DPKO Practices in Gender Mainstreaming
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by Katalind Shkrel | Mine Action Information Center |


The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations was developed to “help countries torn by conflict create the conditions for lasting peace.” DPKO personnel, as United Nations peacekeepers, are deployed in conflict-ridden areas to help stabilize the conflict and establish peaceful conditions. Ever since their first mission in 1948, peacekeepers have carried out a total of 63 field missions, bringing to bear their unique skills and knowledge to over 45 countries, resulting in the disarmament of over 400,000 ex-combatants. At present, DPKO is working in 18 countries and territories, and employs the expertise of military personnel, administrators, economists, police officers, legal experts, doctors, women’s affairs officers, human rights monitors, humanitarian workers and others to deliver effective peacekeeping operations. Mine action is included in the peacekeeping operations of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, home to the United Nations Mine Action Service.

UNMAS “seeks to ensure an effective, protective and coordinated United Nations response to the landmine contamination problem, through collaboration with other United Nations and regional organizations, governments, nongovernmental organizations, and others. To help guide gender practitioners, UNMAS has developed a publication in 2007, Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes, in consultation with the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action. These guidelines have been field tested and will be revised in 2009 based on feedback received.

**Gender Mainstreaming**

During the 1990s, war crimes against women and girls in conflict areas in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia prompted the United Nations to take action and establish policies to mainstream gender perspectives into peacekeeping operations. The result was UN Security Council Resolution 1325. The resolution calls for the mainstreaming of gender considerations into all peacekeeping operations in order to address the different ways conflict affects men and women, and to recognize the contributions of both genders to peace and security. Since the adoption of Resolution 1325, DPKO has taken several steps to mainstream gender perspectives, including the appointment of gender advisers in all peacekeeping operations and in UNPROOF headquarters, and the development of a body of resource and guidance material, available on the DPKO Best Practices Web site. To help guide gender practitioners, UNMAS has also developed a publication in 2007, Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes, in consultation with the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action. These guidelines have been field tested and will be revised in 2009 based on feedback received.

**UNMAS Guidelines**

The United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action developed guidelines to mainstream gender perspectives into relevant aspects of United Nations mine-action programs, including mine clearance, mine-risk education and victim assistance. Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes incorporates real examples of mine-action gender mainstreaming from mine-action programs around the world.

**Conclusion**

Conflicts and their aftermath affect men, women, boys and girls differently. Taking gender differences into consideration in peacekeeping activities such as mine clearance can help ensure that all people have equal access to assistance programs, and can participate in decision-making processes in their communities. Although the guidelines in Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes were created specifically for United Nations mine-action programs, these guidelines may provide a helpful model to other mine-action entities, including national authorities looking to include local considerations in mine-action programs.

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**UNMAS Guidelines**

- Try to include both men and women on survey and clearance teams.
- Mine-risk education: Professionals of different genders and ages also differ in their behavior and their response to mine-risk education. To address these differences, mine-action personnel should take an approach to MRE that will reach both sexes. The United Nations has six guidelines in the area of mine-risk education:
  - Gather data that will illustrate the at-risk behaviors of both genders.
  - Gather data that will show the attitudes held by both genders toward potential mine and UXO threats.
  - Determine the best message that will effectively convey MRE messages to both genders.
  - Hold MRE meetings at times and places convenient for all individuals, not just one gender or age group.
  - Ensure that both genders comprehend MRE messages presented.
  - Include both male and female instructors.

- Victim Assistance: Mine-action operators should also consider gender when delivering effective victim assistance to both men and women. In some communities, women may have more trouble accessing medical assistance due to cultural barriers and other obstacles. Mine-action operators should also consider that both male and female mine

UXO survivors are vulnerable to the economic, psychological and social consequences of disabling injuries. To ensure effective victim assistance for both genders, Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes recommends that mine-action personnel:

- Collect, record and evaluate age- and sex-disaggregated data that will reveal mine/UXO survivors’ needs and access to services.
- Support mine/UXO survivor advocacy and awareness.
- Try to include both male and female workers on victim-assistance teams.

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