October 2003

**Mine Risk Education: The Effective Way to Save Lives**

Musa Jalalov  
*Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA)*

Vagif Sadigov  
*Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA)*

Follow this and additional works at: https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/cisr-journal

Part of the Defense and Security Studies Commons, Emergency and Disaster Management Commons, Other Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons, and the Peace and Conflict Studies Commons

**Recommended Citation**  
Available at: https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/cisr-journal/vol7/iss3/35

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for International Stabilization and Recovery at JMU Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Conventional Weapons Destruction by an authorized editor of JMU Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact dc_admin@jmu.edu.
Another encounter with Cheena knew what a young boy. This boy was walking to school with his friend when he had the urge to go to the bathroom. Before they reached the "Cafe", I thought it was safe to go off the road to relieve himself. He walked two to three meters from the road and stepped off into the road, feeling how limited his property decisions. The boy stepped no more than three meters from the road and ended up losing his leg. Hearing this story, I realized the need for not only general mine risk education (MRE) but also for detailed education on the specific risks of landmines in a particular area. The boy knew that stepping off the road in an unknown area was dangerous, but he did not know enough about cleared areas to avoid injury.

An Encounter in Caux

The most remarkable experience I had during the Exchange for Peace program was an encounter at a peace community near Geneva called Caux. In this community, I had the opportunity to meet a North Korean named Ho Chal Son. Born in Japan and having inherited his North Korean citizenship from his grandfather, this young man traveled to Switzerland with a Japanese NGO worker to speak about his efforts in Japan to establish a friendly Korean-Japanese relationship. Chal is hoping to start a youth camp that brings together and helps to establish relationships between Korean and Japanese teenagers. "The older generation carries too many hurts," he explained in Korean. "We must work with the younger generation to help build a better relationship."

As our conversation continued, we spoke about hopes for Korean reconciliation. My parents immigrated to the United States from South Korea and hold a strong distrust of North Koreans. He's parents likewise felt resentment and distrust of South Koreans. In our respective homes, we were distinctly South and North Koreans. In Caux, however, where we were the only ones who spoke Korean, we found food and lived a part of Korean culture; we were of one nation. Because of that encounter at Caux, the people of North Korea became less of a faceless threat and more of a people to me. I came to a greater understanding of their fears and hopes and gained a greater hope for a better future between our respective mothers. Ho Chal told me about his one and only visit to North Korea. There he saw a girl who was around the same age as he, standing guard in uniform at a government building. He timidly approached her to ask, "is it hard living as a soldier?" She responded kindly, but cautiously. "Not at all, that's just how it is."

Conclusion

For the older generation in power, there are a myriad of complicated problems and issues to tackle before any sort of progress is made toward a better world. But for the young, there is only the world as we have known it. Through education, we can easily bypass, "how it is" and work toward "how it can be." We can do this because we do not carry many of the wounds of the past. My encounter with "the enemy" made me think about the debates and verbal confrontations we had at the ICBL, as the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), and even by members of the Swiss government in Bern about the United States’s refusal to sign the Ottawa Treaty. I knew the United States did not wish to sign the treaty mainly because of its use of landmines at the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between the two Koreas. Due to my ties to both the United States and South Korea, I could not help but feel responsible for U.S. use of landmines. I also had difficulty seeing a way out towards peace between the two nations. However, through the Exchange for Peace program, I have found that reconciliation may perhaps start with something as little as a mutual understanding between two young people of opposing ethnicities. I met the "enemies" of my nation face-to-face and unexpectedly found an innocence and youthful hope for peace that sparked and mirrored my own.

Contact Information

Kimberly Kim
MARC
E-mail: kimk@jnu.edu

Program Activities

The activities in the framework of the program have been conducted mainly on the basis of the general survey data on suspected mine/UXO areas and incidents with the people involved in 11 war-earmark districts of Azerbaijan. The number of mine/UXO victims in surveyed territories since the start of the conflict is estimated to be 1,248. According to the ANAMA Mine Victim Database, 391 people—mainly civilian women and children—became mine/UXO victims since the signing of the ceasefire agreement in May 1994. That was a main reason for making a decision to implement MRE for the civilian population living in frontier and bordering districts.

Fifteen MRE master trainers were trained in February 2001 and they had two

freshwater training courses in March and during July to August 2002, with participation of 18 instructors. During September to December 2001, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Education of Azerbaijan, training of about 30 three-day training sessions for 508 health personnel, and 59 four-day training sessions for 1,043 teachers in 12 frontline districts—Derbent, Agdam, Agjabdi, Aghdam, Aghbafr, Towt, Terr, Gerard, Khanlar, Dashbaxan and Gedabey—as well as in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. Four hundred volunteers from the villages of targeted districts were trained in August 2002 to implement community-based MRE.

An MRE Technical Working Group formed in early 2001, consisting of representatives of several related ministries and other governmental institutions, as well as international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have played and are playing an active role in implementation and coordination of MRE activities. Training sessions are aimed to disseminate MRE safety messages and self-role behavior rules among the population and frontline U.S. citizens and teachers as a role model for children.

A total of 220,000 MRE brochures for adults and children, 150,000 children's notebooks, 10,000 training manuals and 7,000 T-shirts were produced for the purposes of the program. MRE materials were distributed to health, education departments and civil defense headquarters of the targeted districts as well. Ten sets of mine/UXO models were prepared for

Azerbaijani children learn about the dangers of mines through MRE programs, c/o ICRN
Two dead: UXO explosion in scrap metal shop in Baku—June 2, 2003

The incident happened towards evening on June 2nd. All three pieces of UXO were brought from an exploded ammunition depot near Salgac village of Aghjabad district. Members of Disabled Soldiers' Society of Gazakh district provided them as a high-quality scrap metal. To make a profit, they were welded here for delivery to a steel company. Good welders, two refugee men from Armenia, both 35, were hired to handle the UXO. While welding, the ammunition exploded and both died in situ.

It was realized that all of UXO remains there. No doubt, the ammunition might explode, possibly claiming new victims.

ANAMA’s MRE team has had good cooperation with the Golden West Humanitarian Foundation (United States), under the financial support of Colin King Associates (United Kingdom) produced a "Mine Area Indicator Package" for Azerbaijan that was approved in ANAMA and then adapted and converted into the Azerbaijani language by ANAMA MRE staff. It is likely that the Indicator Package will be used as PowerPoint presentation, and ANAMA has been provided with the laptop and multimedia projectors. Sets of printouts of presentation slides are also good additional teaching tools to provide communities and various target groups with sufficient MRE information.

Additional refresher MRE training for a group of ANAMA staff members and mine action NGOs, supported by U.S. European Command (EUCOM) instructors, was conducted in February 2009. The MRE team is going to hold community-based MRE sessions in targeted districts to build and strengthens community associations.

EUCOM training sessions during last summer had a great influence on increasing both qualitatively and quantitatively ANAMA’s MRE capacity.

The difficulty in the training, establishment of an MRE Cell was recommended. The Cell is now active and able not only to provide formal narrative instructions in safe behavior, but also to identify and implement MRE strategic objectives in Azerbaijan.

The increased interest in the mine problem from the society in Azerbaijan makes it possible to disseminate safety messages and safe behavior rules among the people, under favorable auspices, ensuring that innocent lives are saved from the mine and UXO threats.

Contact Information
Mina Jalalov
OSV ANAMA
Tel: (99412) 95 79 34
E-mail: mijalalov@anama.baku.az
Website: www.anama.baku.az

Vigil Sadigov
MRE, ANAMA
Tel: (99412) 95 79 34
E-mail: vsadigov@anama.baku.az
Website: www.anama.baku.az

The OAS and Landmine Victims in Nicaragua

The Organization of American States (OAS) Mine Action Program has established a priority in providing prostheses and medical attention to landmine victims, as well as work training. In 2003, the program started a pilot project that provided job training and jobs to mine victims.

by Carlos Orozco, National Coordinator, OAS Mine Action Program in Nicaragua and Jaime Perales, OAS Communications Specialist

Background
On December 17, 1997, in Nicaragua, Juan Lopez was looking for work on Explosion Mountain. On this day, he stepped on a mine and lost his left leg. He was 39 years old. A year later, the same Mr. Lopez, while he was looking for a small piece of land to work, stepped on a second mine and lost his right leg. Agustín Ramos shared similar circumstances. "I walked into an area where I never imagined mines to be placed." Martín Estrada is a survivor as well. "I was seven years old when I lost my two legs, while I was with my grandmother carrying firewood." José Larico: "I received shattered perforations all over my body." Saima Rayo is also a landmine survivor. "[A] friend and I were trying to get a banana from a tree. My friend died and I lost my left leg." José Blandon describes his injury: "I received a mine blast close to my face. I lost part of my face, my right eye, part of my nose and my upper lip." Juan López, Agustín Ramos, José Blandon and the other supported by the OAS rehabilitation program share similar fates. A loss of a limb or parts of their bodies due to anti-personnel landmines.

The OAS Mine Action Rehabilitation Program was created especially in response to requests from OAS member countries. The effect of one anti-personnel landmine has devastating consequences not only for the victims, but also for their families. Most victims were their family’s main economic support before the accident.

The lack of knowledge about mines is one of the chief contributors to landmine accidents. For instance, Domingo Martinez told the OAS, "I have 10 mines stockpiled at home and I exploded without anybody touching it." Suyu Camuño Rivero, "I had a mine in my patio at home and it exploded without anybody touching it." Aníbal Poo knew of a similar story. She told the OAS that "there are some folks in the Pamapas that take out mines and hide them in their homes." Daniel Montiel volunteered to show the OAS mines that are close to a core, Manuel Perez kept "two mine PMMSR1 and one used rocket LAL5" in his home. There are plenty of stories without a name. For example, a 13-year-old youth found three fusing mines. He kicked them, threw mines at them and moved them close to a road.

Twenty-nine percent of mine accidents happen when people walk through a mined area. Such was the case of Ramón Peña, a 54-year-old farmer. His accident occurred on May 20, 1999. "I was picking corn, I did not know that the field was mined. I stepped on a mine; it exploded and threw me about 30 meters. I was carried to the hospital of Ocotal where they amputated both of my legs."

To reduce the risk of accidents, the OAS Mine Action Program has embarked on an integrative and extensive education program aimed at all sectors of the society, and in some cases training local leaders. OAS campaigns have identified mines placed in parish and schools, and those stockpiled by individuals in their homes. In a recent campaign in the Nueva Segovia area, the participation of the community helped locate more than 200 mines and UXO, which were subsequently destroyed.

With the financial support of Sweden, Norway, Canada, Spain, through the National Center of Prostheses and Orthoses, the OAS supports victims by providing them with prostheses and medical treatment. The case of Victor Bustamante: ["In the Surenga, Nueva Segovia] I stepped on a mine that smashed my right leg. I was carried to the Hospital of Ocotal where my leg was amputated. The OAS gave me the prostheses that I needed." The OAS

The OAS and Landmine Victims in Nicaragua | 69

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Journal of Conventional Weapons Destruction, Vol. 7, Iss. 3 [2003], Art. 3

NOTES FROM THE FIELD