Mine Action and Development: Why should we become MAD about it?

Handicap International

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Mine Action and Development

Why should we become MAD about it?
This position paper is part of the project, “Participatory Mine Action and Development in Mine Affected Municipalities of Stolac and Berkovicii”, implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the financial support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Handicap International (HI).

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MINE ACTION AND DEVELOPMENT

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The Swiss Confederation follows the vision of a world in which, over the long term, the process of economic and social development progresses smoothly and the needs of the most vulnerable populations are adequately met. Therefore, Switzerland has consistently supported efforts at the global level aimed at improving conditions for people living in mine-affected areas.

Landmines and explosive remnants of war represent worrisome obstacles to overall development efforts and have a devastating impact on human security and the quality of life of many citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, Switzerland has been supporting various initiatives in mine action in BiH during the past ten years, with a total amount of approx. 5.5 million euro. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, as in many other countries affected by mines, a tendency towards a reduction in donor funds for demining and mine action could be observed in recent years. This provides a strong reason for integrating humanitarian mine action activities into wider processes of reconstruction and development: It is only by adopting an integral approach that effective and efficient use of limited resources can be made.

Such integral approaches are still scarce. The problem of a weak link between mine action efforts and development programmes is particularly dominant in rural areas, where the poorest and most marginalised communities are doubly discriminated due to the presence of landmines and due to the lack of development programmes in their favour. For these groups, an evaluation of their specific social and economic needs has to precede the development of mine action programmes.

The project “Participatory Mine Action and Development in Mine Affected Municipalities of Stolac and Berkovici” (PMAD project) is an initiative that Switzerland financially supported together with Handicap International. The PMAD project aimed to improve social inclusion, development opportunities and the general quality of life of the population in the mine-affected municipalities of Stolac and Berkovici through the systematic and practical implementation of activities that link mine action and development. The PMAD project facilitated access of marginalised and vulnerable groups to resources and decision-making processes and their inclusion in their communities’ social, economic and cultural life. In order to achieve this, the project ensured the involvement of municipal authorities, civil society, and mine-affected population groups in the designing, steering and implementation of mine action and social inclusion interventions in their communities.
The success of this project has demonstrated the concrete benefits of integrating mine action and development interventions. Its participatory approach has proven to be a powerful instrument to mobilize mine-affected communities and to raise the effectiveness of mine action, as it guarantees that the mine-released land is put in use in order to address the immediate needs of the population. And finally, the population of mine-affected communities has been given development alternatives and instruments in order to actively fight their poverty and social exclusion.

The lessons learnt through the implementation of the PMAD project in the municipalities of Stolac and Berkovici confirm the importance of promoting community development projects that incorporate the management of risks associated with mines and mine action objectives into a strategy of socio-economic development at the local level. The good practice of linking mine action and development, practically proven by the PMAD project, can serve as a model for replication in other regions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and southeast Europe, for the effective use of scarce development resources.

The present paper is a source of valuable information drawn from the lessons learnt during the implementation of the PMAD project. Its aim is to foster and guide effective integration of mine action and development interventions, securing sustainable development solutions, empowerment and inclusion of the most vulnerable populations in all segments of the socio-economic life of their communities. We hope that it will inspire the donor community to become actively engaged in promoting this integral approach, but also in supporting and encouraging responsible local authorities to integrate mine action and development in their development strategies and plans.

Simone Giger
Deputy Country Director
Swiss Cooperation Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Embassy of Switzerland
Acknowledgment

Many lessons have been learned during this four-year test bed for rethinking interventions for individuals and communities affected by mines and other Explosive Remnants of War (ERW). Sometimes there were lessons from success, and sometimes there were hard but useful lessons from unexpected issues that needed to be resolved. The author wants to thank all the people who supported this pilot intervention, with a special gratitude to the project team members, the partners and the SDC cooperation office in Sarajevo for constantly searching for positive solutions to adapt innovative techniques and methods to the conditions on the ground.

This position paper was developed and produced by Michael Carrier, Deputy Programme Director for the Handicap International South East Europe Programme, and acting Technical Advisor for linking mine action and development in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Michael Carrier has been active in the field of disability and local development, with a special focus on mine action, for the last seven years; contact: mika.carrier@gmail.com

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Foreword

Without the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation Office in Sarajevo, the concept and pilot project, Linking Mine Action and Development (LMAD), could have not been implemented.

Although seemingly logical and common sense, initiatives that attempt to Link Mine Action and Development can indeed represent, in practical terms, a multi-dimensional and often complex framework approach. Well aware from the start that we wanted be a pioneer of such an approach, we decided that, no matter what happens during the implementation of the project, our experience, lessons learned and challenges should be shared through the document you have in your hands. The aim of LMAD is to enhance the benefit for the populations affected by landmines, or more generally, all the explosive debris that remains after a conflict. This can be referred to as Explosive Remnants of War (ERW).

ERW, decades after the conflict, still affects the quality of life, the safety and development of many communities in BiH, and this will continue for a significant time. The project HI implemented has generated positive changes: men and women affected by mines in the two targeted municipalities are enjoying more choices and have more opportunities to reach their full potential.

So, what are the key results?

Solutions for mine action and development activities have been found by the communities themselves. Civil Society Organisations at local and national levels have joined government bodies to improve Methods (the identification of priorities through Mine Risk Management) and Regulations (developing a new law that will increase roles and responsibilities of national public and private stakeholders). With better Methods and Regulations, we can better address the needs of mine affected communities - people who can’t wait any longer to have a normal life. Donors who traditionally fund demining will be able to see an opportunity to not only (a) identify the impact of their investment but to (b) increase the desired impact through specific and concrete cost-effective actions. Indeed, large scale development programmes should integrate, where appropriate, direct mine action operational costs to prevent nasty surprises, project failures or postponement because of “a few mines” blocking or diverting assistance to safer areas.

We hope this paper will inspire and guide those who are concerned by the difficult situation of people living in mined areas and wish to support their development and inclusion in the society until the last mine is found. Even though 3% of Bosnia and Herzegovina is contaminated by mines, the positive message we also want to send to the entire community is that there are still 97% of mine free areas. Mine Action needs to continue while you can always look at the bright side of life!

Good reading
Emmanuel Sauvage
Handicap International Programme Director
South East Europe (2007 – 2010)
Sarajevo, March 31, 2011
How to get what you need from this document — please read this first

There is no right way or wrong way to use this position paper. It sets out the background and reasoning about the advantages of linking mine action and development that led to the four year pilot project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and goes into detail on some of the sources of information that were used in the development of the concepts behind the pilot project.

The key lessons learned are also presented, but in a more “academic” way than in the matching “Practical Guide” document.

If you read this document we hope you will understand why the project team designed and implemented the pilot in the way that they did, and some of the key results. As this is a position paper, you may not agree with all that is said.

If you are looking for a shorter and more “field oriented” report then you may find the other document, the “Practical Guide” more useful.

While a few parts of the two documents overlap, each one is a complete, stand alone report.

You can start at the beginning and read all the way through to the end

If you have time, and you want a full understanding of the concept of LMAD and the project, this is a good option.

You can read the parts that interest you and nothing more

Each section stands by itself – though you may need some core background knowledge on Mine Action, or Development, or both, for some of the more technical sections. The document is designed so that each section makes sense by itself and links to the rest, but does not depend on the rest.

It may be that the case studies are the part you want to read, or the technical points of several sections. This document is designed so that the information is easy to find and as useful as possible when used like this.

You can look for specific information and answers

The main part of this document is arranged as a series of questions based on the well-known OECD criteria, which are then discussed. Some further information is given to put the question in the right context and experience from field studies and experience is shared.

To help you find your way through the document there are some graphics and the next page explains what each graphic means.
Specific difficulties/issues faced by existing mine action that may require a complementary support from a development approach.

Background factual information relevant to the topic being discussed (often quotes from articles).

Field story or practical example

Important messages and key points

Quotes that already identified the challenges mentioned in this document but were not fully addressed in the past years. When do we act?
Mine Action and Development

Introduction

This paper describes why complementing existing mine action with a development approach would enhance the choices and opportunities of individuals and communities affected by mines/ERW to overcome poverty and participate more equally in society.

The contents of this document reflect the experience of a four-year pilot project, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by Handicap International (HI) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project developed a strategic framework to explore and test innovative solutions for improving the relationships between mine action and development1.

The problem of landmines and other Explosive Remnants of War

Mines are victim-triggered weapons2 that injure or kill on contact. Mines are part of the overall explosive debris left behind after conflict, usually known as Explosive Remnant of War3 (ERW)

Mines and other ERW are indiscriminate by nature, making no distinction between enemy combatants, farmers at work, or children at play4. Since 1975, from more than one million ERW casualties reported worldwide, at least 80 percent are civilians5.

Mines and other ERW can destroy, injure, or kill decades after the end of a conflict6. In the 66 states and seven other areas that are still contaminated7, thousands of people are killed or injured annually8.

Mines and other ERW do not only represent a physical threat, in fact far more people suffer or die from their indirect impact9 than from direct injuries. ERW block access to resources, including water and arable lands. They obstruct the construction and maintenance of roads and infrastructures. They limit access to education and health services. They represent an obstacle to peace and reconciliation. They limit the revival of trade and investment. And they generate uncontrolled fears that limit the freedom of movement in entire regions or countries.

“A child who dies of diarrhoeal disease because the only clean water source in an area is mined or of malnutrition because farmers’ fields are mine-contaminated is no less a mine victim than the child struck down directly by a landmine.”

Mine action is (and must remain) a success story

During the 1990s, the international community promoted five specific interventions to respond to the crisis caused by the use of mines: clearance of mined areas, mine risk education, stockpile destruction, assistance to mine survivors/victims, and advocacy for a world free from the threat of landmines. Taken together, these

1 This position part is part of a CD-ROM containing: A film presenting the challenges faced by mines-ERW affected population and lessons learnt from Bosnia and Herzegovina; A toolbox outlining good practices to increase sustainable livelihoods of individuals and communities affected by mines and other ERW, and proposing guidelines of intervention in strategic areas (monitoring and evaluation, mine risk management, inclusive local development, social inclusion, and advocacy) to facilitate further replication; A summary of project information including main project documents, specific case studies, dissemination materials, and evaluation reports; A description of the specific context of Bosnia and Herzegovina and opportunities for positive changes.
2 MAINSTREAMING MINE ACTION INTO DEVELOPMENT, Rationale and recommendations. UNDP publication, December 2004.
3 Landmines, or simply mines, are designed to explode from the presence, proximity, or contact of a vehicle or a person. They are usually associated with the term “Explosive Remnants of War” (ERW) that consist of “Abandoned Explosive Ordnance” (AXO), weapons left behind by armed forces when they leave an area, and “Unexploded Ordnance” (UXO), military devices, including cluster bombs, that fail to detonate on impact but remain volatile and can kill if touched or moved.
5 http://www.mineaction.org/section.asp?f=what_is_mine_action
6 http://www.mineaction.org/section.asp?f=what_is_mine_action
7 Landmine monitor report 2010, p. 10
9 MAINSTREAMING MINE ACTION INTO DEVELOPMENT, Rationale and recommendations. UNDP publication, December 2004.
mine-specific humanitarian activities have developed into the core components of what is now referred as “mine action”\(^\text{10}\).

Culminating in 1997 with the signature of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, mine action represents a real success story. Antipersonnel mine use has significantly declined. Producers of anti-personnel mines have decreased. States Parties to the Convention have destroyed over 45 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines and thousands of hectares of land have been cleared for productive use\(^\text{11}\). The number of new victims has fallen significantly and more of those who have survived are receiving assistance. And an additional convention entered into force in August 2010 to reject cluster munitions, because of the same indiscriminate effects as antipersonnel landmines.

However, despite these considerable results, mine action alone is not enough to ensure that people living in, or coming from, or passing through, contaminated areas are able to overcome the negative impact of mines and other ERW, benefit from socio-economic development, and participate equally in society.

Knowledge and experience of mine action have increased over the last two decades, and as a result it is now possible to ask questions about the real difference mine action makes in the lives of individuals and communities affected by mines and other ERW. We are now in a position to analyse and discuss additional changes that may be necessary for mine action to remain a success story. One of the key changes is the need to bring together the more technical approach to mine action with the development based approach.

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\(^{10}\) A Study of Socio-Economic Approaches to Mine Action, GICHD, 2001, p.18.

\(^{11}\) See Landmine monitor report, 2010.
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Why complement existing mine action assistance with a development approach?

The Development Advisory Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has developed a set of five criteria which are widely used to evaluate humanitarian or development interventions.

- **Relevance**: The extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor.

- **Effectiveness**: A measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives.

- **Efficiency**: An economic term which signifies that the aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results.

- **Impact**: The positive and negative changes produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

- **Sustainability**: The extent to which the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn.

Based on these criteria, the following points underline the limits of existing mine action, and discuss the need to complement current interventions for individuals and communities affected by mines and ERW, with a development approach.

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**OECD/DAC criterion Effectiveness:** Are mine action objectives expected to be achieved?

A mine free world in 2009?

Despite allocating significant mine action resources for eliminating mines, the official 2009 target for a “mine free world” was not reached.

And with the high number of requests for extension of clearance deadlines from mine-affected countries, and no firm guarantees that new targets would be reached, it is more and more likely that a total clearance of mines and other ERW will take a long time, and may never be fully undertaken in some areas.

The current process of allocating all available resources for mine action first, and waiting before undertaking development, means therefore that the people who are suffering from extreme social exclusion due to the presence of mines/ERW (among other drivers of poverty and underdevelopment) may in fact wait for a generation or more, before receiving the development support they need.

Goals, outcomes, outputs and activities?

These terms have become widely used since Results Based

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12 The DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance, OECD (1991), Glossary of Terms Used in Evaluation, in Methods and Procedures in Aid Evaluation, OECD (1986), and the Glossary of Evaluation and Results Based Management (RBM) Terms, OECD (2000). More details can be found at: http://www.oecd.org/document/22/0,2340,en_2649_34435_2086550_1_1_1_1,00.html

13 According to the article 5 of the AP mine ban convention, “each State Party undertakes to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control, as soon as possible but not later than ten years after the entry into force of this Convention for that State Party.” When the AP mine ban convention entered into force in 1999, 54 states parties committed to become free of known mines within a period of 10 years. In 2010, 38 still needed to fulfil this obligation.
Management has been introduced as a way of measuring the success of interventions based on their achievement of goals.

- **goals** (overall objectives) - long-term impacts for beneficiaries to which the project itself (beside other projects) should contribute. In mine action the goals are typically to improve the socio-economic wellbeing of people affected by mines/ERW
- **outcomes** (project purpose) - specific (immediate and mid-term) objectives of the project which should bring sustainable benefits / recognisable effects for the target groups. Typically the outcomes would be to permit people to return to their former village and start living there again, to re-start the local economy/health care/transport system, etc.
- **outputs** (results) - the results of the project’s activities, for example: square meters of cleared land, roads rehabilitated, hectares of land brought into production, schools re-opened
- **activities** - the things that must be done to achieve the results. Examples include: demining, setting up a Local Action Group. introducing new cattle, new crops, bridge repair, hiring a teacher, a doctor or a nurse, re-starting a bus service....

As a technical task, demining is often regarded as the goal of mine action. In fact it is not a goal, but an enabling activity that will produce an output (cleared land) leading to an outcome (people able to return to their village) which then leads to the goal (improved wellbeing and development of people affected).

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**contained in Article 5**. The story below is one example of a daily life in areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina contaminated by mines and other ERW more than 15 years after the end of the conflicts.

“One needs to imagine, what it is like to live [...] and MINES and other ERW are all around you and your family. Imagine you or a loved one needing to go into areas of risks to obtain wood for heating. Imagine needing to go into such an area because you must feed and water your stock. You must plant basic agricultural products so that they don’t need to be bought with money that you don’t have. Imagine having to live like this and still these mines are all around you. Citizens of Hodovo and Trijebanj [...] are just some of the people who have to live like this everyday”.

PMAD newsletter, May 2010, Zdenka Pandzo, Basic lifestyles enriched through Mine Action and Development.

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**A mine free world approach**, focusing exclusively on the physical elimination of all mines and ERW as the unique solution, has led to considerable results for more than a decade. However, for people living in the affected areas that are unlikely to see mine clearance reach them within a lifetime, having only a clearance goal may do more harm than good. While keeping it as an idealistic goal, it **may be time to propose a more realistic “new deal” that is possible in the intervention context, with the available duration and means, for ensuring long-term activities that**

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14 Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction Tenth Meeting Geneva, 29 November – 3 December 2010. There are now **38 States Parties** that must still fulfil the obligation contained in Article 5: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Croatia, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Ecuador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Jordan, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Peru, Senegal, Serbia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Yemen and Zimbabwe.
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would address priority needs and decrease the continued marginalization of individuals and communities affected by mines and other ERW.

Key message(s):
- Mine action humanitarian assistance is still needed but more and more mine-affected countries are looking for sustainable development solutions for individuals and communities affected by mines and other ERW.

Similar challenges were already identified before, when do we act?

We want to eradicate those persistent mines that prevent farmers from farming, that prevent children from growing up safely and from going to school, that prevent workers from making a living. But we do not want to expend or divert our finite resources – or encourage the diversion of host countries’ resources - to seek out some landmine in a remote, unpopulated stretch of desert or mountain peak just so that we can say “We got it!”

OECD/DAC criterion Efficiency: Is mine action using the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results (outputs and outcomes)?

Towards the end of traditional “mine action” being the only choice for generous donors?

If the AP mine ban convention has produced a very welcome increase in donor funding, it has also led to traditional approaches to mine action automatically being perceived as the most efficient intervention for individuals and communities affected by mines and other ERW, without examining if this is in fact correct. This trend will eventually come to an end. Donors cannot abandon support for other humanitarian and development interventions, especially where in many countries and regions, mine action contamination, and subsequent death and injury, is significantly lower that other causes of death and injury - from non-communicable and preventable diseases, to road traffic accidents to gun shot victims due to the misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW).

While donors and affected states devoted about $622 million to mine action in 2009, one of the highest annual investments recorded for this purpose, mine action funding might be more limited and difficult to secure over the coming years, especially for the 19 mine-affected countries that have applied for deadline extension to fulfil their clearance obligations. “Donor fatigue” is a real effect, to which can be added a degree of “donor disillusion” in some countries that have not met apparently achievable clearance deadlines.

Failures to reach the 2009 mine free target, and to fully justify the results of mine action interventions, together with growing donor interest in other global challenges and an increasing competition for funds in the broader field of human security, will ultimately lead to reduced funding level for mine action.

If the concept of mine action is expanded beyond its current narrow focus on mines and other ERW to consider a wider set of options for managing and removing mine impacts first, development intervention could become a very effective mine-risk response.


During a field visit, one team from Handicap International met a local mine-affected inhabitant who refused to move out of the marked hazardous area. She was aware that mines and other ERW could be located in this area but she needed this space to raise her cow. Other field assessments confirmed that some local inhabitants enter knowingly in suspected and hazardous area on a regular basis in this area because of social or economic pressures. More than 15 years after the conflict, they face bitter choices between neglecting their families and risking their lives to meet their basic needs.

Being aware that direct mine risk education that focuses on improving a local community’s knowledge of hazardous areas may not be enough to change civilian behaviour, Handicap International decided to work on new ways to link it with development actions to create alternatives.

After being accredited to conduct mine-risk education and carrying out a participatory assessment, two local citizens’ associations identified priorities for demining, mine risk education and development. The mine action priorities were transferred to the related mine-action system and authorities, and at the same time two specific development alternatives were started:

1. One organisation focused on hunters by managing a specific hunting zone in a safe area, marking safe access paths that any type of visitor could use (not just hunters) and promoting the area to local inhabitants and people from other regions, as well as foreigners, in order to enhance the area’s tourism.

2. Another organisation focused on herb collectors by opening new market opportunities and promoting safe areas where herbs could be collected. Herb gathering is a traditional source of income in the region.

Creating development alternatives requires a deeper understanding of local communities and how they function than prioritising mine clearance does, but represents a very efficient and complementary way to manage risk in contaminated areas.

Doing the right job in the right way

Mine action practitioners and donors are often attracted by the simple and powerful logic of indicators that focus on outputs\(^{18}\). Measures, such as the average cost of a square metre cleared or the number of mine incidents, are frequently employed as indicators of achievements even if they say little about the impact of mine action interventions.

Given clear changes in mine action donor strategy and subsequent reductions in financial support to large mine action operations, requesting funding to fulfil the commitments of the AP mine ban convention, and attempt to remove every last AP mine of a country (even if it is in a remote and uninhabited area), is less and less a viable option. More efficient responses are needed to secure funds for supporting individuals and communities affected by mines and ERW in the coming years.

Until mine action opens the door to other responses, and better documents its own impact on individuals and communities affected by mines and other ERW, it will be difficult to know when it represents the best type of intervention among other alternatives.

Key message(s):

- The five pillars of mine action must not be considered as ends in themselves, but possible outputs to contribute to a common outcome: an enhanced capability for affected individuals and communities to overcome the negative impact of mines and other ERW, benefit from human development, and participate equally in society.

- Development can be a very effective and efficient mine risk response - reducing the economic need for local people to get close to mines and ERW can bring significant benefits.

\(^{18}\) See description above of the specific term “output” on page 12.
Similar challenges were already identified before, when do we act?

Rather than the sustained rehabilitation of war damaged societies [mine action] is more often a matter of pragmatic “quick impact” programmes which as a rule are measured in terms of their “output”, such as how many kilometres of road have been de-mined, how many refugees have been resettled or how many prosthetics have been distributed to the injured. Whether the demining of roads really does contribute to the rejuvenation of agriculture, whether the resettled people are able to build democratic social structures which respect human rights and whether the prosthetics really help the reintegration of the injured, remain matters of only secondary interest.

The Bad Honnef Framework, 1999, p. 1

**OECD/DAC criterion Impact:**

**Significantly improving peoples’ quality of life?**

Can mine action address all social exclusion factors in contaminated areas?

As a direct consequence of having been exposed to front-line war activities, affected individuals and communities are usually suffering not only from the threat of mines and other ERW, but also from the poor condition of basic infrastructure (road, electricity, water, transport), local services (education, health, employment, media), social assets (trust, tension) and income generating activities (the majority of the former economic activities having closed down during the conflict).
Mine action alone cannot fully erase mine impact and the related social exclusion factors that can be found in contaminated areas.

And until mine action improves in terms of human development accountability, it will be difficult to know the degree of the positive changes (if any) for mine-ERW affected individuals and communities.

"We define ‘mine-impact free as freedom for local communities to attain sustainable livelihoods (i.e., economic, social and environmental benefits) provided through two broad sets of actions: first, by removing fear and uncertainty about what actions can and cannot be undertaken in a specific area, and second, through support for developing alternative livelihoods.”


In a small community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Handicap International has conducted what was considered as a “SMART” clearance operation: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

Involving local inhabitants, and being aware that available resources are too limited to fully eradicate all the mines and other ERW in this community in the foreseeable future, a small priority task was identified to release access to a water spring, allowing a farmer and his family to increase the cattle breeding activity, their main source of income.

Clearance was successfully conducted without mine incident; by selecting a small task, the total available funding for clearance was not fully used for just one beneficiary only and the remaining funding benefited others. The beneficiary was a returnee, and therefore one of the national priority high-risk groups; and the farmer effectively used this new access to water to increase his cattle.

However, one year later, Handicap International discovered that, due to bad road conditions, the farmer and his family were about to leave the community as their income did not really increase (access to local markets was too difficult) and children could not go to school (access to this community was too difficult for public transports).

Thanks to community involvement and the support of municipal authorities, a solution was found with the community road partially repaired and connected to public transport bus route – and the total cost was less than 10% of the initial clearance cost. Without these development inputs, the farmer would have left the area and most of the adding value of the invested funding for clearance would have been lost until overall conditions improved.

A common and shared belief is that “military” mine action and “civilian” development profiles represent a difficult mix that must be avoided for the sake of the vulnerable target groups. While Mine Action operators and authorities intend to face the identified needs in a very exclusive and technical way, Development cooperation agencies and Civil Society Organisations tend to avoid mine-contaminated areas and instead focus activities elsewhere. However, interventions in mine-affected areas cannot limit themselves to one factor only – risk of mines and other ERW –
and one type of intervention only – mine action – to enhance sustainable livelihoods.

The traditional technical mine-action inputs, such as mine clearance and the provision of prostheses, are not sufficient to fully erase the impact of all the social exclusion factors – including mines and other ERW – evident in contaminated areas. A development approach must complement existing mine action but this does not mean that mine action and development practitioners need to be together at key stages only: when 1. Identifying priorities and 2. Evaluating the human development impact of interventions.

Key messages:

- Mines and other ERW are both a factor that cause, AND an indicator of the existence of, multiple post-conflict discrimination against the affected population.

- Mines and other ERW are a humanitarian and a development issue that requires a multi-dimensional and participatory response. This may result in a slower start to mine-action activities on the ground, but the outcome will be more effective intervention that simultaneously develops a community and releases it from the wider impacts of mines and ERW.

- The term, “mine action and development” does not mean “mine action” versus “development”, but rather development complementing existing mine action for a better support to individuals and communities affected by mines and other ERW. The complementary approach can lead to more focussed mine action, improved development, and a significant increase in the overall impact for local people.

- Setting a mine-impact-free intermediary target may delay the ideal time when all mines would be fully eradicated, but it may be the best possible way toward a mine-free world; it could secure longer-term funding and ensure that mine action is only undertaken immediately if the community benefits.

Similar challenges were already identified before, when do we act?

During the last 15 years, Mine action programmes have improved productivity, safety, quality assurance, and technical standards but remain weak in terms of human development accountability and financial transparency.

Landmine Contamination: A Development Imperative, Social development notes, World Bank, 2004, p.1

The success of mine action may ultimately depend on the level of cooperation with other sectors to achieve sustainable improvements in the living conditions of individuals and communities affected by mines and other ERW.

The Bad Honnef Framework, 1999
OECD/DAC criterion Relevance: Are mine action interventions suited to the priorities of mine-affected population and country needs, global priorities, and donor policies?

Mine action first?

While the IMAS definition of mine action\(^\text{19}\) focus on the social, economic and environmental impact of mines and ERW, and that an international consensus has emerged to establish greater linkages between mine action and development (Nairobi Action Plan, Contact Group on Linking Mine Action Development, OECD-DAC, etc), the reality in the field is that most mine action interventions continue to:

1. **be considered as a pre-condition before any development intervention** in an area contaminated by mines and other ERW, even when it is not identified as the most important priority need by local inhabitants;

2. **operate in stand-alone manner**, even when enhanced cooperation with non-traditional mine action actors would increase the impact of intervention.

A relevant policy framework is already in place for complementing mine action with a development approach but it is usually not implemented at field level.

Most of the current mine action and development policy frameworks do not need any major modification for bringing together existing mine action with a development approach, as long as they focus on their own mandates and effectively implement their principles or rules within a consistent programme of activity.

As one of the five pillars of mine action, Victim Assistance is an area where more inclusive mine action interventions could be very effective. In the existing mine action policy framework, “Victim” can refer to all persons who have been killed or suffered physical or psychological injury, economic loss, social marginalization or substantial impairment of the realization of their rights caused by the use of mines and other ERW\(^\text{20}\). “Victim assistance” has often been regarded in a narrow sense focusing on people injured or killed as a result of mine/ERW accidents; but it could also include family of the person directly affected by a mine/ERW accident and entire communities affected by mines/ERW. The linking of development and mine action offers the only route to effectively address the broader issue of victim assistance.

Mines and other ERW are a development issue: they can severely limit development both by restricting social and economic activities directly and by and preventing or restricting the activities of development agencies in an affected region. Where appropriate, development policy frameworks should recognize affected population and/or contaminated areas as one of the development priorities of a mine-affected country. Besides the already recognized vulnerable groups, such as people with disability or returnees, authorities and development cooperation agencies could use the available information from existing assessments, such the Landmine Impact Survey (LIS), to include mine-ERW affected population in this category, or consider mine-ERW contaminated areas as a priority vulnerable zone of intervention.

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\(^{19}\) IMAS 04.10, January 2003: Mine action: “Activities which aim to reduce the social, economic and environmental impact of mines and ERW”.

\(^{20}\) As defined for cluster munitions for example in the article 2 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.
Earmarked funding for mine action is good, earmarked funding for priority vulnerable groups, including mine-ERW affected population or contaminated areas, could be even better.

In a small community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Handicap International has conducted what was considered as a priority clearance operation because an anti-personnel mine had recently killed one person.

When the demining team discovered one mine already disarmed just before the area of accident, they understood that the person who was killed, the owner of this land, had decided to stop waiting for years for a demining organisation to clear this area and do it himself. He cleared the first mine he found, but not the second one with the end we know. And the tragic irony is that clearance did take place because of his death, when nobody was left anymore to use this land.

Identifying the most relevant intervention for individuals and communities affected by mines and ERW is a difficult task. In a perfect world, resources would have been available for clearing the land as soon as it was requested. In reality, clearance can take decades to happen while a focus on the risk rather than the impact of mines and ERW usually prevail for identifying priority tasks for clearance, even in a development phase.

Complementing current mine action with a development approach that could have proposed cost-effective alternative might have saved the life of this person.

When mines and other ERW are present for decades after a conflict, local inhabitants have usually developed their own safety responses to this threat and may not even consider them as the most important social exclusion factor anymore. Mines and other ERW are still a long-term social, economic and ecological problem. They do prevent affected individuals and communities from recovering after the conflicts; but on short-term basis, and as long as human lives are not endangered anymore, local inhabitants generally prioritize other post-conflict related issues as the ones most urgent: access to services such as health or education, political discriminations, income generating activities...

While more and more mine-affected countries are entering into a “development” phase, the current model of humanitarian mine action assistance may not be always the most relevant priority for individuals and communities affected by mines and other ERW as their circumstances change.

If we want to ensure that priority needs are addressed first, international policy recommendations that recognise the importance of seeing mine action as an integral part of the development continuum should be translated into decision-making processes which are then implemented from national level down to the field. Having joint mine action and development criteria guiding the identification of needs and the evaluation of interventions for individuals and communities affected by mines and other ERW would ensure that the most relevant action is implemented first.

Key message(s):
- Mine action needs a broader approach in order to encapsulate a country’s evolution from humanitarian needs and immediate post-conflict survival to development and sustainable livelihood.
Mine action is not necessarily a pre-condition for development support to take place in areas affected by mines and other ERW. (It will probably require an adapted response – but that does not mean a zero-response).

Mines and other ERW are a social exclusion factor but not necessarily the most important one for local people and not automatically the first one to be addressed.

A human being who, due to the threat of mines and/or other ERW, could not or cannot pursue their normal activities is also a mine victim. Development activities are usually the best way to address the indirect mine victims.

Earmarked funding for mine action is good, earmarked funding for mine-ERW affected population or contaminated areas could be even better.

Similar challenges were already identified before, when do we act?

Priorities vary with time and place. As countries recover from conflict, risks posed by landmine contamination abate because (1) people learn what areas are contaminated, (2) people adapt to the risks, and (3) mine action programmes deal with the most egregious dangers. Focus begins to shift from immediate survival to sustaining livelihoods.


The Nairobi Plan of Action, 2005-2009, highlights the need for mine action to be integrated more into the development process, rather than to be solely labelled as an element of humanitarian assistance.


Sustainability: Are the benefits likely to continue after mine action interventions ceased?

Creating dependencies rather than promoting autonomy?

An approach to mine action based on the concept that the destruction of all mines and other ERW on the planet can be achieved on a short- or mid-term basis has produced a very strong synergy, but it has also led to negative and unintended impacts on the sustainability of mine action interventions.

Specific mine action structures, such as a national mine action centre, have often been created, and usually remain apart from already existing local institutions. Why would they need to be integrated be if mine action institutions were officially supposed to disappear in less than a decade?

Massive investment has been allocated for technical research and clearance operations but much less has been spent on local empowerment and capacity building. Why would available financial resources be allocated to local skills and capacities that would not be needed in a short-term future?

Humanitarian funding has been allocated for mine action but very few mine-affected countries, and no known development cooperation agencies, have planned long-term development funding for a mine-ERW affected population or contaminated areas. Why would they do if mines and other ERW were supposed to be erased before a post-conflict area enters into a development phase?

21 See DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance, http://www.oecd.org/document/22/0,2340,en_2649_34435_2086550_1_1_1,00.html
Mine action interventions have, in general, been more focused on getting the mines out of the ground than promoting sustainable livelihoods. Why would they need to promote sustainable “co-existence with mines” if contaminated lands were to be cleared in a few years, not decades?

A recent survey of donors conducted by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining found that, while short-term donor support remains strong, levels of (mine action) funding may decrease and become more unpredictable over the coming years.


When the BiH project started in 2007, mine-affected local community members from the municipalities of Stolac and Berkovici identified road rehabilitation as a key priority. They realized that better spatial accessibility within their community was a precondition to obtaining sustainable benefits from future mine-action intervention. Mine action would release land for agricultural purposes, thereby increasing local production, while the rehabilitated road would ensure that the agricultural products could be taken to regional markets, thus enhancing local income streams.


The unexpected length of the problem of mines and other ERW may require a more sustainable approach where:

**Key message(s):**

- Mine action should include autonomy as a key component of intervention.
- Strong technical support would be actively complemented with other types of services to permit full inclusion of individuals and communities affected by mines and other ERW.
- The needs of individuals who left the contaminated areas are also addressed. Returnees only go back when life for themselves and their families is seen as “better” in their former place than as refugees/IDPs.

Similar challenges were already identified before, when do we act?

Mine action should promote autonomy rather than creating dependencies.

The Bad Honnef Framework, 1999
Conclusion

People living in, or coming from, or passing through, mine/ERW contaminated areas must be able to overcome poverty and participate more equally on socio-economic and political grounds in society.

The goals and aspirations of achieving a positive longer-term impact on the lives and livelihoods of mine/ERW-affected communities can not be achieved without complementing existing mine action assistance with a development approach.

Traditional technical mine action activities, such as mine clearance and the provision of mine risk education sessions, are not sufficient to overcome the causes and effects of social exclusion that can be evident in contaminated areas. The approach to mine action must accurately reflect a country’s evolution from a post-conflict context (where immediate humanitarian needs are prioritised), to the social, economic and political empowerment of mine-affected communities that is required in longer-term development contexts. The active involvement (direct development interventions or support to mine action programmes) of development stakeholders is key.

Based on the experience of four years’ work in Bosnia and Herzegovina, this position paper has identified good practices that individuals, organisations or governments could support, within their sphere of influence, to shift attention away from mines and other ERW, and towards people and sustainable livelihoods.

- **Addressing the problem of mines and other ERW must be considered a humanitarian and a development issue that requires a multi-dimensional and participatory response** to produce more effective interventions that simultaneously develop a community and release it from the wider impacts of mines and ERW.

- If the current narrow priority focus on the physical elimination of mines and other ERW as the single over-riding solution is expanded to consider a wider set of options for managing and removing mine impacts first, this type of development intervention could become a very effective and efficient mine-risk response by creating alternatives for behaviour change.

- **The best possible way towards a mine-free world may be to set mine-impact free intermediary target.** This intermediate target could secure longer-term funding and ensure mine action is only undertaken in cases where the community benefits.

- **Relevant mine action and development policy frameworks are already in place at a high level, but usually remain a theoretical statement and are not translated into action at field level.** As one of the five pillars of Mine Action, Victim Assistance is an area where more inclusive mine action interventions could be very effective. Development policy frameworks could include the Mine/ERW affected population as one of the priority vulnerable groups, or consider mine/ERW contaminated areas as priority vulnerable zones of intervention.
Further reading


German initiatives to ban landmines. (1997), The Bad Honnef Framework on Mine Action Programmes.


UNDP. (2004), Mainstreaming mine action into development, rationale and recommendations, Bureau for crisis prevention and recovery, New York.
