An Interview with Angelina Jolie

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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Goodwill Ambassador Angelina Jolie discusses her trip to Cambodian and the effects of landmines there as well as the impact the trip had on her personally. She is willing to share her experiences with the world to help raise more awareness for mine action.

by Jenny Lange, MAIC

Jenny Lange (JL): What first made you aware of the landmine situation around the world?

Angelina Jolie (AJ): When I went to Cambodia for work, I was suddenly in a country where I saw it was a very big problem. We were restricted so where we could move or walk because of landmines.

JL: What about Cambodia pulled your attention away from the movie and towards Cambodia and its problems?

AJ: I think it's a lot of things like knowing the history of the place, (and) having not been taught at school. I felt I should have been taught about the landmine problem. It made me suddenly realize certain things about the world and how much I had to learn, like the history of the people. They are so warm and great and spirited; they are such survivors. I think they are such amazing people.

JL: Did you approach UNHCR, or did they approach you after your visit to Cambodia?

AJ: I approached UNHCR because I believe in what the United Nations is attempting to do...and I support the United Nations. I read about the different chapters and UNHCR was the most appealing because I believe refugees are the most vulnerable people in the world. They are affected by everything, including landmines. They are vulnerable to everything.

JL: Through your position at UNHCR, exactly are you helping to accomplish?

AJ: Awareness of the plight of these people. I think they should be commended for what they have survived, not looked down upon. I think people are often uncomfortable and don't like the idea. They seem to shy away because of what it means to them. I think these are really amazing people that are not really understood. Also, I personally just wanted to meet these people around the world and know them, because they are my heroes, and I think they are wonderful people.

JL: Are you able to describe personally the effect that landmines had on the victims in Cambodia, physically, psychologically and economically?

AJ: I think it's difficult to describe because these people are victims of such horror, and yet they are so strong, that they don't seem like victims. So, I think, you don't want to shout that they are victims. We should reach a point that they don't have to go through this because they are such
Educating the United States: Landmines In and Out of the Classroom

Enthusiastic students are giving back to their global community as U.S. Department of State-aided landmine education programs are being launched in grammar schools, colleges and universities across the nation. In these programs, students are given a chance to both learn more about the global landmine crisis and to actively contribute to the mine action community.

by Susanna Sprinkel, MAIC

Introduction

Most U.S. citizens cannot even imagine the extent of the landmine threat that exists worldwide, as it is one problem they will probably never have to face. Assisted by the U.S. Department of State, a variety of programs have been enacted to educate students about the global landmine crisis. These programs not only help spread awareness to U.S. communities, but they also get more people involved in mine action. Many people believe that the youth of today hold the future in the palm of their hands; these programs open a window of opportunity for students to actively improve their future on a global level.

Southwest Missouri State University Landmine Studies

Background

In 2000, the political science department at Southwest Missouri State University (SMSU) enacted a Landmine Studies Program that focuses on demining and survivor assistance. This program is coordinated by Ken Rutherford, a landmine survivor and co-founder of Landmine Survivors Network (LSN). SMSU houses a number of resources that enhance Landmine Studies, such as an extensive UN repository library, an excellent Modell United Nations group, and the Department of State’s Annual Mockie Fellowship, which allows students and faculty from mine-affected countries to attend SMSU. Aside from spreading awareness in and out of the classroom, this program includes a variety of activities to directly involve students in the mine action community and uses local television and radio broadcasts to extend the word beyond campus.

On-Campus Activities

Landmine Studies at SMSU includes various activities on and off campus. On-campus demonstrations have included a Shoe Pile Commemoration, a Petition Drive, and a visit from guest speaker Jody Williams, of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL). The Shoe Pile Commemoration demonstrated a landmine being detonated every 22 minutes. Students began with a pile of shoes at 8:00 a.m. and added a pair every 22