Quality Management in Demining Organisations

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In January 2007, the GICHD unveiled a new look for its Web site and publications. The GICHD implemented these changes to give the organization a modern, fresh appearance, and to increase the utility of the Web site as well as reduce the cost of publications. The redesigned Web site can be seen at www.gichd.org and includes a number of new features such as shortcut buttons, an improved search function, an evaluation repository, and a training calendar.

One of the first publications to be issued in the new style was the Metal Detectors and PPE Catalogue, published in March 2007. This catalogue features handheld, large-loop and vehicle-mounted detectors, as well as the relatively new multisensor systems. In April, the third edition of the Guide to Mine Action and Explosive Remnants of War was published. This edition provides updated information, such as the text of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons Protocol V on explosive remnants of war; it also includes new chapters on mine action and capacity-building.

Tenth Annual Meeting of Programme Directors and U.N. Advisers

In March 2007, the GICHD hosted the “Tenth International Meeting of Mine Action Programme Directors and U.N. Advisers” on behalf of the United Nations Mine Action Service. The meeting brought together over 200 people from 55 mine-affected countries, along with representatives from the various U.N. agencies, nongovernmental organizations and donor countries involved with mine action.

Since the first annual meeting was held, attendance has increased tremendously; in March 1998 only 40 people from seven countries attended. The idea for the meeting came about as there was a growing need for better standardization, coordination and sharing of experiences among the emerging mine-action programmes. The initial meeting focused only on U.N.-conducted or -supported programmes, but since then, the meeting has expanded to include nationally run programmes.

Over the years, the topics discussed at the meeting have included U.N. policy updates, capacity building, national ownership, information management, standards, resource mobilisation and technology. Since the beginning, all meetings have been funded by Switzerland and hosted by the GICHD.

The GICHD continues to provide training and advice on the conduct of mine-action evaluations, as well as undertake selected evaluations itself. Early in 2007 the GICHD undertook an evaluation of the United Nations Development Programme’s capacity-building project in Albania and also completed an independent assessment of the residual threat in Kosovo on behalf of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo.

Later in the year, the GICHD will undertake a thematic evaluation in the Caucasus as part of a rolling series of evaluations for the European Commission.

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by Ian Mansfield | Geneva Centre for Humanitarian Demining |
that this aspect of ISO 9001:2000 Quality Management System alone is enough to generate vast quality improvements in an organisation, purely through the domino effect caused by genuine management commitment.

Operations people must realise that they are responsible for quality—good or bad. Quality-assurance/quality-control personnel are only responsible for reporting on the state of quality, not for generating quality.

Product Realisation
The product realisation process is none other than the core business process of manufacturing its product(s) or service(s). It is self-evident that the best practise dictates that this process should be properly planned and developed to meet the requirements of the product and of the customer. This statement is further supported by Oakland who found in his research that “identifying key-business processes” was one of the best practices found among award-winning companies. In demining, all processes in the minefield are described and guided by standard operating procedures. However, the

The Standard is even more valuable for demining organisations in developing countries, as it can be a framework to direct the organisation’s activities without having to purchase management expertise from developed countries.

minefield is the only last stage of the productrealisation process. The process stages before that are very seldom described and audited.

In Integrated Process Management: A Quality Model, Rodger Slater makes the argument that entropy is a “universal force which relentlessly presses all activity in the direction of disorder.” He contends further that if discipline (measurement and control) is not applied to key variables, they will move to a state of chaos, even if they are not problematic at the moment.

The Standard encapsulates the essence of those variables in the production/service process and seeks to impose the discipline on them that is required to prevent these aspects from drifting into chaos.

Measurement, Analysis and Improvement
Customer satisfaction not only relates to the end user or external customer, it is also applicable for internal customers, i.e., those various people who develop the product through the different stages of the processes. The product must fulfill certain requirements before it can be passed on to the next stage of the process. It must be measured to ensure that problems do not occur further down the process. Oakland calls these internal customer relationships “quality chains,” and deems them vital in being able to meet customer requirements.

Slater refers to measurement activities as “the feedback loop” and further states that without it, any system that seeks to address process control will fail. People need to know how well they are achieving in order to progress. An organisation needs to know the same in order for it to survive and indeed prosper.

Oakland states that “a good quality management system will not function without adequate audits and reviews.” A further advantage of audits is that they automatically generate new processes and systems and are therefore useful for continual improvement.

The Standard requires organisations to continually improve their processes through a range of activities from reviewing nonconformities to reviewing corrective action. This should be taken further in that organisations should identify potential nonconformities

Oakland® contends that any organisation, in essence, competes based on its reputation for quality, reliability and price. Of the three, quality is the most important. It is extremely difficult to change a reputation from bad to good, but very easy to go from good to bad. The Standard provides transparent proof to customers that an organisation is serious about its business and takes the customers’ requirements seriously.

In a donor-driven environment, transparency and effectiveness of organisations are the basis on which donors choose to get involved. Organisations wishing to obtain sustainable, long-term donors will have to demonstrate compliance with the Standard and provide donors with confidence and willingness to engage in lasting partnerships.

The ISO 9001:2000 System is fully compatible with and supported by international best practice. Any demining organisation that seeks to improve its standards and achieve world-class recognition should seriously consider taking a strategic step forward and adopting the Quality Management System based on ISO 9001:2000 standard.

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This article is in the public domain and was reprinted with permission by Charles Loxton passed away Kabul, Afghanistan, in February 2006. The United Mine Action Centre for Protection is proud to pay a tribute to Mr. Loxton in appraising the publication of this article, written during his last assignment. Charles Loxton is remembered for his dedication, hard work and joy to serve.

The assessment identified a number of subgroups that are at risk and helped bring info the myriad of contributing factors that influence behaviour. It highlighted the differences in the ways the mine-action “experts” perceived, analysed, advise, and structure and solve problems in order to determine an appropriate response. The findings suggest that in a country such as the Lao PDR, where communities have lived with unexploded ordinance infestation for over 25 years, more traditional mine-risk education may not be relevant. What may be needed alongside traditional message-based interventions is a more holistic and pragmatic risk-minimisation approach, which may also require a collective paradigm shift in the way different stakeholders view UXO risk. Such methodology would help bridge the current gap between experts’ and laypeople’s opinions and result in more effective MRE. Alongside this risk-minimisation approach, a more complex, integrated style of CBO action and development will help address some of the underlying vulnerabilities of at-risk populations. The assessment also pointed to possible new directions for reaching women and children including integrating MRE into a broader life-skills approach and parenting guides.

Background to the Assessment
Lao PDR has the distinction of being, per capita, the most heavily bombed nation in the world. As a result of intense ground battles and extensive bombing during the Indochina War, especially during the years 1964–

Hidden threat: almost all people living in contaminated areas are potentially at risk of exposure to landmines.

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Charles Loxton was born in South Africa in 1960 and served in the South African Army for more than 15 years. Building on his military and managerial background as Lieutenant Colonel, and working in the Army, he started a new career in mine action. Between 1995 and 2001 he worked for commercial demining companies in the Pacific before entering UNMACA and the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan in 2004 as Chief of Quality Management. He was certified ISO 9001:2000 in 2001.

Needs Assessment in Lao PDR

This article describes the needs-assessment process and findings for mine-risk education in Lao PDR. Specific issues that arise are identifying those who are at risk, why they are at risk, and what can be done about it.

by Jo Durham [Mines Advisory Group]

Mine-risk education is an integral component of humanitarian mine action and, as such, other HMA components, should be a planned intervention. A needs assessment—the process of systematically collecting and analysing information in order to identify who is at risk, why, and what can be done about it—is an essential precursor to programme planning and implementation. A good needs analysis can help to effectively target, design, lead, and implement efficacious, targeted and effective interventions that address the needs of the target populations. It is a crucial step in framing an appropriate response to risk reduction.

Recognising the importance of a needs-assessment process as a key component of UNMACA’s strategy for the Lao PDR, the Mine Action Centre for Protection (UNMACA) and the Mine Action Programme (UNMACAP) commissioned a Needs Assessment to identify the specific needs of the target populations in the Lao PDR.

The assessment identified a number of subgroups that are at risk and helped bring into focus the myriad of contributing factors that influence behaviour. It highlighted the differences in the ways the mine-action “experts” perceived, advised, and structure and solve problems in order to determine an appropriate response. The findings suggest that in a country such as the Lao PDR, where the communities have lived with unexploded ordnance infestation for over 25 years, more traditional mine-risk education may not be relevant. What may be needed alongside traditional message-based interventions is a more holistic and pragmatic risk-minimisation approach, which may also require a collective paradigm shift in the way different stakeholders view UXO risk. Such methodology would help bridge the current gap between experts and laypeople’s opinions and result in more effective MRE. Alongside this risk-minimisation approach, a more complex, integrated style of CBO action and development will help address some of the underlying vulnerabilities of at-risk populations. The assessment also pointed to possible new directions for reaching women and children including integrating MRE into a broader life-skills approach and parenting guides.

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