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EXPLORING MINE/ERW RISK EDUCATION IN ASEAN

**ARMAC
MAGAZINE**

FEATURING:
STORIES OF INTEGRATED
MINE/ERW RISK EDUCATION
FROM ACROSS ASEAN



MESSAGE FROM

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ARMAC

Welcome to the first issue of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC) Magazine.

2019 was a busy year for ARMAC and our partners in the region. Some highlights were hosting workshops, trainings, consultative meetings and field visits on important mine/ERW action issues including risk management, gender equality, international mine awareness day, operational efficiency, information management, victim assistance and mine/ERW risk education (MRE).

The aforementioned activities have been carried out in collaboration with the ASEAN Member States and their national mine action organisations and/or related institutions, Japan, Canada, Norway, United Nations Development Programme, Australia, Switzerland, Ireland, Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining, International Committee of the Red Cross.

One of ARMAC's major activities was implementing our MRE Project entitled, 'Enhance awareness programs on the dangers of Mine/Explosive Rem-

nants of War among ASEAN Member States' thanks to the generous financial contribution by the Japanese Government through the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF). Part of the MRE Project is the curation of this magazine.

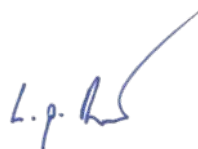
The main theme of this magazine is to promote integrated approaches to MRE, which relates especially to ARMAC's first mandate and function.

Through this publication, we disseminate information, promote innovation and highlight good practices in MRE of interest to our readers across the ASEAN region.

We would like to thank all who have contributed to the contents of this magazine. We hope that for those reading, these articles may provide inspiration and guidance when formulating risk education programmes and recognition of the formidable work being done to drive the ASEAN region ever closer to the ultimate goal of zero casualty from mine/ERW.

Mr. Ly Panharith

Executive Director of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center



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ARMAC's Mine Risk Education Project

Mine Risk Education (MRE) is part of ARMAC's mandate and function: "to enhance awareness programs on the dangers of ERW among affected communities".

In May 2019, the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC) initiated a research and consultation project to develop integrated approaches to MRE to improve risk education for affected communities in ASEAN Member States (AMS). The project built upon the successes of MRE in some countries and shares these with the broader community so that all AMS, and in particular those individuals most at-risk, can be educated on how to avoid mines/ERW and what actions to take when encountering them.

Five AMS have been heavily affected by mine/ERW, namely Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam. ARMAC's consultations during 2019 with stakeholders in these nations clearly revealed that there are various approaches to integrate of MRE. This is not surprising given their unique national contexts, including the complexity and extent of mine/ERW contamination, governance and institutional arrangements, cultures and beliefs, phases of mine action and available resources. The consultations indicated wide support by stakeholders for integrating and connecting MRE with many other associated activities. These nations have integrated, mainstreamed and linked MRE in different and creative ways to reinforce MRE efforts and influence risk behaviours.

Nevertheless, complex challenges come with integrated approaches, particularly central coordination between organisations, accreditation, reporting, monitoring and evaluation. Despite the challenges and limited resources for MRE, each of the mine/ERW affected AMS have found inventive ways of integrating or mainstreaming MRE to leverage the resources of other programmes, harness volunteer networks and reach wide audiences

through mass media and new communications technology.

ARMAC sought international perspectives and feedback on the Preliminary Results of the MRE Study at a side event at the Fourth Review Conference of State parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) which took place from the 25 to 29 November in Oslo, Norway.

While there is no single model to integrate MRE that should be imposed or implemented for all countries, the MRE Study illuminates effective practices, lessons learned, and innovative approaches from the mine/ERW-affected AMS as well as valuable international standards, perspectives and theoretical frameworks.

Based on ARMAC's research, consultations, and international perspectives, the MRE Study offers a number of recommendations about effective MRE practices and approaches to integrate MRE.

Following the ASEAN Regional Consultative Meeting on 6 February 2020, ARMAC will publish the final MRE Study on its website. ARMAC hopes that the MRE Study will promote dialogue and contribute to continuous improvements in the effectiveness of mine/ERW risk education to reduce casualties in the affected communities of the AMS and in other countries with similar problems.

The initial phase of the MRE Project involved national consultative meetings co-hosted by ARMAC and each of the five mine/ERW affected AMS during August and September 2019. The first consultative meeting of MRE stakeholders was held on 6 August 2019 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. H.E. Mr Prum Sophakmonkol, Secretary General of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA), commented that the meeting provided a great chance for Cambodia to both



Opening speech at the Vietnamese national consultative meeting.

enhance their own MRE programme, while also documenting their best practices to allow other states in the ASEAN region to reflect upon Cambodia's experiences.

The consultative meeting in Naypyitaw, Myanmar, was opened by Mr. U Win Naing Tun, Director General of the Department of Rehabilitation, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. The essential work of the Mine Risk Working Group (MRWG), under the co-leadership of UNICEF and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, was highlighted. The MRWG, established seven years ago as an inter-ministerial and inter-agency coordination platform, ensures that mine action in Myanmar complies with international standards and reflects the lessons which have been learnt in Myanmar. ARMAC looks forward to working more with the MRWG to enhance their capacity to respond to mine action needs in Myanmar.

In Thailand, the meeting was held in Bangkok with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Director-General of the Department of ASEAN Affairs, Dr. Suriya Chindawongse, opened the meeting emphasizing the importance of the current Mine Risk Education project in enhancing awareness of mines/ERW across the ASEAN region.

In Vientiane, Lao PDR, the meeting was opened by H.E. Mr. Thongphane Savanphet, Deputy Minister of Foreign

Affairs. Among the positive developments was the substantial progress made towards greater integration of risk education messages into the primary school curriculum in provinces which remain contaminated.

Finally, in Hanoi, the Vietnamese consultative meeting was opened by Ms, Le Thi Thu, Deputy Director General of the Department of ASEAN Affairs. The meeting was an opportunity for ARMAC to hear of the numerous innovative programs currently being run in Vietnam and the Government's commitment to working with affected member states of the ASEAN region.

Following the national consultative meetings, Mr Ly Panharith, Executive Director of ARMAC, concluded "ARMAC appreciated the input from the mine risk education stakeholders in all mine/ERW affected ASEAN Member States who have been handling mine risk education with various innovative approaches. Their experience and knowledge are of critical importance to develop the integrated approach to mine risk education." We are looking forward to seeing how MRE in the region progresses.

Dwi Prameswari
Senior Officer, ARMAC



An Introduction to Integrated Approaches to Mine Risk Education

With communities across the ASEAN region still awaiting demining activities, which can be costly and time-consuming, the need for effective Mine Risk Education (MRE) remains paramount for the protection of vulnerable communities. In some areas, where clearance is not possible, MRE can be the only feasible risk reduction strategy available.

According to International Mine Action Standard 12.10, MRE refers to activities which seek to reduce the risk of death and injury from mines and ERW, by raising awareness and promoting safe behaviours, with the overall goal of reducing the risk to a level where people can live safely in an environment free from the economic and social developmental constraints of contamination.¹ Although casualties have been dramatically reduced in recent years in mine/ERW affected AMS, the need remains to continue enhancing the capacity of at-risk communities to cope with the risks, especially for the safety of new generations and moving populations. Providing MRE remains one of the most effective strategies to reach these groups and to provide protection from the debilitating economic, social and physiological effects of explosive ordnance which remain in the soil.

Nevertheless the ability of stand-alone risk education to change behaviour is the subject of growing debate.

It has been recognized that there is a real gap between mine risk awareness and risk behaviours. In an attempt to bridge this gap, and bring communities closer to the adoption of lasting safe behaviours, greater emphasis has been placed on the use of 'integrated' approaches to risk education. Through this magazine, ARMAC hopes to highlight and promote the successes of some of the most innovative and progressive methods of integrated risk education from within ASEAN.

What exactly is meant by 'integrated' is not confined to one singular definition, rather, integrated approaches emphasise the linkage of risk education within other mine action activities and relief and development efforts. While a universal definition has not been formally acknowledged, the benefits of integration have been widely accepted. For example, when safety messages are integrated within community liaison and non-technical surveying, at-risk communities are generally more receptive. Not only does an approach which emphasises community liaison establish a higher level of community trust, but it also allows MRE to be more locally appropriate, as safety messages are disseminated upon the needs and vulnerabilities of target communit-

ies which have been raised through these direct communication channels.

Integration of risk education into the broader mine action programme also helps support efforts for mine/ERW disposal and land release. Through these established communication channels, hazardous areas can be reported, information can be conveyed about the arrival of demining teams, and the handover of released land can be better facilitated.

Integration of risk education into the school curriculum enables MRE to reach a greater target audience. This is especially relevant for children who live in areas where explosive ordnance has been a long-term problem. Mainstreaming MRE into education is also a relatively cost-effective means of delivering MRE. The same can be said for the integration of risk education into public health programmes, which may use similar communication theories. Child-to-child risk education is another great example of an integrated approach which has significant benefits. In employing this method, not only are youth more proactively engaged in the learn-

ing process, they also offer a pathway to educate harder to reach groups, namely, the out of school youth who do not have the opportunity to receive formal education and who may consequently miss traditional MRE messages due to their lack of literacy.

This article outlines some of the means and benefits of an integrated approach to MRE, however it is not exhaustive, and the possibilities are extensive. Throughout the following articles a range of other methods and advantages of integration are explained in greater depth by people directly involved in the implementation of MRE in the ASEAN region.

Lydia Davies
Researcher, ARMAC

¹ UNMAS (2013) 'Mine/ERW Risk Education', IMAS 12.10.

The Explosive Ordnance Risk Education Advisory Group (EORE-AG)

In recent years, many leading mine action stakeholders around the world have gradually adopted the term ‘Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE)’ in the place of ‘Mine Risk Education (MRE)’. This shift reflects the changing realities of mine action, and offers a more inclusive term for the array of explosive ordnance that now threaten lives and livelihoods of communities across the world. Whereas MRE had specifically landmine focused connotations, EORE can be considered an umbrella term embracing improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and unexploded ordnance (UXO).

This proliferation of improvised explosive devices and the consequent adaption of new terminology has been particularly reflected in the decision to reactivate a global explosive ordnance advisory group.

Following a rise of explosive ordnance casualties to levels not seen in almost two decades, discussions between donors and partners at the 17th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in November 2018 led to the beginnings of the Explosive Ordnance Risk Education Advisory Group (EORE-AG).

The Group exists to ‘serve as a tool for increasing the quality and coverage of EORE programmes, promoting effective behavior change strategies,

strengthening the cadre of EORE experts, addressing contextual sensitivities, advocating to member states including donors, and securing buy-in from highest levels on the importance of coordination’.¹

Specifically the EORE-AG seeks to provide guidance to the sector, ensuring that:

1. International standards are relevant and adaptable
2. EORE is appropriately integrated into mine action strategies
3. There is adequate coordination between humanitarian development sectors
4. That guidance is available on priority setting
5. Donors are aware of gaps and have means of addressing them

The EORE-AG will regularly report to the Global Protection Cluster and maintain close links with the International MRE Working Group. Members of the EORE-AG consist of representatives from UN agencies and other major international mine action organisations.

For further information, see EORE-AG's new website at www.gichd.org/en/our-response/risk-education/advisory-group

¹ Explosive Ordnance Risk Education Advisory Group (EORE-AG) Terms of Reference". www.globalprotectioncluster.org/wp-content/uploads/EORE-AG-TOR_August-2019.pdf

Mine Free World Conference, Oslo

ASEAN nations were well represented at the Fourth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in Oslo, Norway from the 25 to 29 November. Participation from signatories Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand - as well as observers from Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam added to the atmosphere of excitement and determination. For ARMAC personnel the conference not only provided a opportunity to participate in many sessions, but also a chance to share and discuss the Preliminary Results of research and national consultative meetings from ARMAC's current MRE project with mine action experts from around the world, through a side event.

The side event brought together an expert panel of speakers from Afghanistan, Colombia and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) to share expertise and experiences from other countries and regions. ARMAC's MRE expert, Hal Judge shed light on topics such as the complexities of MRE, risk analysis, behavioural change, theories of change, mapping integrated connections, and other examples of best practices and innovations from the ASEAN region.

Concluding the side event, Mr. Ly Panharith, Executive Director of ARMAC, expressed his dismay concerning the new trend of increased casualties from explosive ordnance (particularly in the Middle East and Afghanistan) since 2016, but noted that risk education is gaining momentum globally and was a major theme of the Oslo Conference proceedings. For ARMAC, risk

education will remain a high priority in its work and in building ARMAC's regional and international knowledge base and connections. He also expressed gratitude for the generous contribution of the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) for ARMAC's MRE Project.

During the Conference the Government of Japan extended its commitment to supporting mine/explosive remnants of war (ERW) affected communities. Ms. Asako Omi, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, announced that, "The Government of Japan has been allocating more than USD 800 million since 1998 to support mine action, including mine clearance, MRE, victim assistance and socio-economic integration activities. MRE remains to be one of our priorities of support, and the Government of Japan calls for an acceleration of efforts including through enhancing innovation and effectiveness".

There was also exciting developments at the final plenary meeting on 29 November 2019, which saw the adoption of the Oslo Action Plan 2020-2024. The plan, adopted by 164 States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and including most ASEAN Member States, recognised the importance of mine risk education as a means of preventing injuries and fatal accidents.

The State Parties made a commitment to take the following actions:



H.E. Senior Minister Ly Thuch from Cambodia speaking at the conference in Oslo. Photo courtesy of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

28 Integrate mine risk education activities with wider humanitarian, development, protection and education efforts, as well as with ongoing survey, clearance and victim assistance activities to reduce the risk to the affected population and decrease their need for risk-taking.

29 Provide context-specific mine risk education and reduction programmes to all affected populations and groups at risk. Ensure that such programmes are developed on the basis of a needs assessment, that they are tailored to the threat encountered by the population, and that they are sensitive to gender, age, disability and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account.

30 Prioritise people most at risk by linking mine risk education and reduction programmes and messages directly to an analysis of available casualty and contamination data, an understanding of the affected population's behaviour, risk pattern and coping mechanisms,

and, wherever possible, anticipated population movements.

31 Build national capacity to deliver mine risk education and reduction programmes with the ability to adapt to changing needs and contexts, including the delivery of such programmes to affected communities in the case that previously unknown mined areas are discovered.

32 Report on mine risk education and other risk reduction programmes in Article 7 reports, including the methodologies used, the challenges faced and the results achieved, with information disaggregated by gender and age.

Also the Conference unanimously reaffirmed the determination of the States Parties to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines and their aspiration to meet the goals of the Convention to the fullest extent possible by 2025, and adopted

the Oslo Declaration on a Mine-Free World. The Declaration included a strong statement about risk education:

"We will intensify our efforts to prevent new casualties in affected areas. We will strive towards providing effective, relevant and targeted mine risk education and other risk reduction measures to all groups at risk to increase protection until the threat of anti-personnel mines can be removed."¹

Over 30 other interested international organisations attended the Conference as observers. It was heartening to see representatives of many organisations that are actively involved in mine action in our region including: GICHD, ICBL, ICRC, UNICEF, UNDP, UNMAS, HALO Trust and MAG.

During the opening plenary session, H.E. Senior Minister Ly Thuch, First Vice President of CMAA, delivered a moving speech which captured the spirit of the Conference. Some excerpts of his speech are below:

"Humanitarian mine action is a lot more than an expert engineering operation. It comes from the heart. That's why it is named 'humanitarian'. For all the people who do mine action, it starts from their compassion. It is an act of compassion for the people whose land and lives are healed—from injury, fear and restriction of movement. I cannot think of a more noble act. Our good friends in Thailand Mine Action Center have a statement which I find incredibly inspiring: "One mine cleared: One family saved!" How true that is! Yet it is even wider than one family saved. The land is cleared for the prosperity of the whole community... children, farmers, builders, newcomers, border security officers, travellers ... Mine clearance is the most sustainable form of development, because it opens the space permanently ... Just hours ago in my country, near the Thai border, an anti-tank mine blew up a rice harvesting machine injuring a farmer. .. It's just one compelling example of how mine action, and especially MRE, must adapt and find ways to confront new variations of dangers. It is complex. But I am damn sure that Cambodia is not alone with this problem. I'm sure

that other countries are confronting similar problems and we can share new ideas and new solutions, creative approaches, new technologies ... But to do this we need to talk to each other. We need to build cooperative networks between countries so that we are not alone and isolated in tackling similar problems."

A major outcome for Cambodia was the Conference agreement to Cambodia's request for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines until 31 December 2025 (in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention).

Hal Judge
MRE Expert, ARMAC

¹ Oslo Review Conference, www.osloreviewconference.org

**International
Mine
Awareness
Day
2018-2019**




USA:
Opening of the 'Safe
Ground' exhibition

COLOMBIA:
President Ivan Duque
declared seventy-five mu-
nicipalities mine free

SOUTH SUDAN:
Primary schools and UN-
MAS create performance
highlighting key MRE
messages

SRI LANKA:
Operators and NGOs par-
ticipate in a day of friendly
games



DENMARK:
DDG and DanChurchAid
gave a demining
simulation to the public

SOUTH CAUCASUS:
Animation to raise
awareness released by The
HALO Trust

AFGHANISTAN:
The HALO Trust launch inter-
active map

KURDISTAN:
Spirit of Soccer host an
event to raise awareness

MYANMAR:
Speeches, songs and
dances used to reach
displaced persons

Joint Field Monitoring for Mine Risk Education, Battambang Province, Cambodia

Following a spike in Mine/ERW casualties in early 2019, the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) and UNICEF organised a joint field visit on 26-27 June 2019 to Battambang Province in the west of Cambodia, where a high level of the incidents had been recorded.

The visit brought together a wide range of representatives from the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC) as well as numerous MRE operators: the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC), the National Centre for Peacekeeping Forces (NPMEC), Mines Advisory Group (MAG), The HALO Trust and Spirit of Soccer (SoS). It was productive to be able to involve such a wide range of mine action operators in the joint fieldtrip. This gave everyone involved an excellent opportunity to develop a common understanding of the issues and practices currently being used in Battambang Province, and to inspire innovative solutions to the challenges faced. We hope involving such a wide range of actors will enable the essential continuation of cross-agency coordination in the future.

The local authorities and communities kindly hosted the joint field visit for Mine Risk Education in Battambang Province to enable visitors to observe how classroom MRE messages are integrated and reinforced. The teachers at a local primary school were engaging, and teaching materials included a textbook which included eight types of accident and injury prevention. Amongst them was, mine risk education, road traffic, snake bites and drowning. Aside from the classroom curriculum, we also saw how safety messages have been integrated into both sports and child-to-child theatre. Using sport as a method of risk education has been proven as incredibly successful. Through sport, children are actively involved in the learning process which seeks



Safety messages are integrated into the school curriculum.

to reinforce the key safety messages associated with MRE: **1.** Identifying areas likely to be contaminated, **2.** Not touching any ordnance, **3.** Reporting any viewings, and **4.** Passing on these messages to friends and family. Sport is particularly helpful when trying to engage hard to reach groups such as youth who may have less interest in traditional message-based MRE delivery, yet through watching the Spirit of Soccer event, we observed a high level of engagement from both girls and boys.

Similarly using theatre as a vehicle for MRE delivery allows children to experience an alternative approach to learning, and to teach one another collaboratively through story-telling, songs, and dancing, all of which are considered more entertaining for children. Child-to-child theatre also creates an avenue to reach children unable to attend schools, by children transmitting safety messages that they have either performed themselves or watched, to the out of school youth. Whilst on the field visit, we had the pleasure of watching a short theatrical performance about land clearance in ERW contaminated areas from seven students from the seventh grade to a crowd of 150 other students. The per-

formance was enjoyable, the children performed with confidence and the crowd watched with great interest.

The visit also included community meetings which sought to enhance awareness of the Law on Management of Weapons and MRE through community liaison, identification of mine action priority action plan and emergency response. These activities were undertaken by Spirit of Soccer, the Ministry of Employment, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), CMAC and the National Police. Using community liaison to enhance awareness of the legal aspect of mine action is also hoped to discourage deliberate exposure to explosive ordnance for financial benefit. In Cambodia, the legal restrictions on activities involving explosive ordnance are high and so enhancing community-level understanding of these restrictions is hoped to encourage behavior change, consequently reducing risk.

As a result of the visit, a number of positive outcomes have been noted. For example, one of the issues observed was that danger signs had either been destroyed or removed by people moving onto the land. Following the visit, CMAC committed to printing new signs for

these dangerous areas. It was also acknowledged that moving forward, key risk education messages should be more targeted and specific to the age group, the sex, and the occupation of the target audience. Furthermore, evaluations of these programs should focus on the extent to which they have achieved a change in behaviours rather than just a rise in awareness of safe behaviours. It was evident that mainstreaming MRE into school activities should be encouraged and the safety messages reinforced through offering risk education to all sports coaches.

The field trip was overall a highly constructive event which exceeded expectations. Not only did it bring stakeholders and operators together and emphasize the need for coordination, it also effectively highlighted key issues, promoted excellent practices and inspired further innovative risk education solutions.

For more information please contact: Dara Seng (dara_seng@cmaa.gov.kh), Deputy Director, Public Relations, Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority



Spirit of Soccer disseminate safety messages through sport.

A World Class Monitoring Tool: The Cambodian Mine/UXO Victim Information System

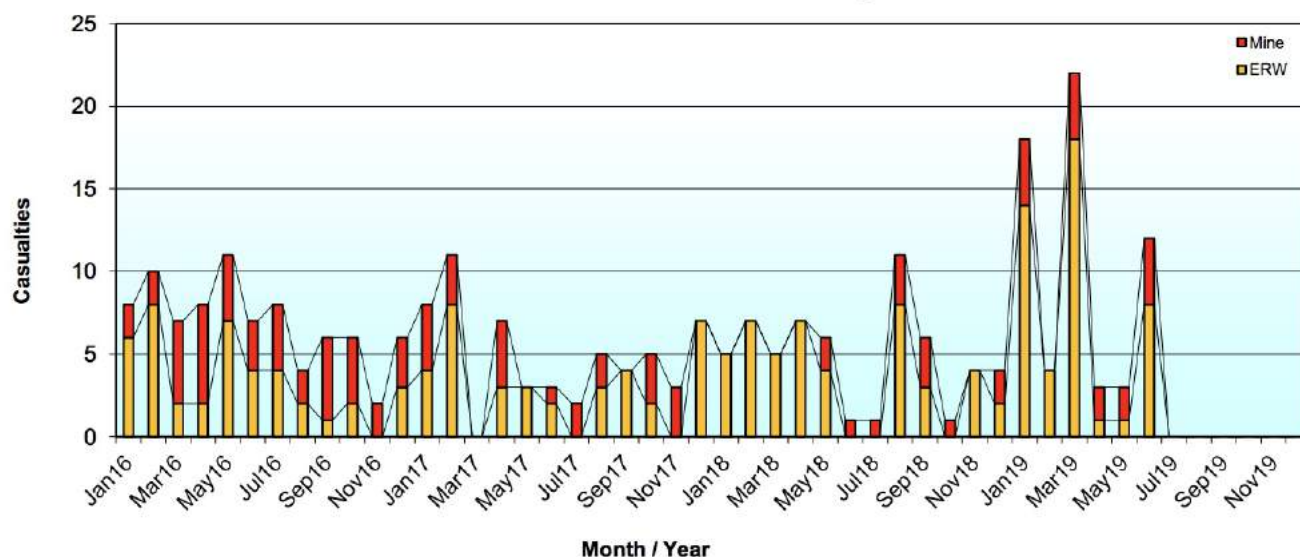
Launched in 1994, the Cambodian Mine/UXO Victim Information System (CMVIS) was the first of its kind. Established by the Cambodian Red Cross with technical and financial support from Handicap International Belgium and UNICEF, the system provides a platform for the systematic collection, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination of mine/UXO victim data in Cambodia. From 2009 onwards, the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority took full managerial responsibility for the CMVIS.

Since its launch in 1994 the CMVIS remains a world class monitoring tool, and globally the most sophisticated and well used of its kind. The CMVIS produces monthly reports detailing the analytical trends through usage of both statistical information and extensive infographics. Within these reports, the data collated

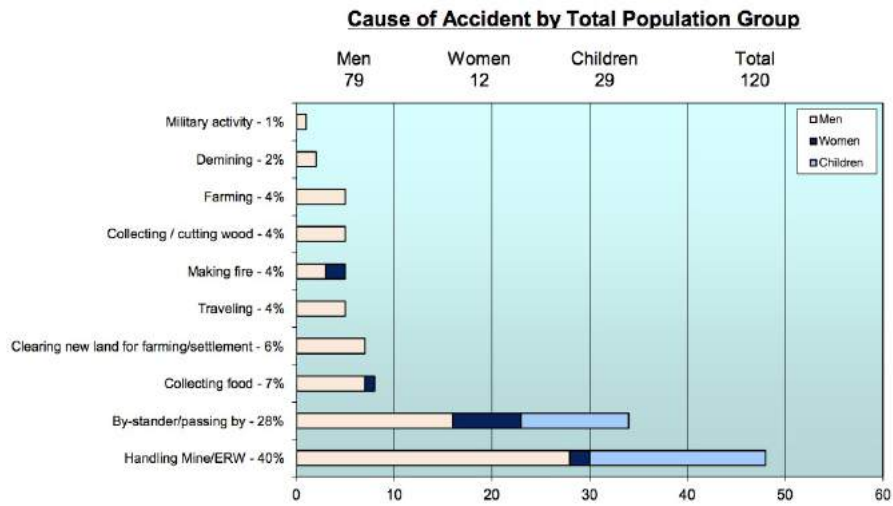
shows things such as, the most contaminated provinces, districts and communes, months with the highest numbers of incidents, the occupations most affected during these incidents, the population groups most affected, and the types of land these incidents most commonly occur upon. In the monthly report from July 2019 for example, the CMVIS reports that the total mine/ERW casualties from January 1979 to July 2019 was 64,843. Of these casualties, 31% were fatal, and of all casualties 81% were men.

The CMVIS is able to produce such informative monthly publications as a result of the detailed Mine/ERW casualty and incident reports. Through these questionnaires, casualties or those involved in incidents with explosive ordnance are asked an extensive array of questions such as: their occupation, their motive for entering contaminated areas, the extent of their physical contact with the ordnance, the extent of their in-

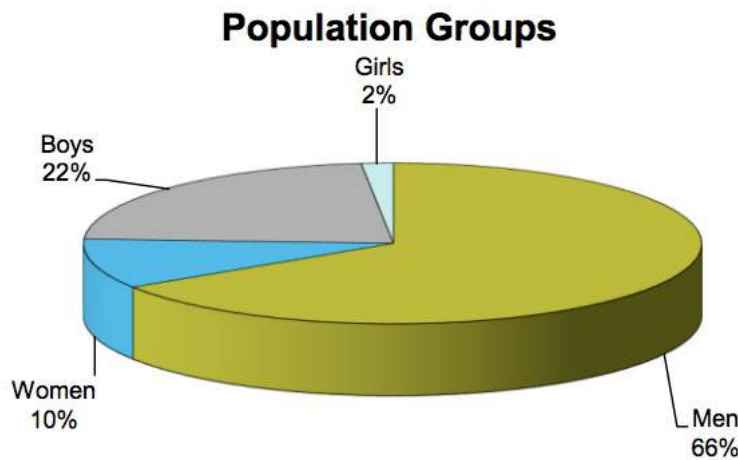
Chart Mine/ERW Casualties for the Period of: January 2016 - June 2019



Graph showing total casualties from January 2016-June 2019. Courtesy of CMAA.



Cause of accident by population group from January 2018 to June 2019. Courtesy of CMAA.



Population groups of mine/UXO victims January 2019 to June 2019. Courtesy of CMAA.

juries, the land use and the vegetation of the affected area.

This allows the CMVIS to generate a holistic overview of the causation of the incident, the severity of the incident, as well as awareness levels with regard to MRE of the casualties involved.

CMVIS has proven to be invaluable for the widespread use of stakeholders and mine action operators within Cambodia. Through this centralised resource, mine action operators can formulate policy based upon accurate and comprehensive incidence data, and this allows for easier formulation, evaluation and monitoring of programs. As the ASEAN region moves towards establishing integrated approaches to MRE, we believe the CMVIS to be a great example for other states to follow would allow risk education programs to be well targeted

and designed.

Having this data freely available through CMAA's website, helps us to sustain public interest in what we do and makes the remarkable progress being made in Cambodia continuously visible to the public.

For more information please contact: Dara Seng (dara_seng@cmaa.gov.kh), Deputy Director, Public Relations, Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA).



Hol Phloy and Chhoeurn Chhin Huo conduct a focus group discussion with a mine-affected community in Anlong Veng district. Discussions are recorded with the permission of the group, translated into English and scored using a scoring rubric. Photo courtesy of The HALO Trust.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Mine Risk Education in South-East Asia

Several of The HALO Trust's programmes in South-East Asia employ multiple mine risk education (MRE) teams who travel extensively across mine and UXO-affected provinces to raise awareness of the threats posed by explosive remnants of war (ERW). In addition to providing quality MRE, teams are increasingly involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of sessions through the use of two evaluative methodologies; knowledge surveys and focus group discussions (FGDs). These methodologies enable operators and donors to understand the impact of MRE, and serve as tools by which to monitor and improve the quality and focus of sessions.

Knowledge Surveys

Knowledge surveys are conducted to measure the increase in MRE participant knowledge immediately after

an MRE session, and the retention of knowledge 3-6 months later. To understand what participants would do in certain situations, several scenario-based questions are included, for instance, "what should you do if you find someone injured in a minefield?". In addition, several questions related to community behaviour and perceptions of the MRE sessions are also asked (but not scored) for internal monitoring and improvement purposes.

In Cambodia, analysis of HALO's survey data from the first six months of 2019 shows that 98% of participants retained knowledge 3-6 months after MRE. This demonstrates that sessions are informative and memorable and that communities remember how to behave in a safe manner months after risk education is received. However, changes in knowledge do not necessarily translate into changes in behaviour. This is

evidenced by casualty data reported by the national authority which states that of the 50 accident victims between January–June 2019, 44% confirmed that they had received MRE before their accident, and one third reported that they were aware they were undertaking risky behaviour when the accident occurred (either using contaminated land or touching/tampering with explosive items). This may support anecdotal understandings that while many communities living in high-risk areas have received MRE and are aware of the risks, they are driven to unsafe behaviour out of economic necessity or opportunity. In light of this, HALO have introduced a new methodology, focus group discussions, in order to determine the efficacy of MRE at changing community behaviour towards ERW.

Focus Group Discussions

Our MRE teams initiate discussions with 5-12 adult community members prior to risk education sessions in order to answer two main questions: What behaviours do the community currently use to limit their risk from explosive ordnance? And, what behaviours do the community currently engage in that put them at risk? The FGDs are then conducted again 3-6 months later to determine whether and to what degree the reported behaviours have changed. Critically, the teams also explore the reasons risky behaviours take place, categorizing communities into one of five “risk profiles”: the unaware, the uninformed, the misinformed, the reckless, and the economically “forced”.

The information gained from the FGDs is important for both targeting our MRE and for determining the most effective follow-up actions. If, for example, communities are using potentially dangerous land or harvesting metal or explosives out of economic necessity, MRE is unlikely to be effective on its own without complementary activities providing alternative livelihood opportunities. Down the line, this type of information may act as a catalyst for the formation of development partnerships with authorities and other NGOs, with a view to preventing accidents through improved livelihood provision to communities “forced” to act dangerously. In the short term, conducting the FGDs has enabled our teams to adapt MRE based on the behaviours reported in the pre-MRE FGD. This makes sessions responsive and tailored to a particular community’s

needs so that unsafe practices and misconceptions can be adequately addressed.

The extensive community liaison process that FGDs and surveys represent builds trust between communities and MRE teams. It is not uncommon for explosive items and information about potentially hazardous areas to be reported to teams as a result of the discussion and MRE. In Cambodia, survey teams swiftly follow up on this information by disposing of ERW, surveying new areas and showing communities the location of nearby hazardous areas using GPS and satellite imagery.

Next Steps for MRE

The Cambodia programme will be monitoring pre-MRE, increase, and retention scores on the knowledge surveys disaggregated by sex and age. This exploration of the data will allow us to focus messaging on concepts that are less well understood at the outset, evaluate the effectiveness of MRE for different demographics, and to understand how we can improve risk education for any low-scoring groups. The next steps for the FGDs in Cambodia will be to widen the geographic scope in which they are collected in order to gather a more complete picture of communities’ behaviours toward risk education and their risk profiles. This data will help us to better understand the most appropriate messages and activities to protect lives across our area of operations.

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From Zero Risk to Risk Reduction: considering a Public Health Approach to MRE in Lao PDR

Key to developing integrated Mine Risk Education (MRE) programmes, is the need to ensure MRE activities are based on the realities, vulnerabilities and needs of the local context. Inevitably the vulnerabilities and existing levels of awareness will vary between localities and from country to country within the ASEAN region. In this regard, the research conducted in the Lao PDR by Jo Durham and Mohammed Ali, offers an excellent example and highlights some of the key issues which are particularly relevant for regions that demonstrate a high level of awareness.¹

The article, first published in 2008 begins by noting that traditional message-based risk education, developed as an interim measure to reduce exposure to threat, was predominantly produced with the intention of creating a risk-free environment. However, there was often minimal recognition of the socio-economic factors which contribute to injury prior to development of the MRE programme. It was also noted that there appears to be very little empirical evidence to suggest this form of MRE has reduced the level of threat. Consequently, the article provides a compelling argument for the adoption of a public health approach to risk education, where the emphasis is placed on pragmatic risk reduction, rather than the risk elimination approach proposed by traditional message-based risk education.

The research found that overall there was a high level of UXO awareness and understanding in Lao PDR. 82% of adult respondents in the research indicated that they believe no UXO is safe. 99.6% of children considered UXO to be dangerous with most reporting that they were afraid of them. However, with this in mind, almost three quarters of adult respondents (74%), who know the dangers, noted that they voluntarily expose themselves to UXO on a daily basis. This most often involved either scrap metal collection or moving ordnance to allow for the cultivation of land.

Most respondents also noted that unintentional UXO exposure was a much greater cause of fear, because they have less control and cannot mitigate the risk of injury by employing their locally derived risk-reduction strategies. Farmers for instance, would prefer to move the ordnance themselves, rather than risk accidentally hitting them whilst ploughing their land. Although often unaccounted for when planning MRE programs, the reasoning for this risk-taking behaviour is well justified when placed within the contextual realities of trying to ensure basic food security amongst other things, for families living on contaminated land. Furthermore, although traditional MRE assumes a need to ‘inform’ people of the dangers of UXO through the dissemination of safety messages, this fails to account

for the fact that most civilians are already mine aware, and almost all respondents were able to give examples of risk reduction strategies. For example, the report quotes respondents having said:

‘Do not turn bombies as you pick them up and carry them slowly’, ‘Use a shovel to pick up bombies and place them down gently’ and also, ‘Place bombies in the whole of a tree using rope’.

Although these risk-reduction strategies may not be approved by traditional MRE operators, thirty years of experience living in these contaminated communities has perhaps given way to an approach to living alongside UXO which cannot be permeated simply by delivering safety messages which have been heard countless times before.

Although Durham and Ali’s study relates directly to the Laotian context, this could also be considered for similar circumstances such as in Cambodia, with Nut and Pascals Review of the Mine Sector from 2016 acknowledging that Cambodia too, has become very ‘mine aware’.² Additionally, a sentiment repeated throughout the review in Cambodia, was that ‘the poorest people must often take risks because they do not have other alternatives to sustain their livelihood’. Logically, this leads us to challenge the effectiveness and appropriateness of message-based MRE which repeatedly issues the same safety messages to communities who are already ‘mine aware’, yet have little agency to adopt safe practices. This was illustrated by a report from the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority in 2008 which noted that, ‘people are not interested in MRE (mine risk education) messages because they think that they already received them many times by different mine action operators’.³

What this may suggest, is that in contexts where a high level of awareness exists, MRE providers should consider moving towards a more nuanced approach. One which acknowledges indigenous practices, their

pre-existing level of awareness, and the individual financial, societal, political, or even environmental pressures of target communities. As is suggested by Durham and Ali, a public health approach to risk education may be more appropriate within these contexts. This could, for example, involve equipping community members with safety training, which will further enhance their capacity to reduce the risks which they will evidently continue to take either way. Examples of this may include basic training of safe practice when excavating ordnance. Other notable strategies may be those which offer greater incentives for safe practice. For example, teaching communities how to make the uncontaminated land they do have as profitable as possible, thereby reducing the necessity to take risks. In essence, a public health approach involves accepting that some level of risk may be unavoidable, but working to help facilitate the minimization of this wherever possible.

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¹ Durham, J., Ali, M. (2008) ‘Mine risk education in the Lao PDR: Time for a public health approach to risk reduction’, *International Journal of Health Promotion and Education*, Vol. 46, No.1.

² Nut, A., Pascal, S. (2016) ‘An Independent Review of the Mine Action Sector in Cambodia’, GICHD, p.47.

³ CMAA. (2008) ‘Evaluation of Mine Risk Education in the Kingdom of Cambodia’, UNICEF, p.25



World Education Laos Partners with the Government to Integrate MRE into the School Curriculum

A puppetry troupe from Bolikhamxay Province, Lao PDR performs for their community on National Children's Day. Photo courtesy of World Education Laos.

Lao PDR is the most heavily bombed country in the world per capita, and of the 270 million sub-munitions that were dropped over the countryside during the Second Indochina War, approximately 30% did not detonate.¹ Although the war ended more than forty years ago, unexploded ordnance (UXO) continue to claim the lives of vulnerable civilians living on contaminated land. Since 1996, World Education has partnered with the Government of Lao PDR to educate children and communities about the risks and safe practices associated with UXO, helping to prevent future accidents.

Funded by the U.S. Government, in 2018 World Education launched the three-year 'Comprehensive Mine Risk Education (MRE)' project, which expands on previous World Education MRE programs. Although UXO accidents have dropped substantially in Lao PDR, from 2016 to 2018, over 50% of UXO victims were children.² To combat this, World Education has worked with the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) to develop and strengthen MRE within schools, and through pup-

petry performances, which disseminate safety messages to the wider community. World Education operates with an overarching strategy of supporting and strengthening MOES with the goal of eventually handing over full managerial responsibility for the provision of mine risk education to the government.

The project currently operates within the ten most heavily UXO contaminated provinces in Lao PDR: Xieng Khouang, Luang Prabang, Huaphan, Khammouane, Sekong, Champassak, Savannakhet, Saravane, Attapeu and Bolikhamxay, reaching 88 districts. Within these provinces, World Education is supporting MOES to integrate MRE into the national science and environment curriculum for grades 1-5, incorporating a range of participatory learning approaches and student-centered activities with messages that are easily recalled and understood. Lessons are supplemented by storybooks, songbooks, and posters. An MRE handbook is also being developed for secondary school teachers to deliver UXO safety messages to students in grades 6-12.

Through the project, it is anticipated that over 500,000 children in 5,280 schools across Lao PDR will receive MRE lessons.

Another key feature of the project is an emphasis on building the capacity of teachers to deliver the new MRE curriculum to their students. Through a 'train the trainer' model, the project will train 2,200 teachers in the new curriculum. World Education will also work with teacher training colleges across Lao PDR to ensure that 4,000 student teachers have the knowledge and skills to deliver MRE when they enter the teaching force.

MRE has benefitted children like Phengta, a thirteen-year-old boy who works in the rice fields with his parents. When a UXO was found in the fields, he remembered the safety messages he had been taught at school and told his parents not to touch it. The family then reported it to his teacher and the village authorities who arranged for the UXO team to clear the item.³

The use of puppetry is also a key means of disseminating safety messages. In 1999, World Education contrac-

ted the National Puppet Theatre of Laos to train teachers in Xieng Khouang, Houaphan, Savannakhet and Saravane provinces. The program has since expanded substantially and 142 troupes of primary school children, predominantly between grades 3-5, are performing for 70,000 to 80,000 community members in the ten target provinces. As the use of puppets has been such a successful element of the program, World Education will be working with districts to expand the number of troupes to 220 by 2021. The emphasis on puppetry is particularly relevant to the Lao PDR context as the art form has been traditionally used as a popular form of entertainment in remote villages with no access to electricity. Not only is this a locally relevant method of disseminating MRE, it is thought to be a particularly beneficial means of engaging community members who are not yet literate or who cannot access MRE through the national curriculum.

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For more information on World Education's programs in Laos, please visit: www.laos.worlded.org/ and www.worlded.org/.



Student teachers at a teacher training college in Pakse, Lao PDR collaborate on MRE lesson plans using the new national curriculum. Photo courtesy of World Education Laos.

¹ National Regulatory Authority for UXO/Mine Action in Lao PDR (2010) 'The Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Problem and Operational Progress in the Lao PDR', <https://tinyurl.com/upgrxp>

² National Regulatory Authority for UXO/Mine Action in Lao PDR (2018) 'Unexploded Ordnance Sector Annual Report 2018', <https://tinyurl.com/rzl8pa9>

³ World Education, Inc. 'UXO Education and Awareness.', <https://tinyurl.com/wje5ng9>

DCA Launches Interactive MRE App

In 2017 DanChurchAid (DCA) Myanmar with the assistance of app-developers Green Box Production and Joy Dash Games Ltd, and the support of UNICEF, developed an interactive Mine Risk Education application. This new innovative tool aims to respond to the needs of target audiences who may be harder to reach through traditional face-to-face MRE sessions, with a particular emphasis on the 18-35 age bracket. The application allows users to learn about the dangers of landmines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) through a more participatory approach way. This application forms part of the common Mine Risk Education toolkit developed by DCA Myanmar, UNICEF and the Myanmar Mine Risk Working Group in 2015, under the support of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.

The content of the app was constructed around the key themes from the 'MRE toolkit' based upon numerous Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) surveys and Rapid Assessments conducted in Myanmar between 2013 and 2014.



MRE facilitators using the app. Photo courtesy of DCA.

These messages are mainly centered around: the storyboard, recognition, international warning signs and clues impact, risky behaviors and information sharing.

The application gives an opportunity for MRE facilitators to interact with the target audience in a fun and engaging way whilst still presenting life-saving messages. Communities and humanitarian workers living and working in areas heavily affected by landmines and ERW will benefit from learning how to: stay safe, recognise dangerous areas and suspicious items, know what to do if you are in the mine field, what might happen if you do not follow safety messages, and other messages, during the fifty minute long training.

The application is free to download from distribution services such as Google Play and the App Store. This ensures the app is as accessible as possible and takes advantage of the rapid expansion of smartphones in the country. Users can also send it to one another directly via the file sharing application 'Zapya', which is commonly used to share files in Myanmar, where data may be costly or unavailable in rural areas. For users without access to smartphones, the app can also be used on a computer.

The app is currently available in Burmese and English languages, and can be translated into other ethnic languages used in Myanmar when necessary, or when requested by mine action stakeholders. An additional advantage of this type of tool is that it allows for the addition of new functionalities, meaning the app can be continuously enhanced and updated to suit the needs of the locality. It is also an environmentally-friendly tool, as it allows for a reduction in the amount of MRE posters, leaflets and booklets be-



Screenshot of the app home screen. Photo courtesy of DCA.

ing printed. This is especially helpful for remote locations where limited road accessibility makes the transportation of materials difficult, especially during the rainy season.

DCA is also using an analytics program integrated within the app, which collects data on the gender, age of users, location of usage and time spent on the application. While it collects this basic data, users are kept anonymous. Moving forward, the next update will allow DCA to send news updates to users, allowing information about mine incidents and other relevant security information to be disseminated with greater ease.

As a part of MRE application launch, during the five days of a Training of Trainers (ToT) event, DCA MRE trainers presented a one-hour session on the process of developing the app, and demonstrating how it can be used in the field. After the presentation, the MRE app was transferred via Zappya to the mobile phones of the participants. The participants then sat in small groups to test the app, completing the exercises for each MRE theme. To ensure the app remains as effective and relevant as possible, DCA continues to regularly collect feedback from users and incorporates this into the app updates.

Though the app was officially launched on International Day for Mine Awareness 2017, DCA is also planning to launch a communication campaign through Facebook in 2020, targeting potential future users living in ERW-affected areas. DCA strongly believes this innovative tool will greatly enhance the practices of the community, helping vulnerable groups and individuals to stay safe from the risks posed by explosive devices, and expelling common myths which have existed in the community for many years.



MRE app icon.

Aye Aye Zaw
Programme Coordinator, Myanmar
DCA-NCA

Thailand Makes Landmine Danger Signs More Accessible to Migrants



Image courtesy of Thailand Mine Action Center.

Geographically, the remaining areas of contaminated land in the Kingdom of Thailand are predominantly around the borders, especially those which run alongside Cambodia, with more than half of the mine incidents in Thailand having occurred on this border. Consequently, the most at-risk communities are often those who migrate and travel across the borders to and from neighboring countries. This presents numerous obstacles to the effective provision of Mine Risk Education (MRE) to these communities. Not only are the children in these groups rarely enrolled in schools where risk education may be disseminated, but they may move into new areas with limited prior knowledge of the threat-level. This means that unlike locals, who may have customary knowledge of demining activities, or who have adopted safe behaviours, these new members of the community are left particularly vulnerable to the implications of explosive ordnance.

To combat this, and make explosive ordnance risk education more accessible to these often harder to reach and unregistered communities, Thai mine action authorities have begun using warning signs which display the warning messages in multiple languages.

The initiative aims to ensure that mine warning signs are displayed in the following languages: English, Thai,

Cambodian, Lao and Burmese. According to the Thai Civilian Demining Association, this has been done particularly around areas where people are known to go to forage for mushrooms. In poorer areas, the sale and consumption of things such as mushrooms found in the forests has become a substantial motivating factor for the exploration of contaminated land.

By displaying a higher level of safety messages, and ensuring that those displayed are printed in multiple languages, mine action actors are helping to ensure that communities who cross Thai borders predominantly from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia and Myanmar, are better able to identify areas which have been identified as hazardous. This is just one simple method which makes the provision of safety information much more inclusive of communities who may not be formally registered within the state. Going forward it is hoped that this will encourage greater adoption of safe behaviours amongst all members of Thai society.

Lydia Davies
Researcher, ARMAC

Local Group Chat to Raise Mine Awareness: An Innovative Approach by Thailand Mine Action Center

In Thailand, the threat posed by mines has been in steady decline for many years, with GICHD's annual report from 2016 noting that Thailand will likely complete all of their clearance obligations under the APM-BC in less than ten years, being only a few years away from total clearance.¹ Despite the incredibly positive progress being made in Thailand, in the meantime it still remains important to ensure that the communities residing near contaminated areas which await clearance, can remain safe. One of the steps that has been taken in Thailand to protect these communities is the promotion and wide-spread uptake of locally established group chats through a messaging application popular in Thailand, called 'LINE' App which has been promoted by the Thai Mine Action Center (TMAC). Mobile units from TMAC train village leaders and volunteers to set up these group chats.

Participants in the group chat are able to notify one another, and community leaders of any sightings of ordnance. This consequently generates a heightened sense of community awareness, and makes risk education messages very accessible to a rapidly increasing audience. According to 'Statista', twenty-four million people in Thailand owned a smartphone in 2017, and this is expected to rise to at least thirty million by 2022.² By harnessing both new technology and the huge spread of smart-phones in Thailand, the LINE group chat for mine awareness is working to keep communities safe in a simple yet effective way, creating an instantaneous warning system and an accessible means of alerting authority to ordnance which has been found. By establishing stronger communication channels with authorities, greater trust is built between mine action organisations and indigenous communities.

Similarly, by establishing these communication channels, risk education can be integrated into other

aspects of mine action such as victim assistance, as it can offer a channel through which to collect data and facilitate the provision of assistance.

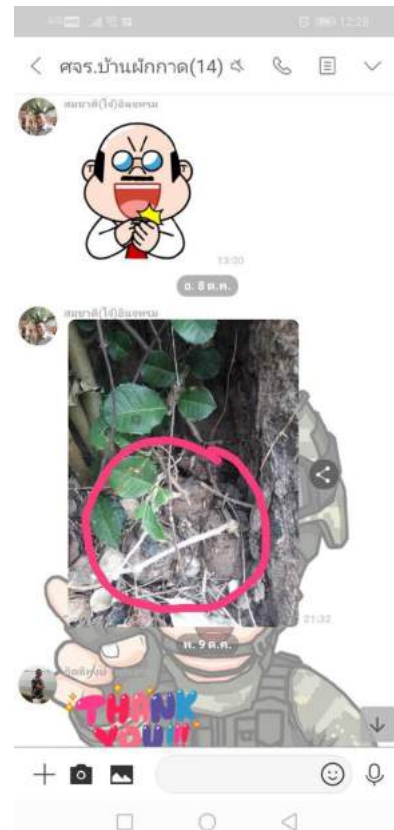


Image courtesy of Thailand Mine Action Center.

Using a group chat for this kind of knowledge sharing is an innovative approach to risk education and one which works to make the adoption of safe behaviours easier for a larger audience. This is particularly true of females, who may be less present in traditional MRE conversations. Other benefits are undoubtedly the cost. By harnessing a free app like 'LINE', the provision of risk education information sharing is done in an incredibly far reaching, fast and cost-effective way.

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¹ GICHD (2016). 'Annual Report 2016', Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, p.21.

² Statista (2019) 'Number of Smartphone users in Thailand from 2013 to 2022 (in millions);: www.statista.com/statistics/467191/forecast-of-smartphone-users-in-thailand/



Screenshot of the MRE app home screen. Photo courtesy of CRS.

Game-Based Learning: An Innovative and Scalable Approach to Mine Risk Education

More than 40 years after the war ended, Vietnam remains highly contaminated with 800,000 tons of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) contaminating 6.1 million hectares of land.¹ According to the Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor, landmines and UXO were the cause of 112 deaths and 220 injuries between 2008 and 2017.² Survey findings also show that children are one of the most high-risk groups in many provinces in Vietnam. Although mine risk education (MRE) has been taught in primary schools for years, lessons are not standardised and are often only included as part of other lessons or extracurricular activities. Without frequent and in-depth lessons and discussions on MRE, many students' knowledge of the risks of mines remains dangerously insufficient.

Design Strategy

To address these inconsistencies, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Vietnam, with funding from the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the U.S. State Department Bureau for Political-Military Affairs (PM/WRA), developed a digital game-based learning application for children aged eight-to-twelve years old. The application includes thirty minutes of narrated, media-rich gaming that can run on Android, iOS, Windows, and Mac operating systems. The app has

features in both Vietnamese and English and can be downloaded for free from Google Play and Apple stores. The app has both online and offline functionality and is designed to be user-friendly and age-appropriate for both boys and girls in the Vietnamese cultural context.

The five stages of the app are equivalent to lessons. These lessons cover important MRE topics: the characteristics of landmines and UXO, risky behaviors that lead to accidents, ways to prevent accidents, consequences of accidents, and clues to identify contaminated areas. Key messages for each lesson are supported by eye-catching illustrations and lively sounds to keep players excited and interested. Each stage ends with a 'challenge', which is a test to measure players' knowledge following each stage. After completing all five stages, players are given one last challenge to test their overall knowledge.

Another key feature of this app is a back-end system to track basic demographic details about users as well as their performance and progress through the five stages. This system plays a critical role in determining areas where children struggle with specific questions, which allows educators to better tailor in-class MRE lessons.



School children use the app. Photo courtesy of CRS.

MRE App Use

The app has been piloting in twenty-six primary schools across three central provinces of Vietnam: Quang Tri, Quang Nam, and Da Nang since January 2019. It is integrated into each school's informatics lessons so students could play whenever they went to the school computer lab.

To encourage students to use the app on their parents' mobile devices, parents were introduced to the app at the end-of-the-year school meetings in May 2019 with the idea that students could continue to play the game throughout the summer break. This provided an opportunity to reinforce students' MRE knowledge and encourage safe behaviors throughout the year.

In its first six months of operation, from January to June 2019, the app had a total of 5,610 downloads, and users played the game 31,717 times. CRS expects that the number of people exposed to the app's content is much

higher than the number of downloads (total users) because students typically play together under one user profile at school, and usually play with their parents or siblings at home.

So far feedback and results have been extremely positive, with students indicating that they really enjoy the game and Vietnamese provincial-level government partners expressing serious commitment to ensuring schools in their jurisdiction use this app. The MRE app, by nature of the platforms on which it is available, is accessible to students throughout Vietnam. Therefore, the app use has expanded to provinces where CRS is not directly implementing MRE programs.

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¹ Vietnam Technology Center for Mine and Bomb Disposal (BOMICEN), www.bomicen.vn

² ICBL-CMC (2019) Landmine Monitor Report 2019, www.the-monitor.org/en-gb/reports/2019/landmine-monitor-2019.aspx

Vietnam Leads With New Innovative Approaches to Mine/UXO Education

Designing effective mine risk education is a challenge which demands a deep understanding of the at-risk groups, the psychology of their motivations, and the ingenuity to influence their behaviour. Vietnam is leading the way in applying technology and impressive media to keep people safe. Vietnam has so far produced two very professional television videos and an interactive smartphone app.

Credit is deserved to the United Nations Development Programme, in partnership with the Vietnamese National Mine Action Center, and with funding from the Korean International Cooperation Agency, for launching a three-year mine action programme with tangible results.

Reaching boys

As part of the Mine Risk Education for this programme, UNDP created a 45 second video as part of their 'Safe Ground' campaign which premiered on International Mine Awareness Day 2019. 'Safe Ground' intends to raise awareness through the promotion of sport, turning contaminated land back into playing fields. The global campaign was launched by Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in April 2019. The video, which has since been made available on YouTube, is available in Vietnamese with English sub-titles.

The video shows a group of boys – an age group particularly at-risk in Vietnam – playing football on an open piece of land. One of the children comes across a piece of an 'iron ball', not knowing it is a deadly 'bombie' (a cluster munition bomb). Just in time, two women appear to warn them, 'Don't touch it, it's very dangerous. It's a bomb, it will hurt you once it explodes'. They immediately inform the local authority who promptly dispose of the explosive ordnance and

return the land to the children to continue their game.

The very short video packs all the ingredients of great story telling: kids playing in their normal world, a sudden deadly 'villain' (bomb) appears, the tension of terrible consequence, the timely arrival of the mentor (helpful adults), the arrival of rescuers (deminers) and the happy resolution of a safe sports field.

Delivering MRE through this format is both engaging and relatable to youth. Video is widely accessible for viewing both at school, or at home, and on either computers, smartphones or televisions. A key feature of the film is the lack of injury or trauma. As this piece is targeted at young children, it is important that the scenario used to portray key positive safety messages is informative but not intimidating or frightening.

Reaching metal salvagers

The second TV ad, also produced through the same partnership, is equally well-targeted and follows a similar type of narrative, however this time for an adult audience. This piece skillfully targets scrap metal collectors, informing of the dangers of collection and the need to report UXO. Through the video, metal collectors are shown discovering a piece of explosive ordnance before being reminded that they can cause permanent injuries. The group then collaboratively make the area safe by marking it, and awaiting the arrival of demining teams. Scrap metal collectors are in many respects a unique 'at-risk' group, voluntarily exposing themselves to unexploded ordnance, often on a daily basis. By dedicating a video to this group, the Vietnamese Mine Action Center, KOICA and UNDP have highlighted a need to ensure programmes are designed to be relatable and appropriate for the target audience.

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Screenshots of one of the TV adverts produced in Vietnam.
Photos courtesy of UNDP Vietnam.

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