

## LANDMINE AWARENESS

### MAIN OBJECTIVES

- **To provide information and knowledge that is reflected in safe behaviours with regard to landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO).**
- **To secure community involvement in all landmine and unexploded ordnance awareness programmes.**

### CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

[The 1997 Ottawa Convention](#) (which 156 countries have ratified or acceded to, and an additional 2 have signed but have yet to ratify) prohibits the use, production, or transfer of anti-personnel landmines. Nevertheless, landmines continue to be a deadly menace to all members of a society. Poor families are more likely to be affected as their need to forage for firewood or cultivate produce puts them at increased risk from landmines.

Children are particularly vulnerable since landmines, designed to maim, are likely to kill young children. Young children face other challenges,

## THE 1997 OTTAWA MINE BAN CONVENTION

The Convention, established on 18 September 1997 and entered into force on 1 March 1999, imposes a total ban on antipersonnel landmines. Its negotiation was the result of a powerful and unusual coalition involving various governments, the United Nations, international organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and over 1,400 non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This unprecedented coalition used advocacy to raise public awareness of the impact of landmines on civilians and to rally global support for a total ban.

### **Key obligations outlined in the convention were:**

Never to use, develop, produce, stockpile or transfer antipersonnel landmines, or to assist any other party to conduct these activities.

To destroy all stockpiled antipersonnel landmines within four years of the Convention's entry into force.

To clear all laid landmines within ten years of the Convention's entry into force.

When it is within their means, to provide assistance to mine clearance, mine awareness, stockpile destruction, and victim assistance activities worldwide.

Source: [United Nations Mine Action \(2004\)](#)

such as the inability to read landmine warning signs or the natural curiosity that will cause them to pick up objects that look interesting.

It is essential that landmine and unexploded ordnance awareness programmes be initiated in areas that have been mined or suffer the effects of war. "An effective educational approach

to mine awareness must be two-fold if it is to reach a significant portion of the population. First, it must target those fortunate enough to still be receiving formal education. Second, it must meet the needs of those unable to attend school (due to lack of facilities, teacher shortages, displacement, etc.)” (Baxter *et al.*, 1997: 11).

Mines are used by troops in minefields as a defensive move against opposing troops and/or to control or intimidate civilian populations – either because they are scattered indiscriminately or located purposefully to harm civilian populations. Unexploded ordnance (UXO) is a risk wherever there have been military activities or stores. Mines and UXOs limit habitable and exploitable land, which in turn puts pressure on less sustainable environments. Civilian populations may be unable to continue or resume agricultural practices, making them dependent on outside assistance for food or leaving them without food.

## **PRINCIPLES OF LANDMINE AWARENESS PROGRAMMES**

- Landmine awareness programmes are not short-term or occasional programmes.
- Landmine awareness programmes are not the same as landmine marking or clearance programmes. A landmine awareness programme must be designed with a view to behaviour change.
- Materials must be relevant to the local situation.
- Materials must be field-tested.
- Messages should be clear and concise.





- Messages should say what should be done rather than what not to do. This is especially true for picture messages – they must never demonstrate wrong behaviour.
- Essentially there are only three types of visual message (for landmine awareness, the first two with appropriate explanation should be used):
  1. “Do this!”
  2. Positive/negative: the positive should always come first – if people read from left to right, then the positive message is on the left.
  3. Action/consequence messages: these are the least effective.
- Awareness and subsequent behaviour change are more effective than marking (markings can disappear).
- When marking is taught, it should be clear, simple and not require sophisticated (and valuable) equipment.
- Programmes should not teach clearance techniques.
- All programmes should be monitored and evaluated to ensure that changes in behaviour and changes in circumstances are taken into account.
- Complacency and ignorance of danger should be minimized through multi-disciplinary approaches and frequent changes in approach.

Source: Adapted from [GICHD \(2009\)](#)

In countries recovering from conflict, natural disasters may result in movement of landmines and UXOs – making previous mapping efforts worthless, and necessitating additional mapping and communication with the affected population.

In the acute phase of an emergency, activities such as de-mining or mine mapping may not have started yet – putting populations at greater risk of mine accidents. Education to ensure recognition of ‘evidence’ of mines is vital in this phase.

During protracted emergencies, de-mining, mine mapping and mine incident reporting programmes may have begun. Coordinators of landmine and UXO awareness programmes will be able to call on these resources when developing their programmes. Populations may become habituated to the threat posed by landmines and UXOs and may begin to exhibit risky behaviours unless mine awareness messages are ongoing and varied.

If areas have been mined, refugees and IDPs may be particularly at risk when fleeing from their home country. If refugees and IDPs are living in areas that have been mined, activities such as firewood collection put them at risk of landmine accidents, especially if the refugees do not live in camps or if they leave the camp to gather firewood. Messages regarding landmine and UXO awareness that are conveyed to displaced populations should also be conveyed to their host communities.

After repatriation, returnees will not be familiar with the local environment – they will need clear communications regarding the location of mined areas, the types of mines that were used during the conflict and local mine marking practices. Given the likelihood that the population will be at risk for many years, mine awareness programmes will be needed for children and adults on a continuing basis.

## **SUGGESTED STRATEGIES**



### **Summary of suggested strategies Landmine awareness**

- 1. Identify persons within the education ministry responsible for landmine and UXO awareness education and ensure that they receive any necessary training.**
- 2. Conduct a review of mine and UXO awareness programmes being conducted under government auspices, through civil-society organizations and external agencies and NGOs, and establish a coordination mechanism and working group.**
- 3. Facilitate the development or improvement of materials and methodologies for mine awareness education, and the testing and implementation of these programmes.**

## Guidance notes

### **1. Identify persons within the education ministry responsible for landmine and UXO awareness education and ensure that they receive any necessary training.**

- Can it be determined which ministries and organizations have responsibility for de-mining and marking activities?
- Has a landmine/UXO situation analysis been undertaken?
- Who are the populations at risk?
- How are people affected (e.g. physically, economically)?
- What leads to risk-taking behaviour?
- What activities if any, have already been conducted with the community (e.g. community meetings regarding the known location of mines and UXOs, community surveys related to knowledge and attitudes about landmines and UXOs, communications about mine incident reporting)?
- Is a landmine/UXO awareness programme necessary?
  - Is necessary training or awareness raising needed for education ministry personnel?
  - How will these programmes, if implemented, be linked to any mine clearance/marketing programme?
  - Who is affected and who will the programme target?

### **2. Conduct a review of mine and UXO awareness programmes being carried out under government auspices, through civil-society organizations and external agencies and NGOs, and establish a coordination mechanism and working group.**

- Are all the organizations involved in mine marking/clearance education collaborating with regard to awareness programmes?
- Is there a database of all organizations working in the area?
- Is there information about the geographical spread and types of mines/UXOs?
- What is the magnitude and geographic focus of the problem?
- Have other awareness programmes already been proposed?
- How will a mine and UXO awareness programmes reach all children – both those who are in school and those who are not?
  - What can be done to reach the children who are not enrolled in school?
  - How can those children be identified, e.g. discussions with children and community members regarding which children are not in school? (See also the [Guidebook, Chapter 1.5, 'Education for all in emergencies and reconstruction'](#) for further information on access and inclusion.)
  - Where will activities for out-of-school children take place?
  - Possible places to locate these children include (Rädda Barnen, 1999):
    - Youth clubs.
    - Health clubs.
    - Houses of worship.
    - Sports fields.
    - Wells or water holes.
    - Anywhere young people meet.





## LANDMINE EDUCATION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN IN AFGHANISTAN

Save the Children, UK (SC-UK) began its Landmine Education Project in Kabul, Afghanistan in 1996. Because of the large number of children outside the formal school system at that time, SC-UK identified different ways of reaching those children. One way was through an Emergency Response Team (ERT) that was “established in reaction to emerging information about the alarmingly high number of incidents that were taking place in certain areas of the city”. The team identified high-risk areas and quickly reached large numbers of children with landmine/UXO education. The ERT developed a standard two-hour session based on the activity session that had been used in schools. Four groups, each containing three male facilitators, took responsibility for four districts of the city, sometimes crossing into other districts, as needed. Each set of ERT facilitators identified all the mosques in their districts and began using these as gathering places for participants. After reaching as many children as possible in the area surrounding one mosque, they moved on to the next.

Another pair of facilitators was also hired to travel around the city on a motorcycle to educate Kuchi nomads and internally displaced people. These teams established strong relationships with the communities and authorities in high priority districts and reached a large number of children and nomads. One disadvantage to the programme was, however, that “children, community members and facilitators grew tired of seeing the same materials and format again”, as messages were simply repeated rather than followed up with new messages or materials.

Source: [Child-to-Child Trust \(2004\)](#)

- In conjunction with all stakeholders, can appropriate multi-disciplinary programmes that may already exist be identified, even if modifications are required?
  - Does the material complement other materials/programmes already in use?
  - Are the materials/programmes multi-disciplinary?
  - What resources are required?
  - Who will fund the implementation of these programmes and for what period?
  - What technical support is required? Who will supply it?

### **3. Facilitate the development or improvement of materials and methodologies for mine awareness education, and the testing and implementation of these programmes.**

- How will the landmine/UXO awareness programme be included in the school curriculum? Consider the following:
  - What will be the objectives of the landmine/UXO awareness programme. (See below.)

#### **OBJECTIVES OF A MINE AWARENESS PROGRAMME**

That children ...

Know where they might encounter mines in areas where they live.

Avoid entering hazardous terrain.

Recognize clues that indicate possible presence of mines.

Know what to do if a mine is spotted and who to inform about it.

Know how to behave if they suspect they have entered a minefield.



Can distinguish between different types of mines likely to be found.

Never ever touch a mine or UXO – or throw things at it.

Know ways of sharing mine information with others.

Source: [Rädda Barnen \(1999\)](#)

- Will the programme be a stand-alone course, or integrated into the curriculum in another way?
- What will be the length of the course?
- Will the course be taught during school hours?
  - If so, what will it replace? Alternatively, will extra time be provided?
  - If not, what steps will be taken so that children are able to stay and participate in the programme?
- Modify and or develop landmine/UXO awareness programmes that respond to the needs of the target populations, both in formal schools and for out-of-school children, youth and adults.
  - What variations in the course will be necessary, e.g. for children of different ages, different ethnic groups, for boys and girls?
  - What specific issues will be dealt with?
- Can messages of peace be built into mine awareness programmes? Since the UXOs usually come from both parties to the conflict (even if mines are laid by one side), children may be able to see that violent conflict is a poor way to solve problems because people get hurt during and after the conflict.
  - Who will develop/revise the materials?
    - Are they clear and 'readable'?
    - Are they culturally sensitive and accurate?

- Have the materials been tested? If so, have they been revised based on the results and feedback from the testing?
- Do the materials send positive messages?
- Who will teach the materials?
  - It is vital to select people the children/youth will trust, who can make lessons interesting and who will cooperate with parents ([Rädda Barnen, 1999](#)).
  - Soldiers are usually not a good option for teaching mine awareness as they may know little about education and psychology ([Rädda Barnen, 1999](#)).
- What training will be needed – both in terms of content and pedagogical approach? Since the objective of landmine/UXO awareness programmes is behaviour change, it is particularly important that teachers use materials and methods that encourage children’s participation and that demonstrate the children’s good decision-making skills related to appropriate behaviours and choices they confront. Suggested methods include ([Rädda Barnen, 1999](#)):
  - Drama/role-play.
  - Puppets.
  - Simple board games.
  - Jigsaw puzzles.
  - Short video and/or audio tapes.
  - Stickers, posters, leaflets, brochures, etc.
  - Activity books.
  - Information gathering/reporting.
- Can children and youth be involved in the design and delivery of mine awareness programmes? Consider the following:
  - Community surveys and interviews.
  - Raising awareness among out-of-school youth by organizing activities such as:
    - Telling and/or collecting stories.

- Asking out-of-school children to draw pictures related to mine/UXO risks.
  - Plays.
  - Games (e.g. stories without words).
  - Discussion groups.
  - Singing songs.
  - Playing the role of the teacher (using posters to initiate discussions and telling other children about key messages).
  - Creating mine awareness materials such as posters or tee shirts.
  - Raising awareness by discussing issues with parents and siblings.
- (See the ‘Needs analysis exercise’ in the ‘Tools and resources’ section of this chapter for one way to create mine awareness.)



### DEVELOPING THE CHILD-TO-CHILD PROGRAMME IN CROATIA

As part of the child-to-child programme in Croatia, 60 youth members of the Croatian Red Cross between the ages of 13 and 19 were trained. Youth members completed a questionnaire that was used to find out how much they knew about the problems of mines and mine awareness programmes, as well as whether, when and how they participated in mine awareness activities in their community (in schools, youth clubs, NGOs etc.). In addition, they learned basic information about mines including:

Recognizing dangerous areas in the community, mine marking, how to recognize the warning signs and clues that an area is mined (using drawing and discussion).

Mine injuries (lecture by facilitator and discussion, using examples led by facilitator).

Modelling proper behaviour (using role-plays).

Source: [Child-to-Child Trust \(2004\)](#)

- Ensure that all mine awareness programmes include an ongoing monitoring and evaluation component to ensure that materials stay relevant and interesting for the targeted audiences.
  - Is there a procedure in place to ensure that priorities and approaches are periodically reassessed, including:
    - Changes in the mine/UXO situation.
    - Changes in vulnerable populations.
    - New educational materials to maintain interest in the programme.
  - What plans have been established for ongoing training and supervision of the mine/UXO awareness teachers?

## TOOLS AND RESOURCES

### 1. Needs analysis exercise

This exercise is taken from the *Mine risk education booklet* developed by the [Child-to-Child Trust \(2004\)](#).

A needs analysis exercise can help to identify a key topic or a sequence of sub-topics when designing mine risk education programmes. It is a simple method, but one that generates useful discussion. This kind of exercise can be carried out using a number of methods such as drawing, discussion or role-play. A method that has been used successfully by a number of child-to-child projects is for groups to develop charts in the following way:

- In groups of 5 to 10 children and/or adults, participants are asked to identify the main problems affecting children's health in the community. In this case, the topic would be mines and the task would be to discuss what problems mines cause the children and the community.

- Discuss how serious each problem is (a system of points is used where 1 is the lowest level of problem and 5 is a problem of greatest importance).
- Discuss how common each of the problems is (with 1 being least common and 5 being most common).
- Discuss how much/what children can do.
- Total the points awarded against each problem and discuss the outcome.

The following is an example of a needs analysis exercise in which participants having identified mines and UXOs problems in their communities were then asked to analyse them. The scale used is 5 for the top score and 1 for the bottom score; the final column is the total score of the 3 previous columns.

Potential mines/ UXOs problems identified in the community	How serious is the problem in the community?	How common is the problem in the community?	How much children can do and examples of what they can do	Importance to the CtC programme
Insufficient care for mine victims	5	3	3 Talk to parents about their concerns	11
Lack of knowledge about mines	5	3	3 Distribute leaflets	11
Mines as an ecological problem	4	2	3 Organize exhibition of drawings to raise awareness	9
Removing mine signs (vandalizing)	5	4	1 Talk to adults about danger	10

The problem scoring the highest points can be prioritized when designing the mine and UXO curriculum for that specific community.

For this particular analysis exercise, the group prioritized the two following problems:

- Insufficient care for mine victims.
- Lack of knowledge about mines.



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