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Gender Mainstreaming in Mine Action: The Ethiopian Case

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Preliminary Report

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Introduction

This paper details the findings from fieldwork recently conducted about gender and mine action in Ethiopia, as part of AMAC's project on gender mainstreaming in mine action. This paper is divided into five sections after this introduction. First, basic background on the landmine problem in Ethiopia is given. Second, the structure of the landmine sector in Ethiopia is explained. The paper then explores how gender is incorporated within the landmine sector in Ethiopia, to include giving an overview of the gender-specific strategies adopted by the various mine sector actors in Ethiopia. Finally, the paper concludes with the lessons that have been learned from the Ethiopian case regarding gender mainstreaming in mine action.

Fieldwork for this project was conducted in October 2008 by the author, and consisted of conducting interviews with mine sector actors in Ethiopia and collecting documents. Two sites were visited: Addis Ababa, the country's capital and home to many relevant government, UN, and NGO offices; and Mekele, the capital of one of Ethiopia's most mine-affected regions (the Tigray region). The author wishes to thank all those individuals and organizations who facilitated and participated in the fieldwork.

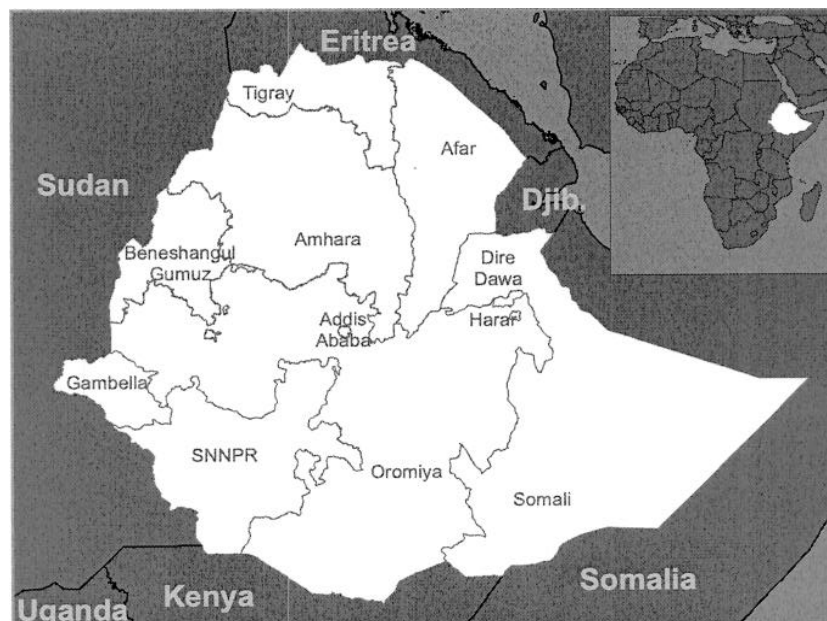
Background to the Landmine Problem in Ethiopia

- **Ethiopia is heavily contaminated by mines.** Ten of the country's eleven regions are contaminated by mines, affecting nearly 2 million people. Three regions in the north and east of Ethiopia (the Tigray, Somali, and Afar regions—see map below) account for over 80% of the landmine impact in the country (Landmine Impact Survey for Ethiopia, 2004¹).
- **The landmine problem in Ethiopia is a long-term historical legacy.** The landmine problem in Ethiopia has resulted from several different conflicts: the Italian occupation and invasion of the country (1936-1941); the Ogaden war between Somalia and Ethiopia (1977-1978); the civil war to overthrow Emperor Haile Selassie

¹ This report can be accessed at http://www.sac-na.org/pdf_text/Ethiopia/ETH_FinalReport.pdf.

which brought the Marxist-oriented military Derg regime to power (1971) and the subsequent civil war to oust the Derg (1975-1991); and the war with Eritrea (1998-2000). Renewed war with Eritrea—a very real threat, and an issue that several of the interviewees spoke about—would change the landmine situation once again through the introduction of new mines.

- **One of the most mine-affected areas is the northern region of Tigray.** This region saw much of the fighting with Eritrea, given that it borders that country, and was also the area from which the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) originated. The TPLF was one of the primary groups that fought against and ultimately overthrew the military Derg regime. The current government is as a result a predominantly Tigrayan government, and the chairman of the TPLF is the country's president (Meles Zenawi), though the ruling government is composed of other parties in addition to the TPLF (just as the resistance to the Derg was composed of several groups). During the fieldwork period, some individuals felt that that the Tigray region is treated somewhat specially now because the TPLF overthrew the Derg regime, but that the government is very careful about this because it does not want to create the perception of favorable treatment.



The Mine Sector in Ethiopia

The mine sector in Ethiopia is structured as follows:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Current Actors, Responsibilities</u>
Demining (clearance, marking, and mine survey activities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethiopian Mine Action Office (EMAO): government body with authority over demining; many employees are former military personnel • UNDP: provides some limited technical assistance, and coordinates appeals for funding • Norwegian People's Aid (NPA): provides mine dogs (currently building a center for EMAO which will have a dog training area); helped to carry out the 2004 Landmine Impact Survey; currently does Task Impact Assessment training for demining teams to determine where mines are; also does other technical advising and training
MRE, and advocacy and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMAO: has an MRE and awareness program; designed MRE curriculum and materials in cooperation with UNICEF • Relief and Development Organization (RaDO): carries out its own MRE and awareness program in cooperation with UNHCR for Sudanese refugees • UNHCR and UNICEF work in cooperation with RaDO and EMAO on MRE, but their involvement is limited to advising and coordination, as it is EMAO and RaDO are responsible for implementing MRE and awareness
Victim Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handicap International: not a landmine victim-only focus, focus is only on disability broadly • Landmine Survivors Network (now called Survivor Corps): located only in Addis, focus on amputees • RaDO is involved primarily with MRE, but also helped to carry out a research study, part of which was to understand the impact of land mines (Village Impact Studies) • Ortho-physiotherapy clinics in each region provide prosthetics and rehabilitation care • Various national NGOs often run prosthetic centers (i.e. Cheshire Services) • Various government agencies have oversight for victim assistance (primarily the Ministry/Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs) • Red Cross: both the International Red Cross and

	the Ethiopian Red Cross provide funding and technical assistance to orthopedic centers
Stockpile Destruction	• Ministry of Defense

- **Ethiopia is characterized by strong national ownership in the mine sector.** The Ethiopian Mine Action Office (EMAO) has complete authority over demining activities. According to an UNDP official interviewed during the fieldwork (who is responsible for coordinating appeals for funding, and works within EMAO), it is quite an unusual situation to have a national authority that is in complete control of demining and is such a strong and competent entity. In fact, other researchers have come to Ethiopia investigate why EMAO is such a strong national demining entity.

Gender and Mine Action in Ethiopia

This section of the paper details the contextual nature of gender structures in Ethiopia broadly and in the Tigray region more specifically. These details are critical to understanding the situation regarding gender and mine action in Ethiopia.

- **Two contextual factors are critical to understanding gender in landmine action in Ethiopia: one, variation in gender norms; and two, the historical development of a gendered perspective in the country.** These are important and interrelated factors that are particular to and very important in the Ethiopian context. First, there is significant variation in gender structures and norms throughout the country, due to the many groups living in the country, including different ethnic groups, Muslim and Christian groups, and nomadic and agriculturalist groups. Second, there is a high degree of awareness about and attention to gender in the country due to the special role that gender equality played in the TPLF's struggle against the Derg.
- **There is significant variation in gender structures and norms around the country.** The three most heavily mine-affected areas are completely different in respect to gender structures and norms. The Tigray region in the north is predominantly Christian and agriculturalist, while the Afar and Somali regions are primarily Muslim and nomadic (pastoralist). Variation in gender structures throughout the different mine-affected regions due to cultural and religious differences mean that mine action agencies must adopt different strategies to carry out their activities in different mine-affected areas. For instance, access to and involvement of women varies in different regions. Women living in the Afar and Somali regions (which have nomadic, Muslim populations) cannot be visited alone at home (but they can in Tigray), and cannot attend meetings without the permission of their husbands or male leaders. Women and men are not allowed to be gathered together in the Afar and Somali regions. Women are in some cases also not present at mosque, and so it is difficult to communicate mine awareness to women in these areas without

reaching women in the locations where they are. The topics that can be addressed as well as how they can be addressed, such as sexual violence, varies in different regions, according to the groups living in these areas. Mine sector actors such as RaDO thus had to convince the husbands, elders, clan leaders, and imams in communities in the Afar and Somali that it was necessary to allow women to participate in these programs because of the life-saving value of MRE and communication programs.

- **Gender equality played a strong role in the conflicts and political regimes that pre-dated the start of national mine action².** Interviewees in Ethiopia stated that the military Derg regime emphasized gender equality during its reign. Speculation as to why this was included a reaction to the inequalities suffered under the monarchy, and also because of the Derg's Marxist orientation. However, the opposition TPLF also took up gender equality as an important part of its ideology, discourse and practices. As one of the interviewees pointed out, gender equality did not gain any ground in Ethiopia as an important issue until Ethiopians themselves starting caring about it. Interviewees stated that between 30% and 40% of the TPLF fighters were women, and this was mirrored in other allied organizations such as the Eritrean People's Liberation Front. Women apparently had equal status with men within the TPLF during the struggle against the Derg, and held equal positions in both combat and support roles. The TPLF had a Women's Fighters Association (WFA), and women's associations were actively formed in TPLF-controlled areas during the struggle against the Derg. The TPLF's WFA was supported financially by international actors. The WAT evolved into the Democratic Association of Tigray Women after the war in alliance with other women's groups, and was then registered as an NGO under the name of the Women's Association of Tigray (WAT) in 1995, which is the current form it has today. There are currently approximately 500,000 members of WAT, most of who are women and live in the Tigray region³. The WAT is characteristic of a broader feature of Ethiopian political and civil society life, which is highly organized, from the top to grass-roots levels. The struggle against the Derg seems to have been similarly well-organized, and currently WAT representatives can be found at the village level.
- **The pre-existence of women's organizations and attention to gender equality has been an important resource for mine action actors.** The historical focus on gender equality (during the Derg regime, and during the struggle against the Derg regime), the strong women's organizations that emerged during the struggle against the Derg, and the fact that the focus on gender equality and the emergence of women's groups pre-dated the start of mine action meant that mine sector actors could tap into these organizations and awareness about gender equality, and more easily involve women in the Tigray region since they were already active and mobilized. As mentioned above, due to the fact that Ethiopian political and civil

² Mine action in Ethiopia began in 1995 with the Ethiopian Demining Project, implemented by the Ministry of Defense. EMAO was established in 2001.

³ Some members live in Addis Ababa, and men can become associate members.

society life is well-organized in the Tigray region due to the way that the TPLF organized itself and communities in the region, this has made it much easier for mine sector actors to engage communities in general in the Tigray region in particular.

- **The pre-existence of gender awareness and women's organizations have been key to the integration of a gender perspective in the Ethiopian mine sector.** It may be the case that WAT, other women's groups, and the prevailing pre-mine action focus on gender have influenced mine sector actors to take a more gendered approach in their activities. It is definitely the case that the pre-existence of strong women's organizations has allowed mine sector actors to engage with gender.
- **Gender is viewed as a cross-cutting issue by mine sector actors in Ethiopia.** Perhaps because there has been a strong focus on gender in the Ethiopian context as a result of historical circumstances, gender was viewed by most of the mine sector actors as being an integrated, cross-cutting activity and focus, rather than as an issue that necessitated or had a sole focus or that was explicitly addressed on its own. There are no mine action programs or budgets with specific gender focus, and no aid is conditioned on incorporating gender as a part of program activities, though interviewees reported that gender is very important for the various donors to mine action in Ethiopia. Except for the fact that there are no female deminers in Ethiopia, most mine sector activities have specifically focused on and engaged women. Most of the mine sector actors were aware of and used to some degree the UN's Gender Guidelines For Mine Action Programs.
- **There is good government legislation and high awareness about gender amongst mine sector actors in Ethiopia.** There is very good government legislation regarding gender, and a generally high awareness of gender as an issue in the country and in the mine sector more specifically. On the government side, there is a Ministry of Women's Affairs, and the government's attention to gender issues is likely a result of the TPLF's heavy focus on gender, though implementation of the government's gender legislation and putting gender awareness into practice is reportedly relatively weak. Despite the important role that gender equality played in the TPLF, gender structures and norms have largely reverted to traditional patriarchal norms, even in the Tigray region. Women do, however, have continued political influence (interviewees stated there is approximately 50% female representation in the regional Parliament in Tigray), they are still organized, and they are especially vocal in the Tigray region. There are also women's organizations in other parts of the country, but they are apparently not as strong as the WAT in Tigray. Awareness about gender more generally in the country is also likely in part the result of the influence of international actors, though Ethiopia has a notoriously strong attitude against interference and influence from the outside. Specific gender-focused work within by civil society actors include the NPA gender violence program, and efforts to eradicate female genital mutilation practices. More females are also being educated in the country.

- **The structure of the mine sector is key to gender mainstreaming in Ethiopia.** While the mine sector is fairly harmonious and there are a limited number of actors working on demining activities, the various pillars of mine action are spread out amongst different actors, and there is no one overarching authority in the mine action sector. The political context and reality of Ethiopia is critical here, as the lack of an overarching mine action authority may be connected to the fact that Ethiopia's government is very decentralized, and many government departments have oversight responsibilities for or involvement in the various pillars of mine action. How a gender strategy and/or perspective would be consistently implemented throughout the mine action sector in Ethiopia is thus unclear, given the number of actors and the decentralized nature of the government. On the other hand, while the government is on paper decentralized (and perhaps in practice decentralization is a reality when it comes to certain areas such as education and cultural matters), practices still remain very centralized, with ultimate political authority coming from Addis. Ethiopia has not quite shaken off the legacy of centralized rule (inherited from royal and then military rule), and decentralization has been used as a divide and rule tactic by the central government to fragment the opposition and possibly also done to please donors, but not as a tool of devolving real political authority. What implications this has for landmine action and for mainstreaming gender in the mine sector is not clear, but implementing a single approach to gender mainstreaming could prove difficult in the Ethiopian context without more coordination between the many actors working on the various pillars of mine action.
- **There are currently no female deminers in Ethiopia.** Currently, women do work with the demining teams, but function only as domestic workers, doing the cooking, cleaning, and other tasks for the teams. No interviewees were opposed to having female deminers, and EMAO apparently has an open attitude towards involving women in demining activities (perhaps necessarily so given that the TPLF is in power). When asked why there are no female deminers, the response given by EMAO and UNDP officials was that women themselves are not coming forward to work on demining. It does not seem to be a problem for women to be working in rural areas or with all-male teams, but it is a larger problem for women to have formal employment in the first place, and it is likely that demining work is seen as men's work (and not "normal" women's work). For example, once a woman is married in the Somali region, it is very difficult for her to get employment outside the home. Also, the attitude was expressed that men cannot cook, so women are needed to do this for the deminers. It is rather ironic that women are not working as deminers, given the strong role that women played in the TPLF's struggle against the Derg, to include in combat roles. There are a few women working in the offices of the various mine action organizations, but many of them are working at lower levels, such as secretaries. EMAO officials stated that there are 27 women working in its offices as secretaries, nurses, programme managers, finance officers, and community liaison officers.

It may also be the case that **organizational attitude** matters in this case. There was some speculation that for there to be more gender equality within EMAO (and

particularly for there to be female deminers), then there needs to be a clear understanding of how EMAO's work will benefit from this.

- **There is strong involvement of women and high levels of gender awareness in the other pillars of mine action.** While there are no female deminers in Ethiopia, there is significant and strong gender awareness in the other pillars of mine action in Ethiopia, to include in MRE, advocacy/communication efforts, and in victim assistance. Women play a strong role in MRE and communication/advocacy, and the content of MRE is gender-sensitive. Demining teams actively seek out the guidance of women regarding the location of mines. Women were engaged by RaDO to listen to RaDO's mine action message over the radio in so-called "listening groups", wherein a group of 10 women gather to make coffee (a female-only activity in Ethiopia), listen to the RaDO message, and convey this message back to their families and communities. In their MRE and awareness programs, RaDO and EMAO have actively devised strategies to engage women (to include hiring women to work as MRE teachers). Other agencies that work on victim assistance, such as Handicap International and Landmine Survivors Network (now called Survivor Corps) also had specific strategies for incorporating gender into their work.
- **Nomadic lifestyles impact school-going behavior and gendered behavior.** Because the populations in the Afar and Somali regions are primarily nomadic, this affects school-going behaviors and the types of activities that men and women carry out. On the issue of schooling, there are government schools in the major towns in these regions, but for those who are nomadic, there are nomad schools (the schools move with the populations) and Koranic schools (which children attend before going to government school). It is thus necessary to reach out to these different schools and populations, and to insert MRE into the various curricula at these schools. Also, RaDO found that it was a challenge to address rural populations in these areas, as those individuals they had initially enlisted to carry out mine risk awareness were living in towns, but their target populations were nomadic. Thus, RaDO engaged high school students to go back to their communities and spread mine risk awareness messages.
- **Risk profiles and victim assistance have important gendered dimensions.** Men are more at risk than women in terms of landmine injuries in Ethiopia; the 2004 Landmine Impact survey states that around 80% of all landmine victims are young males between the ages of 15 and 29. While women are only 18% of mine victims, they have a slightly higher fatality rate than men (47% female and 42% male). Females and males seem to have similar risk profiles as they carry out similar activities. Women have high mobility, as they are fetching firewood and water, and in some cases are carrying out herding and farming activities, which also places them at risk. Men carry out similar activities, though these activities vary by region (Tigray is a farming region, while Afar and Somali are herding regions). Both men and women are in theory able to access victim assistance services, but the main impediment to this is the quality and availability of health services in rural areas. The landmines are located in rural areas, while the health services are located in urban

areas. As a result, 30% of male but only 18% of female victims receive any kind of emergency care for landmine injuries (Landmine Impact Survey, 2004). Those individuals with more money (who are often men, because of their economic privileges and higher social status) are more able to go to the urban areas where such services exist and are of better quality. There is only one prosthetics center for the entire Tigray region, located in Mekele, and it may take many days to reach Mekele by bus from other towns in the region. In terms of rehabilitation care, there is no gender differential, with only 3% of males and females accessing such care (Landmine Impact Survey, 2004).

- **Women are potentially suffering more than men from the effects of landmines.** This is so because women must either care for the victims of landmines or deal with their own injuries in addition to carrying out their domestic responsibilities. Women's injuries thus affect the whole family, and even the community. While men are the primary victims of landmines, women are impacted by male injuries and in some cases even more so than men due to their domestic responsibilities. Women and girls suffer from a dual form of discrimination or segregation when injured, as they are first disadvantaged by virtue of being a woman, and then further disadvantaged when they are injured. Women are left as heads of households when men are killed by landmines, and injured girls may find it difficult to get married, as an injury will affect her ability to go to school and interact with her peers, and will also impact her psychologically.

Gender-Specific Strategies Undertaken By Mine Sector Actors in Ethiopia

The various actors within the mine sector in Ethiopia have adopted gender-specific strategies, as outlined below. While these strategies have been adopted due to the nature of the Ethiopian context, it is not inconceivable to think that many of them could be transferred to other countries, particularly since Ethiopian mine sector actors have had to adopt different gendered strategies in different parts of the country.

Ethiopian Mine Action Office

- Consults with women in survey activities, as ground personnel know that women are aware of the location of mines. EMAO officials understand the need to consult with women, both for the quality of information, to overcome trust issues, and to cater to the gender-specific risk behavior of women.
- Goes to women's gatherings as well as to festivals, churches, mosques, schools (schools do not separate by sex), tea time (Somali region) and other locations where women are (i.e. fetching water) to reach them with MRE. Also runs a door-to-door program in areas where women are not allowed to go to gatherings.
- Women's leaders are present for survey, clearance, and land release activities.
- MRE curriculum is gender-sensitive, and raises issues particular to women and to men regarding their different risk behaviors.

Relief and Development Organization (RaDO)

- Has employed female MRE teachers, as this gets more women engaged. Also, in terms of communicating mine risk awareness to women, they have used different strategies in the Afar and Somali regions to reach women (as outlined below). One challenge in the Afar region is that when RaDO wanted to hire MRE agents, they wanted literate women, but this was not possible to find, so they hired semi-literate and illiterate women instead.
- In its MRE program, RaDO had to devise different strategies to access women in the Afar and Somali regions, such as convincing the husbands, elders, clan leaders, and imams in these communities to allow women to participate in MRE and communication programs because of the life-saving value of these programs.
- MRE curriculum is gender-sensitive, and raises issues particular to women and men.
- Listening groups: Groups of women are organized (10 women in a group) to listen to RaDO's mine messages on the radio. Women make coffee (a female-only activity) and listen to the messages, and then convey these messages to their families and communities.
- Village Profile Studies were undertaken by RaDO for the Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs and in conjunction with UNICEF (the report was published in April 2008). These profile studies were done to find out about the social problems of communities and about the impact of landmines. RaDO used PRA (participatory rural approach) techniques to gather information. Four groups were engaged to participate in the study in each community: one group of women, one of youths, one of male farmers, and one of village elders. Each group was asked to do a variety of tasks, to include map-making and ranking of problems. The groups were then brought together to create one agreed-upon common list of problems for the community, a process during which the concerns of some groups (such as women) could be drowned out and dominated by other groups. Women were engaged in these activities because women are socially and politically engaged in Tigray, but also because RaDO was aware that women are impacted by land mines.

Norwegian People's Aid

- Uses a Task Impact Assessment (TIA) methodology in its survey work, in which women have an important role. The TIA is a 3-phase process: one, interviewing of mine-affected communities; two, deciding where to clear mines and interviewing communities again; and three, documenting the impact of clearance on the communities. Women are engaged as a specific group in gathering information for the TIA, as the TIA looks for specific effects of mines on women, children, etc. NPA officials are aware that more and better information is received when women ask other women and children about landmines.
- Brought in female dog operators from Bosnia. When Ethiopian women saw these women, they apparently were asking themselves why they couldn't do the

same work. As this example illustrates, female role models in the mine sector are important to involving other women and changing perceptions.

Landmine Survivors Network (now called Survivor Corps)

- Women are one of the priority groups that LSN tries to serve, though this is not an explicit or official priority. Women are also prioritized for employment within LSN, though again, this is not an explicit practice, and persons with disabilities are at the top of the priority list for employment.
- Women are prioritized in LSN's microfinance program, since they do very well in this program.
- Sends out female peer support workers to hospitals to talk to other women.

Women's Association of Tigray

- After the end of the war with Eritrea, many women could not return to their homes because the Eritreans had laid mines inside homes and villages. WAT supported these women by giving them cooking utensils and pots until they could return home.
- WAT leaders at the local level are play an important role in raising awareness about landmines.

Handicap International

- Has a "gender disability toolbox" that guides its practices.

The Ethiopian Government

- Once the war with Eritrea had ended, the Bureau of Rehabilitation and Social Affairs set up Rehabilitation Task Forces (RTFs) to work on recovery issues. The RTFs were set up at each administrative level, and included women representatives. Part of the responsibilities of the RTFs were to raise awareness about landmines; RaDO provided training for these RTFs. Women, housewife, and girl RTF members would go from house to house and to schools to teach women about the risks of landmines, and would also call meetings of women to instruct them about how to safely fetch water in the presence of landmines. At these meetings, mine-injured women would share their stories of how they were injured with other women to prevent further injuries.

Lessons Learned from the Ethiopian Case

Three critical lessons were learned from the Ethiopian case about gender and mine action. While the genesis of these lessons is context-specific, they have broader implications that are transferrable to other contexts.

- Culture and religion matter in determining successful gender mainstreaming strategies in the mine sector.** Significant variation in gender structures and norms throughout Ethiopia and particularly within the 3 most mine-affected areas has necessitated the adoption of different gendered strategies by mine sector actors. It should not be assumed that nation states have no variation within their borders as to gender norms and structures, particularly in more culturally diverse societies. Ethiopia has Muslims and Christians, settled and nomadic populations, urban and rural groups, and a plethora of different ethnic groups with different social and economic practices and roles for women. While it is not the case that culture or religion should block gender mainstreaming in mine action, culture and religion do matter in terms of determining the strategies that can and must be adopted in carrying out mine sector activities, because culture and religion directly determine gender norms in particular contexts. Without careful attention to these context-specific culturally-bound norms and the flexibility to address them with different strategies, it will be much more difficult to achieve gender mainstreaming in mine action in an Ethiopian context, but also in any context. Those interviewed during the fieldwork expressed a real fear of tokenism with regards to gender mainstreaming, in that a gendered approach to mine action would be meaningless if done without attention to the local context.
- Women's groups are critical.** The Ethiopian context is probably somewhat unique in terms of the historical factors that have influenced a strong focus on gender in the country, as well as the emergence of strong women's groups. However, there is still an important lesson in the fact that women's groups that were formed prior to the start of demining activities have been a valuable resource which mine sector actors have tapped into. As a result of the conflict with the Derg, there are strong, competent, and capable local organizations such as WAT and RaDO who have a lot of expertise and who can effectively implement work in mine action. Where such local organizations exist, it is imperative to take advantage of their expertise, knowledge and local legitimacy. Where such pre-existing groups do not exist in other regions of the country (both local organizations and women's groups), efforts have still been made to utilize existing women's organizations and to transfer lessons about these existing women's organizations to other mine-affected areas in Ethiopia, as mine sector actors recognize the need for women to engage other women in raising awareness about landmines and for helping women who are impacted by mines. Supporting either pre-existing or newly formed/forming women's organizations is critical to engaging women in mine sector activities, but it also promotes longer-term, sustainable, and legitimate gender mainstreaming more generally in society. This is a point that the interviewees stressed—that gender is larger than the mine sector, and that there must be larger social changes regarding gender for there to be effective gender mainstreaming within the mine sector.
- The structure of the mine sector is important.** Who has control over the various activities and pillars in mine action can be a direct influencing factor on gender

mainstreaming within the mine sector. Strong national ownership and a limited number of actors within the mine sector in Ethiopia can be both positive and negative in terms of adopting more of a gendered approach in mine action in the country. On the one hand, it would be relatively easy to adopt a more mainstreamed approach and would give a gendered approach a high amount of legitimacy due to the strong national ownership in the mine sector, but on the other hand, the relatively fragmented state of the Ethiopian mine action sector and political scene and the lack of an overarching authority in the sector makes it difficult to know how a gendered approach would be consistently implemented throughout the sector, particularly if there is little consensus around the issue amongst the different actors. It may, however, be better to allow different actors in the sector the flexibility to respond to the reality on the ground and to adopt gendered strategies as they need and see fit.

Conclusion

Ethiopia is a valuable case for furthering understanding of how gender is incorporated in the landmine sector and how gender may be further mainstreamed in landmine action. The historical development of a gendered perspective in the country before the start of mining activities has created a context in the country where mine sector actors can easily tap into women's groups and where gender is already a high priority issue. The significant variation in-country regarding gender structures and norms and the strategies which Ethiopian mine sector actors have used to tackle these differences illustrate the many ways in which gender can be integrated into the landmine sector in other countries.



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