in 2004 indicates that in recent years, the income gap between rural and urban populations has increased and that economic conditions for the poorest 20 percent of rural communities have become more difficult (IMF, 2004b: 33).

The agricultural sector provides a living for the majority of the population and accounts for 34 percent of Cambodia's GDP (statistics from 2003, EIU, 2005: 20). Within the agricultural sector there is limited diversity so the risk and impact of a crop failure is significant. In addition, a shortage of land is leading to an increase in landlessness or plots of land which are too small to sustain a family (IMF, 2004a: 34). Although the agricultural share of GDP is declining, agriculture still dominates the economy and there is little economic diversity in Cambodia. Other sectors which make significant contributions to GDP are equally vulnerable. For example, the textile industry is exposed to international trade agreements and markets, although Cambodia's accession to the World Trade Organization in October 2004 has provided some protection for the industry. Growth in tourism has slowed in recent years affected by global security concerns and a regional outbreak of sudden acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) (EIU, 2005: 24).

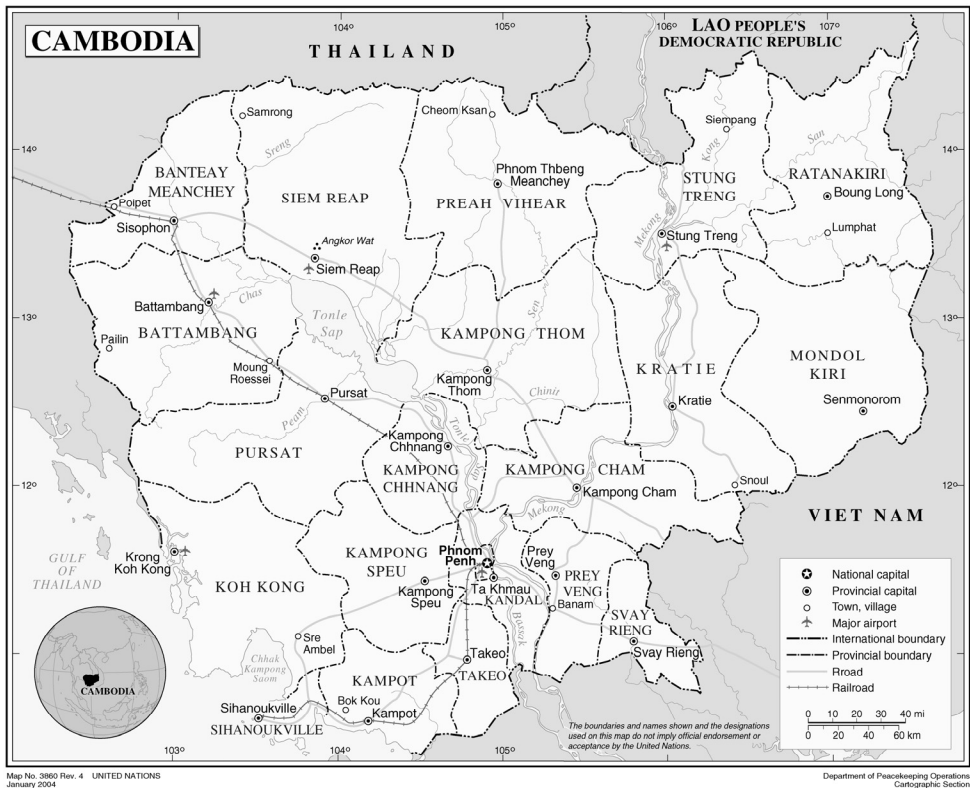
## **The Link Between Mine Action and Development**

The need for appropriate development in Cambodia is apparent and although doubts exist over the accuracy of the available information detailing the extent of the mine and UXO contamination in Cambodia,<sup>1</sup> there is little doubt that the mine and UXO threat has a significant impact on the country's development and affects the performance of the economy in the international arena as well as within the country.

Cambodian Government policies acknowledge the presence of landmines as a major obstacle to development. In an effort to tackle poverty, promote development and strengthen the economy, the Government has developed a National Poverty Reduction

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<sup>1</sup> See the 2004 Landmine Monitor report for Cambodia at <http://www.icbl.org/lm/2004/cambodia.html> (accessed 31 July 2005).



Strategy (NPRS)<sup>2</sup> which, among other things, commits it to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2015 (IMF, 2004a: 35). The importance of mine action to fulfilling the NPRS is emphasized. In 2004, the Government adopted a 9<sup>th</sup> MDG 'to move towards zero impact from landmines by 2012, in order to alleviate poverty and to sustain development'.<sup>3</sup> There is a certain amount of controversy surrounding the 9<sup>th</sup> MDG as the Government is bound by Article 5 of the Mine Ban Treaty to clear all mines from its territory by January 2010, the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty coming into force in Cambodia. The 9<sup>th</sup> MDG extends this deadline and introduces the term 'impact free' which has yet to be defined by the Government but could contradict the terms of the Treaty.

The National Mine Action Strategy has been designed to respond to the NPRS and MDG<sup>4</sup>. The mission statement for the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) is: 'Saving Lives and Supporting Development for Cambodia'.<sup>5</sup> In a country where food

<sup>2</sup> Council for Social Development, Kingdom of Cambodia, 2002. *Cambodia: National Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2003-2005*, December.

<sup>3</sup> Statement of his Excellency Sok An, Deputy Prime Minister, at the Nairobi Summit First review Conference, Nairobi, Kenya, December 2004.

<sup>4</sup> See 'Cambodia' at [http://www.mineaction.org/countries/countries\\_overview.cfm?country\\_id=900](http://www.mineaction.org/countries/countries_overview.cfm?country_id=900) (accessed 17 January 2005).

<sup>5</sup> See the CMAC website at <http://www.cmac.org.kh/index.asp> (accessed 18 July 2005).

security is poor and drought is common, greater areas of land need to be cultivated and irrigated. The NPRS recognizes that landmines prevent access to agricultural land, water, and markets. Cambodia has the highest rate of amputees per capita in the world, many of who were injured by landmines and UXO.<sup>6</sup> Amputees may be unable to work, thereby depriving the family of an income, possibly from the main household provider, and placing an additional economic burden on the family, often the women who tend to be the carers. Landmines exacerbate poverty and vulnerabilities placing an additional burden on already poor households, the majority of which are located in rural areas and rely on farming for survival.

The interlinked mine action and development challenges in Cambodia indicate that a coordinated effort to reduce the mine and UXO threat is needed. However, it is beginning to be recognized that the impact of mine action is limited if prevailing socio-economic conditions are not understood or taken into account when mine action programmes are designed. For example, despite mine clearance and mine risk education programmes (MRE) there are still a significant number of incidents each year. The sharp reduction initially seen in annual landmine and UXO causality rates from 4,320 in 1996 to 858 in 2000 has reached a plateau in recent years. (CMVIS, 2003: 4). In fact, the number of incidents rose from 772 in 2003 to 891 in 2004 (CMVIS, 2004: 5). Data for 2003 shows that 82 percent of mine/UXO incidents took place while victims were undertaking necessary livelihood activities and that the majority of victims knew they were working in mined or mine suspected areas (CMVIS, 2003: 8).

A recent report concluded that the number of incidents caused by the deliberate handling of UXO results from 'complex social and economic forces' (Moyes, xiv: 2004) and therefore cannot simply be reduced through raising awareness but must be tackled holistically because '[p]ersistent handling ... is an indicator of other vulnerabilities' (Moyes, 2004: 149). Furthermore, the clearance of mines and UXO is too slow to meet the demand for land among a population heavily dependent on subsistence farming. Many families have no choice but to farm land they suspect to be mined. Other families decide that rather than live in fear of landmines or wait for them to be cleared by professional deminers, they will clear land for themselves. The practice of village or spontaneous demining in Cambodia and the socio-economic conditions which exist to create such activities have been well documented (Bottomley, 2003). Anecdotal evidence suggests that informal demining activities are increasing and now include deminers who have organized themselves into small commercial groups, which operate informally outside the national mine action programme. Such a development highlights the pressing need for land and the continuing inability of official mine action efforts to meet the needs of the rural population.

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<sup>6</sup> See the World Bank country brief for Cambodia at <http://web.worldbank.org> (accessed 10 October 2005).

The gap between the development needs of the Cambodian population and the capacity of mine action to help meet their needs is clear. There is also a concern that as the country approaches the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mine Ban Treaty coming into force, funding for mine action will decrease. It is widely accepted that Cambodia will have to ask for an extension to enable it to fulfil Article 5 of the Mine Ban Treaty to destroy all anti-personnel mines in areas under its jurisdiction. There are fears that an extension could weaken the impetus for mine action in Cambodia, international donors would gradually stop funding mine action, and that other humanitarian issues would be regarded as more pressing resulting in funds being diverted elsewhere. The inability to secure sufficient funding for mine action in Cambodia would have a negative impact on the country's development.

Above all, a closer alignment of mine action with development objectives would help identify how to meet the development needs of the people more effectively and more quickly. Mine action coordinated with development initiatives would have a greater positive impact on the population. In addition, using development needs to improve priority setting processes helps to justify funding requests to potential funders. It also means that funding for mine action that is closely linked with development objectives can still be secured if dedicated mine action funding is unavailable.

### **Locality Demining: Tailoring the Response to the Need**

In response to the need for effective demining and in an effort to link mine clearance more closely with community development needs, with the work of rural development NGOs, and to reduce the cost of clearance, in 2003 the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) devised the Locality Demining model.<sup>7</sup> Rather than training deminers for deployment in mobile teams which travel to mined areas in different parts of the country, deminers are recruited from the areas in which they will be deployed. After completing the training course, the deminers are deployed for two or three years in the local area. Once the areas allocated for clearance have been demined, the employment for the Locality Deminers comes to an end and they return to their previous livelihood activities.

This case study illustrates how mine action and development organizations can modify existing activities to link them more closely and make the best use of resources to maximize the positive impact of their work. The fieldwork was conducted in villages in the Northwest region of Cambodia bordering Thailand, in the Sala Krau District of the Municipality of Pailin and the Komrieng District of the neighbouring Battambang Province. Pailin was the Khmer Rouge stronghold and so the surrounding area was the scene of heavy fighting between the Khmer Rouge, the Government, and Vietnamese army. All three forces used landmines and the Northwest region, particularly Pailin Municipality, is one of the most heavily mined areas of the country.

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<sup>7</sup> For more information about MAG see [www.magclearsmines.org](http://www.magclearsmines.org).

Since the fighting ended families have been returning to the area and re-establishing their villages. In recent years people from other provinces in Cambodia have travelled to the Pailin area in search of farmland. The migration into a heavily mined area demonstrates the desperate need for farmland and the difficult choices people are forced to make.

MAG has been linking its activities with development in Cambodia for many years by undertaking clearance at the request of development NGOs which have plans to implement projects once the land is cleared. Theoretically, prioritization for clearance should be set by the Mine Action Planning Unit (MAPU) in coordination with the Provincial Mine Action Committees (PMAC), to ensure that ‘each mine action operation is part of the local/national development plan.’<sup>8</sup> However, it is claimed that the MAPU lack capacity and areas prioritized for clearance are usually determined by the mine action operators and development NGOs, often in consultation with the village communities.<sup>9</sup> MAG argues that its prioritization process involves close liaison with development NGOs, which ensures that land is cleared only if a post-clearance use has been determined. Once the land is cleared, it is handed over to the community in the presence of MAPU staff. If MAPU does not have the resources for staff to travel to the cleared minefield, the official handover is delayed. It is MAPU’s responsibility to ensure that the cleared land is registered with the relevant authorities – Provincial Mine Action Committees, Cambodian Mine Action Centre, and Cambodian Mine Action Authority. However, mine action operators are unsure whether the reporting process is reliable, and continue to report cleared land to the CMAA directly, as they did before the current reporting process was introduced. Part of the confusion is caused by the bureaucratic structure in Cambodia, which has five levels: national; provincial; district; commune; and village. The MAPUs come under the Provincial Department of Rural Development and not the national CMAA.

The Locality Demining model links mine action and development more directly than MAG’s other demining team models because the deminers come from the area which will be cleared and where the development projects will be established. The cost of clearance is reduced because locality deminers are paid less than mobile deminers and return home at the end of each working day so they do not need the transport, accommodation and subsistence provided for the mobile demining teams.

By early 2005 MAG had trained three teams of Locality Deminers which are deployed to clear areas as part of CARE, Church World Services (CWS) and the

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<sup>8</sup> Cambodian Strategy and 2005-2009 plan to implement article 5 of the Ottawa Treaty, statement issued by the Cambodian Mine Action Authority on 26 January 2005.

<sup>9</sup> The MAPU, originally Land Use Planning Units (LUPU), were established in 1999 at the provincial level and designed to improve coordination and prioritization of mine clearance, support development processes and oversee fair distribution of cleared land. Lack of funding and organizational disputes have hindered the work of the LUPU/MAPU.



Lutheran World Federation (LWF) community development programmes.<sup>10</sup> Each Locality Demining team is composed of around 12 deminers and four experienced senior staff members - a supervisor who is trauma trained, a senior deminer, a medic, and a deminer responsible for quality assurance. The senior members of the Locality Demining teams are drawn from existing national MAG staff and not from the local community; therefore, accommodation and subsistence must be provided for them. MAG recruits trainee deminers following a selection process undertaken in the local community by MAG's partners. MAG states that to be a deminer, an individual must be over 18, and be considered among the most vulnerable in the community. It used to be stipulated that recruits should have basic literacy and numeracy skills, but this condition has been relaxed, as such a requirement may have made the most vulnerable ineligible to become deminers.

The Locality Deminers followed the same basic four-week training course given to all MAG deminers. Daily transport was provided to take the recruits to attend the training because it took place some distance from their villages. Mobile demining teams are often trained away from their homes, which means that food and accommodation costs are incurred during this period. Most of the recruits qualified as deminers immediately after completing the training course, although a few needed additional training before they were considered to have reached a satisfactory standard. MAG had accepted more trainees than necessary for the Locality Demining teams on the assumption that not all would qualify as deminers. In the event, all those trained succeeded in becoming deminers and have been deployed to work with MAG's partners.

One of MAG's partners, LWF has established what it calls Integrated Rural Development Projects (IRDPs) in villages in four different provinces. The IRDPs include a wide range of complementary grassroots health, education, and livelihood programmes and aim to involve the community through the creation of village development committees (VDC). The Locality Deminers are working with LWF in villages in Battambang province demining land for various uses. Some of the deminers come from LWF's target villages. LWF has been working with MAG since 1997 contracting the demining organization directly to clear areas where it has projects. The Locality Demining model was piloted with LWF which found that because of the reduced costs it could contract two teams of Locality Deminers for the same price as one mobile team. The funding LWF receives for its work in Cambodia is fungible, so within the framework of its IRDPs it can determine its own priorities. Therefore, in Battambang province, LWF has been able to choose to spend the same amount of money on demining but to contract two Locality Demining teams. Consequently, twice as many people from the local area as originally planned can be employed and the land needed for development initiatives can be cleared more quickly.

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<sup>10</sup> The field research was conducted in areas where CARE and LWF were working with MAG. Unfortunately, in the time available, it was not possible to visit CWS/MAG projects so these are not mentioned in the chapter. For more information about CARE see <http://www.care.org>; for CWS see <http://www.churchworldservice.org>; and for LWF see <http://www.lwfcam.org.kh>.

Previously CARE has worked closely with mobile demining teams from CMAC as part of its Integrated Demining and Development Projects (IDDPs) but for its 'Rural Water, Sanitation, and Health Education' project for northwest Cambodia the organization established a working relationship with MAG. CARE and MAG made parallel applications to the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) for funding as part of CARE's rural water sanitation and health education project targeted at 19 villages in Pailin municipality. The project includes a range of integrated grassroots activities and again, through VDCs, involves the community in decision making. The CARE project was intended to link education about health and hygiene with nutrition by providing clean sources of water for drinking and agriculture, safe sanitation facilities, and village gardens to supply nutritious food. MAG applied for funding to train and deploy a Locality Demining team to demine the areas CARE would need for gardens and water sources. Although the parallel funding applications were successful, ECHO agreed to fund only the water and sanitation elements of the programme, which has created practical problems for the demining process. To meet safety regulations, deminers who have received only basic training must be overseen by a supervisor. Had MAG and CARE received the funding they had requested, there would have been enough areas close together for all the deminers to be occupied simultaneously and overseen by one supervisor. For the revised water and sanitation programme, CARE needs only small areas of land to be demined which can be some distance from each other. According to the standard operating procedures, for safety reasons, deminers must work a certain distance apart in case a mine is accidentally detonated. Some of the areas to be demined are too small to occupy all the deminers but they cannot work in several different areas because they are too far apart to be overseen by one supervisor.

Despite considering the design of the programme carefully and maintaining good communication between the two organizations, funding conditions have complicated the plans for the joint MAG Locality Demining and CARE IDDP initiative. So that work can begin, MAG has identified areas which can be demined simultaneously and supervised by one person and is trying to redeploy some of its supervisors from other areas. In February 2005 CARE and MAG began working in three of the less accessible villages in Pailin which are difficult to reach during the rainy season. Both organizations are happy with the progress of the project and to date MAG has managed to plan the demining programme so that all deminers are working under the supervision of one individual. However, it is unclear whether it will be possible to adapt all the original plans for demining as effectively. As LWF does not face the same funding restrictions, it is able to control all elements of its rural development programmes and choose which areas are demined. CARE has also had the same freedom with funding when it has subcontracted CMAC for its IDDPs. The current LWF/MAG cooperation involved clearing relatively large areas of land so the difficulties which have occurred with the CARE/MAG project have not arisen.

The experience of MAG and its partners reveals that Locality Demining is best suited to clearance of larger areas which can be overseen by one supervisor, rather

than smaller dispersed areas which, because of the composition of the Locality Demining teams, would require more than one supervisor. However, it was not MAG's intention to phase out its mobile teams in favour of Locality Deminers, but to explore whether, in certain situations, a different approach to mine action would be more appropriate than the current accepted practices. On the evidence available to date, the Locality Demining model seems to have fulfilled its main objectives to respond effectively and rapidly to facilitate rural development and reduce the costs of demining. In addition the experience has demonstrated the importance of tailoring demining teams to specific needs and tasks.

### **The Impact of Locality Demining**

Locality Demining has not only fulfilled its main objectives, but has had significant additional benefits which were unforeseen or not immediately apparent for the deminers and their families, the local communities, and the relationship between the local communities, the mine action operator, and the development NGOs. The project has also raised a few issues that are more difficult to address.

### **Helping Vulnerable Households**

The quality of demining has been equal to that of the mobile demining teams. However, the productivity has been higher and the supervisors have reported that discipline and attendance has been better among the locality deminers than among the mobile deminers. MAG recognizes that, rather than being a long-term benefit of the Locality Demining model, the good attendance and discipline records may be because the deminers are newly trained and the work is still a novelty. It is expected though that the problems associated with mobile demining teams as a result of being away from home, such as alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling, increased levels of prostitution in the areas where demining teams are working, and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, will be significantly reduced because the locality deminers maintain their established family and social support networks. As the Locality Deminers continue to live at home, women are more willing to become deminers, particularly those who are heads of households. Young single women, for whom it may have been considered inappropriate to live away from home, have also been recruited as Locality Deminers.

Anecdotal evidence collected during field research for this paper, and by Wallgren (2005) suggests that the regular income and short-term job security give the deminers and their families an improved sense of wellbeing. Some of the deminers interviewed claimed that they were proud to have a regular job and to be able to provide for their families. Other villagers felt that the deminers and their families were happier now there was a regular income and said that they looked healthier and better fed. Local shop owners noted that the deminers' families were purchasing more goods and no

longer buying merely the basic food needed to survive. Deminers maintain that they are able to obtain credit at local shops because the owners know that they will be able to clear their bill once they are paid (Wallgren, 2005). The deminers interviewed said that they spent most of their income locally, so it is hoped that the local economy will also benefit from the Locality Demining model. Although, it is too soon to assess the economic impact of a regular income on the deminers' families and their community, it is known that the wages of many mobile deminers are often spent while they are away from home on alcohol, prostitutes, and gambling, so neither their families or their own local community benefit fully from the regular income.

Rural indebtedness is a significant problem in Cambodia. Many people borrow money at a high interest rate and find that they are unable to pay off the loan. In MAG's experience gambling among mobile deminers has led to many accruing substantial debts. Most locality deminers had accumulated debts before having regular employment. They were using their wages to pay off some of the debt each month, but most did not know when the debt would be cleared. The high interest rates and length of time to clear debt means that many deminers will be paying a significant proportion of their wages to the lender. MAG was considering whether it could help the locality deminers to clear their debts more quickly to reduce the amount of money being used to cover the interest rates.

Having regular employment has enabled the deminers to make small changes, some of which have a significant impact on the household. For example, one deminer, with the help of an interest free loan from his brother, has purchased a bicycle to travel to work everyday. The cost of travel can use a significant amount of the deminers' wages because although they live locally, they may still have to travel several kilometres to some of the areas which are being cleared. Some deminers walk, but others find that they have to take a 'moto' (a motorbike which is used as a taxi). The deminer who bought the bicycle, will probably save money on travel in the long-term, and has found that it has been a worthwhile investment for the household, as he is able to use it for domestic tasks such as collecting water and going to market (Wallgren, 2005).

The level of wages Locality Deminers should receive has been discussed at length between MAG and its partners, and pay and benefits have been revised several times in an attempt to respond to the suggestions of the various actors. One of the main aims of Locality Demining has been to reduce costs and this has been achieved through lower wages in addition to the reduced accommodation and subsistence costs. Initially the deminers were paid \$2 - \$3 each day, but for organizational reasons, such as providing insurance cover, it became easier to provide a monthly wage instead. Since February 2005, the Locality Deminers have been paid \$70 a month in comparison with a mobile deminer's wage of \$170-\$200 depending on the individual's level of skill. As with all MAG deminers, Locality Deminers are paid \$10 for medical expenses each month. In addition they receive a \$10 attendance bonus each month in an attempt to combat potential absenteeism. However, the conditions under which the attendance bonus was paid had to be revised as deminers who were ill were reporting for work. The supervisor of each Locality Demining unit has been told to exercise discretion and

send home those deminers who are unfit for work. The attendance bonus represents a significant proportion of the salary and MAG considers this an effective incentive for continuous good attendance.

It has been argued that the Locality Deminers should be paid as much as the mobile deminers because the work is the same. However, many of the mobile deminers have additional skills and are away from home for long periods which is reflected in their higher wages. Another argument for raising the wages of the Locality Deminers is that demining is dangerous so wages should be large enough to compensate the risk to life. Undoubtedly demining is dangerous, but working as a professional deminer under strict safety protocols and wearing protective clothing is arguably less dangerous than farming land that may be mined with little or no knowledge of mines and no form of protection. This is the daily reality for many of the rural poor in Cambodia. Others feel that the wage level is appropriate.

As the deminers continue to live in the same community it is important not to distort the local economy by paying the deminers significantly more than the other villagers can earn. It is also important that the project is perceived positively and does not have a negative effect on the local community. Wages which are too high could create jealousies in the community and corrupt the selection process.

The level of wages paid by an international NGO will always be subject to debate and must be determined by the particular issues of each context. In this case, because the aim of the initiative is to facilitate development and reduce the overall costs of demining, the wages should be at a level which enables the deminers to support their families and invest in activities which will generate an income when the demining employment has been terminated. Issues which have informed the level at which the wages should be set are, the average income of a villager, the average family size, the cost of living, the level of indebtedness, the cost of investing in future income generating activities, and the cost of transportation to and from work. The wage level has to be monitored so it can be adjusted if circumstances change. The secondary aim to reduce the cost of demining in response to decreased donor funding and the expectation that mine action funding will decrease when Cambodia reaches the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its ratification of the Mine Ban Treaty, should also dictate the level of the wages. Unfortunately, for the individual Locality Deminer, this harsh reality means a lower wage. However, without an approach which allows a lower wage to be paid, these individuals would not have regular employment and fewer villages would be cleared of mines. In addition to monitoring the wage level, it may be necessary for MAG and its partners to discuss the issues surrounding the wages with the village communities to explain the factors which are considered when the wage level is determined.

Accounts for the monthly wages have been opened for the deminers at a bank in Pailin. Although it may involve a long journey for some of the deminers to withdraw their money, MAG argues that most people in the area go to the market in Pailin on a regular basis and would be able to visit the bank at the same time. The use of bank accounts is also intended to introduce the deminers to the banking system and to help

them manage their money. However, beyond this no formal financial training or advice is available as part of the Locality Demining project. Regular formal employment is rare among the rural Cambodian population, so the deminers are unused to managing regular wages or planning their finances. For example, one deminer who had a wife and two small children, had bought a television and a speaker despite having debts, owning no land, and having few possessions beyond a one room house, and a set of clothing for each member of the family. Other deminers are heavily in debt and are unable to determine how quickly debts could be cleared. Those who were in debt did not think that once the debt had been paid they would be able to save any money to invest later. Employment as deminers presents an opportunity for the most vulnerable members of the community to break the cycle of poverty and build a more secure future for themselves. However, the deminers may need help and support to be able to do this and this is perhaps an issue that should be examined more closely.

### Supporting Community Development

The Locality Demining has had a broader impact on the community because it allows participation, which may give the community some control over activities and create a sense of ownership for the project. It is possible that local inhabitants are able to see the link between the mine action and development projects. The closer integration of mine action and development activities with the community also makes the mine action and development organizations more accountable and their work more transparent.

For numerous reasons it can be difficult to encourage active participation.<sup>11</sup> First, many communities are new or being re-established. During the war, large numbers of people were displaced and there are still large population flows of people returning home or resettling in different areas. When families move into an area, they concentrate on building shelter and meeting their basic needs, there is little time to become actively involved in community development programmes. Cambodia is still recovering from the legacy of the Khmer Rouge and currently lacks people with the adequate skills and education to assume positions as community leaders or local civil servants. This situation has reinforced the traditional tendency to pass decision making to a higher level (Turner, 2002: 361), which works against efforts to encourage decision making at the grassroots. Generally in Cambodia political parties have strong links to the villages, often through the village chief which is a political appointment rather than a popular choice. Although it is thought that, because of its recent history, the influence of political parties in Pailin may be weaker than in other parts of the country. Actors wanting to work with the local community are faced with a dilemma because officially the village chief is the representative for the village, although he

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<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of the issues raised by active participation in mine action see Skåra, Bernt A (2003), 'Risky Business or Constructive Assistance? Community Engagement in Humanitarian Mine Action', *Third World Quarterly* 23(5): 839–853.

may not necessarily represent the views of the community. As he is unelected, the village population cannot force him to represent their views.

The joint Locality Demining and development projects allow organizations to adopt a long-term approach to develop capacity, encourage broader participation, and help establish a stronger civil society. To move away from traditional hierarchies and political parties, NGOs have encouraged the development of committees such as the village development committees. Training is provided to help people fulfil their roles and to facilitate the inclusion of more community members in decision making processes. However, the majority of people are unused to having a public role and can find it difficult to liaise between the community and external officials. It has been noted that it is an ordeal for some community based mine risk reduction representatives (CBMRR) to provide MRE to a village meeting. Traditionally, Cambodian society is hierarchical and the class structure, ‘characterized by dependency and patron-client relations dates back centuries’ and continues to influence personal and working relations (Vickery 1984 in Turner, 2002: 361). Establishing committees and encouraging people to adopt positions in their community breaks the traditional social structure and cultural norms of behaviour. Therefore, the process of strengthening civil society through mine action and development activities has to be undertaken with care and given long-term support to be effective.

Corruption is a major problem in Cambodia and occurs on many levels (Bull, 2004). In mine action it has led to the misappropriation of funds, land grabbing and the use of positions as patronage. It damages trust between the people and the authorities and hinders people’s efforts to try to improve their own situation. Consequently, it can be difficult to motivate people to become actively involved in programmes aimed at improving the community, as efforts which focus on ameliorating the position of an individual’s household are perceived as having a better guarantee of success. Often posts as representatives or positions on committees are unpaid, so individuals must undertake their community role in addition to their normal income generating activities. The rationale behind voluntary posts is to avoid patronage being used and to encourage individuals to assume responsibility for the wellbeing of their communities. Training volunteer members of the community is intended to be sustainable because large amounts of funding do not need to be secured to cover wages and once the individuals have developed the appropriate skills and knowledge to fulfil their role, they can make a valuable contribution to community life.

MAG argues that the involvement of the local community leads to a greater sense of ownership than would be achieved with demining conducted by an outside team. Although few community members knew about the Local Demining project in any detail, many knew who had been employed as a Locality Deminer and that, in some way, the demining project was linked to other development projects. This level of awareness about the demining and development projects was considered by MAG and its partners to be higher than would be expected if the land was being cleared by mobile demining teams. However, most people did not seem to understand the

significance of employing people locally to demine as opposed to using mobile demining teams, but were pleased that someone from the community, and not a stranger, was benefiting from the regular salary. The greater sense of ownership also means that the NGOs involved become more accountable to the communities. This goes some way to mitigate against the disillusion that might be felt towards external actors as a result of unsatisfactory interventions and corruption.

Consequently, it is important that MAG and its partners are seen to be fair and transparent in their working practices. The Locality Demining project provides employment opportunities that would not otherwise be available. From the beginning, it was agreed that the Locality Demining should provide employment for the most vulnerable members of the community, but the criteria to define vulnerability seem to be unclear. Wallgren (2005) claims that a lack of clear criteria caused some resentment among the communities, who felt that the selection process had not been fair. Those who participated in field research for this paper believed that the selection process had been fair and that the most vulnerable had been recruited, although they did not know how vulnerability was assessed. Currently, the selection process is the responsibility of the development NGOs. To maintain transparency, accountability, and local support for the project, MAG and its partners should establish the selection procedure and make this known to the communities. This is particularly important in a country where patronage is common. Vulnerability must be defined, either by MAG and its partners, or by the community itself, which would help to establish a more inclusive approach and enable the community to participate in the selection process. It may be appropriate to adopt different selection criteria for different villages or projects, to respond to the vulnerabilities of a particular area or the needs of a specific project. LWF claims that it used participatory wealth ranking to select trainee deminers, so it may simply be a matter of ensuring the details of the selection process are understood.

Unfortunately, among some there was a perception that because the deminers were local, they were not trained to as high a standard as the mobile teams so the clearance was not of as high a quality. These views could be indicative of traditional class attitudes and the assumption that someone drawn from the community is a peer; whereas an outsider could be from a higher social rank and better able to be a deminer. Another possibility is that communities may equate the locality deminers with the informal village deminers who are self taught. The lower wages the Locality Deminers receive has created the perception among some in the local community that they are not as skilled as the mobile deminers, and that therefore the quality of their demining is poorer. Conversely, other members of the community believed that because the demining was being undertaken by local people, the work would be of a better quality as the deminers and their families would be using the land after it had been cleared. Being local, the deminers would also have a greater sense of pride in their work. As the Locality Demining concept is new, it may just take time for communities to become familiar with the idea and may need to be an issue that is raised at community meetings to correct any misconceptions.



What happens to the Locality Deminers when their task comes to an end is an issue which still has to be resolved. If the deminers have made no plans for future income generating activities they could simply return to their status of being among the most vulnerable in the community. There are also debates about whether communities should be left with demining capacity once the project has officially come to an end. It would seem to be a waste of a resource to leave a community with a trained deminer who would be unable to respond to a local mine threat. However, there is currently a lot of controversy surrounding informal demining activities and equipping individuals to undertake demining activities unofficially could be problematic. Some argue that because the deminers have been trained they know the dangers of mines and are aware of safety regulations, and in consequence would be unwilling to demine without the support of an organization. However, even if it is decided that once the demining in the area has been completed and the Locality Deminers have returned to their previous work, it is likely that their experience of being a deminer, being trained, and being formally employed within a well managed project will have contributed towards the building of human capital with the potential to make a long-term positive contribution to the community.

## Coordinating Mine Action and Development

The coordination of mine action and development through the Locality Demining project has benefited the rural communities. Most of the villages in the northwest region are affected by mines and the level of threat or perceived threat affects the prosperity of the village. However, the mine threat is only one of a number of factors, which has an impact on livelihoods in the northwest region of Cambodia. Access to water and the ability to irrigate land, chronic poverty and indebtedness, inefficient farming techniques, failed harvests, lack of infrastructure, weak governance structures, poor educational-level and access to education, ill-health and limited access to healthcare all impede the process of development. These factors combine to create a complex web of interlinked vulnerabilities among rural communities. The coordination of demining and development projects enables NGOs to adopt a more holistic and coherent approach to help communities. This results in a more effective use of resources, enabling organizations to provide better support for target communities.

Although mine action operators and development NGOs may have different working practices and different priorities which can make it difficult to work closely together, the close coordination of the Locality Demining with development projects means that MAG and its partners are able to maximize the impact of their work. MAG knows that it is demining areas which are a priority for community development, and it is assured that cleared land will be used. The arrangement between MAG and the development NGOs reduces the opportunity for land grabbing and distributes the benefits of cleared land more fairly among impoverished rural communities. CARE and LWF are able to plan their activities in more detail because they have a good knowledge of which areas

will be cleared and when. The community benefits from such an arrangement because the organizations are able to concentrate on their own areas of expertise at the same time as being able to draw on the expertise of their partners. Over time, the arrangement could lead to a better understanding between mine action and development NGOs thereby improving coordination and contributing towards the creation of more joint activities.

The coordination of mine action and development appeals to potential donors because the synergy results in a better use of resources, and yields more benefits for the target community than separate mine action and development activities. It is possible that because the Locality Demining model can also operate more cheaply than the traditional mobile demining teams, it represents good value for money and therefore appeals to donors more readily. However, it has been noted that funding restrictions can limit the effectiveness of the Locality Demining so potential donors need to be aware of how their funding can be used to have the most impact. CARE will continue to use the Locality Demining model for its IDDPs.

## Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated some of the links between the development challenges which demonstrate the need for mine action to be integrated with development objectives. Cambodia remains a severely mine-affected country facing numerous development challenges and efforts to promote development and economic growth are not having as great an impact as expected. Although the direct impact of landmines may be felt more strongly among the rural population, the whole country is affected by the landmine contamination. The majority of people live in rural communities; and agriculture is still the largest single contributor to GDP. As a result, the mine contamination in the countryside impedes national development and economic performance. The lack of development and the increasing gap between the rich and the poor could lead to discontent and threaten the stability of the country. Therefore, it is vital that the majority of people begin to experience improvements in their standard of living. Mine action can make a significant contribution to the wellbeing of the Cambodian population. However, it is apparent that at present the mine action community cannot meet the development needs of the people. Furthermore, there is a concern that with the approaching 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mine Ban Treaty and its enforcement in Cambodia, the funds available for mine action will decrease. Consequently, mine action operators have to revise their working practices to look at ways to meet the needs of the population more effectively and support development processes in the country. The Locality Demining project is just one way in which the mine action community may be able to respond to these various challenges.

For all the actors involved the Locality Demining project has been successful. MAG is able to conduct demining activities more cheaply but as effectively as it can with its other types of demining teams. CARE and LWF are able to plan development projects

because they know when and which areas will be demined. The local community benefits economically because of the additional income, experiences fewer social problems than it would with a mobile demining team working nearby, and probably has a greater sense of ownership of the project because it is locally based. The local community is also likely to feel that they have greater control over events because they are more involved and have some knowledge of the project. The deminers' families also benefit economically from the regular wage and psychologically from knowing that there will be a guaranteed income for at least the next few years. Women are employed in the various aspects of mine action in Cambodia, but because the Locality Demining does not require the deminers to move, it increases the access of women to a regular income. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that once the Locality Demining project has come to an end the deminers and their families will be able to sustain the same standard of living.

The link between mine action and development has been strengthened through the Locality Demining model because the programmes have been fully integrated rather than being parallel or sequential operations. Funding conditions have created some difficulties, but efforts have been made to overcome these. It is appropriate because it meets the needs of the people by reducing the mine threat, while at the same time supporting development projects and contributing to the grassroots development of the community. Furthermore, the Locality Demining model is inclusive because it actively involves community members, which increases the feelings of ownership and responsibility among the community in general. The full extent of the impact at the grassroots needs to be assessed in the future, as it is too early to identify or confirm all the potential benefits. The Locality Demining model now accounts for 40 percent of MAG's manual clearance in Cambodia. After two years, the model is now accepted by donors and partners. The success of Locality Demining has led CMAC to establishing a similar model.

The development of the Locality Deming project demonstrates that there is still opportunity for innovation within mine action, and that there are real benefits from looking at new ways to work. There has been willingness by all parties involved to revise the project and adapt working practices as circumstances changed or possible improvements were identified. The Locality Demining has been tailored to the specific needs of rural Cambodian Communities to reduce the mine threat and enhance development potential. The fact that the model is not satisfactory for all types of demining operations only serves to highlight the importance of choosing the right approach for each clearance activity. A 'one size fits all' approach is not the most effective method of demining.



## **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: LOCAL NEEDS AND FLEXIBLE PLANNING**

GARY LITTLEJOHN

**S**OME 10 YEARS AFTER MINE ACTION BEGAN, Bosnia and Herzegovina remains one of the most mine-affected countries in the world (Lisica & Rowe, 2004: 10). It has recently adopted a relatively new mine action methodology known as Task Assessment and Planning (TAP), which is being deployed by BH MAC. TAP is conceived of as an integrated approach to mine action, rather than simply demining operations, and is linked into the overall Bosnian process of conducting mine action. It involves both collection of information and consultation about local priorities for mine action. There is formal data collection through questionnaires that cover households and communities. This is supplemented by consultation that is also with households and communities, as well as with voluntary associations and with local government. TAP tends to deal with the sequencing of various mine action operations on an ongoing basis, to maximize the positive impact on local economic development.

Briefly, the process of national priority setting for mine action in relation to development involves a three-fold classification of communities in terms of their national economic importance, and a three-fold classification of the degree to which they are affected by landmines. Combining the two sets of categories in analyzing the communities enables BH MAC to integrate mine action with Bosnian development priorities in a clear, evidence-based process. The importance of TAP lies in its attempt to integrate these nationally determined priorities with at least some community input at the local level. Local input is greatly facilitated by the fact that there is a fairly strong level of local government, entitled the Local Community, which routinely collects information on households. While liaising with the Local Community to obtain such relevant official information, the TAP mine action community liaison team also collects its own information, and consults directly with interested local people and groups. This integrated information then feeds straight into the process of how the mine action is conducted. In other words, TAP means that the final assessment of the tasks, and the planning of how to implement them, includes a process of local consultation. The following discussion examines how this process

works in practice, focusing mainly on the operating agency most experienced in TAP, namely Norwegian People's Aid (NPA).

## **Mine Action and Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The importance of mine action in Bosnia can be seen from the fact that it is one of the few countries to have included mine action in its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).<sup>1</sup> However, while BH MAC now has a clear overall mine action strategy that is linked into overall development strategy through the PRSP, it has taken some nine years to reach this point. This is partly owing to the political difficulties that resulted from the war.

The conflict in Bosnia, which ended in 1995, was mainly directed against civilians. Some 200,000 people were killed and over two million were displaced, either internally or as refugees (Gallagher, 2005). The Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) was a settlement that was hastily arrived at, and its architects had given little clear thought as to how Bosnia could be turned into a viable state. The US-enforced armistice had left two de facto separate administrations in place, on either side of former battle lines that were still marked by minefields. The DPA, which despite its intentions had in effect consolidated this status quo, had left open the question of what to do with an area that had been strategically important to both sides, namely Brcko. This had been 'resolved' under the DPA by designating Brcko as a district to be run directly by the international administration that was to govern elsewhere in partnership with local political forces. Hence politically, the official position now is that there are two Entities (The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska) and Brcko Distrikt: this is known as the 'two plus one' system.

These political and administrative divisions had an impact on the development of mine action in the late 1990s. Institutional development was slow, and what was originally UN MAC (now BH MAC) was then involved in operational demining. In addition, the World Bank funded some mine action, in what was for it an unusual venture that did not work out too well.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps these slow and imperfect developments were partly the result of unrealistic initial expectations. For example, it was expected that mine action would be completed in four months after the DPA, that is, by around March 1996 (Lisica & Rowe, 2004: 21). In reality, however, it was only in July 1998, after a Demining Commission had been established, that BH MAC was formed, together with two Entity (or Regional) MACs. This seems to have provided an institutional basis for steady mine action over the next few years. From 1998 to 2003, the annual clearance rate was steady at around 6.5 million square metres (Lisica & Rowe, 2004: 22). This has increased in 2004 and again in 2005, reflecting improved organizational capacity.

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<sup>1</sup> Council of Ministers of BH (2004: 243–245).

<sup>2</sup> However, some Bosnian former World Bank employees went on to develop a successful commercial company that is still operating in the Republika Srpska (RS).



In terms of general mine action operations in Bosnia, practices have changed since they began in 1996-97. At that time, there was a lot of mine clearance with no information, from what was then UN MAC and other agencies. So the land was often not used, owing to the lack of confidence in mine action by the Bosnian population: in other words, whatever their need for land, some people did not believe that it had been adequately cleared. This was probably the main factor driving the increased emphasis on community involvement within BH MAC. In contrast to many mine-affected

countries, Bosnia has a well-developed local government structure, with the Local Community being the lowest tier of government. Hence community involvement necessarily includes (but is not restricted to) liaison with the officials of the Local Community.

The priorities for economic development contrast sharply with those of other seriously mine-affected countries. Mine action plays an important role in fostering development in Bosnia. For example, the winter sports areas around Sarajevo, famous as the location of the 1984 Winter Olympics, are still affected by landmines, a fact that clearly affects the potential of the once thriving tourist industry. This indicates that the development issues being addressed in Bosnia are very different from those of many developing countries. Although agriculture is important, and in some parts of Bosnia fertile farming land was the scene of lengthy fighting during the war, there is a legacy of substantial industrial and service sector infrastructure in Bosnia, including Internet access and cable TV (at least in Sarajevo) and ubiquitous cell phone use.

Landmines remain a serious obstacle to development in an economy where unemployment “remained at 40 percent (with over half that figure working in the shadow economy, according to the IMF)” (Gallagher, 2005: 147). This clearly implies a need to develop alternative methods of income generation, but in the absence of extensive investment, either from domestic sources of finance, or from abroad, the economy is not growing quickly enough to create much new employment. The main form of investment visible in Bosnia is house construction, which tends to be “self build” rather than a major source of employment. The impact of mines can also be highly localized, and tends to follow the old front line trenches of the war. This often includes very fertile agricultural land, which thus fails to make the contribution to economic growth that might otherwise be expected. A further brake on development, which at times is linked to the presence of mines, is the slow rate of refugee/IDP return in some parts of Bosnia. The difficulty in returning can also be related to localized pockets of very high unemployment, where the social basis of economic recovery is very weak. Gallagher (2005: 137) cites the case of a town in the Drina valley where unemployment was 70 percent.

These continuing effects of the legacy of war, coupled with the fairly slow rate of demining, doubtless highlighted the need for improvement in mine action. In 2004 BH MAC produced a *Strategic Analysis* (Lisica & Rowe, 2004). It is based on extensive analysis of the evidence produced by the Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) conducted by Handicap International Belgium (HIB) for the Survey Action Centre (SAC), and of the evidence produced by the surveys conducted by the various mine action agencies operating in the country. These accredited mine action agencies are subject to BH MAC inspections during their mine action, and this procedure gives the BH MAC confidence in the validity of its views, including views on the accuracy of the data that it receives from this ongoing process.

The 2004 *Strategic Analysis* is based on good analysis of data collected since 1996 (for some of the evidence) and it is clear that data collection has improved over the years. The result is a very credible analysis, which provides a good foundation for



projections of likely future trends. The high quality of the *Strategic Analysis* is partly a result of the fairly inclusive nature of the consultations held during the development process that led to this document, even though some mine action agencies claimed not to have been involved. This claim may have some validity in the formal sense of their not being present in the groups working on the new strategy, but BH MAC claims to have consulted with them.

The most important feature of the new strategy is perhaps a shift to *reduction of suspected risk* through assessment using the LIS, the systematic survey, and clearance operations. Evidence of risk has been incorporated by means of an ongoing comparison between the results of the systematic survey and the LIS, with corrections as new data comes in. The priorities for identifying options for this reduction of suspected risk are to be expressed in terms of impacted communities and existing categories of economic development priorities. This refers to the classification of communities as high, medium and low impacted communities, thus placing assessment of communities at the centre of the process. The categorization of development priorities into 1, 2 and 3 makes possible a cross-tabulation of suspected areas by community impact and national priority.

Category 1 includes locations in everyday use, and reconstruction of housing, infrastructure and economic resources. Category 2 refers to areas partially used, but in contact with Category 1 areas, as well as agriculture and forest areas. Category 3 is the remaining suspect area (Lisica & Rowe, 2004: 49). This means that the strategy can incorporate development as an integral part of mine action, while simultaneously taking account of the level of impact of mines on communities. This national priority setting applies to all mine action tasks, not only to TAP ones<sup>3</sup>. As will be seen later this general prioritization does not preclude fine-tuning of mine action through TAP at the community level, once an area has been defined as high priority.

The 2004 *Strategic Analysis* includes a focus upon the assessment of impacted communities and the production of integrated mine action plans.<sup>4</sup> This focus stems from a critique, reiterated in the strategy document, of the inadequacies of the extant model of priority setting. This model was said to lack a clear order in the priority list, to have a clumsy decision process when dealing with risk, to be subjective in the final choice of tasks and to have difficulty in comparing indicators about risk and the influence of mines (Lisica & Rowe, 2004: 47). The model was outdated because of the new form of assessment (using the systematic survey and LIS) and because of the introduction of the integral approach to mine action where individual locations could not be considered in isolation from the context of impacted communities (Lisica & Rowe, 2004: 49). This is where the process of TAP comes in. In 2003, an assessment

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<sup>3</sup> TAP tasks are conceived of as integrating the various aspects of mine action in a single community action plan.

<sup>4</sup> This is not to play down the importance in the 2004 strategy of MRE, Victim Assistance and other aspects of mine action. Rather these aspects form part of the integrated Community Mine Action Plan.

for 14 impacted communities was completed and for 2004 the plan was for 20-25 integrated mine action plans to be finished for highly impacted communities.

The actual implementation of the first BH MAC integrated mine action plan began in April 2004. However, the 154 communities designated as highly impacted constitute only around 16 percent of the 1,366 mine-affected communities in Bosnia, and while BH MAC felt that it had the capacity to prepare plans for most of these, the real problem came with the medium impacted communities, which were about 54 percent of the total. There were simply not enough survey assets for these (Lisica & Rowe, 2004: 38). Hence the priority would remain the highly impacted communities, which it was intended to survey at the rate of 20-25 per annum until 2009. This emphasis on an integrated approach to mine action was explicitly stated to be a change from the urgent demining pattern that had been evident up till then.

A summary of the 2004 strategy was presented at the Nairobi Summit for a Mine Free World in November 2004 (BH MAC, 2004b), and this was supplemented by a *Statement* in Geneva in June 2005.<sup>5</sup> This *Statement* echoes the *Strategic Analysis* in highlighting the need for a better TAP system, as well as recognizing international obligations (including the adoption of the Nairobi Action Plan 2005-2009). Both documents also emphasize mine risk management in the form of community-based integrated mine action plans, an improved model for priority setting and mine victim assistance and support.

This improvement in policy formulation seems to have yielded results. Despite the late start, almost half the Annual Plan for clearance had been completed by June 2005, that is, within 3 months of the start of mine action. Since the year effectively ends in October, this meant that the 2005 Plan was on schedule, and gaining genuine momentum, after about a decade of slow implementation. Including the well-established NPA TAP programme, to be discussed in more detail later, there are now six Community Mine Action Plans (CMAPs) in progress, with several more being prepared for tendering.<sup>6</sup>

As indicated above, Bosnia is one of the few countries to have officially attempted to mainstream mine action into development by including mine action as a priority in its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), a requirement for some aspects of World Bank development funding. The PRSP treats mine action as a sectoral priority, and identifies the problems as the gap between real needs and available resources (organizational capacity and financial situation), the weak cooperation with other sectors, and the weak response of authorities at all levels of administration. It identifies priorities that are consistent with the later analysis in the 2004 strategy document. A further notable feature of the June 2005 *Statement* is the mention of the fact that BH MAC has accredited NPA for additional general survey services until the end of 2005 as a bridging solution until BH MAC or other agencies have the field capacity to manage a large number of simultaneous tasks and maintain the correct

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<sup>5</sup> *Bosnia and Herzegovina Statement*, Geneva, 14 June 2005.

<sup>6</sup> *Bosnia and Herzegovina Statement*, Geneva 14 June 2005.

levels of quality control.<sup>7</sup> This level of realism in BH MAC's self-assessment is refreshing and indeed reassuring.

## **Implementing TAP: NPA's Experience**

Since the main practitioner of the TAP approach at the operational level is Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), this section deals with NPA's mine action activities in Bosnia. Although there are over 30 accredited MA agencies in Bosnia, NPA actually conducts over one quarter of all demining in the country, and thus far is almost the only mine action agency that engages in TAP in a sustained manner.

As part of the development of its own mine action processes, which had previously included a shift from operational involvement to supervision, monitoring and accreditation of mine operators, BH MAC approached NPA at the beginning of 2004 to help develop TAP. In contributing to the development of TAP by dialogue with BH MAC, NPA drew on its experience with Task Impact Assessment (TIA), which was originally developed in Angola, and was by then being adapted to Bosnian conditions.

NPA in Bosnia thus has a track record of integrating community liaison and Mine Risk Education (MRE). This not MRE in the more prevalent 'mine awareness' sense; that is, it is not general education for school children and other sections of the general population. Rather, it is 'operational MRE', a process that is closely linked to the area in which NPA demining is going to take place. The NPA MRE representative or the whole community liaison team goes to the Local Community some 7-14 days before demining starts and contacts all the relevant agencies and people. There is community liaison as necessary during the demining process. The information imparted includes evidence on which areas have been cleared, and which have not, and what the marking system is. Then there is a further MRE visit 7 days after completion, which is part of the handover process. As part of the handover, NPA walks the Local Community and Municipality (the level of government above Local Community) representatives through the task and discusses the future use of the cleared area. This is said to be more successful in improving the local population's understanding of mine action, and to ensure that the land is used appropriately afterwards.

To conduct TAP, NPA has an operational plan for each specific demining project. This document has an official task number, since it was drawn up when NPA submitted the bid to the BH MAC for that task. For the community liaison, in addition to gathering information from local inhabitants, and from local government, two formal questionnaires/interview schedules are used: one for the Local Community and one for landowners. These documents are scanned into the NPA IT system once they have been filled in, in a simple but effective form of data capture. These two types of forms together form the main basis for reference and analysis when writing the NPA socio-economic impact reports.

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<sup>7</sup> *Bosnia and Herzegovina Statement*, Geneva, 14 June 2005.

The Local Community questionnaire, which is three pages long, is completed by officials from that level of government, since they acquire the relevant information through requests for reconstruction of houses, or records of land sale, and so on. In other words, the Registry Office and the Departments of Reconstruction and of Refugees routinely collect such information, and can usually supply it to NPA within seven days.

To contact local landowners, one must go through the Civilian Protection Department at the Local Community level, which has the names of landowners in a cadastral map, normally. However, some 1 million Bosnians are in Germany or Croatia. If the owner is abroad, then there is a problem of obtaining permission, for example, if a ruined house is to be demolished as part of the mine action. Roughly five or six families are interviewed for every task, which means that 30-40 families are interviewed per annum. While this may not seem much, it probably constitutes a reasonable sample of landowners for each rural task, and in any case it is supplemented by informal interviews that help to complete the picture of the villages in the task area.

The socio-economic impact reports cover such issues as identifying the target groups and likely beneficiaries, assessing their capacities and vulnerabilities in these communities, ensuring appropriate post-demining land use (including ascertaining who will carry out such post-demining economic activities) and avoiding prioritizing unsustainable mine clearance tasks. Examples of economic sustainability could include promotion of agriculture and hunting, with the latter seen as a possible attraction for future tourism. Agricultural impact could refer to the fostering of sustainable crops, pasture and livestock. In addition, the kind of impact being sought could include reconstruction of public infrastructure such as roads, electricity and water wells, and the re-establishment of local institutions such as a local community board. Such an appraisal of the likely socio-economic impact has to assess the likelihood that the activities envisaged might change after the mine action. This is done using an effective IT document management system.

Hence the socio-economic impact reports, and the liaison that feeds into them, constitute the process of fine-tuning mine action to the development goals, not only of the Local Community, but also of villages and voluntary associations.

### **TAP in Brcko Distrikt**

In the light of this discussion of how the NPA Bosnia TAP process actually functions, it is now possible to analyse how community liaison and MRE are conducted. MRE is conducted in conjunction with community liaison, which may well seem a far more relevant practice when the mine action teams are already in the area, as compared to

the use of leaflets and the national mass media with no mine action taking place in one's locality.<sup>8</sup>

As already mentioned, the NPA community liaison team goes to the Local Community about 7-14 days before starting operations, and contacts relevant groups. This can include police (for example, if a road has to be closed) and local government officials (including the official who is head of the Local Community) but it can also include, say, a hunting association or a women's group. The NPA team also maintains links during the operation, and conducts MRE in relation to that operation. At the end, the handover includes a 'walk through' of the site and some further MRE some 7 days after completion. Then the NPA does a post-mine action evaluation after 6 months, and again after one year.

Since the 2005 MA operational year was just beginning at the same time as the fieldwork, it was possible to follow this process as it was starting up, in the area near Brcko city. Although other areas were also visited, the Local Community of Ulice provided an excellent example, since it was a high priority area.

At this time of year (late March - early April), after a long hard winter with deep snow, which meant that work was starting late, rather than in mid-March, there was a bit of a logjam of project applications by demining organizations to BH MAC. However, in the case of Ulice, this would not cause too big a delay, because the mud from the snowmelt meant that the main work on the highest priority areas in Ulice could not start for probably a month. The presence of mud delays demining because of the evacuation rules in case of injury, which require first aid to be applied within five minutes and hospital admission within one hour. There was a 'Plan B' to work on lower priority areas where access was possible, owing to the presence of an asphalt road.

The issue of roads was an indication of how the TAP mine action process responded to local needs, as articulated by both Local Community representatives and the population. Although an area such as Ulice may be high priority in a national sense, that designation may not apply to every area within it from a local perspective. Even within an area such as Ulice, priorities can change for various reasons, including road construction plans.

At the national level, BH MAC has maps based on data of variable quality, which are updated as mine action progresses. The BH MAC maps are laid out in complex GIS polygons, which reflect a variety of considerations, including property ownership. In other words, the GIS maps are composed of detailed many-sided shapes that reflect information used in the planning process. Among the shapes that are recorded are the shapes of the properties being demined, for example, the shape of a private farm or household. This may have its uses, but for immediate demining purposes can be unnecessary. For clearing the land on either side of a road that is to be covered in tarmac, land ownership is irrelevant. All that matters is that an area is cleared on both

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<sup>8</sup> This does not mean that NPA eschews the use of the mass media for MRE, and in fact, rather astute use was made of the AMAC fieldwork visit to attract TV coverage of the start of mine action in 2005. In addition, the IT system is used to produce appropriate leaflets, on a fairly regular basis.

sides of the road that is large enough for safety reasons for the road construction workers.

So NPA, responding to local views, persuaded BH MAC in 2004 to allow the polygons to be simplified because a company was going to tarmac a road, and it would not do so unless a large area to each side of the road was cleared of mines. This was easier to plan if the mapping in terms of polygons were to be simplified, and BH MAC agreed to this. While at first glance this might not sound like responding to local needs, in fact it did coincide with such needs, linking the two largest villages within Ulice. In addition, without changing the polygons, another dirt road was cleared at the western end of Ulice, linking the next two villages/hamlets, together with the fertile land adjacent to this road. These were the first two demining operations within Ulice, towards the end of 2004. The priority in 2005 was to extend into the fertile area between these roads, accessing from the existing tarmac road, and leaving the forest area for permanent marking, after consultation with the Local Community.

This was the area that was muddy at the start of the 2005 mine action season, leading to the development by NPA of 'Plan B', namely, the clearance of part of the area to the east that was of lower local priority. Again, here the forest/gully area would be permanently marked (minimizing risk, not eliminating it). Such marking decisions are subject to Technical Survey findings: thus if the fertile forest area proved to be mine-free following the Technical Survey, then NPA might decide to tackle the lower priority forest areas. In other words, while responding diligently to local priorities within the (nationally) high priority area of Ulice, NPA had also developed contingency plans to deal with new data coming in, and to deal with operational difficulties, such as the mud, when they arose. This did not mean that operational issues were over-riding local priorities, but rather that a highly skilled process of optimizing local needs, national priorities and operational aspects was being conducted.

In the case of Ulice, there was a detailed mine action plan, namely the Ulice Community Mine Action Plan, hereafter UCMAP, that had been written in September 2004.<sup>9</sup> This included a detailed account of the resources to be deployed, and served as an overall guideline for both NPA and BH MAC as to the sequence and approximate time frame for the UCMAP.<sup>10</sup> It left the execution plans to be specified by dialogue between NPA and BH MAC for the year 2005. These execution plans are written by the operating agency after it applies for a red folder from BH MAC. The red folder consists of the official specification of the task by BH MAC, and the execution plan has to be accepted by BH MAC before a contract for that task is issued. While this procedure may seem bureaucratic and rigid, it has the supreme merit of enabling BH

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<sup>9</sup> This document had the same title as a BH MAC plan, but the NPA document referred to Task Impact Assessment (TIA) and MRE as well as the Technical Survey and clearance tasks. TIA was still used internally within NPA to refer to Task Assessment and Planning (TAP).

<sup>10</sup> The sequencing was specified in a well-known proprietary project management software format.

MAC to keep tight and measurable quality control of mine action on every task in Bosnia, as the year progresses.

Despite the logjam of applications to BH MAC owing to the weather-related late start for mine action, the execution plan written according to the red folder for Ulice in 2005 had been accepted by the time the NPA mine action team left Sarajevo in early April. While the demining teams were starting in the field in Ulice and elsewhere, the Community Liaison and MRE team met with both the Director of Civilian Protection, and the newly appointed Mine Action Liaison Officer, for the Municipality of Brcko. Previously the Director of Civilian Protection had carried out the work of the Municipality Mine Action Liaison Officer, but the scope of the work had expanded to the point where it was no longer possible for a single person to carry out both functions. This meeting was important, not simply because the Liaison Officer had only just been appointed, but also because the Municipality of Brcko was about to become an area of increasing activity for NPA. In addition, a meeting was held with the staff of the Regional BH MAC office in Brcko.

In the area of Ulice, where the NPA teams were already in place, the process of community liaison was already beginning and the Municipality Liaison officer was keen to see how it was going, so he accompanied the NPA Community Liaison staff on their first visit of 2005 to Ulice. The process of contacting local households started immediately, mainly because it was unclear who owned some seriously war-damaged houses that would need to be demolished as part of the demining process. This gave an immediate way into the community and resulted in fairly extensive informal discussions with older inhabitants whose memory could be relied upon for tracing where former inhabitants might now be. It was established who the owners almost certainly were (evidence that would be checked against the Municipality records) and this process led to wider discussions of the conditions in Ulice, and of the problems that it faced.

On the day following this preliminary visit to Ulice, a meeting was held in Brcko with the Director of the Regional BH MAC office and with the Director of Civilian Protection for Brcko Distrikt. It was clear that as well as being a liaison meeting with NPA this was an attempt to improve coordination between these two bodies. As such, while it dealt directly with the issues confronting Ulice, it also amounted to a clear recognition by the Regional Office of BH MAC and the Municipality of Brcko Distrikt of the growing importance of the TAP approach, and of their need to develop their own practices to cope with this new method of conducting mine action. A great deal of emphasis was placed by the officials from Brcko on the recently developed ability to modify the TAP plan in a flexible manner as new information came in, and the case of Ulice was used for a detailed illustration of this.

In general, the opening of the mine action season in the communities within and near Brcko Distrikt can be seen as a good example of the NPA process of implementing TAP in an integrated manner. It was evident that the community liaison and MRE activities were not mere appendages of the 'real' mine action – which is often seen as the demining – but were closely integrated with the other operational activities in a

way that fed into the flexible implementation of the TAP process. This flexibility was not simply a matter of rhetoric, but was based on a robust organizational capacity and a recognition that mine clearance positively benefited from good community liaison, both in terms of the effectiveness of MRE and in terms of receiving good intelligence on the real mine situation on the ground. Community liaison also helped NPA in the development of contingency plans if operations encountered unexpected problems.

## Challenges for TAP

The more recent picture of well-developed prioritization in addressing the development problems of a sophisticated, if damaged, economic infrastructure should not blind one to the difficulties of operating in a fragmented polity, and in a society where unemployment continues to be around 40 percent. These latter conditions are bound to be a fertile breeding ground for corruption and other forms of crime, a social context that may impact on mine action despite the recent substantial improvements in capacity within BH MAC. Part of the reason for the high unemployment has been the hitherto slow pace of demining and rehabilitation of the existing infrastructure, but it is also partly due to the lack of foreign direct investment.

## Mainstreaming

It was an important part of the fieldwork to ascertain how effective other agencies might be in adapting to the new emphasis on TAP that formed part of the 2004 BH MAC strategy. This implied that eventually TAP would spread beyond the well-established practice in NPA and the pilot projects in the two armies (RS and Entity), and so it was important to get a feel for how regional BH MAC and Civil Protection offices might be able to respond, as well as how other NGOs and commercial mine action operators might perceive the TAP approach in relation to their existing modes of operating.

The Regional BH MAC Office, located in the town of Pale in the RS, is responsible for 30 Municipalities. Of these 30, only 4 have no mine risk. The Regional Offices do not engage in accreditation, which is all done centrally by BH MAC in Sarajevo. Regionally, they conduct quality assurance and project scheduling. Actual prioritization is under the control of the overall BH MAC. The Regional BH MAC offices receive the plan of demining and they monitor the management of the tasks.

The Regional Office in Pale was aware of TAP and of NPA, and expressed a favourable view as to how it was going. TAP was seen as one method of solving the problem of mines in one community. There was also a TAP implementation being done in a village by the VRS (the RS army: Vojska RS). In addition, there was part of a TAP being done in another village. This indicated not only an awareness of TAP, but an understanding of what was involved, based on the experience of the pilot TAP work being engaged in within the RS. In that sense, it was clear that this new approach



was indeed in the early stages of dissemination among other mine action agencies. However, it was equally clear that this approach was confined to the army (VRS) for the time being.

A similar meeting was held with the Director of Civilian Protection (CP) for the RS in Sarajevo. The CP is only one operating agency, with its own mine action Director (who was also present), and deals with BH MAC like any other. There was no real indication of any knowledge of TAP there, and mine action seemed to be entirely focused upon clearance of areas for infrastructure projects, in cooperation with the relevant Municipalities.

Among the commercial mine action companies, there was less of an emphasis on community liaison than under the TAP system. One Bosnian company operating in the RS made it clear that local people would give information after the company had started a project, so that the information that it received from the LIS survey normally had to be updated. While the company acknowledged that there was often pressure from the local population to increase the area being demined, they would often do nothing about it, unless the company itself found that the area of the site had not been properly defined. In that case, they would discuss the matter with BH MAC. This did not exactly sound like an active dialogue with the mine-affected community. This lack of responsiveness was mainly owing to a combination of tight BH MAC supervisory control of the project (for quality assurance reasons) and commercial pressures to keep the costs down. Hence there would be little reason actively to seek community views on the task. In addition, there was little attempt in such circumstances to integrate demining with mine risk education and other aspects of mine action, in contrast to the TAP approach.

An international commercial operator tended to concentrate on large-scale infrastructure projects, such as power lines or water pipelines. In that sense, it did not have a community to liaise with, but it also engaged in mine action in the periurban area of Sarajevo, close to houses, and noted the somewhat careless attitude towards nearby minefields exhibited by people living in new houses right next to the clearance site.<sup>11</sup>

An international NGO operating in three countries, with a prospect of returning to a fourth, seemed to understand that TAP was now the favoured approach in Bosnia, but did not have a strong grasp of what was involved. Its contracts made it difficult to plan for more than a year at a time, and it felt that TAP would require such a longer-term approach. In other words, the focus of this NGO seemed to be on developing multi-annual plans, something with which it currently experienced difficulties. It favoured a move to TAP in the future, perhaps because it was under the impression that TAP would help it to obtain longer term funding. This stance at least indicated that the message that TAP was now an integral part of the BH MAC strategy was getting across to mine action operators.

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<sup>11</sup> NPA corroborated this on the basis of its own mine action nearby.

While these other agencies were aware of TAP at some level, it was evident that further work was needed by BH MAC to convey the possible advantages of its strategy to those mine action agencies where it did not yet form part of the organizational culture. Despite the closeness of the monitoring system, which ensured that BH MAC had a very good idea of what mine action agencies were up to, the operating agencies themselves seemed to feel left out of the dialogue if they were not actually members of the two groups that BH MAC had formed in 2004 to develop the new strategy.

The implication of this is that, despite the considerable recent successes in mine action in Bosnia, more attention should perhaps now be focused on the context in which the mine action agencies have to function. Clearly this comment does not refer to the monitoring process, which seems to be highly effective, and which has overcome earlier problems. Rather it refers to the scope and frequency of dialogue with the mine action operators. This implies that the working groups established to develop the new BH MAC strategy could become a forum for discussion of issues that might not otherwise be detected.

## Funding Modalities

It is clear that the 2004 BH MAC strategy was drawn up partly to convince the International Trust Fund (ITF) that Bosnia had adequate institutional capacity and strategic vision to justify further funding. The ITF is the body through which international donors coordinate their Balkan activities. The new BH MAC strategy was evidently developed in a situation where donors might otherwise reduce funding to activities that had originally been expected (rightly or wrongly) to take only a few years. The presence of mine action in the PRSP document may help in mobilizing international aid through the ITF and bilateral donors. However, while the later 2004 *Strategic Analysis* identifies the continuing gap between needs and funding, it is realistic in the sense that a gradual increase in mine clearance is envisaged even in the absence of significant changes to the financing of mine action. That is, it is sustainable even if the donors do not increase funding as BH MAC would hope, although it identifies the size of the funding gap and alternative means of closing it to some degree through Bosnian taxation.

Whatever the impact of the new strategy on the overall amount of funding for mine action, there may be unintended effects of the way in which the ITF operates. These effects could have an adverse impact on the mine action operators. If this should prove to be the case, then it is an issue that could be considered in dialogue between the BH MAC and the operators, and, if it were deemed appropriate, raised with the ITF itself.

The ITF tends to fund mine action activities run by agencies that have a demonstrable capacity in terms of both finance and equipment. This does not include all the mine action agencies accredited by BH MAC, since the latter are granted such a status on the basis of their demonstrated technical competence, rather than their in-

house financial and technical resources. Consequently, some small Bosnian mine action agencies are effectively excluded from ITF funded projects, and have to live hand-to-mouth on the basis of persuading other bilateral donor countries to fund specific projects on a case-by-case basis.

This may not appear to be a problem, but the apparently sensible insistence by the ITF on funding only those agencies with a demonstrable existing capacity can be seen as raising a barrier to market entry by honest accredited Bosnian agencies, thereby undercutting what is surely a legitimate aspiration to create employment in an economy where unemployment is high. Some of the accredited Bosnian agencies have to hire qualified and experienced staff and technical equipment on an ad hoc basis, as they succeed in obtaining contracts. This means that they are effectively excluded from many bids, and are condemned by some competitors as effectively ‘two men and a laptop’, while at least one international NGO which engages in the same practice, but which receives funding from the government of its home country, makes a virtue out of this same practice.

The insistence by the ITF on ‘value for money’ has led to a progressive lowering of the price per square metre of demining. It is alleged that some commercial international mine action companies have left Bosnia as the price per square metre has declined substantially. The impact of the decline in price is difficult to assess, but at least one commercial mine action operator stated that they did not make a profit, and only stayed in Bosnia to train staff up to the required international standard so that they could deploy them in other countries. BH MAC took the view that mine action operators were still profitable. That may be true technically, but the level of profit may be so low that the claim about training may be correct. If so, it suggests that competition within Bosnia may decline in future as international commercial mine action operators leave, and as under-resourced Bosnian operators lack the funds to meet ITF criteria for mine action projects. Hence the pressure to reduce the price could conceivably be counter-productive in terms of retaining effective mine action operators. Even if this argument were incorrect, it would be better to have an open discussion to clear up any misunderstandings as to future intentions and prospects of the mine action operators that are accredited by BH MAC.

## **Conclusion**

TAP clearly works very well where it has a strong institutional base, namely in NPA, and it is now being rolled out elsewhere in Bosnia as part of the well founded new strategy of BH MAC. Yet it is evident that there is still some way to go in achieving the culture change that will be required in other mine action agencies. BH MAC was very realistic about this in discussion, and correctly pointed out that this will take time.

This implies that the international donors take a realistic view of the time required to develop the complex management skills required for effective mine action on the ground in Bosnia, in contrast to the early expectation that mine action could be completed in a few months. Clearly, despite extensive experience in other countries,

NPA took some time to build up the expertise to adapt TAP to Bosnian conditions. It depended on an increasing willingness to give Bosnians a free hand to develop their own skills where appropriate and, related to this, to develop good practice, including in the area of IT. BH MAC also took some time to develop the procedures that give it such a firm grip on mine action in Bosnia. Despite the fact that the year 2007 is fast approaching, it is important that Bosnia is permitted to continue with an overall programme that is improving in quality and increasing in pace and scope.

Although both NPA and BH MAC operate detailed monitoring systems such that they can account for their actions on a daily basis over a wide range of activity, the strength of TAP is indeed that it is not simply a top-down management system but really does respond to the changing needs of the communities being served. This enables TAP to be tailored to maximize the socio-economic impact at the local level, and to increase transparency to the beneficiaries. The follow up six months after completion of the mine action enables the TAP process to check on whether ownership of the task really has been taken over by the local actors and agencies.

These benefits of TAP are something of a paradox, given that at first sight the BH MAC IT system might appear to be a somewhat rigid bureaucratic process. The fact is that it probably would be if it were not for the role that IT plays in allowing BH MAC to respond quickly to a situation that inevitably changes as information is updated by the very process of mine action itself. In addition, the sophisticated statistical analysis that BH MAC engages in has enabled it to develop an evidence-based strategy that now places community needs at its centre, not simply because this sounds like a laudable activity, but because it improves the quality of information that comes in as mine action takes place. The challenge now facing BH MAC is how to disseminate the good practice of TAP to other agencies. This may prove more difficult than it first appears, since its flexibility depends on a combination of good IT skills and the analytical capacity to use them effectively for TAP. This combination may take time to develop in organizational cultures that do not yet incorporate IT and local socio-economic analysis.

The main socio-economic impact of mines in Bosnia, if one discounts the direct employment effect of mine action, is as an obstacle to growth in an economy where there are few major stimuli for economic development. The increased effectiveness of BH MAC has improved accountability to donors and has begun to induce a process of capacity building in at least some of the operating agencies. TAP is an innovative measure that tailors mine action to local needs, within an overall national system of priority setting. On the evidence so far available, it also serves to maximize the economic benefits of mine action.

# LESSONS LEARNED: MAXIMIZING THE IMPACT

REBECCA ROBERTS & GARY LITTLEJOHN

**T**HE EVIDENCE FROM BOTH Cambodia and Bosnia and Herzegovina strongly indicates that mine action can have a positive impact on development, and that this does not require a wholesale restructuring of the way in which mine action is conducted. Rather, what is needed to maximize the developmental impact is an organic growth of the mine action operation to include coordination with partner development agencies and feedback from the targeted beneficiaries. For this to be built in to mine action, ongoing dialogue about integrating mine action and development has to be institutionalized. With such an approach development activities can become integral to mine action, in a way that makes sense to the mine-affected population. To achieve this salience in the eyes of the local community and to incorporate development objectives being pursued by partner agencies, thought and planning is needed so that activities that are already central to mine action can be designed or modified to become integrated with development objectives.

The two case studies have pointed to some interesting common themes, despite the many contrasts between Cambodia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Some of these are international factors affecting both countries. For example, mine action agencies in both countries are aware that the tenth anniversary of the Ottawa Convention to Ban Landmines is fast approaching, and there seems to be an underlying fear that there may be a loss of political momentum for mine action after that anniversary has passed. This may be part of the motivation for linking mine action more closely to development goals, at least at the national level in terms of either Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) or poverty reduction strategies. In other words, the official orientation to development in national mine action policies may at least in part reflect a sensitivity to the agendas of international donors. Yet whatever the motivation, for mine action to have a maximal development impact at the national level, this very impact has to be formally recognized and tied into development objectives and activities. This is clearly the case now in Bosnia, not only in terms of official policy documents, but in terms of how TAP has been piloted and is now beginning to be mainstreamed into mine action. In Cambodia, while policies do exist

at the national level, integration of mine action and development activities seems to be more advanced at the grassroots.

At the local level, the ability of international NGOs successfully to implement projects that genuinely foster such integration indicates that there is an agenda on their part to respond to the perceived needs of the beneficiary communities. The projects studied show clear signs of success even in the early stages, and these mine action projects are not simply responding to an international agenda, but rather are designed to meet the different needs encountered in the country concerned. As such, they imply a recognition that mine action interventions should be tailored to the needs of a particular community. This is evidently best achieved by a process that enables the operating agency to take account of those needs on an ongoing basis. There are various institutional conditions for such a process of fine-tuning mine action to a specific community.

Firstly, a developed institutional memory is necessary, so that community needs can be registered and responded to, even if that does not happen immediately. In turn, such memory requires knowledgeable staff who are able to analyse conditions and reorient mine action in the light of that analysis. In other words, those implementing mine action tasks need to be able to identify both mine action and development objectives, so that activities can be planned in a holistic fashion that integrates mine action with development from an early stage. This analytical capacity will not be developed and sustained, unless the staff concerned are confident that they can indeed modify the agency's activities to respond to specific development needs.

Secondly, there needs to be a willingness to revise projects to improve efficiency and effectiveness. This can be seen both with the introduction of the Locality Demining concept in Cambodia and with TAP in Bosnia, which respond to changing local conditions and needs. For example, the original stipulation that Locality Deminers had to have basic literacy and numeracy skills has been waived so that some of the more vulnerable community members can benefit from regular employment. Such responsiveness entails a willingness to innovate by revising the project and considering alternative approaches. It also means that staff have to be prepared to liaise with other agencies, whether state or NGO, that have a remit for development. If this liaison is not close and fairly continuous during the project cycle, then the effectiveness of the project will be that much less. On the other hand, where there is close coordination of activities, then over time both mine action and development organizations will have developed a mutual understanding of each other's work, and can enhance their cooperation without compromising their own working practices or objectives. This could be seen to have matured as a process in the case of Cambodia, and the beginnings of such coordination at the local level could be seen in the case of Brcko in Bosnia. It was also evident at the national level in Bosnia, in the good working relationship between BH MAC and NPA.

Thirdly, there has to be a certain flexibility in funding, together with a willingness to use funds creatively. Funding flexibility can conflict with the need for donors to be able to demonstrate accountability in how funds are disbursed, since the very

flexibility needed to respond to local needs could also allow room for corruption or at least mismanagement of funds. However, where such flexibility in the use of funds is not delegated to the implementing agency, then the effectiveness of the project can be reduced. This tension between delegating spending decisions and accountability of donors to their political constituencies can be resolved. It requires an ability of funding agencies to evaluate the track record of those implementing mine action, or at least to evaluate the national agencies that accredit mine action operators. With a little ingenuity, funding rules that permit fungibility within a clearly defined range of autonomy on the part of the mine action agencies could surely be devised. This does imply that regulatory frameworks for funding be subject to periodic review so that they take account of changing circumstances. Alternatively, it implies that discretionary funding is disbursed by donors on the basis of fairly detailed knowledge of mine action in the country concerned.

Assuming that such institutional conditions (institutional memory, willingness to revise projects and funding flexibility) for fine tuning of mine action exist, then other benefits can follow in terms of community understanding, involvement, and ownership of the results of mine action. Communities in both countries did not have an in-depth knowledge about mine action, and at times were unaware of or were forced to ignore the risks of living in a mine-affected area. Yet when mine action and development programmes were well coordinated, then communities understood that mine action would be followed by development activities. In the event that this was not fully understood, then in Bosnia follow-up visits by the mine action operator were designed to rectify this, or else in Cambodia the presence of the development agency and its other community work demonstrated this relationship.

The form in which mine-affected populations could participate varied, at times even in the same locality. Thus they could participate directly or indirectly through elected representatives or other members of their community. In the case of Bosnia, there could even be provision for contacting people who had not yet returned to their home area after the conflict, in an attempt to obtain input to the mine action process. Participation could occur through individual consultation, through village development committees, through voluntary associations, or through informal groups of farmers. This is not to claim that participation was perfect, since it is always affected by political, organizational and cultural conditions, but the evidence shows that active attempts by mine action operators to encourage some kind of participation does help to maximize the developmental impact of their activities.

Participation could also result in a reorientation of the mine action to meet locally defined priorities that had not been registered at the national level. It is such responsiveness to input by the population that fosters a sense of ownership of the mine action process, and which also stimulates the acquisition by the operating and development agencies of more accurate information about the mine-affected community, at times creating a virtuous circle in terms of the interaction of mine action and development. Participation can also foster a better understanding by the

community of the programmes and how they are coordinated, thus promoting the benefits in an effective way.

One of the major benefits of the willingness to innovate, or at least modify existing practices, in response to community needs is that both mine action and development become more appropriate. That is, they become both more salient and well adapted to the needs of a population, and this usually takes place in a more sustainable manner by using agency skills and technology that are suited to available local skills and resources. Hence the whole process becomes more relevant to the mine-affected population. This comment concerning appropriate skills and technology may be more applicable to Locality Demining in Cambodia. However, even if the mine action itself uses mobile teams, and includes dog teams and demining machinery, as in the case of Bosnia, the responsiveness to community input means that both the technical methods used and subsequent land use are planned before the task begins, and thus appropriately tailored to expressed needs. In both countries subsequent development is likely to be based on more realistic and sustainable objectives and activities.

Coordination by mine action operators with local populations, with partner NGOs and with local, regional and national levels of government means that mine action can then promote development at different levels and in different arenas. For example, involvement at the local level could strengthen the development of civil society and encourage joint responses to shared problems in the future. In addition, such local involvement can lead to further skills training by mine action agencies for their own local staff. Such skills are probably transferable to other development-oriented activities when the mine action agency moves on to new geographical areas. In addition, the positive effect in diverse arenas and levels can be an indirect result of fostering coordination even between different agencies (ministries or levels) within the same government. This was evident in Bosnia, where the introduction of TAP into Brcko was stimulating increased attention to mine action within local government, and increased coordination between local government and the Regional BH MAC.

The integration of mine action and development implies an ability to reconcile priorities coming from different sources, be they the mine action agency itself, the supervising agency with its quality assurance objectives, the development agency, the various levels of government or the mine-affected population. Consequently, the explicitness of these objectives can have a real influence on how development objectives are incorporated within the process of mine action. Clearly this varies between Cambodia and Bosnia, with the latter having a much greater ability to plan on a national basis and ensure that such plans are adhered to. That institutional capacity is based *inter alia* on access to a well-educated population with skills in statistical analysis, a well developed IT infrastructure, a good transport infrastructure for field visits and widespread cell phone reception. The resulting greater capacity to handle and analyse data means that a coherent national strategy can be implemented, and that successful innovations, as well as failing practices, can be identified and acted upon. For these reasons, at a national level it is likely that Bosnia will move more quickly



than Cambodia to mainstream the innovative process of integration of mine action and development.

Despite these differences between Bosnia and Cambodia, there is nevertheless a problem that both countries have complicated governance structures which in many ways impede the national mine action planning process. These issues had been explicitly identified in the Bosnian *Strategic Analysis*, but were also evident in Cambodia. Hence both countries face challenges in achieving the goal of maximizing the developmental impacts of mine action. In any case, the very different development needs in the two countries dictate very different priorities. These two case studies have demonstrated that modifications of existing working practices or better use of data collection and analysis techniques can maximize the impact of mine action on development by facilitating their effective integration.



# ACRONYMS

BH MAC	Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre
CARE	International Humanitarian Organization
CBMRR	Community Based Mine/UXO Risk Reduction project
CMAA	Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority
CMAC	Cambodian Mine Action Centre
CMAP	Community Mine Action Plan
CMVIS	Cambodian Mine/UXO Victim Information System
CP	Civilian Protection
CWS	Church World Service
DPA	Dayton Peace Agreement
DU3	Demining Unit 3, CMAC
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographical Information System
HIB	Handicap International Belgium
IDDP	Integrated Demining and Development Project
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IRDP	Integrated Rural Development Project
ITF	International Trust Fund
LIS	Landmine Impact Survey
LUPU	Land Use Planning Unit
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MAG	Mines Advisory Group
MAPU	Mine Action Planning Unit
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MRE	Mine Risk Education
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
NPRS	National Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RS	Republika Srpska
SAC	Survey Action Centre
SARS	Sudden Acute Respiratory Syndrome
TAP	Task Assessment and Planning
TIA	Task Impact Assessment
UCMAP	Ulice Community Mine Action Plan
UN MAC	United Nations Mine Action Centre
VRS	Vojska Republika Srpska



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