

# Journal of Conventional Weapons Destruction

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Volume 17  
Issue 1 *The Journal of ERW and Mine Action*

Article 8

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April 2013

## Post-conflict Recovery: Gender and Age Issues

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### Recommended Citation

Varó, Stella Salvagni and Hamo, Ciro (2013) "Post-conflict Recovery: Gender and Age Issues," *The Journal of ERW and Mine Action* : Vol. 17 : Iss. 1 , Article 8.

Available at: <https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/cisr-journal/vol17/iss1/8>

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# Post-conflict Recovery: Gender and Age Issues

Despite improvements in victim assistance programs, injured survivors of landmines/explosive remnants of war still struggle to obtain health care and employment. Differentiating between the age and gender of survivors will enable service providers to identify socioeconomic needs.

by Stella Salvagni Varó and Cira Hamo [ Gender and Mine Action Programme ]



A survivor works in a body of water, despite obstacles.  
Photo courtesy of Sean Sutton/MAG (Mines Advisory Group).

**T**he *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction* (Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention or APMBBC) requires that "[e]ach State Party in a position to do so shall provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration, of mine victims and for mine awareness programs."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, during the 2004 Nairobi Summit (First Review Conference of the APMBBC) concrete actions for victim assistance were included, and the term **victim** was broadened to include the injured person's family and community.<sup>2</sup> According to the Cartagena Action Plan adopted at the APMBBC's Second Review Conference in December 2009, "States Parties are resolved to provide adequate age- and gender-sensitive

assistance to mine victims, ..." and several of the actions related to victim assistance (23–33) include gender considerations, namely Actions 25, 29, 30 and 31.<sup>3</sup> The Vientiane Action Plan adopted in November 2010 at the *Convention on Cluster Munitions* First Meeting of States Parties in Laos also includes a section on victim assistance, stating in an even more decisive way than the Cartagena Action Plan that "States Parties with cluster munitions victims in areas under their jurisdiction or control will: ..." carry out a series of actions (Articles 20 through 29).<sup>4</sup> The recently adopted CCM officially broadens the definition of victims (Article 2) to include not only the persons directly impacted by cluster munitions (mainly men and boys) but also affected families and communities, which includes caregivers (often women and girls).

### Sex- and Age-disaggregated Data and Victim Assistance

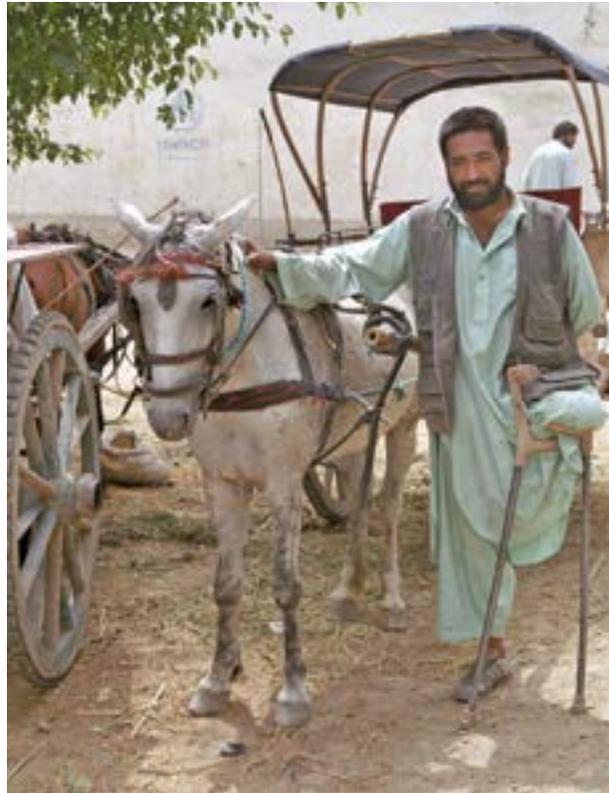
Gender and age issues in post-conflict recovery affect the ability of men, women, boys and girls to seek and obtain assistance after trauma or injury from war or an explosive remnant of war. These issues also affect the employability of people in post-conflict situations. Landmines and ERW affect men, women, boys and girls differently, and each needs to be addressed differently. Therefore, all data for landmine/ERW accidents should be collected and analyzed in a sex- and age-disaggregated manner and separated throughout the analysis phase in order to identify the best means of assistance. The U.N. *Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes* explicitly points out the significance of collecting sex- and age-disaggregated data (SADD), recommending that national mine action authorities and mine action organizations “collect and analyze data and information that reveal the distinct attitudes held by men, women, boys and girls with regards to landmine/ERW risks and threats.”<sup>5</sup>

Both the Cartagena and the Vientiane Action Plans specify the need to collect SADD.<sup>6</sup> However, in spite of this, recent studies show that gender- and age-sensitive victim assistance national plans and their implementation in mine-affected countries remain insufficient.<sup>5</sup>

The collection, analysis and use of SADD provides quantitative statistical information on the different roles, responsibilities, mobility patterns and risks, and enables organizations providing victim assistance to better identify and understand the different needs and priorities of all survivors and indirect victims. It also helps to distinguish access to and control over resources, labor patterns, the status of rights and the distribution of benefits among the different affected groups, which is essential when planning activities for post-conflict recovery. SADD provides a clear indication and social analysis of an accident’s impact on survivors and indirect victims so that a response can be tailored accordingly. In this context, mine action organizations in post-conflict situations and national mine action authorities should take gender and age issues into consideration, which will enable them to analyze the impact of landmine/ERW accidents on all community members.

### The Effects of Gender on Assistance

How does gender affect the ability of men, women, boys and girls to seek and obtain assistance following an injury from ERW or traumatic war injury? Where gender details are known, males tend to comprise the vast majority of all casualties, whereas females account for a much lower percentage. As of June 2010, the Information Management System for Mine



Finding ways to adapt to disabilities allows survivors to work.  
Photo courtesy of International Committee of the Red Cross.

Action SADD for landmine/ERW victims in South Sudan clearly indicated “a gendered pattern. Data collected from the ten states [in South Sudan] shows that out of a total number of 2,762 mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) victims, 2,240 were male, 419 were female and 103 were ‘unknown.’”<sup>7</sup> Recognizing that most landmine/ERW victims are male allows mine action programs to develop an analysis of at-risk activities.

Estimates indicate that females are the minority of direct landmine/ERW victims. Examples from several countries—Afghanistan, Cambodia, Uganda, Vietnam and Yemen—show that compared to men, females injured by landmines/ERW are less likely to have access to immediate health care and are therefore more likely to die from serious injuries.<sup>10,11,12,13,14</sup> Conversely, developing a full understanding of the situation where SADD is unavailable is impossible. As a result, this data must be included on all data-collection forms relating to accidents or landmine/ERW victims.

### Age, Gender and Employability

The APMBC mandates that each State Party in a position to do so shall provide assistance for the care, rehabilitation, and socioeconomic reintegration of mine victims and for mine awareness programs. In post-conflict areas employment



Income-generating activities are important for reintegrating landmine victims.  
 Photo courtesy of International Committee of the Red Cross/Jessica Barry.

is essential for the social status and economic empowerment of survivors and indirect victims. However, in many cases victim assistance providers do not adequately address the employability of landmine/ERW survivors, even though it is a priority for those affected.

The survivors and indirect victims highlight the issue of employability, as in a case study from Sudan (now Sudan and South Sudan), where interviewees were asked to rank their needs in order of importance and placed employment and economic empowerment after basic education for survivors and their children.<sup>15</sup> According to a Handicap International survey in Iraq, 95 percent of respondents said that “unemployment was so high that survivors were the last to be chosen for a job.”<sup>16</sup> Overall, the situation for survivors is better in northern Iraq, in the more stable area of Iraqi Kurdistan. Also, the government of Iraq reportedly “does not employ persons with disabilities,” and many are not admitted to schools.<sup>16</sup> In Jordan, evidence shows that a high level of survivor unemployment persists as well as “minimal systematic approaches to economic empowerment after landmines injury.”<sup>16</sup>

Female survivors and victims are even less likely to find work or receive financial support and are more exposed to the risk of increased poverty. As

highlighted in a study on Colombian female victims, women are often unaware of their rights regarding labor laws or property rights, as well as victim assistance entitlements like economic support or psychological assistance.<sup>17</sup> This lack of awareness may be related to low levels of literacy among women and girls in many affected areas. Child survivors also face specific discrimination. Teachers and classmates are often unaware of disability issues; for child survivors this often leads to “... discrimination, isolation and the inability to participate in certain activities. This is a de-motivating factor for child survivors to stay in school. As a result, education rates among child survivors are lower, while school dropouts are more frequent, which results in diminished employment prospects later on.”<sup>14</sup>

Addressing employability issues involves tackling socioeconomic reintegration generally and approaching it as part of the post-conflict reconstruction process. SADD provides important quantitative and qualitative statistical information on the differences and inequalities between men, women, boys and girls. When collected and analyzed, SADD enables national mine action authorities and mine action organizations to recognize these differences and prioritize the needs of survivors and in-



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directly associated victims, as well as design appropriate services.

### Summary

SADD enables organizations to understand the full impact of landmines/ERW on male and female survivors and/or indirect victims, making it an integral part of data-collection forms. As a result, mine action groups should use SADD when planning programs designed to meet victim assistance needs. ©

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1. *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction*, Article 6(3), Oslo, 18 September 1997. "... victims include those who either individually or collectively have suffered physical or psychological injury, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights through acts or omissions related to mine utilization." First Review Conference 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*. Nairobi Final Report, 29 November–3 December 2004, Paragraph 64. <http://bit.ly/hxtsON>. Accessed 16 February 2011.
2. *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction*, Article 6(3), Oslo, 18 September 1997.
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15. "Victim Assistance Sudan." *United Nations Mine Action Office Sudan*. <http://tinyurl.com/c962nva>. Accessed 7 December 2012.
16. "Voices from the Ground." *Handicap International* (September 2009): 130–131, 138. <http://tinyurl.com/c22863s>. Accessed 7 December 2012.
17. "The Impact of Anti-personnel Mines and Explosive Remnants of War on Women Victims in Colombia." *Geneva Call*. <http://tinyurl.com/actfz9m>. November 2009.
18. "Critical Issue Model 5 Landmine Awareness." *ARC Resource Pack*, 2009. <http://tinyurl.com/b99me7b>.