New Approaches and Strategies for MRE in Azerbaijan

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High-priority Clearance

Besides house-clearance operations, ANAMA is currently implementing a demining project in support of governmental initiatives to repatriate internally displaced persons. Last year ANAMA signed a contract with the Social Development Fund for a mining project in support of governmental initiatives to repatriate internally displaced persons. The project involves the employment of a new area-reduction method and the employment of a new survey and clearance method.

Conclusion

Following the war, hundreds of Azerbaijani families were unable to return home due to mine and UXO contaminations in residential areas. New clearance projects from ANAMA, however, have helped make Azerbaijani safer by eliminating the threat of UXO and landmines from affected houses, yards and villages. A combination of technology and human commitment has been necessary for the successful clearance of residential areas and the safe return of displaced families.

Table 1: Comparative analysis of mechanical-demining machines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Models of machines</th>
<th>Date of deployment</th>
<th>Total operational hours</th>
<th>Total period of exploitation (months/working days)</th>
<th>Area cleared (sq.m)</th>
<th>Total fuel consumption (metric tons)</th>
<th>Missed working days</th>
<th>Explosive expenses for the machine (AZN)</th>
<th>Fuel cost per sq.m. cleared (AZN)</th>
<th>Total cost per sq.m. cleared (AZN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bozena-4 (1)</td>
<td>09/2004</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>28 / 448</td>
<td>1,746,384</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>77,353</td>
<td>0.0025</td>
<td>0.044</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bozena-4 (2)</td>
<td>05/2006</td>
<td>8 / 128</td>
<td>488,800</td>
<td>1035,845</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22,542</td>
<td>0.0033</td>
<td>0.046</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bozena-5</td>
<td>06/2005</td>
<td>1,020</td>
<td>19 / 304</td>
<td>615,500</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>66,321</td>
<td>0.0055</td>
<td>0.064</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valves</td>
<td>09/2005</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>4 / 64</td>
<td>237,600</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5,950</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>0.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mine</td>
<td>09/2005</td>
<td>16 / 256</td>
<td>237,600</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>58,427</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.245</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Comparative analysis of mechanical-demining machines.

Benefits of Integrating MRE into School Curricula

When MRE is integrated into the curriculum of schools, not only does financial support from the government increase for MRE activities, but also the importance of mine-clearance issues among the population rises. Therefore, ANAMA recommends this initiative be considered a priority task for MRE programme implementers in any country.

Currently, 1,520 teachers at 790 schools teach the MRE course in Azerbaijan, reaching 32,500 students. The Education Ministry pays the expenses for the training, and the heads of district education departments are responsible for supervising the classes. The responsibility of teachers and heads of schools increases and thus the attitude towards MRE changes. For the teachers and community leaders it becomes a humanitarian task, or, rather, a noble duty which they perform in order to help and protect their communities and fellow citizens.

Since integrating MRE into schools, students have become more sensitive to the problem. After being taught MRE, they begin to inform the authorities and their teachers when they find mines, unexploded ordnance and unknown objects and they share where these items were found.

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**Survey Helps ANAMA Realize New MVA Projects**

Following a Mine Survivors Needs Assessment Survey in 2004, the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action and several nongovernmental organizations are working closely to bring victim assistance to mine and unexploded ordnance survivors throughout Azerbaijan. Since 2005, victim assistance in Azerbaijan has included five needs-based projects, as well as individual assistance provided to survivors, such as treatment sponsorship and wheelchair provision.

_by Dr. Rauled Mamedov [Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action]_

The new ANAMA database was created as a result of the Mine Survivors Needs Assessment Survey in 2004 and serves as a reliable and useful source of information on mine/UXO survivors' needs. It has proven itself with a number of successful pilot projects, which are now being realized and put into practice under the leadership of ANAMA.

Under the project, researchers have interviewed 1,883 mine survivors living in 65 areas of Azerbaijan about their needs. A special questionnaire form, created by ANAMA specialists, reflects various needs of victims in the following areas: medical care, economic and educational assistance, physical and professional rehabilitation, psychosocial support, suitable sports and others. Using the newly created database helped ANAMA recognize the particular needs of survivors; therefore, it has become easier to plan and realize new projects.

**Recent VA Projects in Azerbaijan**

Organizing of summer camps. One of the first projects in the field of mine-victim assistance was the project "Organizing of Summer Camps" for injured children and children from mine-victims' families. This project started in 2005 in cooperation with UNICEF, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Azerbaijan, and the United States organisation Right to Play. One hundred twenty children from war-affected and borderline districts spent their rest and leisure time over a two-month summer break at a boarding school in the Geraqboy district. The children enjoyed relaxation and fun activities while staying at the school.

At the beginning of 2006, four more projects began. National NGOs, which are active participants of the ANAMA MVA Working Group and given grants by ANAMA through the bidding process, were responsible for implementing all projects.

**Organization of sanatorium treatment.** The project with the NGO Shehri Elinik ("Healing Hands") in English on "Organization of Sanatorium Treatment" for 120 mine survivors, was successfully completed recently in the Masdakan settlement (one of the suburbs of Baku), in a boarding house sublet to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection.

This MVA project, sponsored by the European Commission, is actually the first project ANAMA has implemented in cooperation with local NGOs. Mine survivors are delivered from their residences to a boarding house where they rest and receive medical care, mostly physical-therapy treatment, and then are brought back to their residences. The majority of survivors express their gratitude to the organization of such services; they also emphasize the usefulness of the treatments and their hope that they will continue to receive this and other services. In light of this positive response, ANAMA intends to continue implementation of such projects in the future.

**Establishment of Mine Victims Association.** The NGO International Eurasia Press Fund initiated the project to establish the Mine Victims Association in the Tetter district, which is still ongoing. The U.S. Department of State’s Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement is sponsoring this project for a period of three months. The project’s goal is to mobilize internal resources of the community through the establishment of the Mine Victims Association to meet survivors’ needs in medical care, physical and psychological rehabilitation, education, social and vocational adaptation, economic assistance and financial support. The sustainability of this project will strengthen the community’s capability to solve problems they face and improve civil society. The skeleton of the organization consists of 10 mine survivors (in total, there are about 2,500 mine survivors in the Tetter district). The main goal of the project is to expand the activities of the association to a national level.