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The Humpty Dumpty Institute

In 1998, a group of business entrepreneurs came together with a desire to tackle some of the world's leading humanitarian problems. They developed the Humpty Dumpty Institute as a way to find creative solutions to global issues, such as explosive remnants of war and food security.¹

True to its tagline, HDI is "putting the pieces back together" through unique public-private partnerships and development programs. HDI also encourages dialogue between the United

Nations and the United States Congress to support mine-action programs around the world and help alleviate hunger.¹ HDI has partnered with The HALO Trust, International Relief and Development, UXO Lao, Project RENEW, Land O'Lakes and Mines Advisory Group to implement its projects around the world.



Funding

Eliminating landmines and unexploded ordnance, mine-victims' assistance and mine-risk education are all part of HDI's core interests. HDI has raised more than US\$15 million for mine-clearance efforts in Africa and Asia while managing several multi-million dollar mine-action programs. HDI's founders also created the Adopt-A-Minefield Program, a campaign that raised an additional \$25 million over the last decade and ended in December 2009.² HDI currently has projects in Myanmar (Burma), Laos and Vietnam, with successfully completed projects in Sri Lanka, Angola, Armenia, Eritrea, Lebanon and Mozambique.

In late 2011, operating under a grant from the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM/WRA), the Humpty Dumpty Institute became the first American NGO to initiate both mine-victims' assistance and mine-risk education programs inside the borders of Myanmar. In her historic trip to Myanmar in December 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced HDI's newest initiative. In this program, HDI is partnering with Myanmar's largest Buddhist organization, the Sitagu Association, to conduct pilot MVA and MRE programs in 30 communities inside Myanmar.

In Vietnam, in 2009, with funding from PM/WRA, HDI initiated a large-scale mushroom-growing livelihood-assistance project for 1,000 explosive-remnants-of-war survivor families in one of Vietnam's poorest provinces. Through this program, survivors are able to substantially supplement their monthly income because HDI and Project RENEW purchase all the mushrooms from the farmers and take care of packaging, sales and distribution. Money earned from these sales is used to clear unexploded bombs in Vietnam. Additionally, Vietnamese mushrooms will be exported around the world beginning in 2013 and "profits" will be used in a similar manner.

Since 2006, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's McGovern-Dole Food for Education program has funded HDI and its mine-action efforts in Laos. More than \$9 million has been provided to feed 25,000 kids in 175 villages and to remove

UXO at school sites in these remote Laos villages. HDI has collaborated with UXO Lao to destroy nearly 8,122 pieces of UXO thus far.³

In Sri Lanka, in 2006, HDI launched a two-year mine clearance and agricultural development project valued at \$4 million.⁴ Under the USDA Food for Peace program, HDI received 6,500 tons of red lentils and soybean oil. HDI monetized these commodities using a Sri Lankan broker who sold the products to buyers in country. HDI then used the funds to finance the project. Over the course of two years, HDI and its partner HALO returned more than 175 acres of contaminated land to productive agricultural use for smallholder farmers in northern Sri Lanka's Jaffna District.⁵ More than 1,500 landmines were removed and destroyed.

More Than Just Landmines

Through HDI's mine-action efforts, its agenda expanded in Laos and Sri Lanka to include food security and other development work. For example, while funding landmine removal in Laos, HDI began rebuilding schools, planting gardens and feeding 25,000 undernourished children. While clearing landmines in Sri Lanka's Jaffna Peninsula, HDI worked to revitalize the area's local dairy industry, increasing milk production by 45 percent, training 2,000 farmers on modern agricultural techniques and providing 10,000 mothers and children access to free health care. HDI is not, however, limited to food aid abroad. In 2008, it issued \$125,000 worth of special coupons in Upstate New York (U.S.) to 20,000 food-stamp recipients that served to double their purchases of fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables at 43 farmer's markets.³

Making Connections

Implemented in 2011, HDI's latest program is the Higher Education Alliance. The organization takes its mandate a step further by fostering dialogue between the United Nations and academia in an effort to globalize U.S. college campuses. HDI forges a relationship with students and the U.N. through hosting conferences and speakers from the United Nations, U.N. specialized agencies, the U.S. diplomatic corps and U.N.-related NGOs. For example, HDI hosted a lecture at Albany State University on health-related millennium development goals. Students also have the opportunity to visit U.N. headquarters and serve as interns in various international organizations. Eight campuses in nine states with almost 300,000 students are alliance members, which includes many U.S. Historically Black Colleges and Universities.⁶ For more information, visit <http://thehdi.org>. ↗

~ Amy Crockett, CISR staff

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Endnotes

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