



MONITORING & EVALUATION OF GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSION IN EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE RISK REDUCTION



With support from:



ITALIAN AGENCY
FOR DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION

Research and consultation by Dominic Wosley and Laura Biscaglia of GICHD

Copyright © March 2023 by the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC)

ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center

Permanent Secretariat: #29, Street 115, Sangkat Veal Vong, Khan 7 Makara

Phnom Penh 120307, Cambodia

Telephone: +855 23 221 354

Email: secretariat@aseanmineaction.org

This Study can be found online on the ARMAC website at <https://aseanmineaction.org>

Disclaimer:

The views, information and opinions expressed in the Study are solely those of individuals and/or the consultants involved, and do not necessarily represent those of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC) wishes to thank the Government of Italy for funding this study and supporting efforts to strengthen the links between mine action, gender equality, women empowerment and inclusion under the framework of ASEAN-Italy Development Partnership.

The study relied on interviews and written submissions from 26 organisations and country programmes, including donors, national authorities, operators, and UN agencies (See Annex B for full list). ARMAC is especially grateful to Mines Advisory Group and UXO Laos for providing access to their staff for the employment case study in Lao PDR (Annex A) and for supporting the visit throughout, and to the staff and communities who participated in the study.

ARMAC would also like to thank all of those involved for their time and valuable reflections, without which this report would not have been possible.



FOREWORD

In building a peaceful, secure and stable region, ASEAN adopts a comprehensive approach to security which enhances its capacity to deal with existing and emerging challenges under the ASEAN Political Security Blueprint 2025. Among the key elements of the peaceful, secure and stable region is the promotion of ASEAN Member States active participation in peacekeeping and post-conflict peace building efforts, in accordance with the capacity of respective ASEAN Member States and the promotion of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC) to study, document and share best practices to address humanitarian aspects of landmines and explosive remnants of war.

In pursuit of ASEAN Political Security Blueprint 2025, this Study is an initiative of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center. ARMAC is a center of excellence established under the ASEAN Political-Security pillar to encourage the efforts to address landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) for interested ASEAN Member States (AMS). Inaugurated on 25 May 2016, the Center aims to collectively tackle the humanitarian aspects of landmines and ERW through an integrated approach of experiences sharing, skills training and other capacity building activities.

ARMAC gratefully acknowledges the funding for the Study from the Government of Italy under the framework of ASEAN-Italy Development Partnership

The full title of this Study is “MONITORING & EVALUATION OF GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSION IN EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE RISK REDUCTION”. For convenience hereafter, it is abbreviated to “The Gender Study”.

In the development of the substance of this Study, ARMAC acknowledges the numerous contributions and support of the mine action community within and beyond the ASEAN region. The Study brought key stakeholders from the landmine and ERW affected ASEAN countries together with 26 organisations and country programmes, including donors, national authorities, operators, and UN agencies to share their knowledge and experiences on gender equality, women empowerment and inclusion.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

6

Executive Summary

7

Introduction

Methodology	7
Definitions	9

10

Policy Background

International Policies and Commitments	11
Regional and National Policies and Commitments	18
Mine action Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Guiding Documents	21

24

Findings

Data Collection & Use	23
How Donors Use this Data	40

43

Recommended Indicators

46

Conclusion

47

Recommendations Summary

50

Annex A – Employment Case Study: Lao PDR

59

Annex B – List of Organisations Consulted



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study aims to understand and highlight practices in the collection, analysis, and reporting of data on gender and diversity in the mine action sector in EO-affected ASEAN states, and how this data can demonstrate the sector's contribution towards broader agendas on gender equality and inclusion.

A great variety of data on gender and diversity is collected by mine action stakeholders across a wide range of activities, and the sector has come a long way in collecting more of this data in recent years, and codifying these documents in standards, SOPs, and guidance. However, there is some uncertainty about how to make the best use of this data, and in many cases a lack of awareness of the overarching policy framework on gender equality and inclusion to which this data relates. The report therefore provides a policy background section which lists relevant policy commitments and links them directly with mine action activities.

The report identifies challenges with existing approaches. For example, there has been a push towards more collection of data on disability in recent years, but there is a lack of training and guidance on how to collect and use this data effectively, risking that data on disability becomes a 'tick box' exercise. In some cases, specific targets are being applied to the participation of women, girls, boys, and men, which do not necessarily align with good practice, such as 50/50 male/female beneficiary targets for both land release activities or EORE. This approach neither supports gender equality, inclusion, or effective mine action outcomes. There are also considerable differences between the extent to which stakeholders collect gender and diversity sensitive data, with many organisations implementing good practice, and a minority of others that do not collect the minimum data recommended in good practice guidance and international and national standards.

There are also opportunities; many organisations are already collecting data that is directly useful for mine action donors to demonstrate impact on gender equality and inclusion, but are not reporting it. The report therefore provides recommendations on how to better analyse and utilise data collected on gender and diversity, including a set of recommended indicators.



INTRODUCTION

Much of the focus on gender equality and inclusion in mine action has been on mainstreaming a gender and diversity sensitive approach to activities, including an inclusive approach to data collection, analysis, and reporting (promoting active participation of marginalised groups in community-facing activities) in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of activities. However, mine action activities also contribute materially towards the broader goals of gender equality and inclusion in a number of ways.

This study aims to examine the extent to which the data that is being collected by donors, national authorities, and operators is fit for purpose in ensuring an inclusive approach to activities, and for demonstrating impact across a range of international and regional policy commitments on gender equality and inclusion.

This study highlights how data collected by operators in the field can support international, regional, and national policy commitments by demonstrating how best to measure the contribution of mine action towards gender equality and disability inclusion. It is hoped that the study can act as a reference for field-based staff wishing to demonstrate the impact of their activities on broader agendas, and for policy actors and donors wishing to better understand which data apply to different policy commitments.

This study is divided into three main sections.

- 1 A policy background section explaining key policy commitments on gender equality and inclusion at the international, regional, and national levels
- 2 Findings from consultations with donors, national authorities, and operators on what data is collected and what it is used for, including recommendations
- 3 A list of recommended indicators to demonstrate EORR contributions to gender equality and inclusion

The study also includes a case study on employment conducted in Lao PDR which illustrates some of the impact of employment on gender equality and disability inclusion in particular.

Methodology

The study set out to answer the following primary and secondary research questions:

Primary Research Question

- ▶ How can mine action stakeholders, including donors, national authorities, and operators, enhance their approach towards monitoring and reporting the impact of EORR activities on gender equality and inclusion?

Secondary Research Questions

- ▶ How do mine action stakeholders currently collect, analyse and monitor data on the impact of mine action activities on gender equality and inclusion?
- ▶ What are the impacts of mine action activities on gender equality and inclusion for different groups of beneficiaries? Are these captured and communicated effectively in the mine action results chain? What is the current status of capturing and communicating impact of mine action activities on the different social groups?
- ▶ How is sex- and age-disaggregated data (SADD) used? Can this be done in more effectively?
- ▶ How can this impact be communicated without increasing the reporting burden on stakeholders?

Data for this study was primarily collected from stakeholders in five EO-affected ASEAN states, namely the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, as well as from international donors funding activities in the region.

As part of the study, 24 interviews with country programmes or organisations were conducted, and two written responses were provided by organisations unable to conduct interviews. The study consulted with international and national operators, international donors, UN agencies, and national mine action authorities. These organisations provided over 150 documents to the document review, which are analysed in the report.

A study validation workshop, hosted by the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC), was held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 28-29 November 2022, where 24 participants (8 men, 16 women) from stakeholders in the region were consulted on the findings and recommendations of the study. Feedback from the workshop is integrated throughout this report.

Employment Case Study

A case study on employment was also conducted with two organisations in Lao PDR: Mines Advisory Group and UXO Laos. As part of this case study 300 operational staff (101 women, 199 men) were surveyed and 11 focus group discussions were held with members of EO affected communities. The results of the case study are included in Annex A.

Note on the Use of the Terms 'sex' and 'gender' in the Report

The mine action sector, and the broader humanitarian and development sectors in general, tend to maintain a binary understanding of gender, as demonstrated by the use of women, girls, boys, and men in data disaggregation requirements. As this study examines present practices in data collection and aims to align its findings and recommendations with currently applicable policy frameworks and commitments, it should be noted that it adheres to this binary interpretation.

Throughout the primary data collection for the study, gender identity appeared prominent in the experiences of some mine action stakeholders in different contexts, especially in discussions about the employment of gender non-binary, transgender, and gender non-conforming individuals by the sector. This indicates that, whilst the way in which the sector addresses this dimension of diversity is still outstanding, it is imperative that concrete efforts are undertaken to ensure that it no longer goes unaddressed. Redefinition of the meaning of gender identity is also essential to ensure consistency in the application of data disaggregation methodologies, which almost exclusively use "sex" and "gender" interchangeably.

It is hopeful that the binary understanding of gender will be revisited in future iterations of policy frameworks and guiding documents to provide a more realistic and inclusive representation of the full spectrum of existing gender identities and the expressions in which they may manifest.

Definitions



Gender refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for women, girls, boys and men. Gender is socially constructed, and thus changes in relation to location and time. Gender is not a synonym for women; it is about the power relations between women and men, as well as among women and among men. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context, which includes other dimensions such as age, race, ethnic group, class, etc.¹



Gender equality refers to the equal enjoyment by women, girls, men and boys of rights and opportunities. It means that all human beings are free to make their own choices without limitations set by gender norms, and that the diversity in behaviour, needs and aspirations of women and men is equally valued. Gender equality does not mean that women and men are the same, but that they can enjoy their rights equally.²



Diversity refers to identity characteristics such as age, race, ethnicity, language, religion, disability, sexual orientation, etc. A good understanding of diversity enables the use of an intersectional approach where different diversity aspects are seen overlapping and creating interdependent systems of discrimination.³



The **empowerment** of women concerns women gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality.⁴ Empowerment can exist at the personal, social, political, and economic levels.



The **Washington Group Short Set (WG-SS) of questions on functioning** is a tool for understanding individuals' impairments, consisting of six questions intended to ascertain people's functional capabilities and classify the presence of disabilities accordingly. This is based on the understanding that disability is a complex phenomenon that cannot be established through binary yes/no questions such as "Do you have a disability?". It is intended to be incorporated when data is gathered at the individual or household level and applied to those who are six years of age or older. The WG-SS are not appropriate for data collection at a group or community level.⁵

¹ UN Women, UN Women Training Centre's Glossary

² IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action

³ UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes

⁴ IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action

⁵ Accessed at: <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-short-set-on-functioning-wg-ss/>



POLICY BACKGROUND

Mine action does not take place in a vacuum, but rather in a context where social and gender norms influence mine action outcomes, and mine action interventions in turn can positively or negatively influence the state of gender equality and inclusion in EO-affected contexts. Mainstreaming gender and diversity perspectives across all relevant mine action activities contributes positively to the efficiency and effectiveness of the sector's work. At the same time, mine action supports sustainable development and the reinforcement of more equal and inclusive societies.

A framework of international, regional, and national policy commitments on gender equality and inclusion exists which holds relevance for all stakeholders in the mine action sector. These commitments influence the actions of operators, national authorities, donors, and other stakeholders, including the setting of funding priorities by donor governments.

This policy background outlines some of the key policy commitments on gender equality and inclusion which hold particular relevance to the mine action sector at the international and regional levels. These are:

International Commitments

- ▶ Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- ▶ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- ▶ Action Plans of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) and Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)
- ▶ 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development
- ▶ Women Peace and Security Agenda (UNSCR 1325)

Regional & National Commitments

- ▶ ASEAN Commitments on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls
- ▶ ASEAN Commitments on Disability Inclusion
- ▶ National Mine Action Strategies, Standards, and Policies
- ▶ Feminist Foreign Policies

International Guidance

- ▶ Standardising Beneficiary Definitions
- ▶ International Mine Action Standards (IMAS)
- ▶ UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes
- ▶ Housing Land and Property Resources

This section acts as a reference to explain the relevance of each of these documents for the mine action

sector's work on gender equality and inclusion, in order that the links between policy level commitments and monitoring of mine action activities can be better demonstrated, and to better establish or reinforce synergies between mine action and contributions to international, regional, and national frameworks on gender equality and inclusion.

International Policies and Commitments

The sections below summarise some of the key international agendas that should inform mine action to ensure that the sector's interventions promote gender equality and inclusion. Each section provides a brief description of the commitment, an explanation of the relevance for mine action, and a summary of specific requirements or indicators relevant to gender equality and inclusion in the sector.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

The CRPD is the key international human rights treaty of the United Nations intended to protect the rights and dignity of persons living with disabilities.⁶ The convention is ratified by all ASEAN member states and all major mine action donor countries are parties to the convention with the exception of the United States.

Commitments

The Convention includes many commitments⁷ that apply to the mine action sector. Some of the most relevant are highlighted below:

- ▶ Article 26 on **Habilitation and Rehabilitation** commits states to:
 - Organise rehabilitation services and programmes, particularly in the areas of health, employment, education and social services
- ▶ Article 27 on **Work & Employment** commits states to:
 - Promote employment opportunities and career advancement for persons with disabilities;
 - Ensure reasonable accommodation⁷ is provided to persons with disabilities in the workplace;
 - Promote vocational and professional rehabilitation, job retention and return-to-work programmes for persons with disabilities
- ▶ Article 31 on **Statistics and Data** collection commits states to:
 - Collect and disaggregate data relevant to the convention
- ▶ Article 32 on **International Cooperation** commits states to:
 - Ensure that international cooperation, including international development programmes, is inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities

The text also recognises in the preamble that: “persons with disabilities should have the opportunity to be **actively involved in decision-making processes** about policies and programmes, including those directly concerning them.”

The convention also promotes an **intersectional approach to disability, gender and age**, recognising that women and girls with disability face multiple discrimination, and committing states to take “measures to ensure the full development, advancement and empowerment of women” as well as children.⁸

Relevance for Mine Action

In accordance with these commitments, state parties (both donors, and EO-affected countries) with a role in mine action have obligations to:

- ▶ Promote inclusion of persons with disabilities in mine action interventions, including in decision-making processes

⁶ The convention defines persons with disabilities as: “those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”, CRPD full convention text, accessed via: <https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>

⁷ Reasonable accommodation is defined in the CRPD as “necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms”, CRPD, Article 2

⁸ CRPD, Articles 6 and 7

- ▶ Promote the right of persons with disabilities to work in the sector, including through the provision of reasonable accommodation
- ▶ Promote an intersectional approach taking into account age, gender, and other factors
- ▶ Collect disaggregated data on these aspects

Mine action's role in accident and victim monitoring, and Victim Assistance (VA) have particular relevance to the convention. The collection, analysis and presentation of disaggregated data on EO-accident survivors, the referral of those survivors to VA services, and the inclusion of other persons with disabilities as part of an integrated approach facilitates progress towards meeting the convention's obligations, as will be described below in the section on Victim Assistance.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

Described as the first international bill on the rights of women, CEDAW has been ratified by all ASEAN States and all major mine action donor countries with the exception of the United States.⁹ The convention commits states to eliminate discrimination against women and to ensure the full development and advancement of women in political, social, economic, and cultural fields.¹⁰ The convention also notes that “adoption of temporary special measures aimed accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination”, referring to affirmative action measures, it also establishes that maternity leave measures are not discriminatory.¹¹

Commitments

The convention establishes a range of commitments on women's rights, many of which are relevant to the mine action sector, in particular:

- ▶ Article 5: “modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the **elimination of prejudices** and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women”
- ▶ Article 11: “take all appropriate measures to **eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment**”
- ▶ Article 14, 2: “take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to **ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that [women] participate in and benefit from rural development**”. In particular:
 - a) to participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels
 - f) to participate in all community activities
 - g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes

Relevance for Mine Action

In accordance with these commitments both EO-affected and donor states are committed to:

- ▶ Promote gender equality through addressing discriminatory norms, prejudices, and stereotyped roles for men and women
- ▶ Offer equal access to employment in the mine action sector, taking into account maternity leave, equal pay, and health and safety (including safeguarding of the function of reproduction)
- ▶ Promote the full participation of women, particularly in rural areas, in planning and community activities, especially in relation to land

Mine action interventions have a role to play in contributing towards the realisation of the convention's commitments by promoting the equal employment of women within mine action organisations, as well as ensuring the full inclusion of women in community-facing activities such as NTS, handover, and EORE.

⁹ CEDAW full convention text accessed via: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>

¹⁰ CEDAW, Articles 2-3

¹¹ CEDAW, Article 4

Furthermore, the sector has an opportunity to challenge stereotypical gender norms through the employment of women and inclusion of women in decision-making processes, depending on the context of operations. This is often referred to as **gender transformative**, in that the activity seeks to challenge underlying social norms which constrain both women and men from fully accessing their rights. Gender transformative approaches can be defined as ‘promoting gender equality and aiming to achieve positive development outcomes by transforming unequal gender relations to promote shared power, control of resources, decision-making, and support women’s empowerment.’¹²

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and Convention on Cluster Munitions

The key international conventions governing the mine action sector also include certain commitments on gender equality and inclusion. All EO-affected ASEAN States and most donor states are parties to at least one of the conventions and, as such, have committed to implement their respective gender- and diversity-related requirements.

Whilst the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) text does not address gender directly, the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) contains specific gender-related provisions. Both instruments address gender and diversity in their current action plans at the time of writing (the Oslo Action Plan (OAP) to the APMBC and the Lausanne Action Plan (LAP) to the CCM) have further reinforced the expectations from both affected and donor States Parties to promote and report on achievements on gender equality and inclusion in the sector.

Commitments

The conventions and action plans establish several specific commitments relating to gender equality and inclusion in mine action:

- ▶ OAP Action 3: LAP Action 4: **integration of gender and diversity considerations** in all aspects of work. Specifically, the integration of perspectives and needs of women girls boys and men from diverse populations and all ages in:
 - Striving to remove all barriers to **gender balanced participation**, including at meetings of states parties (OAP Action 3)
 - **Survey and Clearance** (LAP Action 23)
 - **Victim Assistance** (LAP Action 31)
 - **Explosive Ordnance Risk Education** (OAP Action 29, LAP Action 28)
- ▶ OAP Action 32, 35, LAP action 29, 31: **Collection of Sex, Age, and Disability Disaggregated Data (SADDD)** in Article 7 reporting and more generally
 - Collection of **SADD** (sex and age disaggregated data) **required for EORE beneficiaries** in OAP
 - Collection of **SADDD required for VA beneficiaries** in OAP
 - Collection of **SADDD casualty data required** in LAP

Relevance for Mine Action

In summary, the conventions’ action plans commit states parties to:

- ▶ Collecting SADD and SADDD in specific areas
- ▶ Promoting gender balanced participation in the sector
- ▶ Delivering an inclusive approach to activities involving EO-affected individuals and communities

In addition to these conventions and the Convention on the Certain Conventional Weapons, the international framework on mine action was expanded in 2017 as the **United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2365**, the first stand-alone text on mine action. Point 10 stresses:

“the importance of considering mine action during the earliest stages of planning and programming in peacekeeping operations and special political missions, where appropriate, as well as humanitarian emergency responses, taking into account relevant gender and age specific considerations, particularly in survey methodology, victim assistance, and risk education.”

¹² UN Women Training Centre Glossary

This resolution further reinforces the obligations under the Conventions and their Action Plans to incorporate identity diversity considerations of explosive-ordnance affected communities in all relevant activities.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Launched in 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aims at ending poverty in all its forms, envisaging *“a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination”*. The agenda establishes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including a specific goal (SDG 5) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls.¹³ Mine action contributes towards a number of these goals and their specific targets through various activities.¹⁴

Commitments

Several aspects of the 2030 Agenda are relevant specifically to gender equality and inclusion efforts in EORR. Note that mine action contributes to many more of the SDG targets and indicators than listed here, which are the targets and indicators specific to gender equality and inclusion:

▶ SDG 5: Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls

- Target 5.A: Equal rights to economic resources, property ownership and financial services
 - Indicator 5.A.1: **Female land rights or ownership**: give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property
- Target 5.B: Promote empowerment of women through technology
 - Indicator 5.B.1: **Mobile telephone ownership**
- Target 5.2: **End all violence against and exploitation of women and girls**
- Target 5.4: Value unpaid care and **promote shared domestic responsibilities**
 - Indicator 5.4.1: Time spent on domestic or unpaid work
- Target 5.5: Ensure full participation in leadership and decision-making
 - Indicator 5.5.2: **Women in managerial positions**

▶ SDG 1: End Poverty in All its Forms Everywhere

- Target 1.4 Equal rights to ownership, basic services, technology and economic resources
 - Indicator 1.4.2 **Secure tenure rights to land** (for women and men)

▶ SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

- Target 2.3: **Double the productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers** (including women in particular)

▶ SDG 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all

- Target 8.5: Full employment and Decent Work with Equal Pay: achieve full and **productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities**, and equal pay for work of equal value

▶ SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

- Target 10.2: **Promote universal social, economic and political inclusion: By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status**

It is also worth noting that all SDG indicators are intended to be disaggregated by sex and age wherever relevant.

¹³ The wording of the SDG targets and indicators listed below has been simplified; the full list of targets and their official names can be found on the United Nations website: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>

¹⁴ A joint GICHD-UNDP study in 2017 demonstrated that, while SDG 16—and its target 16.1 aimed at reducing violence in particular—provides the most direct entry point, EORR is directly relevant to targets under 11 other SDGs and indirectly to an additional four. In total, more than 50 targets can be relevant, depending on a project’s scope and objectives. GICHD-UNDP, *Leaving No One Behind: Mine Action and Sustainable Development Goals*, 2017

Relevance for Mine Action

The 2030 Agenda targets and indicators are wide-ranging and high level, and as such it can be difficult to establish direct links between these goals and mine action activities on the ground, though more and more evidence for these links has been collected in recent years.¹⁵ However, in many areas, mine action activities contribute towards the gender equality and inclusion aspects of the SDGs. Previous studies have demonstrated how gender and diversity “mainstreaming in mine action can create multiple interlinkages between different SDGs and accelerate their achievement”.¹⁶

A range of mine action activities contribute towards the SDGs. Land release in particular can contribute towards increasing women’s access to land ownership and tenure, if done in an inclusive manner, as well as increasing the productivity of women small-scale farmers. Inclusive approaches to community-facing activities such as NTS, handover, community liaison, and EORE also contributes towards the inclusion of all groups in decision-making.

In addition to the activities themselves, employment of women and persons with disabilities in mine action also contributes towards several of the goals, including the promotion of employment and decent work for all, reduction in inequalities, reduction in Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), access to assets such as mobile telephone ownership, and equal rights to economic resources. These contributions are described in greater detail in the section below on employment.

In summary, the 2030 Agenda establishes goals on gender equality and inclusion to which the mine action sector contributes materially, including:

- ▶ Increasing women’s access to land ownership and secure land tenure
- ▶ Increasing women’s access to economic resources including mobile telephone ownership and financial services such as loans
- ▶ Increasing the productivity of small-scale food producers (in particular women)
- ▶ Ending violence against and exploitation of women and girls
- ▶ Promoting full employment for women, men, young people, and persons with disabilities
- ▶ Increasing the number of women in managerial positions
- ▶ Promoting shared domestic responsibilities
- ▶ Reducing inequalities through promoting inclusion in activities regardless of age, sex, disability, and other diversity factors

The mine action sector’s contributions towards these goals are described in the findings of this report, along with suggested indicators to better demonstrate impact.

Women, Peace and Security Agenda

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), adopted in 2000, calls on the international community to recognise and respond to the differentiated impact of conflict on women and affirm that women’s full and equal participation is a precondition for peace, disarmament, and security efforts to be effective and sustainable. Since 2000, the Security Council has adopted ten more resolutions on WPS, which together form the basis for what is often referred to as the WPS Agenda and is formed by four interconnected pillars:

- ▶ participation,
- ▶ prevention,
- ▶ protection,
- ▶ and relief & recovery.

In the original resolution (UNSCR 1325), the Security Council calls specifically on the mine action sector to act:

¹⁵ The GICHD has developed several publications linking mine action and the SDGs including: GICHD-UNDP, Leaving No One Behind: Mine Action and Sustainable Development Goals, 2017, and specific publications on Cambodia, Lao PDR, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Angola and Colombia, available on the GICHD website

¹⁶ M. Provencher Langlois et al., Gender Mainstreaming in Mine Action: Powerful Linkages for Progress across the SDGs, 2018.

“Emphasizing the need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes take into account the special needs of women and girls¹⁷”

In response to the growing international standing of WPS, an increasing number of conflict-affected and donor countries worldwide have adopted WPS National Action Plans (WPS NAPs).¹⁸ All mine action donor countries consulted for this study have WPS NAPs in place (and in many cases they mention mine action specifically), and for some these commitments have a direct influence on their programming and reporting priorities.

Among the ASEAN States, only the Philippines are currently implementing a WPS NAP.¹⁹ The ASEAN Association, however, has shown great commitment to WPS as a regional priority area. Since the adoption of the Joint Statement on Promoting Women, Peace, and Security in ASEAN in 2017, ASEAN has set important milestones in implementing the WPS agenda through concerted multi-sectoral efforts and partnerships. ASEAN is also currently developing its first Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security in ASEAN (ASEAN RPA on WPS).

It should also be noted that the UN Security Council also have a Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda (UNSCR 2250), a related initiative which establishes similar objectives for the inclusion of young persons in the security sector, however the agenda does not mention mine action specifically.

Commitments

The WPS Agenda is a general call for action, and specific commitments are contained within states WPS NAPs, which differ from country to country, depending on the context. Typical commitments, taken from donor countries’ NAPs, include:

- ▶ to apply gender sensitive, responsive, or transformative approaches to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, to transitional justice and reconciliation, to small arms and light weapons, to mine action, and to human trafficking
- ▶ the use of gender analysis to inform, monitor, evaluate, and report on programmes and projects
- ▶ strengthen the participation of women at all levels of decision-making
- ▶ increased participation of women and greater consideration of gender aspects in arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation
- ▶ promote the direct, formal and meaningful participation of women and youth in peace processes and in all decision-making processes related to peace and security
- ▶ ensure the collection and use of sex and age disaggregated
- ▶ requirement to use gender markers to evaluate all projects

Relevance for Mine Action

Although disarmament, and the explosive ordnance risk reduction sector specifically, play an important role in the implementation of the WPS agenda, multilateral processes and NAPs have rarely addressed the normative and practical overlaps and connections between WPS and mine action. Simultaneously, awareness of the WPS agenda within the mine action sector remains low.

As such it is important to outline the relevance of mine action activities for each pillar. The table below describes the synergies between mine action activities and the WPS pillars:

¹⁷ UNSCR 1325, Preamble

¹⁸ For an overview of WPS NAPs, please consult the database of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom at <https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/>.

¹⁹ Women’s International League for Peace & Freedom. National Action Plans by Region, accessed at <https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/nap-overview/>

Pillar	Description	Contribution of Mine Action
 <p>Participation</p>	<p>Calls for increased participation of women at all levels of decision-making, including in national, regional, and international institutions; in mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict; in peace negotiations; in peace operations, as soldiers, police, and civilians; and as Special Representatives of the U.N. Secretary-General</p>	<p>Inclusion of women in mine action activities at the community level, particularly in decision-making capacities. Efforts to increase women’s participation in community liaison, NTS, handover, and EORE activities contribute towards this pillar.</p> <p>Promoting greater gender-balance in participation in disarmament fora including the APMBC and CCM meetings of states parties, intersessional meetings, and the UN National Directors Meeting, amongst others.</p> <p>Promotion of women’s participation in national level decision-making on mine action, such as participation of women and women’s groups representatives in national mine action strategy consultations.</p> <p>Employment of women in the mine action sector in operators, national authorities and other stakeholders, especially in management and leadership roles.</p>
 <p>Protection</p>	<p>Calls specifically for the protection of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence, including in emergency and humanitarian situations</p> <p>This also includes protection of women and girls from violence resulting from EO contamination</p>	<p>By demonstrating that clearance and risk education activities benefit women and girls, the mine action sector can show a contribution towards this pillar. This requires collection and presentation of SADD on clearance and EORE beneficiaries as well as SADD victim data.</p> <p>Mine action stakeholders can also demonstrate commitment to protection from SGBV by ensuring up to date safeguarding prevention, reporting, and response mechanisms.</p>
 <p>Prevention</p>	<p>Calls for improving intervention strategies in the prevention of violence against women, including by prosecuting those responsible for violations of international law; strengthening women’s rights under national law; and supporting local women’s peace initiatives and conflict resolution processes.</p>	<p>As with protection, demonstrating that clearance and risk education activities prevent accidents which would put women and girls at risk, mine action can show how the sector contributes to preventing injuries and saving lives of women and girls. This requires collection and presentation of SADD on clearance and EORE beneficiaries as well as SADD victim data.</p> <p>Employment of women, and clearance of land can indirectly help to reduce the risk of SGBV by facilitating economic independence and empowerment of economically marginalised women, and allowing displaced women and girls to return safely, the latter being frequently linked to reductions in SGBV, especially in the long term.²⁰</p>

²⁰ Economically marginalised groups, including women, girls, persons with disabilities, gender and sexual minorities, displaced persons, and racially, religiously, and ethnically marginalised groups, tend to experience higher risks of SGBV based on research conducted worldwide. When identities intersect, such as in the case of women and girls with disabilities living in refugee camps, the risks can be even higher. Numerous studies and declarations, including the Beijing Declaration adopted by the United Nations in 1995, recommend economic empowerment as a protective factor against SGBV. It should however be noted that some recent analyses suggest that economic empowerment could lead to “backlash” from intimate partners as well as family and community members, at least in the short term. This risk is highly context-specific and depends on how entrenched discriminatory and unequal social and gender norms are in a given community. Therefore, while the bulk of evidence suggests that economic empowerment can be a protective factor against SGBV, it should be taken in a vacuum and should always be accompanied by other protective measures to prevent and respond to potential repercussions, particularly when economic empowerment occurs in rapid timescales.



Relief and Recovery

Calls for advancement of relief and recovery measures to address post-conflict, post-disaster and other humanitarian support through a gendered lens allowing for the meaningful and active participation of women and girls.

Demonstrating the **participation of women in decision-making on post-clearance land use**, particularly in contexts of displacement, as well as in the **planning and design of VA services**.

Most mine action impact on WPS falls under the Participation pillar, where activities have a direct impact, rather than under the other pillars where the impact is mainly indirect.

In summary, the WPS Agenda calls on mine action actors to:

- ▶ promote the participation of women in the sector;
- ▶ to prevent and protect them from violence, including SGBV and violence from EO, and;
- ▶ integrate the needs and perspectives of women and girls in post-conflict recovery activities

In practice contribution towards the participation pillar can be demonstrated through providing data on:

- ▶ employment of women in the sector
- ▶ representation of women in managerial and decision-making roles
- ▶ representation of women in mine action policy fora at the international and national levels
- ▶ active participation of women in community facing mine action activities such as NTS, handover, EORE, VA, and community liaison

Contribution to the other pillars can be demonstrated through providing data on:

- ▶ the number of women and girls benefitting from clearance and EORE activities
- ▶ the existence of well-functioning safeguarding systems
- ▶ women's participation in decision-making on VA services and post-clearance land use

Regional and National Policies and Commitments

The section below offers an overview of the commitments on gender equality and inclusion in the ASEAN regional association and briefly explain the relevance of these commitments to mine action and how the sector's activities provide opportunities for demonstrating alignment with and achievement of regional expectations.

Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls

At the regional level, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls have been an area of focus of ASEAN since 1988, when the **Declaration of the Advancement of Women in ASEAN Region** called for the equitable and meaningful participation of women in the political and socioeconomic spheres at both national and regional levels. Since then, ASEAN has adopted several political declarations and multi-year regional action plans in this regard. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are also at the forefront of the **ASEAN Community Vision 2025**, which imagines ASEAN as “an inclusive community that promotes high quality of life, equitable access to opportunities for all and promotes and protects human rights of women.”²¹

The **ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) Work Plan 2021-2025** repeatedly mentions across the text the need for ASEAN Member States to enhance the collection and analysis of data disaggregated by sex, age, and other identity factors as relevant. Accordingly, to align with the ACWC, the sector's stakeholders should ensure inclusive SADDD collection,

²¹ ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

analysis, and reporting as a precondition to effectively demonstrate the impact of explosive ordnance risk reduction to gender equality and women's empowerment. The ACWC also refers to the advancement of the WPS Agenda among its key objectives.

National Level Strategies and Action Plans

Whilst all of the EO-affected countries covered in this study are signatories to CEDAW, it should be noted that Lao PDR in particular has a structured approach to data collection and reporting under the convention, as all ministries have CEDAW reporting focal points, usually appointed at a senior level, responsible for reporting actions under the convention, including disaggregated data on activities.

ASEAN EO-affected states also have their own national plans for women's empowerment, to which mine action can contribute, for example Cambodia's **Neary Rattanak Plan for Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Empowerment 2019-2023**, referenced in CMAA's sub-strategy on gender mainstreaming in mine action.

Inclusion and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities

Starting with the **Bali Declaration on the Enhancement of the Role and Participation of the Persons with Disabilities in ASEAN Community** and the **ASEAN Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2011-2020)**, the regional association has been advocating for the inclusion and empowerment of persons living with disabilities. **The ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** reiterates key action points from the **ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025** and the **ASEAN Socio-Cultural (ASCC) Blueprint 2025** with relevance for the explosive ordnance risk reduction sector.

Among others, the masterplan advocates for the promotion of equitable opportunities to employment and economic integration for persons with disabilities (based on AEC 1, AEC 25, ASCC 2). The explosive ordnance risk reduction sector can meaningfully contribute to this objective by increasing (as needed) the employment of staff with disabilities, including in leadership positions, and reporting this advancement in relevant forums. Moreover, states can provide disaggregated reports of how Victim Assistance socioeconomic reintegration services contribute to economic empowerment, as well as collecting and analysis SADDD in pre- and post-clearance impact assessment to identify the ways and extent to which the release of cleared land has impacted the living conditions and integration in society of persons with disabilities.

As persons with disabilities may be at higher risk of land grabbing and dispossession, the systematic collection of SADDD in impact assessment forms that incorporate meaningful questions on access to and tenure of land is necessary not only prevent and/or address disputes, but also to understand and report trends on the impact of clearance on the empowerment of persons with disabilities.

National Frameworks: Feminist Foreign Policies

A growing number of governments have adopted Feminist Foreign Policies (FFP) in recent years, including mine action donor countries.²² For example, Canada's **Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)**, launched in 2017, commits to *"investing no less than 80 percent of bilateral international development assistance through Global Affairs Canada for initiatives designed to achieve"* gender equality and women's empowerment. Canada's FIAP, and those of several other donor countries, recognises the contributions of the mine action sector to WPS and the socioeconomic empowerment of women and girls. Such policies influence the type of data requested from implementing partners, and challenges the sector to effectively demonstrate how it can meet donor's commitments to gender equality in international development assistance.

Donor Attitudes towards Gender Equality & Inclusion in Mine Action

All consulted mine action donors were interested in better demonstrating how mine action activities contribute to gender equality and inclusion (especially disability inclusion) for several reasons. Foremost is the need to protect and enhance mine action budgets by demonstrating contribution to broader aid agendas and priorities beyond mine action. Donors reported that mine action funds come from several different sources

²² Dalaqua, R., Lifting each other up: Feminist foreign policies and gendered approaches to arms control, 2022, accessed at: <https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/commentary/lifting-each-other-up-feminist-foreign-policies-and-gendered-approaches-to-arms-control/>

within their states' different funding frameworks including security, agriculture and food security envelopes. Apart from gender equality and inclusion, other priorities include livelihoods, food security, and environment. Some donors characterised a need to demonstrate the value of mine action across as many aspects of the 'triple nexus' of the humanitarian, peacebuilding, and development sectors as possible, and that gender equality and inclusion are cross cutting themes across all three.

Some donors have internal reporting commitments to their governments on specific agendas, such as the SDGs or the WPS Agenda. Different donor strategies on mine action, where they exist, generally commit to mainstreaming gender and diversity. Consultations with donors for this study demonstrated different policy motivations behind this focus. Different donors reported having different underlying reasons for promoting gender equality or disability inclusion in the projects they fund. In several cases, the WPS agenda was the main focus, as some states have internal reporting requirements on WPS and are accountable to demonstrating impact under this agenda,²³ but reported that other agendas such as the SDGs are less or not at all important. Other donors have the reverse approach, with the need to demonstrate mine action contribution across the SDGs but less interest or commitment to the WPS agenda. Others still reported that both agendas were priorities for their governments.

Attitudes towards disability also differ between donors, with some stating outright that disability inclusion is not a priority in their mine action programming, and others emphasising its importance and requiring that data is disaggregated by disability status.

More generally, donors have a need for data to be available if they are asked for specific information. Some donor countries, such as the UK, have a legal requirement to mainstream gender in all aid projects, and many have internal policies or strategies which require a level of gender mainstreaming and sometimes disability mainstreaming as cross-cutting issues. Calls for proposals analysed for this study requested sex and age disaggregated data on beneficiaries, the number of women and men employed, and required survey teams to be mixed gender.

Amongst donors there was generally a feeling that a great deal of socioeconomic data was presented by implementing partners, which could be presented in a more streamlined format.

One donor interviewee posed the question:

"Disaggregation of data is the start, a baseline to understand who we are reaching. That's the minimum, and that's where sometimes it's too much information received by operators to process or not the right information to process. Before imposing additional burdens, what do we really need and how can better use what we already ask for?"

Another donor noted that donors capacity to analyse this data themselves is sometimes limited:

"It's always a struggle to define reporting requirements, especially on outcomes and impact. We receive great information but sometimes this is just put on file as we don't have the capacity or know-how to analyse or assess it. We need to get better at assessing and evaluating the data we already get."

It should also be noted that, whilst all donors are supportive of gender mainstreaming in their policies, during the course of the study one interviewee remained hesitant about employing women in mine action, stating:

"I think that maybe women shouldn't do this [work in operational roles]– it's too hard and maybe not suitable for women. It's also dangerous."

Views that women cannot or should not work in operational roles persist in the sector, including amongst donors, demonstrating that there is still a need to advocate for gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the sector.

Interviewees from both donors and operators also highlighted a key challenge when measuring impact on gender equality and inclusion. These are long term outcomes, which are difficult to measure over the life cycle of short contract lengths. A lack of long-term monitoring and evaluation capacity was also highlighted as a constraint, making it difficult to measure beyond immediate outcomes.

²³ For example, the US State Department 2022 Report to Congress on Women, Peace and Security 2022

Longer term funding agreements have shown more success in demonstrating impact on gender equality. More than one donor interviewee stated the need to move towards longer-term funding agreements in order to better demonstrate outcomes on gender equality and inclusion.

Some donors also suggested some actions which could help to better demonstrate impact:

- ▶ Establishing reporting standards for the whole sector to adhere to.
- ▶ Having a theory of change accepted by the sector with a strong inclusion element throughout.
- ▶ Better sharing best practices to encourage parties to raise their game with regards to inclusion.

National Frameworks: National Mine Action Strategies and Policies

Some ASEAN states also have national commitments to gender equality and inclusion as part of their national policy framework and strategies on mine action. For example, Cambodia's National Mine Action Strategy 2018-2025 establishes gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting issue. The associated Gender Mainstreaming in Mine Action Plan is a sub strategy requiring several actions from stakeholders including use of disaggregated data in planning and prioritisation and a requirement for 26 forms to collect SADDD. National guidelines, based on the UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes, have also been developed by CMAA's Gender Mainstreaming Team. The National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) of Laos and Cambodia also integrate gender and diversity considerations to some extent.

These **policies** and strategies often come with associated reporting requirements for mine action stakeholders, most often on the disaggregation of data by sex and age, and reporting on the percentage of women (and sometimes persons with disabilities) employed. These national level policies are designed to align with national laws and **policies** on gender equality and disability inclusion, and with APMB and CCM reporting requirements, detailed above.

It should be noted that the level of integration of gender and diversity considerations in national planning varies across EO-affected ASEAN states.

Mine Action Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Guiding Documents

The following documents, whilst not policies or commitments relating to gender equality and inclusion in mine action, set out guidance and standards for the sector which are relevant to the research questions and are referenced throughout the findings of this study.

Standardising Beneficiary Definitions

The 2nd edition of the Standardising Beneficiary Definitions in Humanitarian Mine Action is a key document for the mine action sector which aims to promote consistency in the understanding and application of who qualifies as a beneficiary of mine action activities. Drawing from recognised good practices in mine action programmes worldwide, the document "lays out standard definitions and guidelines for measuring, recording and reporting beneficiary numbers for EORE, land release, victim assistance, and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) spot tasks."²⁴

One of the key principles of the guidance is that **all beneficiary numbers should be disaggregated by sex, age, and disability, where possible**, as a prerequisite for inclusive, efficient and effective community liaison, NTS, EORE, and VA. This includes casualty data that is disaggregated by disability prior to the EO accident as a means to better target activities such as EORE.

The WG-SS of questions is identified as the recommended minimum standard to identify disabilities. The questions should be applied to anyone six years of age or older, and adults (defined as anyone aged 18 or older), applied at the level of the individual. Further disaggregation by other contextually relevant identity factors is encouraged as feasible and relevant to the activities undertaken.

International Mine Action Standards

Gender and diversity considerations are included in many IMAS chapters which are referenced later throughout this report. Of particular relevance are the **minimum data requirements set out in IMAS 05.10 on**

²⁴ Standardising Beneficiary Definitions in Humanitarian Mine Action: Second Edition. 2020

Information Management, which sets requirements for disaggregation of data across different categories, as well as the IMAS chapters on **Land Release, Non-Technical Survey, Victim Assistance, and Explosive Ordnance Risk Education**, amongst others. As there are many requirements, these will be referenced in the relevant sections of the report where appropriate.

UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes

The UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes are a set of guidelines on gender and diversity mainstreaming for the mine action sector which provide recommendations for mainstreaming in:

- ▶ Personnel and recruitment
- ▶ Interaction with Affected Communities and Beneficiaries
- ▶ Clearance, Land Release, and Handover
- ▶ Explosive Ordnance Risk Education
- ▶ Victim Assistance, and;
- ▶ Advocacy.²⁵

The guidelines also set out recommendations on gender and diversity analysis, as well as monitoring and evaluation of mine action activities, recommending **disaggregation of all data on people by sex and age at a minimum and developing gender sensitive project indicators**, alongside the use of **gender markers and inclusive approaches to data collection**.

Housing, Land and Property Resources

Broadly speaking, the term Housing, Land and Property (HLP) refers to an area of humanitarian practice that focuses on ensuring the respect of people's rights to immovable property such as land and houses, not only in laws but also in behaviours and practices resulting from contextual customs, norms, perceptions, and attitudes.²⁶ HLP rights are particularly at stake during emergency, conflict, and post-conflict situations, and especially arise in contexts of displacement, including resulting from explosive ordnance contamination.²⁷

Mine action interventions have a significant role to play in HLP. If conducted without due attention to inclusion and conflict sensitivity, they risk exacerbating existing land disputes and driving the rise of new disputes, with the potential of leading to conflict, and contribute to land grabbing and dispossession. These can have important repercussions on the food security and wellbeing of communities which mainly rely on land for subsistence, as is the case in many ASEAN countries, where informal employment in agriculture represents the main form of income generation. Women²⁸-, children-, and PWD-headed households can be especially vulnerable to this phenomenon due to restrictions to their rights to property inheritance and ownership by tradition and law.²⁹ In situation of return post displacement (such as in the case of the release of cleared land), women are also less likely to have documentary evidence of their land tenure.

When mine action is not conducted in a way that examines and responds appropriately to entrenched social and gender inequalities in access to land and property, the sector is not abiding by the guiding principle of "Do No Harm". On the contrary, when their activities are based on due diligence, they not only respect core human rights instruments entrenching women's equal rights to land and property such as CEDAW³⁰ but

²⁵ UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes, 3rd edition

²⁶ Global Shelter Cluster. The Importance of Addressing Housing, Land and Property (HLP) Challenges in Humanitarian Response. <https://sheltercluster.org/hlp>.

²⁷ For reference materials, please see: <https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/old/tools-and-guidance/essential-protection-guidance-and-tools/hlp-essential-guidance-and-tools/>

²⁸ Among other reasons disproportionately affecting the negative repercussions of violation of their HLP rights, women-headed households tend to have a higher dependency burden than men-headed households. This means that they are generally responsible for more family members who are not in the labour force or otherwise able to contribute productively to the household (children 0 – 14 and adults over 65, based on most definitions what qualifies individuals as economically active or dependent).

²⁹ The Global Protection Cluster reports that globally, men share almost three times the size of landholdings than women. <https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/old/2021/10/06/what-is-secure-enough-good-practice-to-enhance-womens-housing-land-and-property-rights-in-humanitarian-response/>.

³⁰ Women's equal rights to land and property are grounded in a several instruments, including the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

can also demonstrate their contribution to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which contains explicit targets on women's HLP rights and recognises women's land rights as a cross-cutting driver to ending poverty for all³¹.

There are different ways in which the sector can positively contribute to access to HLP rights for women, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups most at risk of violations of their property and land rights. Through community liaison, EORE, Victim Assistance and other community-facing activities, the mine action stakeholders should spread awareness of HLP rights and redressal mechanisms, as available. When undertaking pre-clearance impact assessments, specific information on land ownership, land use, and the possibility of disputes should be explicitly gathered and analysed to identify how to avoid aggravating HLP violations and contribute to their prevention. In post-clearance impact assessment, the extent to which the ownership and use of land aligns with the HLP rights of beneficiaries needs to be clearly assessed and redressal interventions and partnerships undertaken as necessary. Identifying respondents by sex, age, and disability, and disaggregating households by the identity of the head of household by sex, age, and disability is key to identify potential and actual patterns of risk, both prior to and after clearance.



³¹ OHCHR. Insecure land rights for women: a threat to progress on gender equality and sustainable development. 2017. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/wg-women-and-girls/insecure-land-rights-women-threat-progress-gender-equality-and-sustainable-development->



FINDINGS

The findings of this study were gathered from stakeholders across ASEAN EO-affected states through interviews, document review, and a validation workshop in November 2022. The data collection and use section looks at what data is collected, how it is used, and how it is linked to the policy background in this study, for:

- ▶ Accident & Victim Data
- ▶ Explosive Ordnance Risk Education
- ▶ Victim Assistance
- ▶ Land Release Beneficiaries
- ▶ Non-Technical Survey
- ▶ Impact Assessments
- ▶ Employment

Followed by a discussion on why donor organisations require this data and what they reported using it for.

Data Collection & Use

This section describes the data relevant to gender equality and inclusion collected in the mine action sector, the tools used to collect it, how and why this information is used by different mine action stakeholders and makes recommendations on how this can be made more efficient and effective in demonstrating impact towards the agendas and commitments set out in the policy background.

Why is Disaggregated Data on People Collected Within the Mine Action Sector?

Several individuals interviewed for the study expressed uncertainty about why disaggregated data is collected for certain mine action activities.

- ▶ First and foremost, disaggregated data is intended to be used to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the project, to ensure that the impact of EO on different groups is well understood and the target beneficiaries are being reached effectively.
- ▶ Secondly, donors reported using disaggregated data to demonstrate that the projects they fund benefit everyone, and that mine action activities contribute to various broader agendas such as the WPS Agenda and SDG 5.
- ▶ Thirdly, states should report using SADD or SADDD, depending on the information, in their reports to the APMBC and CCM.

This study aims to recommend ways in which this can be done more efficiently and effectively by mine action stakeholders. The following section looks at how and why disaggregated data is collected and used in different mine action activities, and how the presentation of this data can be improved.

Data Disaggregation

Sex and Age Disaggregated Data: Collection of disaggregated data on people is fairly well established as a good practice in the humanitarian sector. Sex- and Age-Disaggregated Data (SADD) presents data on people disaggregated by their sex³² and age group. For example, data on beneficiaries of a hypothetical EORE activity for example would be collected as follows:

Non-Disaggregated Data

EORE beneficiaries
1000

Sex and Age Disaggregated Data

EORE beneficiaries			
Adult female	Child female	Child male	Adult male
200	350	450	100

By disaggregating this data by sex and age, it becomes clear that the EORE activity is reaching some groups more than others, which may or may not be desirable based on the project goals. Further disaggregation into more precise age categories is also possible, and often more useful operationally as younger children and adolescents are likely to have different mobility patterns, roles, responsibilities, which influence both exposure to risk and appropriate ways to receive EORE safety messages. It is important however that adults are defined as those 18 years of age and older.³³

Clear guidance and standards on disaggregation exist within the mine action sector, such as the Standardising Beneficiary Definitions, the UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes, as well as clear requirements within IMAS. These generally set as a minimum requirement that all data related to people should be disaggregated by two factors (sex and age - SADD), adding disaggregation by disability (SADDD) and other diversity factors as appropriate. Interviewees reported that on some projects, data was also disaggregated by internal displacement status, religion, or ethnicity depending on the relevance and availability of reliable information in the context.

SADD is a requirement set by almost all donors interviewed for this study and is generally used by most stakeholders including donors, operators, and national authorities, though there are some exceptions amongst both donors and national authorities. For example, some donors request disaggregated data from funding recipients but do not use this data internally, and some national authorities do not require disaggregation of beneficiary data from operators.

Sex Age and Disability Disaggregated Data: In addition to SADD, data on people can be disaggregated by other diversity factors, most commonly by disability status (sex, age, and disability disaggregated data – SADDD). Whilst the use of SADD is widely established, operators reported finding it challenging to present SADDD. For example, beneficiary numbers were often presented like this in reporting:

Adult female	Child female	Child male	Adult male	PWDs
10	20	15	40	13

When persons with disabilities are presented in a separate category to women, girls, boys, and men, this negates the possibility of intersectional analysis of the data. For example, if data from a VA project presents PWDs as one category, it is harder to monitor whether adolescent girls with disabilities are being reached. One donor did request that implementing partners request the overall percentage of beneficiaries with disabilities, rather than present them separately, but this approach also doesn't allow for accurate analysis of the information.

³² As noted in the methodology section above, the terms “sex” and “gender” are almost always used interchangeably in the humanitarian sector, including by EORR stakeholders. When the term “gender” is used, it is usually based on a binary understanding of gender identity limited to women, men, boys and girls.

³³ Based on the definitions in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

A simple solution would be to present the same data like this:

	Adult female	Child female	Child male	Adult male
	8	19	10	35
With disabilities	2	1	5	5

By comparison, this presentation provides much more insight into the beneficiary figures. It can be inferred for example, that a much higher percentage of boys accessing the service have disabilities than other groups. However, several questions remain such as whether disability should be treated as a binary (i.e., an individual is either a ‘person with a disability’ or not) or how data on different impairments should be represented.

At the moment there is a lack of guidance in the sector on how to present SADDD. Operators consulted for the study often pointed out that there were increasing donor requirements around collection of data on disability, but a lack of understanding on how to analyse, present, or use the data collected, as well as a lack for funding for staff training on disability inclusion. One validation workshop participant stated there was a need for:

“Simple guidance on the use of disability data, what it’s for, and not just asking for the sake of it. Staff need disability awareness training when collecting this data due to the sensitivity of the questions.”

Some operator interviewees reported that they collect SADDD for all activities, and use the WG-SS of questions on functioning to determine disability status when collecting data from individuals. However, most operators do not collect SADDD, which is recommended as a minimum standard for data collection on persons with disabilities in the Standardising Beneficiary Definitions.³⁴ Interviewees from operators noted that this provided useful information on inclusion of persons with disabilities (estimated to be 15% of the global population) in their projects but required more resources in the form of time spent by community-facing teams to ask these questions. In some cases, it was reported that persons with disabilities were not present when community-facing activities took place.

Finding

Stakeholders are unsure of how to analyse, present, and use SADDD, and are often doing so in a manner which doesn’t allow for intersectional analysis of the data. There is a lack of guidance on how to do so.

Recommendations

The mine action sector should develop good practice guidance on the presentation and use of SADDD. Donors and training organisations should support training for community facing mine action staff on the use of the WG-SS.

All collection of data on individuals should be conducted in line with national laws on data protection, including data on disability status, age, gender, and other identity characteristics. This issue was not widely raised as a priority during consultations but should always be kept in mind when considering data collection.

Accident and Victim Data

IMAS 12.10 on EORE recommends that “EO injury surveillance systems should be established and maintained by the NMAA (or organisation acting on its behalf) or embedded in a broader national injury surveillance system as they provide an essential source of evidence to systematically document the most at-risk areas, the most at-risk groups, and the most at-risk behaviour, to support the targeting, tailoring and prioritisation of EORE interventions.”³⁵

³⁴ Standardising Beneficiary Definitions, Second Edition, p. 8

³⁵ IMAS 12.10, 4.3.8

Most ASEAN mine action programmes included in the study have a system in place to monitor the number of accidents and victims and report at the national level, however this was not the case for all countries included in the study. National mine action authorities generally collate accident and victim data collected by operators, often as part of the NTS process or using specific accident/victim forms in response to accident reports. According to interviewees most, but not all, can access disaggregated accident and victim data at a national level if they wish to do so.

Data requirements on accident and victim reporting are defined in IMAS 05.10 on Information Management, specifically that sex and age of victims must be recorded (SADD). IMAS 12.10 and IMAS 13.10 go further to recommend that victim data should be disaggregated by sex, age, and disability along with other factors (SADDD). Furthermore, the LAP and OAP both call on mine action programmes to collect SADDD victim data.

However, many operators and national authorities didn't ask about the sex, age, or disability status of victims in forms reviewed for the study.

Finding

Collection of SADD and SADDD victim data is recommended in IMAS and required in the action plans of the APMBC and CCM, however in some cases this is not collected by stakeholders in EO-affected ASEAN states.

Recommendation

All organisations collecting data on direct victims of EO accidents should collect SADD at a minimum as per the minimum data requirements in IMAS 05.10³⁶ and preferably SADDD to align with the OAP, LAP and good practice guidance.

There is also uncertainty about what data on disability should refer to in accident and victim data collection; whether the disability status should refer to a pre-existing impairment, or whether it should refer to impairments resulting from injuries sustained during the accident. At present, there is little available data on how persons with disabilities are affected as direct victims of accidents, either as direct or indirect victims. This is in part due to practical constraints, as disability status can be very difficult to establish in the case of fatal accidents, as well as concerns about the appropriateness of asking about victim's disability status and whether this could create an expectation of compensation. Also, there is a general attitude in the sector that persons with disabilities are less affected by EO as they are perceived to be at less risk due to reduced mobility. This assumption is difficult to test without disaggregated data.

The Standardising Beneficiary Definitions recommend that disability status before the accident should be collected, whilst data on any impairment resulting from the accident is important information for referral to VA services. As a result, both data points should ideally be collected in accident and victim reporting.

Finding

Good practice guidance recommends that disability status before the accident should be collected in accident and victim monitoring systems, but this is rarely the case in practice.

Recommendation

Stakeholders should revise accident and victim forms and databases to add fields for the disability status of the victim before the accident, to be collected where possible.

³⁶ IMAS 05.10, Annex B, p. 5

Explosive Ordnance Risk Education

There are several areas within EORE where data disaggregation on people is relevant. These include beneficiary data, message and material testing, knowledge retention testing, and participants in EORE needs assessments and other surveys such as Knowledge, Attitudes, Perceptions, and Behaviours (KAPB) surveys.

Several guiding documents in the mine action sector require or recommend disaggregation of EORE beneficiaries by sex and age, including the IMAS 05.10 minimum data requirements.³⁷ IMAS 12.10 also states that EORE operators should establish monitoring systems that disaggregate by sex and age.³⁸ Amongst interviewees for this study, almost all collected SADD beneficiary data if they conduct EORE activities directly.

Disaggregated beneficiary data is intended to be used to:

- a) monitor whether or not specific target groups are being reached by EORE activities, and;
- b) to demonstrate that these groups are being reached, including to donors.

Regarding SADD, some operators do collect this data on EORE beneficiaries, and ask the WG-SS to a sample, however, most do not. The Standardising Beneficiary Guidelines argue that it is often not feasible to count the number of persons with disabilities when counting beneficiaries in EORE sessions.³⁹ SADD and SADD should be used as part of EORE needs assessments, though EORE operators did not widely report conducting formal needs assessments as part of their EORE approach, though this is stated as a requirement in IMAS.⁴⁰

Operators which conduct knowledge retention surveys and KAPB surveys all disaggregated participation data by sex and age, and a few by disability. In some contexts, disaggregation by other diversity factors such as ethnicity or religion were also integrated. This data is used to design and improve the messaging, materials, and delivery of EORE and so should be disaggregated as much as possible to understand the effectiveness of the approach with different groups.

Target-Setting Using SADD in EORE

When it comes to target setting for EORE beneficiaries, operators can be categorised into three groups:

- ▶ those that do not have any specific beneficiary targets,
- ▶ those that have overall targets to reach a certain number of beneficiaries, and
- ▶ those that have targets to reach a specific number of beneficiaries, broken down into women, girls, boys, and men.

Targets are typically set in funding agreements, either externally by donors, or based on proposals from operators. There were no examples of agreements setting specific targets for the number of beneficiaries with disabilities reached by EORE.

Interviewees from operators noted some challenges with EORE target-setting, specifically that setting high numbers of EORE beneficiaries in funding agreements leads to higher overall numbers of people receiving EORE sometimes at the expense of reaching the people most at-risk, who are often more challenging to reach, thus requiring more resources. In many cases this translates to higher risk individuals, such as men in riskier livelihoods, not being reached as much as needed.

³⁷ IMAS 05.10, Annex B, p. 4

³⁸ IMAS 12.10, 10.3, p. 10

³⁹ Standardising Beneficiary Guidelines, Second Edition, p. 10

⁴⁰ IMAS 12.10, 5.2

One interviewee reported that:

“ we try to set our own gender targets based on vulnerability, which some donors accept, but other donors want to stick to 50/50 men and women. We try to point out that it takes more time to reach men working in certain livelihoods [the target group] but some donors don't want to hear that. It's about educating donors...”

Whilst many funding agreements simply required an application of a gender and diversity sensitive approach, several logical frameworks reviewed for this study contained hard EORE targets of either 50/50 male/female or 25/25/25/25 women/girls/boys/men. Gender balanced EORE targets, either formal or informal, were very common. Whilst these targets appear based on the principle of equal access and to “Leave no one behind”, such an approach may come at the cost of targeting the most at-risk groups.

In another example, one donor reported requesting that an operator focus EORE mostly on women as they are an at-risk group. This request, while based on a well-intentioned attempt to mainstream gender, was not based on evidence from accident and victim data analysis or an EORE needs assessment. One operator also reported setting 50/50 targets for child focused EORE, because they considered boys and girls to be at the same level or risk, which however is frequently not the case. Differences in accident prevalence amongst women, girls, boys, and men are highly context specific and vary considerably between contexts. However, on a global level, available accident data shows that around 85% of direct victims of mines and ERW where the sex is known are male.⁴¹

IMAS 12.10 on Explosive Ordnance Risk Education states that risk education should be “based on a carefully planned strategy that is targeted to specific at-risk groups”.⁴² These at-risk groups should be identified through “gathering comprehensive data on who is taking risks, what type of risks, when and why (which may relate to gendered social roles), and who is affected by EO”⁴³ including data collected in accident surveillance systems.⁴⁴

Targeting women, girls, boys, and men equally may be contrary to these requirements in many cases, especially in contexts where men and boys make up the large majority of direct victims, and when men in particular can be harder to reach due to being unavailable during operators’ working hours. One interviewee stated:

“ Donors don't want to have lower targets in order to reach at risk populations of men, but it's about the quality of beneficiaries.”

At the same time, it was also noted that at-risk groups should not be targeted to the exclusion of others. For example, a project targeting only men, to the exclusion of women, girls, and boys, would not follow a gender- or age-sensitive approach. IMAS 12.10 states that a key issue to monitor is the ‘equity principles’, which refers to the extent to which the most vulnerable are being targeted and prioritised.⁴⁵

It should also be noted that EORE provided to groups who are not necessarily the most at-risk can also be effective for communicating EORE messages on to at-risk groups. For example, in a context where men and boys are the most at-risk, EORE provided to women could also be effective in changing behaviours if women act as secondary messengers of EORE, though this is difficult to establish. This can also hold true for ‘community gatekeepers’ such as religious leaders, women’s groups, and trusted individuals in the community.

⁴¹ ICBL CMC, Gender and the Mine Ban Treaty, Data from 2022, http://www.the-monitor.org/media/3327346/Gender-and-MBT_June-2022.pdf

⁴² IMAS 12.10, 6.1

⁴³ IMAS 12.10, 5.4

⁴⁴ IMAS 12.10, 4.3.8

⁴⁵ IMAS 12.10, 10.2, f

While everyone has the right to EORE, not everyone is equal at risk and therefore in equal need. Hence the importance of developing priority setting mechanisms based on an ongoing assessments of needs and not on assumptions or predetermined targets. Therefore, there is a balance to be struck between effectiveness and making EORE available to all. Allowance should be given to target more of the particular target group identified during the EORE needs analysis, but with the caveat that all groups (women, girls, boys, and men – including persons with disabilities) should be reached by the project. Some stakeholders suggested that minimum targets, for example a minimum percentage of lower priority groups were more appropriate, allowing targeting of higher risk groups.

More generally, donors should encourage operators to target the most at-risk groups through establishing explicit and transparent prioritisation mechanisms⁴⁶, accompanied by either the requisite funding, or an understanding that lower numbers of beneficiaries will be reached, but with a potentially greater impact on reducing accidents.

As well as EORE beneficiaries, those operators that conduct KAPB surveys and knowledge retention testing reported that they strived for equal participation across groups. In contrast to beneficiary targeting, this is highly appropriate as these surveys serve the operational purpose of improving the materials, messaging, and delivery of EORE to different groups.

Findings

In many cases, EORE operators are targeting gender balanced participation in EORE activities

In some cases, operators are prioritising ‘easier to reach’ EORE beneficiaries rather than the most at risk, in order to reach higher numerical EORE beneficiary targets.

Recommendations

50/50 sex- or gender-based beneficiary targets should be avoided in EORE activities, unless an EORE needs analysis demonstrates this is the most effective approach.

EORE beneficiary targets should set a minimum participation percentage for all relevant groups (e.g., adult females, child females, child males and adult males), in order to allow operators flexibility to target the most at-risk, whilst ensuring that beneficiaries from all groups are reached)

Donors should prioritise reaching the most at-risk people, rather than reaching the highest possible number of EORE beneficiaries, as the most at-risk are often the hardest to reach.

Operators should continue to strive for equitable representation of women, girls, boys, and men, including persons with disabilities in knowledge retention and KAPB surveys, as well as EORE needs assessments, where possible.

Victim Assistance

Data disaggregation is important for the design and delivery of VA services, as the impacts of an EO accident on both direct and indirect victims can differ significantly depending on gender, age, disability, and other identity factors, leading to different needs and barriers to participation. As such IMAS 13.10 requires that mine action operators shall ‘collect disaggregated data on the age, sex and disability of victims.’⁴⁷ This is also a recommendation in the Standardising Beneficiary Guidelines⁴⁸ and the OAP.

Use of disaggregated data is especially well established in VA, all VA operator interviews consulted as part of this study applied SADDD to both direct and indirect victim and beneficiary data, using the WG-SS. This applies to victim records, beneficiary data, needs assessments, and quality of life surveys. In the case of beneficiary data, the numbers were also broken down by type of activity (for example medical treatment, psychosocial support, and vocational support).

⁴⁶ IMAS 12.10, 5.5, p. 15

⁴⁷ IMAS 13.10, Amendment 1, 5.2, 2

⁴⁸ Standardising Beneficiary Guidelines, Second Edition, p. 8

The primary purpose of this disaggregation is to design and monitor VA services which are sensitive and responsive to gender, age, and disability and to ensure that target groups are being reached. SADDD beneficiary data is also used to communicate to donors that specific groups are being reached and that a gender and diversity sensitive approach is being applied, though most donors did not ask for SADDD.

One organisation gave the example of the Gender Action Learning System approach, developed by Oxfam and used at a household level and community level for persons with disabilities and other community members to identify and plan socioeconomic inclusion activities. It was reported that this approach had also led to better division of domestic labour amongst beneficiary households in Laos, through setting targets defined by the beneficiaries themselves. This type of community engagement supports the **CRPD's** commitment to involve persons with disabilities in decision-making processes, as well as **Article 27 on Work and Employment**. Another VA service provider gave the example of community self-help groups for persons with disabilities, which they reported as providing personal and social empowerment for beneficiaries within their communities.

VA projects in ASEAN EO-affected states often have direct interaction with people who may be vulnerable to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), including persons with disabilities, and specifically women and girls with disabilities, as well as LGBTQI persons. Provision of VA services, and other community facing activities, can also be used as an opportunity to raise awareness on SGBV, as well as on mechanisms and services available for survivors of SGBV. Incorporating SGBV expertise, as well as awareness raising on LGBTQI rights, in VA activities creates an entry point to raise awareness and provide care or refer survivors to support services. Whilst this approach was not discussed in consultations for this report, good practices have been developed in other contexts, such as through the work of the Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines in Colombia.⁴⁹ Mainstreaming of SGBV considerations in VA and other community facing activities can help to contribute directly to **SDG 5 Target 5.2** “End all Violence Against and Exploitation of Women and Girls”.

Finding

VA services in ASEAN EO-affected states often have access to, and direct interaction with individuals who may be vulnerable to SGBV.

Recommendation

VA service providers should aim to integrate SGBV messaging and referral to SGBV services in their programmes where possible.

Socioeconomic inclusion projects such as vocational training projects can also contribute towards the CRPD and SDGs through the collection of SADDD on beneficiaries. One organisation reported aiming for gender balance amongst vocational training beneficiaries, including indirect victims, often women heads of households identified as economically vulnerable and lacking employment opportunities. Mine action physical rehabilitation services also contribute directly to the CRPD's **Article 26 on Habilitation and Rehabilitation**.

Some barriers to effective monitoring of VA activities were also identified. Along with a lack of training on the WG-SS and disability inclusion more generally, coordination of VA services by governments was identified as a challenge by some interviewees. It was noted that in some contexts, authorities ability to integrate intersectional considerations is restricted, as distinctions is made between ‘mine victims’, as compared to the perceived separate categories of ‘women’ or ‘persons with disabilities’ for financial aid. This separation does not support the integrated approach to VA or allow for intersectional analysis of VA beneficiaries.

⁴⁹ Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines. Gender-based Violence in the Context of Mine Action in Colombia. 2020.

Finding

An example of separate and exclusive government categories for financial support for ‘mine victims’, ‘women’, and ‘persons with disabilities’ was identified.

Recommendation

Provision of VA services should follow an integrated approach including referral of EO accident victims to services for persons with disabilities and allowing access to persons with disabilities to VA services.

Land Release Beneficiaries

Land release beneficiary data (both direct and indirect) reviewed in the study was generally disaggregated by sex and age, by categories of direct female adult beneficiaries, direct male adult beneficiaries, direct female child beneficiaries, and direct male children beneficiaries, in line with IMAS 05.10. Sometimes the results were presented disaggregated only by gender. To take a typical example from a project report:

[The project] *benefited women, men, girls and boys relatively equally. 53% of beneficiaries were men and boys, 47% women and girls.*

The main purpose of collecting this data is to demonstrate that clearance activities benefit a broad cross-section of the community, including women, girls, boys, and men, in contrast with some other humanitarian projects which may only target and benefit specific age and gender groups.

Whilst this is useful for reporting, disaggregation of beneficiary data at this level is generally not used for operational purposes such as task prioritisation. However, some project logframes set gender balanced targets for land release beneficiaries, indicating that the final land release beneficiaries should be as close as possible to 50% women and 50% men, or 25% each for women, girls, boys, and men. Furthermore, it was reported in one case that the number of female direct beneficiaries in a proposed clearance task could have an impact on prioritisation at the task selection stage, i.e., the higher the % of female beneficiaries, the higher the prioritisation score awarded to the task by the national authority.

Whilst they are the result of well-intentioned attempts by stakeholders to be gender sensitive, such targets are not helpful, as they are arbitrary and wrongfully elevate the importance of one group over another. Whilst land released directly to women as landowners or heads of households can demonstrate direct contribution towards SDG 5 and indirect contribution to other SDGs as highlighted in the policy background, it doesn't follow that the selection of tasks with an overall equal number of male and female beneficiaries is realistic or the right thing to do.

In reality, the sex and age balance of land release beneficiaries will be dependent on the population living in or using the hazardous areas. Furthermore, prioritisation based on gender should not supersede the first priority which is preservation of life, for example prioritising clearance of areas with a higher percentage of women or men doesn't materially reflect a reduction in risk for individuals compared with other criteria.

Finding

In some cases, donors set SADD targets for land release beneficiaries, implying that operators should strive for gender balance in land release beneficiaries. Some prioritisation processes nominally ascribe greater priority scores to tasks with a higher percentage of female beneficiaries.

Recommendation

Stakeholders should not set arbitrary project targets for the number of women, girls, boys, and men benefitting from land release, as these targets have little impact on prioritisation and don't reflect the reality of mine-affected communities. However, disaggregated data on land release beneficiaries should still be collected to demonstrate that land release activities benefit everyone in affected communities.

Non-Technical Survey

NTS involves collection of data from consultation with affected communities and as such the collection of SADD and SADDD is relevant. Around half of the NTS forms analysed for the study contained fields asking for the sex and age of informants. There were also differences in the extent to which operators conducting NTS applied inclusive and participatory approaches to data collection from the community in NTS. Most reported using mixed gender teams⁵⁰, but some deployed more participatory methods such as focus group discussions, separation of groups by gender and age, and house to house interviews.

IMAS 08.10 on NTS recommends that 'names, age, sex appointments, and signatures of key informants should be recorded', and as such recommends but does not strictly require collection of SADD.⁵¹ The minimum data requirements in IMAS 05.10 do not require collection of data on informants, disaggregated or otherwise.⁵² The Standardising Beneficiary Guidelines go further by recommending that SADDD is collected during NTS 'to monitor if persons with disabilities are informing NTS'.⁵³ However, none of the NTS forms analysed for the study asked about disability status of informants. There is a lack of information on different roles, responsibilities and mobility patterns that may mean that persons with disabilities have different information on EO contamination than other groups, with the exception of accident survivors with disabilities.

Operators reported being unsure about the purpose of this disaggregated data collection. These data points can be used to monitor the extent to which the NTS process has consulted with women, men, and different age groups (for example elderly people and adolescents). Some operator interviewees noted that they aimed for gender balance amongst informants but didn't record this information. Inclusion of these questions was more like in cases where operators have SOPs requiring or recommending that different groups are consulted as part of the NTS process, or where it is required in NMAAS.

This data can also be communicated to donors, for example reporting SADDD on the informants consulted as part of an NTS exercise. Specifically, this data would be useful in demonstrating activities that contribute towards the participation pillar of the WPS agenda, however this is generally not done by operators or NMAAs.

Finding

Whilst guidance and standards on NTS recommend collection of either SADD or SADDD on survey informants, SADD is only sometimes collected in practice and SADDD is generally not collected.

Recommendation

Operators should collect the age, sex, and (where possible) the disability status of NTS informants in NTS forms.

Impact Assessments

Most operators, and one of the consulted NMAAs, collect impact data on clearance activities through pre- and post-clearance surveys. This data is primarily collected for presentation of results to donors, rather than for operational reasons though there are some exceptions. Attitudes of donors towards socioeconomic and psychosocial impact data varied significantly, with some requiring a lot of data and others requiring none at all, though some emphasised that it was becoming increasingly important for mine action budgets in order to demonstrate impact across the global sustainable development, peacebuilding, and humanitarian agendas, allowing reporting to move from the output to impact level.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ A mixed-gender team is a team where at least one member is a man and one is a woman.

⁵¹ MAS 08.10, 10 Documentation

⁵² IMAS 05.10, Annex B, 2.1 Non-Technical Survey

⁵³ Standardising Beneficiary Definitions, Second Edition p. 8

⁵⁴ Often referred together as forming "the triple nexus".

Data is collected, usually at the household level, before clearance and usually 6-12 months after clearance and the pre- and post-clearance data is compared. In some cases, the post-clearance data is compared with more limited data on intended land use during the NTS process. Operators stressed the need for longer term funding to implement land release impact surveys, and some explained that their plans to move away from collecting impact data for individual donor contracts and towards a programme-led system.

All of the impact surveys analysed for this study disaggregated data by sex and age, and some also included questions on disability including the Washington Group Short Set of Questions. Despite this, some operators reported that their analysis of socioeconomic data collection did not have a gender or disability component. One interviewee reported:

“Our livelihoods work doesn’t have a strong gender component to it. Gender tends to get swept under the rug as there aren’t many donor requirements on gender.”

This is a case where a lot of potentially valuable data is already being collected, but not analysed or used.

Data collected by operators in pre- and post-clearance surveys varies considerably between organisations, but data is typically collected at the household levels, involving the identification of either a head of household or a survey respondent, as well as other individuals in that person’s household. Beyond the household level, information is also collected at the community level, comparing expected and actual land use between the pre- and post-clearance surveys.

For data collected at the household level, it is important to examine its value for establishing contribution to gender equality. It is assumed that clearance will benefit all members of a household, and this is captured in overall land release beneficiary data as noted above. It is therefore difficult to demonstrate the impact of clearance on gender equality at the household level without asking questions about and to specific household members, and some impact surveys do this, however this is a time-intensive approach.

Some operators collect detailed socioeconomic and psychosocial information at the household level including indicators such as:

- ▶ Land use
- ▶ Land value
- ▶ Overall household income
- ▶ Income from agriculture
- ▶ % or amount of expenditure on food
- ▶ Access to loans
- ▶ Crop yield
- ▶ Number or value of livestock
- ▶ Level of fear of EO⁵⁵

This data is sometimes presented to show a reduction in the vulnerability of households. One operator reported having compared household income data between male and female headed households, finding that the latter experienced a greater increase in income as a result of clearance (though this group still had a lower income than male-headed households on average). Such data is extremely useful for demonstrating the impact of mine action on women’s economic empowerment.

⁵⁵ Expressed by the survey respondent on an individual level.

Albeit not always at disadvantage, female-headed households can be more vulnerable to poverty due to more limited access to job opportunities or lower wages.⁵⁶ Whilst this largely depends on societal norms and contextual factors, including the reasons behind this type of household, explosive ordnance risk reduction can be an important form of economic empowerment for female-headed households, as activities largely take place in areas affected by conflict which has left many women widowed.

In order to demonstrate the impact of clearance on gender equality and women's empowerment more clearly, two distinctions can be made in household level data: 1) whether the household is a female-headed household, and 2) whether the released land is owned by a woman. Other than occasional case studies, operators reported that they do not currently collate or analyse data on female-headed households from impact surveys, even though some already disaggregate 'head of household' and 'landowner' by gender.

By identifying female-headed households, operators can use all of the socioeconomic indicators already collected in the list above to demonstrate contribution towards gender equality. This impact data can be used to identify increase in assets of female-headed households or individual women, demonstrating a direct impact to SDG 5 Target 5.A. This could be expressed in as a financial amount (e.g., increased income, increased asset value of land).

Finding

Many operators already collect SADD or SADDD on heads of household in household surveys which demonstrate the socioeconomic and psychosocial impact of mine action activities, but do not disaggregate this data by sex to demonstrate the specific positive impact of clearance on female-headed households

Recommendation

Impact assessments collecting household survey data should ask for SADDD on the head of household and then analyse this data to demonstrate the specific positive impact of clearance (such as increased income or land value) on female headed households where possible.

Land Ownership Data

Most pre- and post- impact assessment forms at the household and community level included questions on private land ownership and use, and some added questions to understand the risk of disputes about land tenure and use, such as *"Do you expect any disputes over land rights or ownership?"* or *"Do you anticipate any land disputes with the land after clearance?"*

One operator included a question and related response options to identify potential challenges for some groups to access and own land: *"Are there any groups of people in your community who face problems in owning property or maintaining / proving ownership?"*. Possible answers included: "women", "religious minorities", "ethnic minorities", and "displaced persons". It was reported that these questions were added to the assessments in order to understand whether the clearance had facilitated, or could facilitate, land disputes or land grabbing.

Groups in situations of vulnerability, such as female- and child- headed households and persons with disabilities are generally more at risk of land grabs and dispossession, particularly in contexts where they have been displaced. Women are also less likely to possess documentation and more likely to face violence in relation to land disputes. Accordingly, it is especially important to acquire reliable information on these risks from a gender equality and inclusion perspective, inform people of their rights through community liaison when appropriate, and implement strategies to reduce land grabbing risks in line with global and regional development and security agendas.

⁵⁶ Ghada E Saad, Hala Ghattas, Andrea Wendt, Franciele Hellwig, Jocelyn DeJong, Ties Boerma, Cesar Victora, Aluisio JD Barros, "Paving the way to understanding female-headed households", Journal of Global Health: <https://jogh.org/2022/jogh-12-04038>

Sex disaggregated data on land ownership is difficult to find for ASEAN states, and global estimates vary, some estimating that 20% of land is owned by women and others that men own around three times the land owned by women. Data from Myanmar in 2016 shows that 14.5% of women aged 15-49 own land alone compared with 27.3% of men.⁵⁷ By demonstrating that clearance activities transfer land to women landowners, operators, authorities, and donors can demonstrate direct contribution towards SDG 5 Indicator 5.A.1 on Female land rights or ownership (give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property). This impact could be expressed in terms of area released (e.g., the project released X^m² to female headed households) or land value.

It should be noted that there is little guidance on land ownership and HLP in mine action, despite the fact that the sector is responsible for releasing land to communities and landowners, including producing documentation citing land ownership (in the case of privately held land, rather than community land or public land) as part of the handover process. IMAS does not require collection of any data on land ownership as part of the land release process, though IMAS 07.11 does identify landowners as a 'stakeholder' in the process.⁵⁸

Findings

Operators regularly release land to women landowners and are in a position to collect sex disaggregated data on land ownership, but generally do not collect data or report on this

IMAS and good practice guidance do not require or recommend collection of data on the identity of landowners as part of the land release process.

Recommendations

Stakeholders should collect SADD (and where possible SADDD) on land ownership as part of the land release process or post-clearance impact assessment, in order to better demonstrate impact on women's land ownership that is already taking place

IMAS 07.10 should be updated to recommend or require that stakeholders collect data on the landowner, including their sex, age, and (where possible) disability status

Employment data

In addition to data relating to operations and impact of clearance, operators also collect and present data on employment within their organisations, in order to demonstrate the positive impact this employment brings to the area of operations beyond activities, in the form of salaries, training opportunities, and other benefits.

Data on employment is useful for demonstrating mine action's impact on gender equality and broader inclusion across a number of policy agendas including SDG 5 and the participation pillar of the WPS Agenda. All donors interviewed for this study emphasised the value of employment data for this purpose. This data is also useful for employers in making reasonable adjustments in the workplace and reducing gender or disability based disadvantages.

While women continued to remain underrepresented in management and operational roles, the mine action sector in a number of ASEAN States has made significant progress in providing opportunities for women in many aspects of work, particularly in post-conflict rural areas where opportunities for stable remunerative work may be more limited.

Operators often report data on their staff disaggregated by sex, and much less frequently (very rarely) by disability, to donors and in some cases national authorities.⁵⁹ This disaggregation is usually applied to the overall staff numbers, and sometimes to the number of staff trained, or the number of supervisors, expressed as a number or percentage.

⁵⁷ Gender Data Portal – World Bank: <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/indicators/sg-own-ld/>

⁵⁸ MAS 07.10, 7 Land Release Criteria

In particular, there has been a drive in many programmes to increase the gender balance in staff or maintain a high percentage of women in the workforce. Operators generally reported this as being a) because they are equal opportunities employers and recognise the benefits of hiring more women, and b) because this is seen as a priority by some donors.

Donors stated that there is no expectation that operators should adopt full gender balance in employment over the short term, however some donors do set targets for a minimum percentage of women employed using the funds they provide. Two examples were provided where donors had set minimum levels, of 30% and 36% for employment of women, both of which were exceeded by the operators in question.

In most cases donors were keen to receive examples of how their funding leads to employment opportunities for women, either through quantitative reporting, or through case studies highlighting the positive impacts of employment for specific employees. Some donors also ask their implementing partners to report on the percentage of women in managerial roles and the number of women participating in certain types of training such as EOD and PSSM standards. Some further emphasised the need for in-depth qualitative reporting to demonstrate employment impact on specific agendas, rather than just reporting staffing numbers.

The employment of persons with disabilities in the sector contributes to economic empowerment and enjoyment of basic rights and freedoms including under the CRPD and national and regional frameworks. Employment opportunities by the mine action sector can be important for all persons with disabilities, especially women living with disabilities, who globally tend to have a considerably lower rate of workforce participation than men living with disabilities. Women with disabilities living in rural contexts, face even larger challenges and restrictions in obtaining productive employment that pays a living wage. This makes employment in mine action, which largely occurs in rural areas, a very unique opportunity to protect the rights of women living with disabilities and ensure their advancement and empowerment, as dictated by the CRPD. Organisations can also demonstrate contribution towards **CRPD Article 27 on Work and Employment** by making reasonable accommodations to facilitate the access of persons with disabilities to employment.

Team Composition

The distinction between all-women teams, gender balanced teams, and mixed gender teams was also raised by stakeholders.

It was noted that in some cases, operators maintain all-women clearance teams. One operator interviewee stated:

“We have one all-female team as donors like it. The reason for the team composition is donor-led, it’s great for communication as this one team attracts the most journalists and external visits. But generally, we advocate for having mixed teams and promoting women in leadership roles.”

One national authority also reported encouraging the adoption of all-women clearance teams by operators and the army.

It is important to note that good practice guidance recommends mixed-gender teams for community facing activities (in order to facilitate effective communication), and mixed-gender teams for clearance and technical survey activities, unless the cultural context requires single gender teams.⁶⁰ One mine action donor country recently changed its reporting indicator on this from ‘number of all-female teams’ to ‘% of women and men employed’ in recognition of the sector moving towards using mixed teams rather than single sex teams.

There is no hard evidence for operational advantages or disadvantages of single-gender or mixed-gender teams, but operators generally report a better working atmosphere in mixed gender teams. Whether organisations deploy mixed or single gender clearance teams should be up to the discretion of the organisation, though community-facing teams (community liaison, NTS, EORE, VA) should be mixed gender according to good practice.

⁵⁹ Staffing figures are not disaggregated by age as it is assumed that all staff are adults.

⁶⁰ UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes

Finding

In the past donors and national authorities have promoted all-female teams for communications purposes, but good practice guidance recommends mixed gender clearance teams where possible, and mixed gender community facing teams in all cases.

Recommendation

Stakeholders should support the deployment of mixed gender clearance and community facing teams.

Transformative Impact

Several operators and donors reported that employment of women in their organisations led to positive changes in personal empowerment and gender norms. For example, one operator in Cambodia reported:

“We have shown that women in deminer roles have increased self-esteem and respect in their communities. Employing women isn’t always easy in Cambodia as there has been significant resistance from some local communities in the past.”

Another, also in Cambodia, reported:

“Our female deminers are members of affected communities, they are empowered via their employment and their status in the community is changing due to changes in attitudes towards them.”

This is also reflected in several studies on employment in mine action including the case study on Lao PDR in Annex A of this report, which highlights the positive impact of employment on gender norms in the home communities of staff employed in mine action, as well as the improvements to personal empowerment of women, and social empowerment through greater respect in the household, community, and more involvement in decision-making.

Employment in mine action has been demonstrated to have a significant positive impact on women’s financial independence, ability to make decisions within their household and communities, and self-esteem and confidence.⁶¹ Members of EO-affected communities have also reported positive changes in attitudes towards women working and women’s capacities in general, attributing greater respect to women deminers for example being more likely to agree that ‘Women can do the same jobs as men’.⁶²

Donors also cited case studies which they had used for internal reporting including examples of women deminers attending trainings, receiving promotions, learning to drive, and sending their children to school as a result of their employment in mine action. Some emphasised that information on positively changing gender norms as a result of mine action is particularly useful.

Socioeconomic Impact

Studies on the impact of employment of female deminers have demonstrated that across different contexts women benefit from employment in terms of both economic and personal empowerment.⁶³ Women experience a considerably greater increase in financial independence and income compared with their male counterparts,

⁶¹ The Socio-Economic Impact of Employing Female Deminers in Sri Lanka, GICHD, 2017, p. 30, Afghanistan’s First Female Deminers: An Analysis of Perception Changes among Deminers, Families, and Communities, GICHD & UNMAS, 2019, p. 27, Baseline Study of the Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women through Mine Action in Ninewa Governorate, Iraq, UNMAS, 2021, p. 8

⁶² The Socio-Economic Impact of Employing Female Deminers in Sri Lanka, p. 34, Afghanistan’s First Female Deminers, p. 11

⁶³ *he Socio-Economic Impact of Employing Female Deminers in Sri Lanka*, GICHD, 2017
Afghanistan’s First Female Deminers: An Analysis of Perception Changes among Deminers, Families, and Communities, GICHD & UNMAS, 2019
Baseline Study of the Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women through Mine Action in Ninewa Governorate, Iraq, UN Mine Action Service, 2021

and that women's expenditure on food and access to water and electricity improves after starting work as deminers.⁶⁴ Women's access to financial services such as loans and bank accounts also increases as a result of employment in mine action. Most notably, data shows that women often send more of their children to school than their male counterparts following employment in mine action, demonstrating contribution towards **SDG 4 on Quality Education**.

Mine action employment also contributes to women's ability to purchase land and acquire property, directly contributing towards **SDG 5 Target 5.A**.⁶⁵ Employment also contributes towards women's increased access to mobile phones, contributing directly to **SDG 5 Indicator 5.B.1 on Mobile Telephone Ownership**.⁶⁶ Both women and men employed in MA experience greater access to healthcare services and medication⁶⁷

Finding

Employment of women in mine action contributes towards several positive outcomes, including transformation of gender norms

Recommendation

Stakeholders can demonstrate impact through employee surveys highlighting impact using the recommended indicator list in this report

Training

Employment in mine action provides women with opportunities to develop knowledge and skills that can be transferred to other forms of employment outside the sector. As well as gaining technical mine action and medical training, research on the socioeconomic impact of employing women deminers in different contexts have repeatedly shown that, once employed in the sector, women gained soft skills in leadership, teamwork, communication, and mediation. Some organisations also provide opportunities to develop hard skills such as language and computer literacy.

Some donors have also funded gender mainstreaming training to operators and NMAAs, however this was much less the case for disability inclusion training, though several operators highlighted the need for this training, especially as the WG-SS are increasingly used.

Finding

Operators highlight the need for disability inclusion training for staff when asking about disability and using the WG-SS

Recommendation

Donors should support disability inclusion training for community facing mine action staff where possible

⁶⁴ Baseline Study of the Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women through Mine Action in Ninewa Governorate, p. 30

⁶⁵ *The Socio-Economic Impact of Employing Female Deminers in Sri Lanka*, pp. 21-22

⁶⁶ *The Socio-Economic Impact of Employing Female Deminers in Sri Lanka*, pp. 22-24

⁶⁷ *The Socio-Economic Impact of Employing Female Deminers in Sri Lanka*, p. 25

How Donors Use this Data

The points above demonstrate the huge amount of data collected relevant to gender equality and inclusion in mine action. But often much less of this data is subsequently passed on to donors. Some interviewees from operators and national authorities raised questions about what donors actually want to see regarding gender equality and inclusion, and why. This section attempts to answer those questions based on the information provided by donor interviewees.

Tools Used by Donors to Gather Data

Donors reporting using a range of tools to establish the degree of gender or diversity mainstreaming in projects, as well as impact on gender equality and inclusion. These include:

- ▶ Narrative reporting (including case studies)
- ▶ Results logframes
- ▶ Markers or scoring systems
- ▶ Donor monitoring and evaluation visits

Narrative reporting

Most donors interviewed for the study require some kind of narrative reporting on gender (and sometimes other diversity factors), either in a specific section of a donor report, or mainstreamed throughout. Donors stressed that case studies were useful in this regard, though some stated that more formal reporting on specific activities and indicators was preferable. The case studies submitted for this study generally fell into three categories, highlighting:

- ▶ the impact of EO contamination on affected communities,
- ▶ the socioeconomic impact of clearance, and
- ▶ the positive benefits of employment.

Case studies in the first category describe the different impacts of EO on individuals including women and men, including reports on the impact of blocked resources on households and communities, and of specific accidents. The case studies provided for this study generally did not highlight the gendered risks faced by affected people,

The second category of case studies highlights the positive impact of activities, usually clearance. In this case, stories of both women and men are told, highlighting the fact that women also benefit from clearance. Most do not speak about the impact of clearance on gender equality or inclusion in particular, rather focusing on increase in earnings, community land use, and reduction in fear of EO before and after clearance. Though some did highlight the cases of particularly vulnerable individuals such as widows and returnees.

One operator reported having reviewed their case studies and noticed that there was a bias in their reporting, reporting more stories of male landowners, or putting their stories first in reports. This may reflect local conditions in that more men are landowners, or local gender norms lead to stories from men being prioritised unconsciously by community liaison staff.

These impact-focused case studies could better demonstrate impact on gender equality by referencing gender inequality in the context of the area of operations, for instance the levels of land ownership amongst women, or that women have fewer opportunities to work outside the community, so the return of agricultural assets has a particular positive impact on their opportunities for income.

Findings

Case studies on clearance generally do not highlight the gendered context in activities take place, and could better demonstrate impact on gender equality and inclusion by doing so

Case studies are effective in highlighting intersectional considerations and impacts, of both contamination and mine action activities

Recommendation

Case studies should highlight gender inequalities and marginalisation of groups in the area of operations, where relevant, to better demonstrate the impact of mine action activities on gender equality and inclusion in those contexts (for example by highlighting the lower incomes of female-headed households in relevant case studies)

The final category of case studies, on employment, are the most effective in highlighting mine action impact on gender equality. These highlight the benefits of employment with the operator including increases in income, assets, standard of living, skills and training before and after employment. Once again, highlighting the gender inequalities in the working context and lack of alternative employment opportunities for women could better demonstrate the impact of employment on gender equality. Case studies also highlight specific women who have been trained or promoted within the organisation, demonstrating impact towards the participation pillar in the WPS Agenda.

Several case studies mentioned changing attitudes towards women in the workplace, as well as personal and social empowerment. For example, mentioning how there had initially been resistance within the family to a deminer joining, but that attitudes of family and neighbours had changed as a result. This demonstrates contribution towards **Article 5 of CEDAW**, and more generally demonstrates a gender transformative impact by highlighting changing gender norms and power relations.

No examples were provided of case studies highlighting positive impacts of highlighting persons with disabilities, but the same approach applies. Integration of former combatants is another theme highlighted in case studies which could demonstrate contribution towards peacebuilding.

Logframes

Logical frameworks or results matrixes represent expected results and progress towards those results using quantitative indicators. Indicators in the logframes submitted to this study mostly disaggregated data by SADD, and some by SADD, in line with the section above on data disaggregation.

Output and outcome level targets are a feature of mine action logframes. Often donors will set beneficiary targets at the output level in agreement with operators or accept suggested targets from operators in proposals. One interviewee described the setting of such targets as a 'chicken and egg situation' where donors tend to expect specific indicators or targets because operators present them.

As discussed above, SADD targets for land release beneficiaries do not impact prioritisation, so whilst SADD reporting of beneficiaries (without targets) should be used, SADD targets for land release beneficiaries should not.

Setting of SADD(D) targets for EORE beneficiaries was seen as being more appropriate, though targets setting an equal number of women, girls, boys, and men as beneficiaries restricts the ability of operators to target at-risk groups. It is recommended that stakeholders working in EORE set minimum beneficiary targets depending on the context.

Some donors set targets for the percentage of female staff, in one case a minimum of 36%. Operators reported that these targets were not restrictive as they were set at a realistic level. Most donors requiring data on percentages of women in staff, trainings, and managerial roles do not set hard targets, but request disaggregated data for their own internal reporting towards agendas such as the participation pillar of the WPS Agenda.

Gender Markers

Some donors also reported using gender markers to determine the level of gender and diversity mainstreaming in projects. For example, FCDO use a three-level marker (aware, sensitive, transformative) and Global Affairs Canada use a scoring system of E1-E3. The donors that apply these markers use them to make decisions on funding, for donor interviewees mentioned that a project with a low marker score would likely not be funded.

Each marker system is different but generally the aim is to determine whether the project in question:

- ▶ Involves some form of gender or diversity sensitive context analysis
 - Most interviewees stated that standalone gender and diversity analysis, but instead this analysis was mainstreamed throughout other documents including proposals
- ▶ Records SADD or SADDD
- ▶ Addresses barriers to participation to include marginalized groups in the activity
- ▶ Mainstreams gender and diversity considerations throughout the project
- ▶ Aims to address gender equality or inclusion as a project objective
- ▶ Aims to have a transformational impact on gender norms

Most mine action projects will not have gender equality or transformative impact on social and gender norms as their primary objectives, however as noted above mine action projects can have impact in these areas and this can be demonstrated using the reporting good practices and recommendations in this report.

Donor visits

As with other aspects of mine action programmes, donor visits also provide an opportunity to highlight mainstreaming efforts in community facing activities and employment. One donor suggested that these visits should focus more on gender and diversity mainstreaming.

RECOMMENDED INDICATORS

Based on the findings above, the following list of indicators is suggested in order to demonstrate the value of mine action activities across different policy agendas. The table below lists indicators relevant to gender equality and inclusion and how these can be linked to the policy background:

Indicator	Disaggregation	Purpose
Accident and Victim Data		
# EO-related casualties	SADDD	Operational purpose: to understand the impact of EO on different age and gender groups, as well as persons with disabilities
Land Release		
# Direct land release beneficiaries	SADDD	WPS Protection Pillar
# Indirect land release beneficiaries	SADDD	WPS Protection Pillar
NTS informants	SADDD	Operational purpose: to ensure that NTS is including women and persons with disabilities Impact: WPS Participation Pillar LAP Action 23, 4 OAP Action 3
# Mixed gender NTS teams	-	Operational purpose: to ensure inclusive approach to NTS
Participation in handover processes	SADDD	WPS Participation Pillar WPS Relief & Recovery Pillar
EORE		
# EORE beneficiaries	SADD	WPS Protection Pillar WPS Prevention Pillar OAP Action 29, 3 LAP Action 28, 4

% EORE beneficiaries demonstrating improved understanding of EO risks after EORE	SADDD	Operational purpose: to improve quality of EORE materials and messages and adapt to specific audiences on basis of gender, age, and disability Ref: IMAS 12.10
--	-------	---

Victim Assistance

Participation in VA services planning	SADDD	WPS Relief and Recovery Pillar CRPD
---------------------------------------	-------	--

CRPD

VA beneficiaries	SADDD	Operational purpose: to monitor access to different groups CPRD Article 26, 31 LAP Action 31
------------------	-------	--

% VA services integrating SGBV messaging	-	SDG 5 Target 5.2
--	---	------------------

Impact Assessments

M ² of formerly contaminated land released	Female landowners	SDG 5 Target 5.A SDG 1 Target 1.4 CEDAW Article 14
---	-------------------	--

Land value of released land	Female landowners	SDG 5 Target 5.A SDG 1 Indicator 1.4.2
-----------------------------	-------------------	---

Household income increase	Female-headed households	SDG 10 Target 10.2
---------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------

Income from agriculture	Female-headed households	SDG 2 Target 2.3
-------------------------	--------------------------	------------------

Access to loans	Female-headed households	CEDAW Article 14.2
-----------------	--------------------------	--------------------

Crop yield	Female-headed households	SDG 2 Target 2.3
------------	--------------------------	------------------

# and value of livestock	Female-headed households	SDG 2 Target 2.3
--------------------------	--------------------------	------------------

% direct beneficiaries surveyed reporting feeling safer after land release or EORE	SADDD	WPS Protection Pillar
--	-------	-----------------------

% of direct beneficiaries surveyed reporting improved livelihood opportunities following land release activities	SADDD	SDG 10 Target 10.2
--	-------	--------------------

% of direct beneficiaries surveyed reporting increased access to basic services and/or infrastructure following land release activities	SADDD	SDG 10 Target 10.2
---	-------	--------------------

Employment

# or % of employees	by sex and disability status	WPS Participation Pillar WPS Prevention Pillar CEDAW Article 10 SDG Target 8.5 CRPD Article 27
---------------------	------------------------------	--

# or % of managers or supervisors	by sex and disability status	SDG 5 Target 5.5.2 CRPD Article 27 WPS Participation Pillar
-----------------------------------	------------------------------	---

# employees able to purchase property or land	by sex and disability status	SDG 5 Target 5.A
---	------------------------------	------------------

# employees able to purchase a mobile telephone	by sex and disability status	SDG 5 Indicator 5.B.1
---	------------------------------	-----------------------

# employees trained in EOD, PSSM, medical, demining	by sex and disability status	CRPD Article 27 CEDAW Article 11 WPS Participation Pillar SDG 5 Target 5.1
---	------------------------------	---

Change in community attitudes towards women working in mine action / in general	-	Gender transformative impact CEDAW Article 5
---	---	---

Policy Participation

Attendees at mine action fora	by sex	WPS Participation Pillar OAP Action 3
-------------------------------	--------	--

Attendees at National Mine Action Strategic Planning meetings	by sex	WPS Participation Pillar
---	--------	--------------------------



CONCLUSION

Mine action stakeholders collect considerable data on gender, age, and disability as part of their work in EO-affected ASEAN states, both in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their work, including on promotion of gender equality and inclusion, as well as to better demonstrate their impact to others. Donors find this valuable and universally expressed the desire for more evidence of impact on gender equality and inclusion, presented more clearly and related to specific policy agendas.

At the same time, operators and national authorities are sometimes unsure of why they are collecting this data, what it should be used for, and of the broader policy agenda it relates to. This study has attempted to clarify these points through linking relevant areas of the gender equality and inclusion policy framework to specific mine action activities and indicators.

Some organisations already collect and analyse data to a high standard, in line with good practices, whereas others are not meeting IMAS minimum data requirements on disaggregation. Most stakeholders interviewed for the study sit somewhere in the middle, by collecting SADD but not always analysing it to demonstrate the impact of their activities. This study has suggested a range of indicators that clearly present this impact, linked to specific international commitments.

In some cases, disaggregated data is used for target setting, such as in EORE and land release, which does not necessarily support equitable outcomes for beneficiaries, all stakeholders should adopt a flexible attitude towards targeting of activities, based on need and vulnerability rather than arbitrarily aiming for gender balance.

The mine action sector has also begun to move towards greater integration of disability considerations in its work, including the use of the WG-SS and more focus on disability inclusion, often at the direction of mine action donors, however some stakeholders require more guidance and training to do this effectively and avoid this becoming a 'tick-box' exercise. Improving data collection on disability without increasing the reporting burden on stakeholders remains a challenge.

Through better demonstrating impact on gender equality and inclusion, particularly in employment, mine action stakeholders can better demonstrate the contribution of the sector towards a range of international commitments and agendas, further establishing the value of inclusive approaches to mine action, and to broader humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

Finding	Recommendation
<p>Stakeholders are unsure of how to analyse, present, and use SADDD, and are often doing so in a manner which doesn't allow for intersectional analysis of the data. There is a lack of guidance on how to do so.</p>	<p>The mine action sector should develop good practice guidance on the presentation and use of SADDD</p> <p>Donors and training organisations should support training for community facing mine action staff on the use of the WG-SS</p>
<p>Collection of SADD and SADDD victim data is recommended in good practice but in some cases, this is not collected by stakeholders in EO-affected ASEAN states.</p>	<p>All organisations collecting data on direct victims of EO accidents should collect SADD at a minimum as per the minimum data requirements in IMAS 05.10 and preferably SADDD to align with the OAP, LAP and good practice guidance.</p>
<p>Good practice guidance recommends that disability status before the accident should be collected in accident and victim monitoring systems but this is rarely the case in practice</p>	<p>Stakeholders should revise accident and victim forms and databases to add fields for the disability status of the victim before the accident, to be collected where possible</p>
<p>In many cases, EORE operators are targeting gender balanced participation in EORE activities</p>	<p>50/50 male/female beneficiary targets should be avoided in EORE activities, unless an EORE needs analysis demonstrates this is the most effective approach.</p> <p>EORE beneficiary targets should set a minimum participation percentage for all relevant groups (e.g., women, girls, boys and men), in order to allow operators flexibility to target the most at-risk, whilst ensuring that beneficiaries from all groups are reached)</p>

In some cases, operators are prioritising 'easier to reach' EORE beneficiaries rather than the most at risk, in order to reach higher numerical EORE beneficiary targets.

Donors should prioritise reaching the most at-risk people, rather than reaching the highest possible number of EORE beneficiaries, as the most at-risk are often the hardest to reach.

Equal representation of different gender, age, and disability groups in knowledge retention surveys is a good practice and widely conducted

Operators should continue to strive for equitable representation of women, girls, boys, and men, including persons with disabilities in knowledge retention and KAPB surveys, as well as EORE needs assessments, where possible.

VA services in ASEAN EO-affected states often have access to, and direct interaction with individuals who may be vulnerable to SGBV

VA service providers should aim to integrate SGBV messaging and referral to SGBV services in their programmes where possible.

An example of separate and exclusive government categories for financial support for 'mine victims', 'women', and 'persons with disabilities' was identified.

Provision of VA services should follow an integrated approach including referral of EO accident victims to services for persons with disabilities and allowing access to persons with disabilities to VA services.

In some cases, donors set SADD targets for land release beneficiaries, implying that operators should strive for gender balance in land release beneficiaries. Some prioritisation processes nominally ascribe greater priority scores to tasks with a higher percentage of female beneficiaries.

Stakeholders should not set arbitrary project targets for the number of women, girls, boys, and men benefitting from land release, as these targets have little impact on prioritisation and don't reflect the reality of mine-affected communities

Whilst guidance and standards on NTS recommend collection of either SADD or SADDD on survey informants, SADD is only sometimes collected in practice and SADDD is generally not collected.

Operators should collect the age, sex, and (where possible) the disability status of NTS informants in NTS forms.

Many operators already collect SADD or SADDD on heads of household in surveys which demonstrate the socioeconomic and psychosocial impact of mine action activities, but do not disaggregate this data by sex to demonstrate the specific positive impact of clearance on female-headed households

Impact assessments collecting household survey data should ask for SADDD on the head of household and then analyse this data to demonstrate the specific positive impact of clearance (such as increased income or land value) on female headed households where possible.

Operators regularly release land to women landowners and are in a position to collect sex disaggregated data on land ownership, but generally do not collect data or report on this

Stakeholders should collect SADD (and where possible SADDD) on land ownership as part of the land release process or post-clearance impact assessment, in order to better demonstrate impact on women's land ownership that is already taking place

<p>HLP considerations are not well-integrated in good practice guidance and standards; IMAS and good practice guidance do not require or recommend collection of data on the identity of landowners as part of the land release process.</p>	<p>IMAS 07.10 should be updated to recommend or require that stakeholders collect data on the landowner, including their sex, age, and (where possible) disability status</p>
<p>Stakeholders can strengthen HLP rights by promoting awareness during community facing activities</p>	<p>Stakeholders should strengthen HLP rights by promoting awareness during community facing activities</p>
<p>The protection and prevention pillars of the WPS agenda relate to the protection of women from sexual and gender-based violence</p>	<p>Stakeholders can demonstrate commitment to these pillars through application of effective and transparent safeguarding systems</p>
<p>Employment of women in mine action contributes towards several positive outcomes, including transformation of gender norms</p>	<p>Stakeholders can demonstrate impact through employee surveys highlighting impact using the recommended indicator list in this report</p>
<p>Operators highlight the need for disability inclusion training for staff when asking about disability and using the WG-SS</p>	<p>Donors should support disability inclusion training for community facing mine action staff where possible</p>
<p>In the past donors and national authorities have promoted all-female teams for communications purposes, but good practice guidance recommends mixed gender clearance teams where possible, and mixed gender community facing teams in all cases</p>	<p>Stakeholders should support the deployment of mixed gender clearance and community facing teams</p>
<p>Case studies on clearance generally do not highlight the gendered context in activities take place, and could better demonstrate impact on gender equality and inclusion by doing so</p>	<p>Case studies should highlight gender inequalities and marginalisation of groups in the area of operations, where relevant, to better demonstrate the impact of mine action activities on gender equality and inclusion in those contexts (for example by highlighting the lower incomes of female-headed households in relevant case studies)</p>



ANNEX A – EMPLOYMENT CASE STUDY: LAO PDR

Dominic Wolsey & Laura Biscaglia

December 2022

Summary of Findings

The following case study on the impact of mine action employment on gender equality and inclusion in Laos finds that the employment of women and men from diverse backgrounds has a range of positive benefits for gender equality and inclusion. In particular, the experience of both men and women on staff, and their home communities, indicates a significant positive impact on norms and attitudes towards women working in operational roles in mine action, as well as broader personal and social empowerment.

The study also demonstrates the significant economic benefits of mine action employment for both women and men. Whilst the benefits in terms of assets and resources are similar for women and men, women are less likely to have been formally employed before working in mine action, and those that do experience a higher increase in income. Women-led single income households, such as those led by widows, show particularly strong improvements across a range of indicators, indicating that employment of women who are the sole breadwinners for their families can be particularly beneficial.

Finally, data from surveys and focus group discussions shows through employment in mine action, women are more personally empowered through improved skills and confidence, as well as empowered within their own households and communities to participate and be taken seriously.

Background

This case study was conducted together with Mines Advisory Group and UXO Laos in November 2022 as part of a broader study of monitoring and evaluation of gender equality and inclusion in mine action. The study analyses data collected from mine action staff and communities in Laos to highlight the impact of employment on gender equality and inclusion in Laos.

The People's Democratic Republic of Lao (Lao PDR) remains one of the world's most heavily contaminated countries with explosive ordnance (EO), including the legacy of aerial bombing between 1964 and 1973 during the second Indochina War which still affect the population in many areas of the country today, particularly from aircraft bombs and cluster munitions. In 2022, Lao PDR reported 20 casualties from EO (3 women, 0 girls, 6 boys, and 11 men). There were 5 fatal casualties and 15 people injured.⁶⁸ In the two areas covered in this case study, Khammouane, and Xieng Khouang provinces, participants in the study reported that agricultural resources remain blocked, as well as areas used for firewood collection, though the situation has been improving in recent years due to the efforts of mine action organisations.

⁶⁸ NRA Dashboard, accident and victim data for 2022: <https://www.nra.gov.la/resources.php>

In terms of gender equality, the country occupies 113th place in the Gender Inequality Index, just above Iran, according to 2019 data.⁶⁹ Despite strong commitments towards gender equality from the government, challenges remain as girls have poor access to secondary education compared with boys, and maternal death rates remain high, amongst other indicators of poor gender equality. Nationally, women are less likely to be employed in the formal labour force (women's labour force participation rate is 74.8% compared with 78.1% for men)⁷⁰ and women are paid around 77% of men's monthly salary on average.⁷¹ These figures compare favourably with other low-to-middle income countries (LMICs) which had an average labour participation rate of 74.5% for men and just 35% for women across 55 LMICs in 2020/21, indicating much greater inclusion of women in the workforce in Laos than in other LMICs.⁷²

The Lao Statistic Bureau, using data from the 2015 census, reports that around 160,000 people in Laos (2.77% of the population) are living with a disability, though it should be noted that this is likely a significant underreporting of the incidence of disability, given the much higher global average (estimated around 15-20%). It should also be noted that disabled youth and women/girls with disabilities are particularly excluded from the job market and education.⁷³ Lao PDR is also an ethnically diverse country, with 49 officially recognised ethnic groups and many more sub-groups, just over half of the population belongs to the Lao Loum ethnic group, followed by Khamu and Hmong.⁷⁴ There is also a high level of linguistic diversity, with 86 recorded languages and many areas where minority language skills are necessary for effective communication. This is particularly true for women and older people from ethnic minority communities who are less likely to speak Lao.⁷⁵

Lao PDR is a signatory to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), the Convention on the Elimination of the Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Methodology

The study collected data through in-person interviews with 300 operations staff from Mines Advisory Group and UXO Laos, and 11 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) involving people from the home communities of those staff in Khammouane and Xieng Khouang provinces.

Target Groups

The target population for the data collection process was comprised of three groups. They were:

- ▶ Women UXO operations workers
- ▶ Men UXO operations workers
- ▶ Community members (from home communities of women and men operations workers)

The target population was located in two regions, Khammouane and Xieng Khouang provinces in Lao PDR, specifically the areas surrounding Ban Langkhan in Khammouane, and Phonsevan in Xieng Khouang, both are the sites of MAG operations offices and Phonsevan is also the location of UXO Laos operations base. Operations workers included UXO Technicians, Vegetation Cutters, Team Leaders, Deputy Team Leaders, Medics, and Drivers.

⁶⁹ <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index#/indicies/GII>

⁷⁰ World Bank Gender Data Portal, Laos Country Profile 2021: <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/countries/lao-pdr/#:~:text=In%20the%20Lao%20People's%20Democratic%20Republic%2C%20the%20labor%20force%20participation,older%20that%20is%20economically%20active>.

⁷¹ The Situation of Women and Children in Laos, 2020, UNICEF, p. 19

⁷² World Bank Data Portal, LMIC Labour Force participation Rate: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS?locations=XN>

⁷³ UNFPA article, Towards better inclusion of People with Disability rights in Lao PDR, 2020: <https://lao.unfpa.org/en/news/towards-better-inclusion-people-disability-rights-lao-pdr>

⁷⁴ 2015 Census, UNFPA 4th population and housing census, p. 37 accessed here: https://lao.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/PHC-ENG-FNAL-WEB_0.pdf

⁷⁵ Kalamar, T., Social Inclusion of Marginalized Communities: Mine Action in Laos, Journal of Conventional Weapons Destruction, accessed: <https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=2787&context=cisr-journal>

Data Collection Methods

The first two groups completed a survey, conducted by enumerators provided and trained by Indochina Research Ltd, a data collection company, who spoke Lao and Hmong languages. Each survey interview was conducted individually and in private between the participant and the surveyor, with observation from an Indochina QA Officer.

Community members were consulted using a semi-structured Focus Group Discussion (FGD) approach. The study team facilitated the FGDs with translation provided by MAG community liaison staff. In total 11 FGDs were held in 10 locations, including 48 women and 45 men. This usually included village leaders and members of the local women's groups and women's unions, as well as ordinary villagers. Where possible, the FGDs were divided by gender. Participants were all adults ranging from their late teens until their late 70s, with many participants aged around 40-60 years old.



Photographs from the FGDs with community members

Limitations and Challenges

Most interviews were conducted in Lao language, and several in Xieng Khouang were conducted in Hmong. However, especially in Khammouane, many participants did not speak fluent Lao as their mother tongue was a minority language, such as Makong, and so had difficulty answering some of the questions. In these cases, the enumerators took more time to explain the questionnaire and translated the questions into more easily understood Lao, however some meaning will have been lost.

There may have been more general challenges in the translation of the survey or understanding of certain questions, for example around 2/3rds of respondents reported that they were victims of EO accidents, which is likely to have been translated as meaning indirect victims, rather than the question in English which was 'Are you a survivor of an accident involving UXO?'. The results of this question were therefore disregarded, as it was evident anecdotally during the survey that the prevalence of direct involvement in accidents was not that high amongst mine action staff, and that only 1% of staff reported having a disability.

Due to time constraints and the need to keep interviews with staff short to avoid disruption to working schedules, the survey conducted with staff was largely quantitative, which did not allow for follow up on specific questions, which would have provided more detail and explanation of results.

Demographics

300 operations staff were interviewed for the study, 230 from MAG and 70 from UXO Laos. Of the interviewees, 199 were men and 101 were women (33.6%). The average woman employee was 29 years old, compared with 34 for men.

Women staff were much more likely to be single, divorced, or widowed, whereas men were more likely to be married.

Marital Status	Men	Women
Single	17.6%	33.6%
Married	80.9%	49.5%
Divorced	1%	11.8%
Co-habiting	0.5%	3%
Widowed	0%	2.1%

65% of all women staff were the sole breadwinner in their family, compared with 68% of men. In the case of divorced and widowed women the number is 86% (from a total of 14), and 100% for divorced men (total of 2). 100% of single women and single men were the main breadwinner in their households. By contrast, 34% of married women were the sole breadwinners, compared with 60% of men. As a result, women were more likely to have a shared income with their partners, compared with men. FGD participants pointed out that widowed or divorced women faced financial problems because they only had one income, whereas this wasn't seen as a problem for single-income households where a man was the breadwinner. The double burden of work and socially assigned caregiving roles may also be a contributor to this, as well as the likelihood that widowed or divorced women are more likely to have primary responsibility for children.

All interviewees were asked the Washington Group Short Set of Questions on functioning, in order to measure incidence of disability amongst staff. Three interviewees (two women and one man) gave responses that indicate the existence of a disability.⁷⁶ At the same time, 108 staff (38 women and 70 men, over a third of the sample) reported having some difficulty in at least one of the areas of functioning, indicating that there may be staff who have impairments and may benefit from additional support.⁷⁷

Employment

There were some differences in the positions held by women and men, with men being more likely to hold Team Leader or Deputy Team Leader positions. This does not appear to be related to experience, as whilst men reported having an average of 5.8 years of mine action experience compared with 4.9 years for women, women Team Leaders and Deputy Team Leaders reported an average of 14 years with their organisation, compared with 12 years for men, and there were several examples of women with this amount of experience not in leadership roles.

This demonstrates a long-term recruitment of both women and men in operational roles, over the last 29 years, rather than a more recent surge in hiring of women, as is the case on some other mine action programmes. However, this does not translate into equitable distribution of senior operations roles, as women make up 12% of Deputy Team Leaders, and 14% of Team Leaders, compared with 34% of total staff in the sample. This indicates that despite the long-standing involvement of women in the sector, and operators' ongoing focus on advancing women's careers, there are still barriers inhibiting women's progress in operations roles in Laos.

Positions by Gender

Position	Men	Men %	Women	Women %
UXO Technician	133	66.8%	72	71%
Vegetation Cutter	24	12%	18	18%
Deputy Team Leader	15	8%	2	2%
Driver	5	3%	0	-
Medic	4	2%	6	6%
Team Leader	18	9%	3	3%
Total	199		101	

⁷⁶ When responding to the question: "Using your mother language, do you have difficulty communicating, for example understanding or being understood?" All three respondents were from Khammouane province, and it is possible that the question was misinterpreted to mean whether they have difficulty communicating with others outside of their mother tongue.

⁷⁷ By WG-SS question, the number reporting some difficulty for each functional area was: Q1: 40, Q2: 14, Q3: 15, Q4: 72, Q5: 12, Q6: 44

The majority of both women and men reported having no formal employment before working in mine action (61.9% for men, 74.3% for women). Men were most likely to have worked in construction, manufacturing, or the electricity sector, and women in manufacturing or small businesses. This reflects men's greater access to formal employment in Laos compared with women.⁷⁸

Monthly Household Income by Source and Gender (USD)⁷⁹

	Women	Men
Myself	209.35	229.24
Partner	76.31	35.06
Children	5.27	14.86
Parents	29.55	20.80
Partners parents	1.72	5.32
Family abroad	0	2.09
Others	6.30	7.24
Total	328.50	314.61

These figures demonstrate that the average women's salary is around the level of Lao's Gross National Income per capita (higher than the national median income) whilst men's is slightly higher.⁸⁰ It is likely that this is considerably higher than the average income in Khammouane and Xieng Khouang provinces. Notably, whilst the average personal income of women was lower, the average household income was higher, due to higher incomes from partners than in the case of men. Women were more likely to have a partner who is working than men, and men were more likely to be the sole family breadwinner, though women who are divorced or widowed are more likely again to be sole breadwinners.

When comparing previous income to current income, men who had previously worked before mine action experienced an average increase in income of 257%, compared with women who experience an increase of 305%. So whilst men on staff earn more on average than women, women experience a greater increase in income through joining the mine action sector, and are less likely to be in work before joining.

Access to Resources and Services

The survey also demonstrated considerable increases in access to resources and services for mine action operational staff through their employment. The vast majority (99%) of respondents reported an increase in their access to services and resources as a direct result of employment in mine action.

The most widely gained improvements were in access to **financial services**, where 93% of women and 89% of men gained access to bank accounts for the first time, and 85% of men and 98% of women gained access to insurance, most likely through gaining work related insurance and payment of salaries to bank accounts. Furthermore, a small number of women and men (8%) in each case were also able to access loans as a result of their employment. 32% of men and 40% of women reported having increased access to credit.

In terms of general **purchasing power**, both women and men reported an increase as a result of employment (57% for women and 60% for men), and a higher percentage of women (27%) than men (17%) reported a strong increase. Women who were the sole breadwinners were more likely to report a strong increase in purchasing power.

Staff also purchased land using their income from mine action, on average buying 848 m² (median 700 m²). The median for men was slightly larger (725m²) than for women (664m²). In total women purchased 28,268 m² of land, around the same area as four football pitches, through their employment in mine action. This

⁷⁸ The Situation of Women & Girls in Laos, UNICEF, 2020, p. 19

⁷⁹ USD amounts converted from Laotian Kip at November 2022 rate of 0.000058 USD to 1 Kip

⁸⁰ GNI per capita of Lao PDR (2021) was 2,520 USD
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.CD?locations=LA>

contributes directly to the 2030 Agenda's **Sustainable Development Goal 5, Target 5.A on Female land rights or ownership**: *"give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property"*. A significant number of women and men were able to purchase a house (around 35% in both cases) and also pay for renovations and extensions to their properties.

Access to **agricultural resources** including livestock also increased, with around 37% of women and 40% of men purchasing either cattle, swine or chickens using their salaries. Around 17% of men and 14% of women were also able to construct small fisheries or fishponds. Overall, 81% of respondents reported that their access to food had increased, whereas 20% of women and 15% of men reported that their access to food had significantly increased. Mine action employment therefore contributed towards increased food security, agricultural output and incomes of staff's households, many of whom are from small-scale farming backgrounds, directly contributing towards **SDG 2 Target 2.3 Double the productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers** (including women in particular).

Furthermore, mine action staff reported increased access to **basic services and amenities** including electricity (around 30-35% for women and men) and running water (around 20% for women and men). Both women and men reported increased access to the **internet**, as well as being able to purchase **mobile phones and smartphones** as a result of employment. 90% of women reported increased access to the internet, compared with 78% of men, whereas 73% of both women and men gained access to mobile phones. This contributes directly towards **SDG 5 Indicator 5.B.1 on women's mobile telephone ownership**.

Employees also saw an increase in their families access to **education**, with 55% of men and 56% of women sending more children to school. It should be noted that whilst education is mostly provided for free in Laos, only the first five years of primary school are compulsory, and many families, especially in rural communities, remove their children from school in order to work in agriculture or assist in the home. On average, from those staff that have children, they reported being able to send roughly 1.4 children each (a similar figure for girls and boys, and from both male and female parents), totalling 270 children. This figure represents the number of children reportedly able to attend school as a direct result of their employment in the sector, and therefore demonstrates a direct contribution towards **SDG 4 on Education** across a range of targets and indicators. 57% of staff also reported being able to send their children to school for more years in total. Interestingly, 75% of women and 65% of men were also able to increase their own access to further learning and education as a result of their work in mine action.

Employees also benefitted from increased access to **healthcare**, with 60% of women and 65% of men reporting increased access, and around double the percentage of women reporting a strong increase in access (17%) than men. Once again, those reporting a strong increase were more likely to be single income women-headed households, including widows and divorcees. The pattern for access to medication is similar, with 55% of women and 49% reporting increased access and around double the percentage of women reporting a strong increase (12%). Around half of women and men also reported increased access to psychological support services, and slightly less than half (49% for men, 45% of women) reported an increase in access to family planning and contraception. This demonstrates mine action's contribution to **SDG 3 on Health**, and specifically access to **Target 3.7 on Universal access to sexual and reproductive care, family planning and education**, through employment of staff in areas with previously poor access to these services.

Finally, staff also reported increased access to personal transportation, mostly in the form of motorcycles (61% of women, 71% of men), but also cars (around 10% of women and men) and bicycles (around 20% of women and men). Both women and men also reported being able to purchase labour-saving household appliances such as stoves, fridges, washing machines and rice cookers.

The survey therefore demonstrates that high numbers of mine action staff increased their access to services and resources, contributing to a range of SDG goals in the process. In most cases access to resources increased in a broadly equal manner between women and men with some notable exceptions of more women having increased their access to financial services and adult education. The increases were highest when looking at the data for single-income women-led households, indicating that this group benefits the most in terms of access to services and resources from the sample.

Skills

Respondents also reported a significant increase in skills learned through their work in mine action. A higher percentage of women reported increased skills across all areas as well as a higher percentage of those reporting a strong increase in skills.

Respondents Reporting Increase in Skills as a Result of Mine Action Employment

Skills	Women		Men	
	Reporting any increase	Reporting strong increase	Reporting any increase	Reporting strong increase
Technical Skills	89%	23%	81%	14%
Leadership Skills	88%	31%	78%	18%
First Aid Skills	87%	20%	80%	11%
Language Skills	55%	10%	45%	7%

Similarly, more women reported increased financial independence (78% compared with 70% for men) as well as confidence in their own capacity to work and provide for their families (95% of women, 89% of men) more women also felt that their confidence had strongly increased in this regard (42% compared with 29% for men).

Attitudes Towards Women Working in Mine Action

The study also asked about attitudes towards women at work and working in the mine action sector specifically, noting that in many other contexts women's employment in mine action roles has helped to change attitudes positively. This demonstrates mine action's contribution towards **Article 5 of the Convention on the Elimination of the Discrimination of Women**, which commits parties to *"modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women"*, as well **CEDAW Article 11** on Work and Employment.

In terms of changing gender norms, both women and men reported that they were more confident that women can work as UXO technicians (99% of women, 85% of men) and that women can support their own families financially (97% of women, 83% of men). Both women and men also reported large increases in confidence that women are strong enough to be UXO technicians and that women UXO technicians can clear as much ground as men, with women being more likely to show a strong increase in confidence.

FGD participants were overwhelmingly positive about the employment of women in UXO clearance, stating in many cases that they were proud of the women from their communities who work in the sector, and saw it as an opportunity for them to help their families and communities, as well as raise up other women in the community and inspire them.

Interestingly, in comparison with other mine action contexts where clearance roles are often considered very difficult, most FGD participants in Khammouane and Xieng Khoang reported that they did not consider the work of UXO Technicians and Vegetation Cutters to be very difficult. They stated that agricultural labour is generally seen as more physically taxing than mine action work, and that both men and women participate in this work. This stands in contrast to some other contexts where mine action is seen as a sector that is too physically difficult for women to work in. In these other contexts, the effect of employment on gender norms can be even greater.⁸¹

Nevertheless, the survey results show that a majority of both women and men were more confident that women can be employed in the same jobs as men (95% of women, 76% of men). Women were also more likely to report a strong increase in their confidence that women can work in the same jobs as men (43% of

⁸¹ For example, in previous studies in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka: The Socio-Economic Impact of Employing Female Deminers in Sri Lanka, GICHD, 2017, Afghanistan's First Female Deminers: An Analysis of Perception Changes among Deminers, Families, and Communities, GICHD & UNMAS, 2019, Baseline Study of the Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women through Mine Action in Ninewa Governorate, Iraq, UNMAS, 2021

women and 22% for men). So it can be said that the employment of women in the sector does have a positive impact on gender norms in Laos, which remains a context where men and women have unequal access to the labour market.

Domestic Labour

The survey also collected data on household chores, asking how much time staff spend on household work each day before they worked in mine action, compared with now.

Hours of household chores	Before Employment		During Employment		Change	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
0-3	80%	66.5%	60%	46%	-20%	-20.5%
4-6	15%	15%	32%	32%	+17%	+17%
7-9	4%	18%	6%	19%	+2%	+1%
10+	1%	0.5%	2%	3%	+1%	+2.5%

This data shows that the changes in household chores are remarkably similar between women and men, both are doing more household work on their days off than they were before working in mine action. This may be due to the question, which asks: *“On average, how many hours do you spend on household chores in one day when you are at home?”*, which may be an indication of staff doing less household work overall, but having fewer free days in which to do this work. Interestingly, men reported more time spent on household chores, with a significantly greater number reporting 7-9 hours of household chores both before and after employment in mine action.

Empowerment of Women

Women were also asked specific questions on their own perceptions of themselves. Their responses demonstrate the benefits of mine action employment in both personal and social empowerment of women within their communities.

92% of women reported an increase in their own confidence, and 32% reported a strong increase, the same percentage that reported an increase or strong increase in being useful to their communities. Similarly, 91% of women reported feeling more useful to their families. Women also reported an increase in their interest in their own communities, the importance that they give to their own happiness and well-being. Some FGD participants reported that there had been a big change in how women working in UXO clearance behave, including more discipline, better time management, and more respect within the community as a result, especially from the income that they provide to their families.

The survey also asked about women’s decision-making power within the household. The great majority of women (90%) reported having increased knowledge and confidence to express their opinions in their household (with 22% reporting a strong increase). 67% reported having more say in household expenditures, though 7% said that this was only in spending their own money. A majority of women (around 71-75%) reported that both their men and women relatives took their opinions more seriously after they started working in mine action, to similar degrees. FGD participants noted that women were gaining more responsibility over financial matters in the household, and were generally considered more capable with household budgeting than men.

Beyond the household, 86% of women reported an increase in their confidence to express their opinions freely during community discussions and decisions, with 14% reporting a strong increase. Women also reported that people in their communities treated them with greater respect after they started working in the sector, with 55% reporting that women in their communities took their opinions more seriously, and 57% reporting that men took their opinions more seriously. One participant stated: *“In community meetings, they speak up more about what they think is right or wrong. They are less shy.”* Mine action work was also seen as

making people more structured and “cleverer” and therefore more respected in community meetings when sharing their opinions

FGD participants widely reported that they felt that women and men had become much more equal both within the household and in the community in recent years, but traditional expectations around women’s roles as homemakers and carers, and men’s roles as providers, were commonly expressed. In Xieng Khouang, some participants felt that Hmong households were more conservative than other ethnic groups such as Lao.

Women also felt more confident to express their opinions in discussions and decisions in the workplace, with 83% reporting an increase and 20% a strong increase. 77% felt that they were more able to speak up if they felt they faced unfair treatment (though 11% felt that their ability to do so had decreased since working in the sector), and 82% felt that their knowledge of their rights at work (working hours, vacation, maternity leave, health insurance, etc.) had increased.

Some FGD participants did express that any greater respect for women working in the sector was contingent on them ‘behaving properly’, which involved different actions that for men, who are expected not to drink too much or stay too late at work, whereas it was stated that women should be seen to behave properly and not provide opportunity for criticism or for people to think she is having an affair. One participant stated that women should not stay in demining camps as they would be seen as ‘up to no good’ as ‘ladies have unstable minds’ and could damage the family reputation. This underlines the fact that gender negative norms exist within affected communities in Lao PDR and that operators should implement strong staffing policies including safeguarding to build confidence that the working environment is safe for all staff. It should also be noted that women reported feeling safer from the dangers of UXO in their communities after working in mine action, with 88% of women reporting an increase and 51% reporting a strong increase in feelings of safety.

The employment of women and men therefore contributes towards women’s personal empowerment, in terms of greater self-confidence, autonomy in decision-making, and say in household decision-making, as well as social empowerment within the community, through greater respect from other community members and confidence to speak and be taken seriously in community meetings.

Conclusion

This case study demonstrates that through employing women and men in Laos, mine action organisations contribute to gender equality and the empowerment of women in a number of ways. Women working in the sector report being more confident personally, within their households, and within their communities, as well as being more respected and able to take decisions. Women also benefit economically from mine action, on a broadly similar scale to men, but in a context where formal employment opportunities for women are fewer. Single-income households led by women benefit experienced considerably greater economic benefits than other groups. Mine action organisations should therefore where possible prioritise women providing the single income for their families if they wish to maximise impact on women’s economic empowerment. Furthermore, the employment of women in the sector has positively changed attitudes towards women at work within EO-affected communities in Laos.

The GICHD would like to express sincere thanks to both Mines Advisory Group and UXO Laos for their facilitation of the visit, cooperation and time in helping to make this study possible.

ANNEX B – LIST OF ORGANISATIONS CONSULTED⁸²

Donors

- ▶ UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)
- ▶ Global Affairs Canada
- ▶ Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- ▶ US State Department Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement
- ▶ Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Operators

- ▶ Cambodian Mine Action Centre
- ▶ Golden West Humanitarian Foundation
- ▶ Humanity & Inclusion Myanmar
- ▶ Humanity & Inclusion Thailand
- ▶ Humanity & Inclusion Laos
- ▶ Mines Advisory Group Myanmar
- ▶ Mines Advisory Group Laos,
- ▶ Mines Advisory Group Vietnam,
- ▶ Mines Advisory Group Cambodia
- ▶ Norwegian People's Aid Thailand,
- ▶ Norwegian People's Aid Cambodia

- ▶ The HALO Trust Cambodia,
- ▶ The HALO Trust Myanmar
- ▶ UXO Laos

National / Regional Mine Action Authorities

- ▶ Cambodian Mine Action Authority
- ▶ National Regulatory Authority for the UXO / Mine Action Centre (Laos)
- ▶ Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement (Myanmar)
- ▶ Thailand Mine Action Centre (TMAC)
- ▶ Quang Tri Provincial Mine Action Centre (QTMAC)

United Nations Organisations


- ▶ UNDP Cambodia
- ▶ UNICEF (Myanmar Mine Action Area of Responsibility Sub-Cluster)


⁸² Includes interviews, written responses and participation in the validation workshop



ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center

 secretariat@aseanmineaction.org

 www.aseanmineaction.org

 (+855) 23 221 354 / 23 221 364

 Permanent Secretariat: #29, Street 115, Veal Vong, 7 Makara, Phnom Penh 120307, Cambodia