Norwegian People's Aid

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1997 treaty negotiations in Oslo, Norway.

- Establishment of working relationships with survivors in Africa, Asia, and Europe willing to promote cooperation on landmine issues, including better rehabilitation services.
- Development of an easy-to-use database to link landmine survivors with the resources available to help them.
- Over 35 public presentations and speeches, and well over 300 media interviews to build support for a ban treaty and victim assistance.

Since its inception, the Landmine Survivors Network has been building a worldwide network of landmine survivors with the resources available to help them. LSN is developing the first comprehensive database designed to track the rehabilitation needs of mine victims and the organizations that can channel urgently needed assistance to the impoverished survivors who need it most.

Contact Information
Landmine Survivors Network
1420 K St. NW, Suite 650
Washington, D.C. 20005
Tel: (202) 464-8007
Fax: (202) 464-0011
E-mail: LSN@landminesurvivors.org
Website: http://www.landminesurvivors.org

Norwegian People’s Aid
Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA) is one of Norway’s largest non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Although NPA is currently involved in more than 300 projects in thirty countries, the organization still adheres to the basic principles set forth by its founders: solidarity, unity, human dignity, peace, and freedom. The range of NPA’s projects is diverse, from extensive outreach programs for the people of Palestine, to short-term emergency relief programs and long-term development cooperation in over twelve countries in Africa, and more. One of NPA’s most notable efforts is in humanitarian demining activities, centered in Asia and Africa.

A History of Excellence
It should come as no surprise that the founding principles of the NPA should have guided it to take a place as a driving force behind the world-wide humanitarian demining effort. Starting in 1992 with mine work in Cambodia, NPA has expanded their operations into several other countries, especially Mozambique, Angola, and Iraq. In accordance with the spirit of its founding principles, NPA not only tackles the physical problem of landmines, but the social and political factors that make mines such a deterrent to the development process of these recovering countries. The landmine must be addressed not only as a physical threat, but also as a symbolic burden on the efforts to rehabilitate and rebuild a country.

With this in mind, NPA has developed a multi-faceted mine program that is easily adaptable to individual local needs, but always contains the following elements:
- Mapping of mine fields—NPA is quick to point out that the mapping of mine fields is nothing new, but the social angle which the organization imparts to the activity is. To NPA, mapping is not only an aid to the operation of demining, but an important psychological step to empowering the local population by limiting their paranoia fear of the mines.
- Training—NPA has developed a three-step program for training deminers, and a two-step program for training accompanying medical personnel. The eventual goal of both programs is to make the local population self-sufficient, and eliminate the need for Norwegian presence within five years.
- Demining—NPA’s demining operations are based on models used by the Norwegian Army, altered to fit peacekeeper goals. NPA points out that it has set the official UN standards for demining in many areas. One of the most successful elements of the organization’s demining programs is the dog-sniffing project, started in October 1994. The dogs make a vital contribution to the demining effort by snuffing out mines and helping to determine the borders of mine fields, so miners do not waste time and resources clearing areas where there are no mines in the first place.
- Mine Awareness—NPA realizes that the extent of the landmine problem is so great, that even with the best of clearance efforts, the local populations of seriously affected countries will have to live with the daily threat of mines for at least the next thirty years. The organization’s mine awareness program consists of instructor training and day-long courses for the local population. The secret of the program lies in the choice of instructors, NPA points out, “It is not enough for the person to be a good instructor, he or she must also be an important resource person that most of the local people will trust. In this way we ensure that the projects will continue for a long time without our presence.”
- Methodology—NPA is actively involved in the development of new demining equipment, with experienced project workers collaborating with organizations such as the Norwegian Armed Forces, the Norwegian Institute for Industrial Design, and The Foundation for Scientific and Industrial Research at the Norwegian Institute of Technology.

In 1989, Sen. Patrick Leahy started a fund to get medical aid to victims of landmines. There are an estimated 100 million unexploded landmines in over 60 countries, where they kill or maim an estimated 26,000 people each year. Vast areas of countries like Cambodia, Bosnia and Angola now have grave landmine problems.

In 1992, Leahy sponsored an amendment to stop U.S. exports of anti-personnel landmines: the first law of its kind anywhere in the world. In 1993, the amendment extended to Latin American countries banned the sale of U.S.-made landmines. In 1997, President Clinton adopted it as permanent U.S. policy. The senator sponsored a 1995 amendment to ban U.S. use of anti-personnel mines for one year, beginning in 1999. That amendment was passed in the Senate 67-27, and was signed into law by Clinton on February 12, 1996. The law reads as follows:

Patrick Leahy War Victims Fund
Leahy Amendment Moratorium on Use of Anti-personnel Landmines
Sec. 583. (a) UNITED STATES MORATORIUM: For a period of one year beginning three years after the date of enactment of this Act, the United States shall not use anti-personnel landmines except along internationally recognized national borders or in demilitarized zones within a perimeter of one kilometer marked area that is monitored by military personnel and protected by adequate means to ensure the exclusion of civilians.

(b) DEFINITION AND EXEMPTIONS: For the purposes of this section-(1) ANTI-PERSONNEL LANDMINE: The term ‘anti-personnel landmine’ means any munitions placed under, on, near the ground or other surface area, delivered by artillery, rocket, mortar, or similar means, or dropped from a to a platform and which is designed, constructed or adapted to be detonated or exploded by the presence, proximity or contact of a person.

(2) EXEMPTIONS: The term ‘anti-personnel landmine’ does not include commanded detonated Claymore munitions.

In June 1997, Leahy sponsored legislation with Sen. Chuck Hagel to ban U.S. deployments of anti-personnel mines after January 1, 2000. That bill now has 60 co-sponsors. Currently he is working with Judy Williams of Bracebrooks, Vermont, the coordinator of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL).
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Some Individual Successes
Employing 500 deminers, 18 dogs and 2 demining machines, NPA is the largest operator in the mapping and clearance of mines in Angola. The NPA surveying unit has managed to register the demining of the landmine problem in ten out of eighteen provinces and turn this valuable information over to the National Landmine Institute of Angola. Recent efforts include the use of new, time-saving technology to map mine fields and to help mine victims in Angola.

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Technology (SINTEF).
- International campaigns—Motivated by the everyday tragedy NPA hears witness to in project countries, NPA supports the international ban on landmines, and takes on an active part at both the national and international level in the international battle to ban landmines.

In 1998, Sen. Patrick Leahy started a fund to get medical aid to victims of landmines. There are an estimated 100 million unexploded ordnance in over 60 countries, where they kill or maim an estimated 26,000 people each year. Variant types of mines in Cambodia, Angola and Brazil have become death traps.

In 1992, Leahy sponsored an amendment to stop U.S. exports of anti-personnel landmines: the first law of its kind anywhere in the world. In 1993, the amendment was expanded by means of the Landmine Ban Act passed the Senate 100-0, and in 1997, President Clinton adopted it as permanent U.S. policy. The senator sponsored a 1995 amendment in the U.S. to ban use of anti-personnel mines for one year, beginning in 1999. That amendment was passed in the Senate 67-27, and was signed into law by Clinton on February 12, 1996. The law reads as follows:

Leahy Amendment Moratorium on Use of Anti-personnel Landmines

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(b) DEFINITION AND EXEMPTIONS: For purposes of this section:

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(3) Contact Information
Norwegian People's Aid
Per Jacob Nergaard
Landmines Project Coordinator
P.O. Box 8844 Youngstorger
Oslo, Norway

N-0028
E-mail: Per.Nergaard@npaid.no

Website: http://www.npaid.no/npaid/npa.html

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P.O. Box 8844 Youngstorger
Oslo, Norway

N-0028
E-mail: Per.Nergaard@npaid.no

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