
[Back to Contents](#)


[Current Issue](#)

[Call For Papers](#)

[Submission Guidelines](#)

[E-mail the Journal](#)

[Journal Staff](#)

[Editorial Board](#)

[Other Issues](#)


The Humanitarian Foundation of People against Landmines, Stiftung Menschen gegen Minen

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Founded in January 1996, the Humanitarian Foundation of People against Landmines, or *Stiftung Menschen gegen Minen* (MGM), is Germany's first Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) created specifically for humanitarian demining. Before the inception of MGM, Germans in need of demining aid turned chiefly to England (the HALO-trust and Mine Action Group) and Norway (Norwegian People's Aid). Though a few German organizations have been involved in demining, they have focused on limited mined areas or on political campaign. MGM, in contrast, provides emergency demining aid; instructs and employs the local population in demining precautions and operations; and conducts research in demining operations.

The two founders of MGM, Hans Georg Kruben and Hendrik Ehlers, are experienced in demining operations. After working in a medical demining program in Angola from 1992 to 1994, they sensed a need for improved humanitarianism and professionalism in demining operations, particularly in Germany. They consequently joined other international demining programs and ultimately created their own, one aiming for technical expertise as well as humane and professional spirit.

MGM works extensively to ensure that its demining methods are effective and safe. Each demining operation begins with an analysis of the target region, followed by a dispatch of surveyors and EOD experts to the region. In its demining operations MGM uses technology ranging from metal detectors and prodders to infrared detection and satellite navigation. To handle large projects, MGM works in cooperation with other humanitarian demining organizations possessing similar objectives and ethics. Standard for every MGM operation is a mine-awareness campaign, including information about mine hazards and precautions, for the population affected. To update the local and international communities on the status of MGM operations and foster dialogue about demining, MGM provides a status report and open forum on its web site, <http://www.dsk.de/mgm>. Local populations by a project, MGM donors, and international cooperating organizations can access and respond to the reports with ease.

Colleen Pettit is a staff writer for the *Journal of Humanitarian Demining*.