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External Evaluation of Handicap International Belgium's Community Based Mine Awareness Program

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Methodology:

This evaluation was conducted and written by an external consultant ¹ between April and May 2001. The evaluation consisted of direct observation of all aspects of the programme and numerous interviews by the consultant of key staff within and outside HI. In addition 19 case studies based on semi-structured interviews were compiled and form annex A.. A total of 1113 individual interviews with pre-tested questionnaires were carried out in the 5 target provinces and the 41 target districts. These questionnaires targeted different groups in different communities, as is explained in the report. Copies of these questionnaires can be found in the annexes. The design of the evaluation by the consultant was based on the Terms of References for the evaluation and can be found as annex D. Existing HI national staff (supervisors) conducted the questionnaire survey, the national data staff at the Kandahar office entered the data prior to analysis. All questionnaire results and statistical tabulations (Excel) have been left with HI office in Afghanistan.

Introduction to CBMAP (overview):

Briefly, the HI community based mine awareness programme (CBMAP) is a programme that began in southern Afghanistan in 1996 in order to establish sustainable and appropriate mine awareness to rural communities at high risk to mines and UXO. The central vehicle used to disseminate mine awareness information is locally recruited staff (Nomaindas) who conduct direct mine awareness training as well as identify and train mine committees (MCs) as village volunteers to maintain and reiterate the mine awareness message. It is a pyramidal structure from HI trainers to these Nomaindas and then to the many MC at the village level. The programme has grown considerably over the years and not only transfers information to reduce accidents but also collects information from the villages (through the MCs) concerning UXO, mine injury data and new previously unidentified minefields. The community based approach with unpaid volunteers was innovative when it began and appears to be effective. Working in 5 provinces in 2001 and 41 districts of high risk, and expanding every year, the programme has never been evaluated. This evaluation was commissioned by HI Belgium .

¹ Chris Horwood

Executive Summary:

This report considers the CBMAP to have established a conceptual approach and operational structure that allows mine awareness to be highly sustainable in a target area and among population groups of a considerable size. The programme is culturally and socially appropriate in design and its structure allows a single community-based Nomainda (HI staff representative) to monitor and interface with a large number of volunteer mine committees (MCs). While the statistics do not allow us to draw a direct correlation between mine awareness dissemination and reduced injury levels there is substantial statistical and circumstantial information to suggest that people in HI's areas are more 'mine smart' and have changed reduced risk-taking activities to some degree. Data in this report will illustrate this.

Handicap's CBMAP pyramidal structure takes time and resources to set up, but once it is functioning it has an immense capacity to deliver mine awareness to an ever increasing number of affected communities. Due to 'economies of scale' and the capacity of the Nomaindas to create and monitor large numbers of mine committees, the CBMAP can continue to offer its benefits to an increasing number of people at a decreasing cost per capita (i.e. person trained).

Mine awareness seeks to reduce dangerous and risk-taking practises through the teaching of 'mine smart' knowledge: as long as there are mines and UXO this is a *damage limitation* exercise and not a *damage control* exercise. There will never be the perfect mine awareness programme but a community based, voluntary and self-sustaining network of trainer and information collectors is a significant achievement that deserves recognition. This evaluation finds this approach to be the most appropriate currently in use in Afghanistan in terms of pedagogical approach and sustainability.

The volunteer network in many hundreds of villages in affected areas gives HI a high capacity for valuable information transfer :The secondary benefits of the community based network enables HI to collect, on a regular basis, important data concerning mine victims, previously unidentified minefields and location of UXO. Such a system would be costly to establish independently and should be valued as a major output of the programme. If and when this data is managed in a more effective way it should offer considerable added value to the mine action sector in Afghanistan . Despite the disappointing standard of victim data collection nationally , but also within HI's programme, HI is well placed to improve the data collected in its regions substantially as well as take a lead nationally. In this regard HI should vigorously promote the establishment of the national data collection plan as laid out in the AMVIS proposal written in 2000.

The CBMAP system is evaluated to be appropriate to facilitate a long term or short term involvement by HI. They have set up a low cost system that requires low staff and low maintenance. In terms of sustainability 98% of MCs interviewed indicated that they would continue to act as the mine committee when HIs support and involvement in their communities curtailed

HIs relative negligence in developing a strategy to create a community based volunteer system among the most vulnerable sections of the population (Kuchi nomads) represents a missed opportunity that can and should be rectified immediately.

Another area of weakness highlighted in this evaluation is the method used for village and MC selection at the district level. The survey results indicate a high number of villages, that currently do not receive mine awareness through an MC, consider themselves exposed to high risk. This too needs to be addressed immediately. In addition to this the study identified the need for further attention by CBMAP to the exact coverage capacity of MCs within their villages. Some evidence suggests that some of the MCs do not reach a large proportion of their village population.

HI is already using the BBC programmes as a vehicle for mine awareness 'radio forum' in their project area to considerable effect. This evaluation recommends that they greatly expand their promotion (through providing radios) and harness the power of this available and popular resource.

HI has always worked closely with the UN Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan. HI's link through the Regional MAPA offices has enabled ammunition reports generated from their community-based information to be partially addressed. But due to the high number of requests generated there has been an urgent need for more EOD teams. HI's current plan to develop 2 new EOD teams in 2001 is commendable, if not overdue.

In terms of strategic planning and organisational 'vision' this evaluation recommends HIB to consider all possible mine action options when seeking to address the needs of mine risk communities and not restrict itself to mine awareness. The recent development of 2 EOD teams is a positive development. It is recommended that the progress of AREA (innovative and successful community-based demining agency in Afghanistan) be studied by HI and that a possible adoption of a similar approach be considered in Southern Afghanistan.

Despite the relatively large number of agencies working in mine action in Afghanistan, it is a huge country with major geographical, political and climatic constraints. A large number of people continue to be directly affected by landmines and UXO both economically, social and physically (with high numbers of casualties) even after 12 years of mine action operations. This evaluation commends the CBMAP for the success of its programme and contributions made to reducing the threat, but also encourages HI to continue considering ways it can maximise its intervention on behalf of mine affected communities.

1.0 Impact Evaluation.

1.1 Achievements as set against stated goals, aims and objectives.

As expressed in the Terms of Reference for this evaluation the two overall objectives of this program are:

- To reduce instances of mine/UXO accidents among civilian populations in rural communities of southern Afghanistan, through direct and indirect mine awareness training.
- To develop mine awareness in communities and create a sustainable mine awareness capacity, which endures once the project is finished.

Although this evaluation is designed to comment on CBMAP since its inception (1996) the evaluation itself is mostly funded as part of the project activities under the current contract with the EC Commission as part of the consortium led by the NGO, MADERA. As expressed in the Aug 1999 contract between HIB and the European Union the goal and project purpose are expressed as follows:

The goal of this programme is to arrive within a period of 24 months to a reduction of mines accidents through the development of mine awareness within rural communities and the creation of a sustainable mine awareness capacity and mine information network that will continue after the end of the project.

Specifically, the project will have the following results:

200,000 villagers trained to Mine Awareness (villagers and nomads)

400 Mine Committees created in focus districts and provinces

600 unexploded ordnance reports collected in focus districts and provinces.

Findings of 1.1 Achievements as set against stated goals, aims and objectives.

Specific results

With respect to these specific results the CBMAP has, between August 1999 and April 2001 (two months short of the contract period with the EC) :

- Trained (direct and indirect) in mine awareness over 736, 000 villagers and pastoral nomads (Kuchie). This is an over achievement of 350% above the target number.
- Created 542 new mine committee. This is an over achievement of 135% above the target level.
- Documented and collected 1664 ammunition reports from affected villages. An over achievement of 277%.

These achievements are very commendable and illustrate that the system in place to achieve these different project output are working well and to far higher levels than expected. Possibly they also show that HI set their targets low or are not aware themselves of the capacity of their system to generate these results. It should be clear that these levels of achievement will probably not be repeated in the future in the same areas: There will be a finite limit to how many Mine Committees (MCs) a province needs and how many people need training. Equally there will be a limit to how many ammunition reports HI will receive from the same areas over time.

Reducing mine incidents

With respect to the stated goal of reducing mine incidents in the project area it must be said that seeking to establish a direct correlation between changes in mine/UXO incidents and mine awareness dissemination is problematic and misleading. By isolating mine awareness training as a single factor affecting mine/UXO incidents this evaluation would be ignoring the fact that mine / UXO incidents are the result of a complex interplay of physical, seasonal and attitudinal factors. There are serious limiting factors in assessing this objective. This has also been found to be the case in other countries where an evaluation of mine awareness impact has been attempted as well as in a previous national mine

awareness evaluation (CIET 1998) in Afghanistan. Nevertheless some findings concerning this central CBMAP objective and these can be found below in section 1.4.

Sustainable mine awareness capacity and mine information network

Concerning the creation of a sustainable mine awareness capacity and mine information network, the programme has developed an approach that has proved to be sustainable (to date) and has resulted in an effective mine information network that almost entirely covers mine affected districts of southern Afghanistan, including Ghazni to the east and Farah to the west. In addition it appears that the network of information gathering and mine awareness dissemination will be sustainable in the long term due to the structure of the CBMAP and the particular social and cultural conditions of rural Afghanistan. This is discussed throughout the report and particularly section 3.

Information transfer network

Currently the programme covers hundreds of villages in 38 districts in the five provinces. Three districts regarded as mine affected and needing mine awareness (according to HI's internal needs assessment) are not yet covered.² The network of mine committees continues to grow every month increasing CBMAP's coverage. The approach currently used for this *information transfer* from HI to villagers (i.e. mine awareness) and from villagers to the mine action community (victim data and munitions reports via HI) is judged to be an extraordinarily effective network in terms of reaching a large amount of rural people through a relatively low-cost and low-maintenance staffing structure. The details of the level of effectiveness of this mine awareness approach, and the substance, reliability and end use of the information network is evaluated in various sections below.

1.2 Comparison between villages covered by the project and those not covered.

As explained in the 'Methodology' section village questionnaires were used were used in randomly selected villages evenly spread across the 41 districts of the 5 provinces of Handicap's area of activities.

These 1113 individual interviews (377 adults / 736 children) contain a wide range of information which provides the statistical backbone of this evaluation and more detailed information that may be useful to HI at a latter date for planning and prioritisation etc. Additionally they could provide a baseline database for further evaluation at a later data to monitor the progress and effectiveness of their programme in these selected villages.

1.2.1 Statistical comparison between villages in terms of 'mine smart'³ knowledge:

Examples of all questionnaires can be found in the annexes.

Questionnaire 1a:

The adults in villages where CBMAP operates (either with direct or indirect training) answered all questions relating to 'mine smart' knowledge correctly to an overall level of **91%**. In response to a group of simple questions concerning the 'don't touch, don't handle and don't tamper with mines or UXO' messages, **94%** of adults responded correctly. In response to a group of more difficult questions concerning 'recognition of mined areas, mine marking, mine signs, precautions and what to do if you find yourself in a minefield', the adults answered **88%** correctly.⁴

² One district in Kandahar province where HI has repeatedly failed to recruit a reliable representative, and 2 other districts in Farah which are so far from the provincial capital that logistical considerations have prevented CBMAP establishing representatives.

³ A useful term used in the 1998 CIET evaluation of mine awareness in Afghanistan referring to the level of knowledge concerning the essential safety and advice messages of mine awareness programmes.

⁴ 'Correctly' here does not mean the answered every point of every question correctly but that in each question they answered enough points to show that they were 'mine smart' by this evaluations' standard.

Questionnaire 1b:

The children (65% boys / 35% girls) in villages where CBMAP operates (either with direct or indirect training) answered all questions relating to 'mine smart' knowledge correctly to an overall level of **84%**. In response to a group of simple questions concerning the 'don't touch, don't handle and don't tamper with mines or UXO' messages, **95%** of children responded correctly. In response to a group of more difficult questions concerning 'recognition of mined areas, mine marking, mine signs, precautions and what to do if you find yourself in a minefield', the children answered **73%** correctly. These children were particularly weak concerning the question of recognition of a typically mined area, only **42%** answering correctly.

Questionnaire 2a:

The adults in villages where CBMAP does not operate answered all questions relating to 'mine smart' knowledge correctly to an overall level of **70%**. In response to a group of simple questions concerning the 'don't touch, don't handle and don't tamper with mines or UXO' messages, **79%** of adults responded correctly. In response to a group of more difficult questions concerning 'recognition of mined areas, mine marking, mine signs, precautions and what to do if you find yourself in a minefield', the adults answered **61%** correctly. These adults were particularly weak concerning the question of recognition of a typically mined area, only **33%** answering correctly.

(Of interest, 74% of these adults interviewed claimed to have had some form of one-off mine awareness training at some point in the last few years, but not from HI.)

Questionnaire 2b:

The children (63% boys / 36% girls) in villages where CBMAP does not operate answered all questions relating to 'mine smart' knowledge correctly to an overall level of **53%**. In response to a group of simple questions concerning the 'don't touch, don't handle and don't tamper with mines or UXO' messages, **75%** of these children responded correctly. In response to a group of more difficult questions concerning 'recognition of mined areas, mine marking, mine signs, precautions and what to do if you find yourself in a minefield', only **32%** of the children answered correctly.

Questionnaire 3a:

The adults kuchies interviewed in encampments where CBMAP does not have mine committees answered all questions relating to 'mine smart' knowledge correctly to an overall level of **73%**. In response to a group of simple questions concerning the 'don't touch, don't handle and don't tamper with mines or UXO' messages, **76%** of kuchi adults responded correctly. In response to a group of more difficult questions concerning 'recognition of mined areas, mine marking, mine signs, precautions and what to do if you find yourself in a minefield', the adults answered **70%** correctly. Of those questioned in this category (kuchi adults) 61% said that they had had mine awareness before. 59% of these indicated it was from an HI Nomainda.(over a quarter of those interviewed).

Questionnaire 3b:

The kuchi children (54% boys / 46% girls) interviewed in encampments where CBMAP does not have mine committees answered all questions relating to 'mine smart' knowledge correctly to an overall level of **65%**. In response to a group of simple questions concerning the 'don't touch, don't handle and don't tamper with mines or UXO' messages, **81%** of these children responded correctly. In response to a group of more difficult questions concerning 'recognition of mined areas, mine marking, mine signs, precautions and what to do if you find yourself in a minefield', the kuchi children answered **49%** correctly. Of those questioned in this category (kuchi children) 53% said that they had had mine awareness before. 50% of these said it was from an HI Nomainda.(approximately a quarter of those interviewed).

Table No 1: The above narrative information is illustrated in the following, comparative 'mine smart' table:

Percentile breakdown of 'mine smart' responses to 1113 questionnaires to different communities in 41 districts in 5 provinces where CBMAP operates.	Adults trained by CBMAP	Children trained by CBMAP	Adults not trained by CBMAP	Children not trained by CBMAP	Kuchi adults (approx 30% received some training)	Kuchie Children (approx 25% received some training)
Sample size (total 1113)	210	419	91	173	76	144
Proportion correctly answering simple 'don't touch' questions	94%	95%	79%	75%	76%	81%
Proportion answering correctly more specific mine awareness questions.	88%	73%	61%	32%	70%	49%
Proportion correctly answering 'mine smart' questions overall. (i.e. both categories above)	91%	84%	70%	53%	73%	65%

N.B. Generally it is wise to be cautious drawing too many conclusions from data drawn from questionnaires. Some people (especially children) may have not correctly understood the questions, or the questions themselves may not have been designed well enough to elicit the full knowledge of the interviewee etc. All questionnaires are included in English in the annexes.

Findings of 1.2.1: Statistical comparison between villages in terms of 'mine smart'⁵ knowledge

- In terms of 'mine smart' knowledge, based on the key, repeated messages of CBMAP, those villagers within Handicap's mine awareness programme clearly have a higher knowledge than those outside the programme. The kuchi, some of whom had received *some* direct training scored a little higher than those communities that had received no training at all.
- Many of the questions relating to mine awareness in general are common sense and therefore it is not surprising that those not trained by the CBMAP still scored relatively highly overall (70%) on mine awareness questions. (e.g. When asked *whether 'there is ever a situation where it is good to touch a mine.'* extremely few people would respond to the affirmative whether they had been trained or not!)
- It is pertinent that those villagers *outside* of CBMAP activities scored lower on the more demanding questions concerning *recognition of minefields, how to recognise mine marking, natural signs and what are the safest activities when you find yourself in an unknown or mined area.* The mine smart knowledge concerning these kinds of questions require a range of responses and need to be taught for people to be aware of them. Where HI has been training the knowledge is significantly higher on these issues, particularly when comparing the children.
- We can conclude that the statistics from the results of the questionnaires illustrate that adults and children within CBMAP possess significantly more 'mine smart' knowledge. This is a positive affirmation of the programmes success in transferring 'mine smart' knowledge. It does *not*, however, illustrate to what level this knowledge may influences changes away from risk-taking behaviour.

⁵ A useful term used in the 1998 CIET evaluation of mine awareness in Afghanistan referring to the level of knowledge concerning the essential safety and advice messages of mine awareness programmes.

1.2.2 Gender separation and comments

All Nomainda and mine committees are male. Anyone familiar with the culture of Afghanistan (now more rigorously enforced by the Taleban regime) makes the training in women and girls above puberty very difficult. This is not the case among the kuchies where women enjoy more freedom and can, in most cases, attend mine awareness training. This is illustrated by the records that show a far larger number of kuchi women and girls attending mine awareness trainings than in settled villagers. (see table 2). Generally females (due to their restricted movements outside of their home) are far less exposed to risk than male. Again, the kuchi women are different as they are exposed to far greater mobility and freedom among the camps and during their nomadic travels.

The use of women in the training teams is virtually impossible. The Taleban have banned the use of women as paid workers in NGOs unless they are directly involved in health work. HI has taken the position of accepting the current parameters in Afghanistan and despite considering ideas to develop husband and wife teams of MC they have not implemented the concept to date. The two main reasons is that the female MC would not be able to be monitored by anyone except her husband, and they fear that if they upset the authorities on this issue they could jeopardise their whole programme. As long as the proportion of female casualties remains low (under 6% females over the age of 17yrs⁶) they feel this approach is justified and this evaluation concurs.

Despite these conditions this evaluation considers it important that HI strives to present trainings to girls and women. HI do have high access to girls who are, after all, tomorrow's women. CBMAP have documented the training of a total of **55,184 women** in direct and indirect (including radio forums) since 1996. 51% of these were kuchie attendees. Since 1996 they have documented the training of **149,491 girls** of whom 30% were kuchie girls. The female trainees therefore represent only 16.4% of all people trained by CBMAP. Adult women only represent 4% of all people trained between 1996 and April 2001. This is shown in table 2 below. In general the only way village women receive training is if they are related in some way to the Nomainda or MC and therefore he is able to gain access to the compound or home where women live. Older women can sometimes freely participate in trainings with children and men in trainings outside of their home. Apart from this there are no ways for the Nomainda or MC to have contact or train village women. The situation in the kuchi camps is more liberal as the statistics indicate.

Table No 2. Sexual and age division of trainees recorded by CBMAP (1996-Apr 2001).

Direct, indirect and radio forum training attendees (incl kuchi)	MEN	WOMEN	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
Total trained by CMAP since 1996	430,586	55,184	609,066	149,491	1,244,327
Percentile of total	34.6%	4.4%	49%	12%	100%

In the case studies in certain villages the men said they would inform their wives about mine awareness themselves and therefore it was unnecessary for women to have direct training from outsiders or even the MCs. The HI staff claim that this attitude is fairly universal. CBMAP has far greater access to the younger generation of boys and girls although boys, again, have more freedom and mobility away from their homes than girls. The fact that those conducting the interviews found it difficult to interview an equal number of boys to girls for this evaluation is further evidence of this fact. (see sample size differences). A clear exception to this being the kuchi where they interviewed almost the same amount

⁶ Based on data of 788 accidents since 1996 recorded by CBMAP. ICRC's data show a similarly low level for women.

of boys to girls.) The following table displays the gender breakdown between boys and girls and their level of 'mine smart' knowledge:

Table No 3. Gender comparison; 'Mine smart' knowledge between boys and girls:

Percentile breakdown of 'mine smart' responses to 736 questionnaires to boys and girls in different communities in 41 districts in 5 provinces where CBMAP operates.	BOYS trained by CBMAP	GIRLS trained by CBMAP	BOYS not trained by CBMAP	GIRLS not trained by CMBAP	Kuchi BOYS (approx. 25% received some training)	Kuchie GIRLS (approx. 25% received some training)
Sample size (total 736)	273	146	111	62	78	66
Proportion correctly answering simple 'don't touch' questions	96%	92%	79%	70%	80%	83%
Proportion answering correctly more specific mine awareness questions.	71%	55%	38%	21%	51%	45%
Proportion correctly answering 'mine smart' questions overall. (i.e. both categories above)	84%	74%	59%	46%	66%	64%

Findings from the statistics:

There is a clear difference between the 'mine smart' knowledge between boys and girls whether they attend mine awareness training or not. Boys are more 'mine smart', (or at least were able to answer the questions with more confidence than the girls interviewed). There may be cultural and psychological issues here concerning girls' expectations and motivation to learn in a society that essentially prepares them to be wives and mothers. Among the kuchi where women appear to have more social equality to men it is interesting to note that the girls were almost exactly as 'mine smart' as the boys. As with the table 1 showing the results of the questionnaire for adults and children, in this table we can see that the kuchi children (of whom 25% claimed to have had some mine awareness at some point) scored better results than communities that had received no mine awareness.

Although all children scored relatively low levels on the more complex questions (..concerning recognition of minefields, recognising mine marking and safe behaviour in and around unknown areas and/or minefields) those children with no mine awareness scored a very low level on these questions, with girls in this category only answering 21% of the questions correctly. It should be added that in the areas where CBMAP does not operate, of 264 adult and children questioned (in 41 districts) a surprising 67% said they considered their village to have a direct problem of mines and UXO.⁷

Findings 1.2.2: Gender separation

- ⇒ A very small percentage of women receive mine awareness through CBMAP. Although there are low levels of accidents among women they should have access to mine awareness education. Islamic culture and the particular interpretation by the Taliban regime currently restricts this.
- ⇒ A greater number of girls have access to mine awareness but it is still far less that the number of boys. CBMAP can take advantage of the access to pre-pubescent girls and offer mine awareness training to this group where possible.

⁷ This could raise important questions for CBMAP and will be dealt with in sections concerning **targeting** and **selection** of villages.(see section 2.2)

- ⇒ Village boys are generally about 10% more 'mine smart' than girls (according to the questionnaire results) whether they have received mine awareness training or not. Kuchi girls and boys were found to be about equal in terms of 'mine smart' knowledge.
- ⇒ In villages where CBMAP operates girls scored well on questions concerning touching and contact with mine/UXO but weak on the more practical situational questions.

1.3 Impact of training on behavioural change.

If the CBMAP seeks to influence behavioural change it implies that Afghans conduct certain unsafe practices which cause injury and death to themselves and their livestock and that if they change their behaviour in various respects they can live with greater safety in a mined / UXO environments. Discussions with villagers and Kuchie, and victim data collected in Afghanistan, and in other countries strongly supports this premise.

Children playing with mines and UXO⁸, men tampering with items to extract metal or explosive, people not recognising minefield marking signs (man-made or natural), entering unknown but suspect areas, travelling off-road etc. are all typical examples of activities that cause death and injury and which are in most case *avoidable*. In addition to this the failure to recognise mines, UXO or booby traps through ignorance also leads to subsequent activities that are dangerous. The 8 essential mine awareness messages of the CBMAP, with the illustration of shapes and sizes of the most common mines and UXO (models and flyers) is designed to address people's lack of awareness and their practice of risky behaviour.

Many Afghan men spent the 1980s fighting as *Mujahedeen* and are very familiar with UXO and mines. Also in many mine/UXO affected areas the population have seen the devastating effects of abandoned weapons at first hand leading to some critics of mine awareness to claim that mine awareness is 'preaching to the converted' and therefore unnecessary. However, the reality is that in many cases the exact opposite is true. Repeatedly villagers admit that only by listening to the messages of mine awareness and hearing the stories of mine victims (part of CBMAP's presentation) they have come to realise just how dangerous and certain risk-taking activities are. This was stated by villagers in almost all of the case studies and mine committees (MCs) interviewed during this evaluation.

The difference between an intellectual knowledge of a fact and actual changes in behaviour is a profound difference and one which directly concerns the objectives of mine awareness education. People rarely absorb and/or act on new information on first hearing, and professional educators and communication specialists know that repetition, or reiteration, is vital. It is astonishing that many mine awareness approaches in Afghanistan as well as in other countries continue to promote mine awareness through one-off direct trainings, based on the optimistic idea that people will both learn and understand new information, as well as change their risky behaviour, based on a single presentation⁹. **The CBMAP has developed a system of mine awareness that is first based on direct training (through the visits of Nomaindas) and then reiterated with regular refresher training (through a community based mine committee).**¹⁰

⁸ This activity is the single-most significant cause of death and injury in HI's project areas and is discussed later in this report.

⁹ Possibly for mine /UXO recognition and emergency warning messages a single presentation is useful, but for attitudinal and behavioural changes it cannot be adequate.

¹⁰ The Mine Action Plan for Afghanistan are now (after a decade of direct training) promoting a mine awareness approach (using village volunteers/representatives) identical to CBMAP which HI has used since 1996.

Assessing the impact of direct and indirect training regarding behavioural change among a wide range of villagers is complex. Any assessment of behavioural change is limited by the tools it must use as a substitute to direct observation of villagers activities. There are three ways to consider the issue:

- From the **statistical evidence** of the changes in the number of injuries and deaths caused over time in the CBMAP area that are caused by risk-taking behaviour (mainly playing, handling, tampering of mines/UXO but also other activities..) See section 1.4 below.
- From the group **interviews / case studies** and feedback from MC in the villages about the behaviour of their communities..
- From the answers of villagers collected through the **questionnaires**.

Although all those interviewed for the study were questioned on the matter it is clear that few people will admit that they have *not* changed their behaviour having been trained in mine awareness. Nevertheless the findings of these questions were interesting:

- In villages across 41 districts where the CBMAP operates, 88% (of 210 adults interviewed) claimed that their behaviour had changed due to mine awareness training.
- In the same areas, 75% of adult kuchi (75 interviewed) said that mine awareness changes behaviour, while of 144 kuchi children interviewed only 54% said mine awareness changed their behaviour..
- All sixty mine committees interviewed (100%) claimed that behaviour had changed in their villages as a result of mine awareness training. They gave as evidence of this that people would no longer touch unknown objects any more, that tampering and playing with mines/UXO had ended, that villagers would not enter unknown or marked areas.
- Perhaps the most common evidence of change given by the MCs was the prevalence of reporting UXO and mines to the MC. While this is a commendable development this evaluation notes that as the villagers had neither mines representative in the village nor forms before CBMAP(i.e. no means of reporting ammunition), we therefore have no control mechanism to measure whether it is the impact of mine awareness that has caused this 'change of behaviour'.

Findings of 1.3: Impact of training on behavioural change

- The evidence from the 210 adult villagers and 76 adult kuchi interviews indicates that people themselves regard mine awareness as having changed their behaviour in relation to mines/UXO. They value mine awareness and want regular refresher indirect training as they see it as being linked to safer behaviour around mines/UXO.
- The Mine Committees questioned for this evaluation (60 in 5 provinces) all claim that their communities have changed their behaviour towards mine/UXO to some degree. They list particular changes of activities as evidence of this. If their claims are accurate this is a positive indicator that mine awareness is having an impact in this regard.
- The statistical data in one province (Helmand) strongly indicates a big reduction in injuries and deaths between 1996-2000. Within this data the number of child-victims due to playing and tampering also greatly reduced as a proportion of the total. This *could* indicate that CBMA has been successful at some level, but unfortunately data from other provinces that have also been receiving CBMA for some years do not indicate similar trends. The data is too weak to draw reliable conclusions.
- That the successful development of large amounts of ammunitions reports from villagers through the MCs cannot be used as a indication of behavioural change even though there is strong circumstantial evidence to suggest that people no longer *touch* items and make an effort to *report* them to the MC as a result of the presence and trainings of the MCs. This is a positive indicator of safer practices resulting from the project.

- That the measurement of behavioural change continues to be a challenge to those implementing and evaluating mine awareness where no reliable baseline victim data or behavioural analysis exists. Without these no serious conclusions can be drawn during or following programme implementation..

1.4 **Statistical correlations between incident frequency and project activities.**

In this section the critical issue of victim data collection and its management needs to be discussed before examining statistical correlations:

1.4.1 **Poor data:**

The statistical data on mine/UXO victims in Afghanistan is weak and has been severely neglected. It is not systematic or regular, it has been collected sporadically by different agencies over the years, has been poorly processed, if at all, by MAPA as the central data-collating agency. Only recently have the various agencies even agreed to use the same format for information collecting.

The 3 agencies collecting mine incident data are HI, ICRC and MCPA (Mine Clearance Planning Agency). MCPA has a poor data base with very little information collected by its own survey and clearance teams. These teams are busy with other work and not dedicated to collection of data and also leave an area once their task is complete. Clearly this is highly inadequate for a systematic process.

ICRC have collected data for 3 years through hospitals and clinics and numerous health centres. They now have a dedicated team of staff for data collection but their data is limited entirely to areas that have health centres and the victims that actually use the facilities. The dead or those with minor injuries are not represented therefore and neither can they cover the whole country. However the evidence suggests that ICRC's collection from its own centres may be very inadequate. An example of the discrepancies between HI and ICRC data can be seen in the following table;

Table No 4 Comparison of victim data for selected provinces HI/ICRC for the same years:

	Handicap	ICRC	Handicap	ICRC	Handicap	ICRC
	Kandahar	Kandahar	Helmand	Helmand	Zabul	Zabul
1998	119	6*	41	4	26	2
1999	45	32	35	5	19	4
2000	40	19	3	10	24	5
Totals	204	57	99	19	69	11

*This figure from the ICRC is particularly worrying: In October 1998 a mine detonated under a wedding bus. Of the 79 casualties at least 35 of the injured were treated at ICRC in Kandahar but are unreported in ICRC's own interview data.

HI's victim data is, in theory, the most systematic collection base for the provinces in which it works. Using the 1150 community based MCs created in 41 districts (5 provinces) it collects information on a monthly basis through these permanent village volunteers. A system that could be comprehensive and sustainable. The limitations are that HI does not have mine committees in all villages and have expanded to new provinces at different times and therefore for some provinces (e.g. Ghazni and Farah) their coverage is currently low (but continually expanding). This imbalance can be seen in the tables No;5 below. Despite claiming to be committed to data gathering, changes in CBMAP management and interagency disagreements over forms to be used has resulted in stops and starts in the collection of data. Almost no data was collected in 2000. Additionally HI have approximately 4000 complete forms of historical data concerning past accidents (prior to 1996) that have not been processed and remain in files. It appears that the importance of collecting victim data is not always recognised by the Field Officers and Supervisors of the project and there is little understanding in HI Afghanistan to the potential

use of mine victim data as a strong planning tool for mine action in general. This is somewhat surprising as HIB is very involved with the nation-wide victim database in Cambodia and have also developed a national proposal for creating an Afghan national data-collection structure since early 2000.¹¹

MAPA is the central agency that is responsible for collating any mine incident data received from the 3 agencies mentioned as well as any other source. MAPA freely admits that victim data is handled poorly, but they are planning to improve their system in the future.

Findings for 1.4.1 Poor Data

- What this means is that MAPA (and its implementing partners including HI) have not realised, and therefore have not set as a priority over the last 12 years of operations, the considerable power of victim data as a planning tool to direct humanitarian mine action intervention. Neither have they or other mine action agencies recognised the critical need to establish a baseline data in terms of victim data in order monitor progress. The central aim of humanitarian mine action is, presumably, the relief of the threat of mines for the population and not simply the clearance of land.
- From a national point of view it is clear that the collection of reliable data is in a very poor state and the current dependency on national data from the ICRC is seriously flawed. Any quotations of changes in injury/death levels in recent years in Afghanistan must therefore be resisted as there is no method of substantiation. People are talking about a significant drop in casualty rates but there is no reliable data to support this at the national level. A rigorous system needs to be put in place as soon as possible along the lines of the HI proposal of 2000. Further discussion of this is beyond the scope of this evaluation.

1.4.2 Constraints to finding correlations:

There are too many other factors that influence accident levels to isolate any particular mine action intervention as being the key reason for decreases. In a similar assessment conducted in Cambodia in 2000 it was found that despite high concentrations of mine clearance, mine marking and mine awareness interventions in some affected areas there were no correlations between accident rates and mine action operations.¹² This is a hard fact to swallow for those active in mine action as well as the donors who would like to see a direct correlation between their investment and a decrease in mine/UXO accidents.

An analysis of Handicap's data from 4 provinces is shown below. Special focus has been given to data concerning handling of mines and UXO as this is one type of behaviour / activity that mine awareness particularly seeks to change

¹¹ Afghanistan Mine Victim Information System (AMVIS) project proposal, as yet un-funded.

¹² External Evaluation of Unicef-Supported Activities to Prevent Mine Incidents (Horwood/Crossland July 2000)

Table No 5. Selected analysis of HI Mine/UXO victim data

HELMAND Province	Total victims reported	Number of victims playing/tampering with mine/UXO	% age of total	Number of these under 17 yrs old	% age of playing/tampering victims under 17 yrs
1996	96	62	64%	49	79%
1997	71	50	70%	38	76%
1998	41	17	41%	9	53%
1999	35	13	37%	6	46%
2000	3	2	66%	2	100%

KANDAHAR Province	Total victims reported	Number of victims playing/tampering with mine/UXO	% age of total	Number of these under 17 yrs old	% age of playing/tampering victims under 17 yrs
1997	47	10	21%	7	70%
1998	119*	12	10%	5	55%
1999	45	25	56%	17	68%
2000	40	6	15%	3	50%

*one accident alone in Oct 1998 accounted for 79 of this figure . Without this accident the tampering percentage in this year would have been 30 % instead of 7.5%.

ZABUL Province	Total victims reported	Number of victims playing/tampering with mine/UXO	% age of total	Number of these under 17 yrs old	% age of playing/tampering victims under 17 yrs
1998	26	19	73%	9	47%
1999	19	7	37%	3	43%
2000	24	16	67%	13	81%

FARAH Province	Total victims reported	Number of victims playing/tampering with mine/UXO	% age of total	Number of these under 17 yrs old	% age of playing/tampering victims under 17 yrs
2000	33	12	36%	11	92%

The ambiguity of the data:

The above analysis show a very high percentage of children (67% of all handling victims) involved in deliberately touching mines and subsequently dying or being injured. These findings are significant and strongly justify the 'Don't Touch' message of mine awareness. However, the actual number of children injured or killed by tampering playing has fallen from 49 children in Helmand alone in 1996, to 29 children in 4 provinces in the year 2000 (with only 2 children in Helmand in 2000).

Interestingly the general trend continues when we look at the data from the first 3 months of 2001 from all 5 provinces: 45% of the 38 victims reported were injured or killed by handling/playing with weapons. Of these 64 % were 17 yrs old or less.

Helmand statistics indicate a major drop in accident levels from mine and UXO from 96 reported victims in '96 to a low 3 in 2000 but this trend not seen in other provinces according to the CBMAP data. Interestingly Kandahar has not seen a major change in victim levels since 1997, however there has been considerable mine awareness and clearance and mine marking in Kandahar in the last 5 years. The problem with this sort of data is that some parts could be used as an indication of successful mine action intervention (where HI's contribution can be assumed to have made an impact), but other sections of the data could be used as an illustration of the failure of mine action (including HI) to affect victim levels.

Findings of 1.4.2 Constraints to finding correlations

- Data collection of mine and UXO victims in Afghanistan is poor and has been neglected for many years. The low commitment to data collection is indicative of a lack of awareness of how important this data is to prioritising and planning mine action intervention as well as providing a basis for programme evaluation.
- HI have created the basis for a good data-collecting network in selected provinces but have not processed the information consistently and have not prioritised this aspect of their work among their staff. Nevertheless victim data has been reported by HI every month in their reports and submitted to MAPA, despite MAPA's repeated failure to manage and process this information in their own reports or publications.¹³
- A correlation between CBMAP and changes in victim data can not be made. The available data is ambiguous and because it lacks consistency no conclusions can be made. There is no statistical evidence that accidents reduce where CBMAP operates. This does not, however mean that it is not happening, just we can not show it statistically. If data is collected in areas where CBMAP do *not* operate (and which are mine/UXO affected) it may be possible to illustrate, in future years, that the impact of CBMAP reduces accidents. At this stage it is impossible.
- Even where reliable data-bases of victims exist (only Cambodia at present¹⁴) there is no substantiated evidence that mine awareness or any activity of mine action *directly* leads to mine accident reductions. In a post-conflict and rehabilitation situation there are simply too many other factors that account for these changes and mine action activities can rarely be isolated as the main causal factor of change.

1.5 Capacity and motivation assessment of direct and indirect mine awareness trainers.

1.5.1 Nomaindas (direct training)

Nomaindas are direct employees of CBMAP. There are currently 38 Nomaindas working in the 41 districts of the five provinces of Helmand, Kandahar, Zabul, Farah and Ghazni. They are directly monitored by provincial supervisors (2 per province) and indirectly managed from each provincial office by Field Officers (4 to cover the 5 provinces).. They are recruited in the districts where CBMAP decided

¹³ When questioned on this, MAPA claimed that their regional offices did respond to victim data when available by prioritising high risk areas for mine action intervention...

¹⁴ Also Kosovo but under very unique circumstances

to work and take responsibility for their own district. Nomaindas are tasked to conduct direct training in mine affected villages in their designated district. Their medium term aim is to give direct training at least once to all villagers as well as kuchi and IDPs in their districts. In addition to this to create a sustainable basis for mine awareness in the communities they have to recruit, create, train, support and monitor volunteers mine committees where ever they can. In reality this means at least one per village although some villages have more. Furthermore they are required to regularly collect information from the MCs, fill in forms and return these to the supervisors and through the HI system to the Kandahar co-ordination office.

Nomainda capacity.

The capacity of the Nomaindas appears to be considerable, and their role in the successful implementation of CBMAP is central. They are given a high level of independence but have considerable demands placed upon them. They are expected to perform at least 2 direct trainings each day as well as compile various reports (i.e. 3 tasks per day). On average the Nomaindas in the 3 provinces of Kandahar, Zabul and Helmand supervise between 50-60 mine committees each. Some Nomaindas have created up to 110 MC. The new Nomaindas in Ghazni and Farah are still creating MCs. The current co-ordinator of the programme suggests that 65 should be the maximum number of MCs under any Nomainda.

Since 1996 the Nomaindas have trained approximately 545,000 villagers and Kuchi in mine awareness through their direct, one-off training approach. In addition they have created, trained and supported 1150 functioning MCs. Every month these totals are increasing and of course with the people the MCs themselves train, it means that this pyramid of training provides mine awareness to a large proportion of the rural population in these provinces.

All Nomaindas are literate and extremely familiar with the core mine awareness messages and the HI curriculum. They use participatory methods in their trainings and are all equipped with mine models. They sometimes use victims' stories and tape recordings of the BBC drama 'New Home, New Life' in their training. The presentations seen during the evaluation followed a format, covered all the issues and appeared to capture the attention of those listening for the duration of the training. The training of Nomaindas is centralised and curriculum-based which results in a standardised approach and minimal deviation.

The Nomaindas are also responsible for the collection of village based data from the MCs on a monthly basis. This includes victim data, ammunition reports and more recently minefield reports, apart from the normal reporting of MCs training details. To date the Nomaindas and MCs have generated 2653 ammunition reports which are sent to the regional MAPA office in Kandahar so that EOD teams of another NGO (MCPA) can respond to these village requests for clearance. They have also collected over 4000 'historical' mine victim data forms while regularly submitting accident information (current total almost 800 individual cases.)

Nomainda motivation:

Nomaindas are paid staff and presumably their key motivation is to maintain their position in HI at difficult economic period for most rural Afghans. This evaluation was not able to judge whether religious or humanitarian (or other) motivation led Nomaindas to work for HI. Nevertheless they are not highly paid and they have many demands placed on them. This evaluation was very impressed with the high output of CBMAP considering the harsh weather condition and distances covered by the Nomaindas and the various responsibilities placed upon them. Their role and dedication is central to the whole CBMAP structure, which appears to be very productive in terms of collecting data, creating MCs and continue direct training.

1.5.2 Mine committees (indirect training):

The title 'mine committee' can be misleading as the MC normally consists of one man. As of March 2001, HI list 1356 MC in total, of which 1150 are the mine committee leaders and the remaining 206 (voluntary) assistants.

MC Capacity:

The findings of this evaluation indicate that the capacity of the MCs to train (through re-fresher training and in some cases direct training) is considerable. According to the CBMAP selection criteria the MC has to be a respected member of the community, must live in the community and should be literate and entirely appropriate to their section of their community. They are all volunteers and are in no way enticed or compelled to be MC by HI or the Nomaindas.

MCs are given 10 hours training by the Nomaindas after the Nomainda has given direct training sessions to the villages with the aim of giving most villages a one-time training exposure. The MC is then created to continue this training from then on. An MC only starts to function after he is certified by the provincial supervisors after passing a test and receiving a small kit consisting of mine models, a blackboard, notebooks and in most cases a small radio. The Nomaindas (and sometime supervisors) monitor the MCs regularly at least once a month and initially 2 times a month. At least once a month the Nomaindas are expected to collect data from the MC under their jurisdiction and this visit provided an opportunity for the Nomaindas to encourage and monitor the work of the MC

The evaluation found that of the 60 MC questioned, on average, they gave training to children in their village either on a weekly basis (12%), on a two-weekly basis (35%) or on a monthly (45%) basis. They also gave separate training to adults on a weekly basis (12%), on a two-weekly basis (25%) or on a monthly basis (57%). As an average they divided their time between children and adults with 68% of their time to children, and 32% to adults.

Almost all (95%) of the MCs interviewed claimed that they were able to reach the whole of the village through their trainings. This was not substantiated by the findings of group interviews in the case studies. In the case studies, which mostly took place in villages where MCs were active, it was not unusual for members of the village to say they had not ever attending trainings (informal or formal) by the MCs even when the MC may have been operational for some years. Clearly there are limitations to the capacity of the MCs in this regard. Some villagers are large with various mosques (community centres) and despite there being more than one MC in the village they do not make contact with the entire community. The informal nature of the MC and his frequent use of a single mosque or *madrassa* as the venue for his training means that those outside of that mosque of *madrassa* will probably not have exposure to mine awareness from the MC concerned. The questionnaire results showed that 43% of the MCs train informally, 40% do so formally (schools, madrassas and mosques) while 17% use both approaches. This reality needs to be considered more seriously by the CBMAP, and closer supervision of the larger villages may be necessary by the Nomaindas and provincial supervisors.

The wide (and increasing) network of MCs does enable a large number of people to hear mine awareness training on a regular basis. CBMAP has recorded a total of 699,972 people trained by MC (including those attending the radio forum organised by MCs with radios) since 1996. In terms of volunteer capacity this is a very high number.¹⁵ As the programme is consolidated in the province where they started earliest we should expect to see a drop in attendance levels of 'new' trainees and a rise in the number of refresher trainings for 'old' trainees. For this reason it would be wrong in coming years to assess the success of the activities of CBMAP by the number of people that attend their trainings. The situation is very different for other mine awareness agencies that emphasis the one-off training

¹⁵ It may be added that HI have recorded their attendance figure for training quite conservatively, recognising that in many training sessions some people will have already attended previous trainings. As of March 2001 they require the MC to record 'new' and 'old' attendees separately.

approach. For them numbers of attendees will remain a central tool to measure their progress, (despite the fact that these sorts of measurements do not take into account the quality of the training).

MC Motivation:

The findings from the 60 MCs questioned for the evaluation indicate that they have a strong religious and social (humanitarian) motivation for offering their services as a village volunteer. 98% indicated that they would continue to act as the mine committee even if the Nomaindas (i.e. CBMAP) stopped to support them or visit them. This is a very positive finding in regard to appropriateness and sustainability of the position of MCs in the communities. (more discussion of this can be found in section 2.4)

Another indication of the motivation, and sustainability of the MCs is the extremely low level of discontinued MCs. Only 81 of the total number of MCs created since 1996 have stopped working, representing only 6% of the total. Considering they work as volunteers this is impressive.

It has been suggested that part of the attraction and motivation of the MCs is that the peace-time fight against the scourge of mines/UXO is considered *jihad* (holy war) and for this reason the recruitment of MCs is much easier than recruiting health volunteers, for example. However, all MCs interviewed were asked if they would be willing to collect information on a volunteer basis on other issues (such as health, which could assist health NGOs) and the response was 95% positive. Already HI uses its extensive network of MCs to collect data on mine victims, minefields and ammunition reports. The potential benefits of such a network could be considerable. This will be discussed later in the report.

1.5.3 Training of IDPs / returnees and nomads (kuchi):

The CBMAP identifies IDPs, returnees and Kuchi as particular target groups in all of the projects' 5 provinces and are reported separately from villagers in HI documentation. They are considered more vulnerable to mines and UXO by the mine action community due to their lifestyles or changes in situations.

Although in villages mine committees may train known 'newcomers' or returnees (often Afghan villagers returning from years in Pakistan or Iran) and may also give training to passing kuchies, it is mainly the task of the Nomaindas to meet these needs. Nomaindas are required to give training to identified groups of IDPs and to kuchi groups as they arrive and camp in their areas of jurisdiction. On occasions outside agencies with contact HI directly or through the regional mine action centre (RMAC) to request mine awareness training in particular IDP camps. IDP from the drought (and some continued violence in the north) can be found in western and southern Afghanistan.¹⁶

CBMAP have been reporting their direct training of IDPs since early 2000. Between early 2000 and April 2001 in Farah, Kandahar and Helmand, approximately 2596 IDPs have been given direct training in mine awareness. As it is not clear how many IDPs there are in total in these specific area it is hard to evaluate the coverage of Handicaps contribution in this area. This total represents only 1.2% of CBMAP's overall training (direct only) during the same period. According to HI data, as of March 2001, 8 mine committees had been created among IDPs.

HI has only recently started documenting the training given to 'returnees'. Since September 2000 they have given training to 559 persons in this category.

Nomaindas also give direct training to the kuchi. The questionnaire results indicated that many of the MC also give informal training to kuchi but this is not recorded separately. It is not clear if the number of kuchi the MCs train are included in the MC figures. 41% of all the Nomaindas trainees are kuchi, over 221,000 have been trained since 1996. This figure represents only 18% of the total number of people

¹⁶ HI are currently in discussions with RMAC in Herat and Kandahar concerning the training of IDP camp volunteers there.

trained by CBMAP during the last 5 years. It is hard to estimate the current number of kuchi in Afghanistan. A working estimate from the United Nations suggests there are approximately 800,000. HI assume that due to the difficulty of tracking different kuchi groups many kuchi may have received double or triple training over recent years as they move from district to district and have contact with different Nomaindas. There are only 7 MCs in kuchi groups. This situation needs to be re-considered by HI as the volunteers representative system has a range of benefits to the people as well as HI and the lack of MCs among the kuchi is a missed opportunity on both sides¹⁷. Apart from this the kuchi are extremely vulnerable to mines and UXO during their travels and HI needs to find a way to maximise mine awareness in their communities.

1.5.4 Current and future capacity:

Handicap's CBMA structure take time and resources to set up , but once it is functioning it has a immense capacity to deliver mine awareness to an ever increasing number of affected communities. Due to 'economies of scale' and the capacity of the Nomaindas to create and monitor large numbers of mine committees, the CBMAP can continue to offer its benefits to an increasing number of people at a decreasing cost per capita (i.e. person trained).

An example of the productivity of the programme as it stands at the moment is to take an extract from the latest quarterly report (Jan-March 2001)

- 104,607 people were trained in mine awareness (direct and indirect)
- The Nomaindas visited a total of 321 new villages in the 5 provinces.
- 770 radio forums were held by the mine committees.
- 44 new mine committees were recruited, trained and created during this quarter.
- 46 mine victim casualty reports were completed and submitted from the project areas.
- 363 new ammunition reports were completed and submitted by mine committees .

The CBMAP operates with the same team of 38 Nomaindas, 10 supervisors and 4 Field Officers but due to the expanding number of volunteer mine committees their productivity increases and considerable 'economies of scale' are possible.

Limitations to growth & measurement of growth (progress indicators):

It is important to understand that despite the high 'productivity' evident in the CBMAP it would be a mistake to expect this to continue and a mistake to judge the success of the programme by 'production figure' such as those listed above.

As HI continues to expand into new areas (such as in Farah and now Ghazni) the numbers will continue to increase in terms of new MCs, new trainees, radio forums etc. However, there is a limitation to this growth. When Nomaindas have given direct training to everyone in their project areas and when they have created all the required MCs they will need to focus more on support and monitoring; Their new training figures will drop dramatically. Equally as the MC train all their villagers in mine awareness and then continue with refresher training and reiteration HI cannot record these trainings in the same way that they currently record 'new' training. Also with ammunition reports. There will be a finite limit to how many reports a village will generate just as there is with minefields, and it should be expected that after some time less and less ammunition report will be submitted. (This will be a positive sign in an area where submission of reports has been active as will indicate that most UXO have been identified and will soon be demolished, thereby making the villages UXO -free for ever.)

The overall 'production' figures will therefore fall as the programme consolidates its position . Clearly victim data reporting will continue and training report from the village mine committees will continue but

¹⁷ Reliable kuchi victim data, ammunitions reports and a sustainable mine awareness network among this vulnerable group are all missed by just offering direct training to kuchi and not developing a volunteer representative option.

the role of the HI staff will become one of maintaining and supporting the large number of village volunteers. HI staff both in Afghanistan and HQ, MAPA authorities as well as donors need to be aware of this so that expectations of the project are realistic. Reduced output figures will by no means indicate a demise in the effectiveness of the project. On the contrary it could indicate a consolidation and increased level of effectiveness among the affected populations.

Concerning *measurement of progress*, over time, the CBMAP should focus more on changes of behaviour and quality of 'mine smart' knowledge in all target areas. In mine awareness the quality of training and the effective use of the training by the villagers is as important as the quantity measured in terms of coverage and trainees. The former is far harder to measure and will present HI staff with a significant challenge. This external evaluation has gone some way to indicate the quality of the programme in different areas but this function needs to be internalised in CBMAP and become part of their own monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

The case studies in particular revealed gaps and missed opportunities in some of the target villages, that the statistics and high 'production' figures can easily hide. The case studies and some results of the questionnaires raise some central questions that need to be asked of the programme managers and coordinators. See section 1.8 for more details.

Findings for all 1.5: Capacity and motivation assessment of direct and indirect mine awareness trainers.

- ⇒ The Nomainda –based system is highly effective at developing a pyramidal structure with fast expansion capacity for information gathering as well as mine awareness dissemination.
- ⇒ Nomaindas perform a central task in the CBMAP under difficult conditions. Their determination and continuity should be commended.
- ⇒ The selection and recruitment of MCs appears to be appropriate and the concept of using only village volunteers is a central aspect of HI's concept in CBMAP.
- ⇒ The ability of MCs to reach all members of their community must not be exaggerated. It is clear this is not the case and remedial attention is required by HI to address this deficiency.
- ⇒ The motivation of MCs is primarily religious and humanitarian. Afghanistan may be a unique context in which a system of this nature can flourish. Possibly not replicable in other countries.
- ⇒ The effectiveness of this 'information transfer system' could be harnessed for other humanitarian concerns outside of mines.
- ⇒ His failure to develop a different structure to address the issue of meeting the needs of the Kuchi represents a lost opportunity and should be corrected.
- ⇒ The potential for expansion of the HI system is considerable.
- ⇒ HI's role in their current 5 provinces will change over time as they consolidate the programme: 'production' figures will cease to be meaningful as a measure of the programmes' success and dynamism.
- ⇒ Measure of the success of the programme needs to focus more on change of behaviour, increase in mine smart knowledge and clear reduction in numbers of preventable accidents.

1.6 Community perceptions and expectations of mine awareness interventions.

Both in the case studies interviews and through the questionnaires villagers expressed a high level interest and importance to mine awareness training. They were positive about the need and relevance of mine awareness and strongly wished it to be continued. Almost none of those questioned expressed indifference or tiredness concerning the trainings and a high percentage wanted the training to be continued regularly in their villages.

Statistically the results of the questionnaires were as follows:

In randomly selected villages evenly spread across the 38 districts where CBMAP operates, 629 people were asked whether they thought their community *needed to receive mine awareness* training: 97% of 210 adults interviewed responded positively. 95% of 419 children interviewed responded positively. Of these same interviewees only 5% of the adults and 5% of the children claimed they were *tired of hearing the mine awareness message*. Concerning repetition (or reiteration), 96% of the adults and 95% of the children felt mine awareness should be given *repeatedly and not in one teaching lesson*. 94% adults (of 210 interviewed) confirmed in a final question that mine awareness continued to be *good for their community*.

Sixty mine committees were interviewed. Of these 96% confirmed that their villages *wanted more mine awareness training*. Although 33% of the MCs said there were some people in their community who were resistant to the mine awareness message they appear to represent a small minority in each village

Of 219 randomly selected kuchi adults and children questioned (in 38 different districts of the five provinces) 95% responded that they felt mine awareness was necessary in their communities. Of these just over half (58%) had had a visit and one-time training from a HI Nomainda or visiting MC at some point. Despite the fact that CBMAP has almost no MCs in kuchi communities 73% of the 60 MCs interviewed claimed that they visited kuchi communities from time to time. They confirmed that every kuchi community that they visited was enthusiastic to receive mine awareness training.

This evaluation was surprised to find such a high level of interest and enthusiasm for mine awareness in communities interviewed. In some cases the Nomaindas and MC have been operating for over 4 years and it would not have been surprising for many to be somewhat indifferent to mine awareness training and its continuation. In fact, for those communities where there have been high casualty levels and little mine clearance or mine marking intervention it would not have been surprising to encounter resentment towards mine awareness which is at best a preventative 'public safety' message and not a cure to the problem. Instead the overwhelming attitude was one of support and recognising the relevance. HI should take some credit that they have established a methodology and approach that is very acceptable to the communities and which is taken seriously by the people. The semi-structured interviews (case studies) with groups of villagers entirely corroborates the findings on these issues from the results of the questionnaires.

Findings of 1.6 Community perceptions and expectations of mine awareness interventions.

- ⇒ The perception of the vast majority of the communities where CBMAP operates is highly supportive of the existence and continuation of mine awareness training. HI have clearly developed a methodology and approach which is both acceptable and perceived as relevant to communities.
- ⇒ Communities indicate a strong desire for mine awareness to continue and with frequency. This suggests that there is a strong basis for the sustainability of the programme.
- ⇒ That the kuchis have a high interest in receiving more mine awareness and due to their uniquely vulnerable status in Afghanistan in relation to mines HI should put more emphasis into providing kuchis with systematic mine awareness training in stead of the *ad hoc* visits by Nomaindas and MCs.

1.7 HI/CBMAP as part of the overall Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan(MAPA)

Although not part of the TOR for this evaluation, it is felt that CBMAP needs to be seen in the context of the overall Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan co-ordinated by UNOCHA (Islamabad) and through its 4 regional offices (a 5th to be created shortly in the north)

Handicap has always voluntarily placed itself under the co-ordination of UNOCHA/ MAPA, although it obtains all of its programme funding independently. This is part of HI's overall policy in mine action to combine efforts, avoid duplication, share expertise and information with the wider mine action community. The largest NGO conducting mine awareness within MAPA is OMAR, and other agencies active in mine awareness include Save The Children-US, The Afghan Red Crescent Society, the BBC-Afghan Education Programme, AMAA (Afghan Mine Awareness Agency) and ARI (Ansar Raleif Institute). Halo Trust and other clearance NGOs perform some mine awareness where they work but not in a systematic or dedicated manner.

HI participates in national co-ordination meetings (quarterly) as well as monthly meetings held in Kandahar by the Southern Regional Mine Action Centre. It submits progress reports to RMAC every month as well as accident data and ammunition reports collected by Nomaidas and mine committees. Since early 2001 the CBMAP network is also starting to submit minefield information from villages concerning minefields identified by villagers which are not included in the data base of MCPA- the survey and marking agency within MAPA. The capacity of the CBMAP network to generate village-based information (victim data, new minefields, ammunition reports) is an important *added value* in addition to the mine awareness dissemination it performs.

In terms of mine awareness support and coordination HI receives little operational or methodological benefit from being part of MAPA. Occasionally MAPA has assisted HI by advising another agency to curtail duplication of mine awareness or practises that undermine the CBMAP approach in their areas.¹⁸ However the HI rural community based approach remains a progressive and innovative one, differing from other mine awareness agencies in Afghanistan, although some are currently moving towards a volunteer based system.¹⁹ It may be noted that in a recent planning document from the Plans and Operations Manager of MAPA (April 2001) almost all the activities and plans that are suggested for mine awareness agencies are based on the exact approach of CBMAP.

MAPA appear to be pleased with HI's participation in data collection and mine awareness and are also keen to see them develop and field the proposed EOD teams. In terms of international profile and credibility with donors, MAPA's accreditation of HI and the CBMAP and its participation in MAPA is a benefit to HI. This evaluation strongly recommends the continuation of HI in MAPA and comments that HI and its considerable success with CBMAP probably has a relatively low profile in Kabul and Islamabad due to lack of representation and presence in those centres.

Victim Data and a national data collection proposal:

Issues concerning victim data collection in HI as well as nationally are discussed in detail in section 1.4. As mentioned the national data generally is poor and unreliable, coming as it does from irregular and incomplete sources. Furthermore MAPA management of data received from the 3 main agencies that report to them has been very unsatisfactory. HI does have more systematic and regular network for collecting information and is in a strong position to provide reliable information on the 5 provinces in which it works. This system will only increase and improve as their coverage in provinces increases (especially in Farah and Ghazni where they are still creating MCs). This evaluation suspects that apart from some deficiencies already mentioned in section 1.4, the HI collection network probably misses a considerable number of deaths and injuries sustained by kuchi. This evaluation will suggest recommendations to remedy this.

¹⁸ During 1999 and 2000 there were cases where OMAR were conducting mine awareness in the same villages where HI had MCs and were in addition recruiting village representatives who received pay for the first 3 months and then were required to become voluntary. Not surprisingly most stopped working after 3 months. OMAR abandoned this approach.

¹⁹ Following a visit to the HI programme, in 1997 SCF-US began an effective volunteer system in Kabul.

In early 2000 HI, following discussions with ICRC, WHO and MAPA put together a proposal to develop a national system for mine victim information – AMVIS- Afghanistan Mine Victim Information System. As of May 2001 no progress has been made to establish funding for this project. This evaluation considers the development of a national data system for the accurate recording of mine and UXO victims to be vital. That MAPA has operated for 12 years without any real idea of the number and circumstance of victims is remarkable. Such data is not only vital to monitor the rise or fall of incidents in specific areas, act as a baseline against which progress can be monitored, but is a powerful planning and prioritisation tool for mine clearance, mine awareness and victim support services. HI have experience in Cambodia where they run (with the Cambodian Red Cross) a national victim data system which provide monthly reports with detailed analysis of changes and commune level location of accidents. This information is used by the mine action community within Cambodia and outside. This evaluation does not promote any particular agency to be the lead agency in a similar initiative in Afghanistan, but it does recommend strongly that a system is established in Afghanistan without delay. Full support should be given to the current proposal.

Ammunition Reports and new EOD initiatives:

The CBMAP network is also very effective in collecting information concerning 'stray mines' and UXO in rural areas. Mine committees and Nomaindas are specially trained to complete forms that are then passed onto RMAC (Kandahar). Since 1996 (up to March 2001) 2,653 ammunition reports have been submitted to RMAC. They give this information to MCPA which is the only agency in the southern region to have one mobile EOD team available to respond to these reports. A single team has been found to be inadequate to meet the needs and HI lose moral and motivation to report when long delays occur between the time of reporting and the time when the EOD team arrives to conduct the destruction of the item reported. Data collected by HI in their project areas and reinforced by findings of there data from other regions indicate that a disproportionately high number of children are being killed and injured by tampering and playing with abandoned UXO.

For some years HI have requested MAPA for permission to set up their own EOD teams to respond to the reports generated by their village volunteers and Nomaindas. Since 2000 MAPA have recognised the need for an increase in designated EOD teams operating in different parts of Afghanistan and plans have been approved for the establishment a number of new mobile EOD teams. ECHO has proposed to fund this development. HI will be responsible (with MCPA's existing team) for the southern region and is currently planning the recruitment of staff and equipment for the setting up of 2 EOD teams. These two mobile teams will be established by the end of 2001 and immediately work on the backlog of ammunition reports that the MCPA team has been unable to address. This evaluation strongly supports this development and expansion of HI's operational profile in Afghanistan.

Findings of 1.7: HI/CBMAP as part of the overall Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan(MAPA)

- ⇒ Strategically and operationally it is important for HI to remain a participating member of MAPA despite the fact that the programme has felt few direct benefits in terms of mine awareness ideology or shared experience from other mine awareness agencies and MAPA itself.
- ⇒ That the volunteer network in many hundreds of villages in affected areas gives HI a high capacity for valuable information transfer. This can be seen in the high levels of trainees as well as the victim data information and ammunition report which are useful to MAPA.
- ⇒ That HI's link through the RMAC with EOD teams in other agencies has enabled ammunition reports to be addressed in the past. Due to the high number of requests generated there is a need for more EOD teams and that HI's plan to develop 2 new EOD teams in 2001 is commendable, if not overdue.

⇒ That despite the disappointing standard of victim data collection and processing nationally, HI is establishing a solid basis and is well placed to improve the data collected in its regions substantially. That it should continue to submit all victim data to MAPA as it tries to improve its management of this data. In this regard HI should vigorously promote the establishment of the national data collection plan as laid out in the AMVIS proposal written in 2000.

1.8 Towards project progress indicators.

The case studies in particular revealed gaps and missed opportunities in some of the target villages, that the statistics and high 'production' figures can easily hide. The case studies and some results of the questionnaires raise some central questions that need to be asked of the programme managers and co-ordinators. Some key questions that need to become internalised and part of CBMAP regular monitoring and evaluation include;

How is it that there are villagers who have not been trained after 4 years of Nomainda and MC trainings in the village?

How do we reach every household in a village?

How do we measure the change of behaviour among villagers?

Why is it that in villages where mine awareness has been trained for years do children still play with UXO?/ step on mines?

Is there a direct link between people becoming 'mine smart' through training and subsequent changes in risk-taking behaviour?

As adult men are the most vulnerable group, are we sure the MC are really addressing their needs?

The kuchi are probably the most vulnerable group but have no volunteer representative structure; how can CBMAP address their needs better?

How do we measure the quality of the programme and not the quantity of the activities?

2.0 Evaluation of Operations

2.1 Project structure and resources

The project structure is straight forward and uncomplicated: The CBMAP coordinators (one expat /one national) co-ordinate the three levels of staff that consist of provincial field officers (4 for 5 provinces), 10 supervisors (2 per province) and the 38 Nomaindas. This structure is illustrated as annex B. For some months the project has been co-ordinated by the national co-ordinator as HI Brussels has been recruiting a new expatriate co-ordinator to head the team. This new co-ordinator will arrive in early June 2001.

Field Officers live at the provincial field offices in Farah city, (Farah), Ghazni city (Ghazni), Grishk (Helmand), Qalat (Zabul) and Kandahar city (Kandahar). Each field office has a designated vehicle for the programme. All Nomaindas and supervisors have motorbikes which are used extensively in their daily work.

Findings of 2.1: Project structure and resources

⇒ This evaluation finds the management structure to be simple and effective, with a low level of paid staff able to control a network that benefits 41 districts, thousands of villages and reaches hundreds of thousands of people. The Nomaindas and supervisors should be commended for their dedication in particularly difficult geographical and climatic conditions, having to traverse vast areas of the 41 districts they cover in Southern Afghanistan.

⇒ The current structure has considerable potential for further expansion in terms of reaching more communities with mine awareness (creating more MCs) without increasing the number of paid staff. The current co-ordinator feels that the number of MC could double (giving each Nomainda and

average of 65 MC each) without increasing the staff number or structure. These 'economies of scale' are a major benefit of the CBMAP design

2.2 Project coverage and selection mechanisms

The CBMAP is now working in five province. It started in Kandahar in 1996. In late 1997 it expanded to Zabul, followed by Helmand in January of 1998. In February 2000 they started in Farah and this January 2001 they began recruiting and training Nomaindas in Ghazni. CBMAP is currently covering the southern part of Afghanistan as well as Farah in the south-west and Ghazni (which is considered a central province.)

The selection of province has not only been based on highest priorities or needs assessments but on logistical, administrative and political considerations as well. In addition to this 'donor politics' have played a part. HI was already based in Kandahar in 1996 having run disability projects for some years. It was a high priority province and expanding to other districts in Kandahar was a natural expansion following some months of pilot activities in Dand district. Expansion between 1997-2000 into adjacent provinces was an instinctive process in terms of logistics and communications, management and proximity. HI did have the intention and donor commitment, to extend into Herat, considered extremely high priority, in 2000. The Taliban blocked this and the result was Ghazni becoming the 5th province within the CBMAP after consultations with MAPA who favoured Ghazni as opposed to Paktika (HI's original choice) . The various details of donor relations, internal and external politics with the Taliban, MAPA and within HI are not important to this report, but illustrate the reality of NGO presence and expansion often being a function of different pressures and considerations.

The last expatriate co-ordinator of CBMAP wrote a critical report concerning the lack of sufficient justification for HI to choose new provinces without observing more rigorous selection criteria. This evaluation finds that in the cut and thrust of 'donor politics', geographical, logistical and communications constraints, the urgency to respond to a widespread but undocumented need (i.e. no real victim data) create a situation where choices are as much pragmatic as they are idealistic. The issue of concern is not that of province selection but of village selection within the high-risk districts that are selected by CBMAP: The village selection is left up to the Nomaindas.

Of the 64 districts in the 5 provinces CBMAP has recruited Nomaindas to train villagers and create MCs in 41 districts. These districts have been selected by CBMAP as most-affected and requiring mine awareness intervention. The districts themselves are selected by using MAPAs minefield survey data that illustrate where the most heavily mined areas are. A needs assessment survey is conducted in a selection of villages in these districts to see how high the level of need is for mine awareness and the level of interest of the population. HI staff also claim they consult NGOs and local authorities a part of this process. Once the assessment has been analysed districts are selected, Nomaindas are recruited and trained. Then they start to train the local people in their village and in surrounding villages. First by foot and then after 3 months of trial period with a motorbike. The normal direct training visits and MC-creating pattern is of an ever widening ring of villages around the village where the Nomainda lives.

This is a weakness of the CBMAP programme as villages that need mine awareness may be missed due to their location, accessibility or distance from the Nomaindas preferred areas of operations. When adults in villagers (where CBMAP *has not been operational* and *are not planning to be operational* i.e. in Helmand, Zabul and Kandahar) were asked if they considered their village to be directly at risk from landmines, 81% replied positively. This could indicate that the current system of allowing the Nomainda themselves to select which villages they work in is flawed and that HI need to review and revise their selection process within districts as soon as possible. To some extent HI already recognise this weakness and in their newest province (Ghazni) the Field Officer is being tasked to monitor the target areas chosen by the Nomaindas carefully and continue needs assessment analysis as an on-going activity.

In terms of coverage it is very difficult to establish how many villages there are in the project provinces/districts. The Gazette, MCPA and Programme Management Information System (UN-PROMIS) according to HI's findings are grossly underestimating the number of actual villages in each district. HI is currently requesting the project field staff to count the number of villages in the areas along with numbers of households in each village, the village names and the number of mosques. Equally with regard to total population residing in the 5 provinces there is no reliable data.

Findings of 2.2: Project coverage and selection mechanisms

- ⇒ This evaluation realises that this section is inconclusive and sheds little light on the scope of HI's coverage. Nevertheless it is clear that in the 5 provinces there are 38 Nomaindas working in the most affected districts. Their duty is to give direct training throughout the district in mine affected villages and kuchi camps. To what extent this is occurring cannot be measured at this stage except by the considerable numbers of trainees in all locations and the establishment of large numbers of MCs (over 1150) and visits made to at least 4,200 villages in the last 6 years.
- ⇒ As indicated there is a weakness in the selection system concerning villages within districts. HI needs to have a more rigorous process of ensuring that other villagers that are not currently included in the work of Nomainda and MC are not at risk. The questionnaire result appear to show that many people living in such areas consider themselves at risk and in need of mine awareness.

2.3 Staff monitoring and training .

The MCs are monitored and encouraged through a minimum of once a month visits (sometimes more frequent) by the Nomainda, occasionally accompanied by the supervisors. During these visits the Nomainda helps the MCs to fill in forms and collect the information concerning his training, accident data and any munitions reports. Nomainda are also required to make assessments (using prepared forms) of the MCs from time to time. When the MC is created he receives approximately 10 hours of one to one training from the Nomainda during a maximum period of 6 days. In 2000 HI gave three refresher and form-filling training sessions to 50 MCs each time in the 3 provinces of Helmand, Kandahar and Zabul. This year they hope to repeat the exercise but including many more of the MCs.

The Nomaindas are monitored by the 2 supervisors for each Province. They compile all the reports coming from the villages through the Nomaindas and regularly visit the Nomaindas as they perform direct training. The Nomaindas always leave a note on their house door saying where they are so that the supervisors and field officer can always locate them. There are no electronic or telephonic forms of communication between the provincial office and the Nomaindas and/or MC. Supervisors are also required to make assessments (using prepared forms) of the Nomaindas from time to time.

The supervisors and Nomaindas are co-ordinated and managed at the provincial level by the Field Officers and all three levels are given training in Kandahar every 3 month by the co-ordinator himself. At these training sessions a general internal evaluation is made of the progress made, problems encountered and new ideas are discussed.

In the new proposal to cover the period from June 2001 into the future a 'Training Cell' has been planned which will consist of 2 trainers tasked to monitor and training the supervisors and Nomainda in the field.

Findings of 2.3: Staff monitoring and training

- ⇒ The current structure of monitoring and training appear to be working well and meeting the needs of different levels of management. The frequent 3-monthly training for Field Officers, Supervisors and

Nomainda is judged to be very positive in terms of keeping a close control of standards, monitoring problems as they arise and developing a strong team spirit.

⇒ This evaluation found that more control was needed concerning the understanding by field staff of the importance of coverage and village selection. This is discussed in more detail above in section 2.2.

2.4 Status & function of the Mine Committee

2.4.1 The social origin and function of the MC and its influence upon its motivation, impact and credibility.

Between April 1996 and March 2001 (5 years) HI has created 1228 Mine Committees of which 1150 are currently active. Some of the MCs have assistants bring the total of currently-supported mine awareness volunteers to over 1300 in five provinces. These village volunteers have been created as HI has expanded from Kandahar, to Zabul and Helmand and more recently to Farah and Ghazni. In these last two provinces new MCs are being created on a regular basis based on the province's needs assessment (conducted by HI prior to entry into the province) and as part of the duties of the local Nomaindas. In the provinces where HI has been operating for some years new MCs are created only when mine-risk villages that still do not have MCs come to the notice of the Nomaindas and the provincial supervisors.

Of the current MCs supported by the programme approximately 35% are local farmers. 38% are either mullahs or student mullahs (*talebs*) and 14% are teachers in the local *madrasas* or schools while 5% are local health workers. The final 8% are tailors, drivers, jobless or shopkeepers. Only 2 of all the MCs are headman / leaders of their communities. Nomaindas who are responsible for the creation of new MCs are aware that they have to select members of the community that have a good level of respect and of course MCs are only created in villages where they community show both an interest and desire for mine awareness. Clearly MCs share the same origins as other community members and live within the village.²⁰ The social status of the MCs, as illustrated above, indicate that most of the MCs are respected community members. Those familiar with Islamic societies will understand the immense importance of the mullah, as well as school teachers, in rural communities.

The evaluation found that almost all MC interviewed (sample size of 60) themselves considered that they were able to reach all members of their community with mine awareness messages. During the case studies it appeared that the MC was always respected, mine awareness training valued and his ability to reach all members of the community was normally a function of the physical size of the village or the newness of the MC in the community.

Among the Kuchi there are only 5 active MCs . Almost all training of Kuchi (which in terms of trained persons accounts for 40% of all direct training) is conducted by Nomaindas who do not come from the Kuchi communities. It should be noted that although the lifestyles of settled villagers and Kuchies differ considerably their common ethnic origins means a Nomainda can enter a Kuchie encampment and enjoy the hospitality and respect of the people during the training period.²¹ Nevertheless considering that the Kuchi groups are especially vulnerable to mines and UXO this evaluation suggests that greater efforts are made to establish volunteer representatives within Kuchi groups. Perhaps a different

²⁰ During one of the case studies (No: XX) a young *hazari* (ethnic group within Afghanistan) man was interviewed as the MC for a small community of *hazaris* within a larger rural community.

²¹ Pastoral nomadism in Afghanistan is highly dynamic in terms of the nomadic life being a choice based on economic and climatic opportunity. A nomadic community this decade could switch to a settled existence in another decade. However it is also true that many settled, and especially urban Afghan group have a pejorative view of the Kuchies.

methodology has to be found for them and a different support structure, but currently the HI structure favours settled communities although the evidence suggests Kuchies are exposed to higher risk.

All MCs are male. This is a function of the social and cultural realities (which may be seen as 'constraints') in Afghanistan. Despite this and the fact that women have severely limited access to mine awareness training the Nomaindas and MC are able to train a significant number of women and girls. This is discussed in section 1.2.2 of this report.

Currently HI appears to *not* be pressurising Nomaindas (and their provincial Field Officers) to create new MC in order to meet targets or to impress superiors with 'output' levels. There may, however, have been some element of this in earlier years when HI was keen to establish its programme with wide coverage. Nevertheless the MCs are volunteers who receive no incentives of any kind other than a functional training kit and in many cases a small radio (worth less than \$4 USA). The evaluation found that the primary motivation of the MC was a combination of Islamic faith and duty combined with a humanitarian desire to save their fellow villagers from the dangers of mines. HI's own experience over the years indicates that many of the MCs consider that the struggle against mines is still part of the *jihad*, (holy war) and participation is a particular honour for any Muslim.²²

Over the last 5 years only 6% of the MCs created have decided to relinquish their role after agreeing to acting as volunteers²³. This indicates a high degree of stability among the volunteers many of whom have been working for at least 2 years and others up to 4 or 5 years as volunteers. The others appear to be actively giving their communities training and reporting munitions and other data to the HI Nomaindas. If MCs had been created merely to meet quotas or raise statistics we could expect to see a high number of defunct or inactive MC. According to HI's monitoring information and data collection this is not the case. Due to the considerable hardship caused by the drought in the last 2 years some MCs have recently gone to Pakistan (c.20).

Findings of 2.4.1 Status & function of the Mine Committee

- ⇒ The social status of the Mine Committees appears to be appropriate to the task in so far that they operate within social groups of which they themselves are part.
- ⇒ The fact that the community themselves indicate to the Nomaindas whether they want a MC operating in their village, and that the MC himself volunteers knowing there are no incentives (except the honour), is a good measure of the willingness of villages to participate in HI's mine awareness network.
- ⇒ The fact that the majority of the MC volunteers are respected members of their communities indicates that mine awareness training as developed through this programme is taken seriously by community leaders which in turn guarantees a high level of attendance by villagers at indirect training sessions.
- ⇒ Considering the social and cultural context of Afghanistan this evaluation finds that the current system of MC recruitment and support works well and is appropriate for settled communities. The current system with respect to Kuchies appears to be weak with only 5 active MC in these communities. If the existing recruitment and support structure for MC is not appropriate for Kuchies and alternative needs to be found as soon as possible.

²² As such it was suggested that the MCs would not be interested in acting as village volunteers on other issues, but the results of the questionnaires found that most were very willing to assist the community and NGOs in other way and with other data. This is discussed in section XXX.

²³ Some of these ex-MCs were located during the evaluation and interviewed. Most left after serving their community as the MC for over a year and all left for personal or work-related reasons.

2.4.2 Determine the proportion between formal and informal training given by MC and assess the efficiency of both methods.

The MC Questionnaire asked a sample selection of 60 MCs to differentiate between informal and formal trainings that they gave. 43% said they gave formal training, 40% said they gave informal training and 17% said they gave both. These results are of limited use as it was impossible to subsequently test villagers knowledge and/or behavioural change in relation to mines and draw any conclusions concerning the efficiency. The case study interviews appears to support the reality that in fact most MCs use both informal and formal training approaches.

Afghan village culture involves a high level of social gatherings (tea-drinking) and conversation/discussion (in homes and around the mosques). Inevitable the MC will discuss mines with villagers in these sort of situations. This is one of the strengths of the MC structure in so far that the issue of mines and UXO can be kept alive and training occurring in an informal and continuous way. To try to separate the informal and formal training approach would be a difficult and questionable analytical exercise. However it is the conviction of this evaluation that both methods are inevitably used by MCs and are the basis for the mine awareness message being sustainable and repeated within the village context.

2.5 Materials and Methodologies

The Taleban regime have implemented rules concerning television, video, games, puppets and any photo image or realistic representation of the human form. These rules considerably restrict the scope of materials available to mine awareness trainer in Afghanistan. The CBMAP has always operated under these restrictions and use a simple range of tools and props to promote mine awareness.

Nomaindas and mine committees use the same simple kit. They have a number of wooden mine and UXO model that are either loose or stuck into a wooden close-able case. They also have a range of 3 different A4 size flyers with some warning messages and images of mine and disabled people etc. These item have been used since 1996. They also have a collection of stories about mine victims or mine-related stories that are used to stimulate discussion and group story-telling during training meetings. New stories are added to the collection every year. Nomaindas have tape recorders with taped mine awareness messages taken from the BBC drama series. These they use during their direct trainings. Just over 700 mine committee have been given small radios with which they are encouraged to hold Radio Forums, inviting people to listen to the BBC drama and then generate some discussion about mines and a pretext for the MC to mention some of the essential mine awareness messages.

The tools, radios, mine models and flyers are all designed to reinforce the basic 8 messages of mine awareness that is the core of the CBMAP curriculum. This curriculum was developed in 1996/7 and has been upgraded over the years but essentially the message are the same. Teaching first aid messages to children has stopped but otherwise the methodology and materials remain the same. Nomainda are required to adhere to the 8 messages very closely and to teach the MCs to do the same.

The current co-ordinator hopes to develop some new images on silk screens and renew the flyers in the next programme cycle (post-June 2001). An evaluation of the tools and methodologies used by HI Afghanistan (and other HI programmes) was made by the mine awareness officer from HI Lyon last year. The office in Kandahar still awaits the report.

Radios and radio forums:

For some years the BBC have been broadcasting (in Pushtoon and Farsi)a radio drama (on-going 'soap' style) called New 'Home New Life' that has important public health messages expressed through the drama. Mine awareness is a main theme for the drama and the show is broadcast four times a week

with a new story two times a week: 8 episodes a month . They reinforce their message by making booklets for NGOs and Afghans to use to reiterate the messages. Handicap has been working closely with BBC developing the theme for mine awareness broadcasts and the accompanying booklet.

The drama series have been a great success with the rural population. The CIET national mine awareness evaluation of 1998 found this to be the case, BBC's own frequent research show this and the result of this study also confirm the fact. In the case studies groups of villagers often spoke highly of the radio drama and seemed very familiar with the characters and events in the show. The questionnaire results indicated that of the 1113 people interviewed 48% listen or had listened to the drama. 46% considered that they understood the messages in the show and that people learned from the drama. The highest group of listeners were in those villages where CBMAP operates with 80% of the adults and 63 % children listening to the drama. About half of these had listened to the drama with the MC in radio forums at some point.

This evaluation considers the BBC drama to be an excellent tool that they should take full advantage of in terms of encouraging their MC and Nomaindas to promote the drama. Currently HI have a problem with the radios they first purchased and distributed to 785 mine committees. They purchased small and cheap Chinese radios(c\$3 US) that are too small for large groups, have poor reception and are not at all sturdy. Many are broken and unusable. This evaluation suggests that buying cheap radios is a false economy and that in the future better quality radios should be purchased and that radio distribution should be seen as an essential tool of all mine committees. A policy needs to be considered concerning the issue of battery provision by HI (versus the community providing their own batteries as their participation).

Since the introduction of radio forums as part of the MCs activities in January 2000 over 63,000 people have had mine awareness training through the radio forums and the subsequent discussions and teachings that it generates. Far more people listen to the drama on their own. The potential to harness the high popularity of the show is considerable and HI should make this a priority.

Findings of 2.5 Materials and Methodologies

- ⇒ Considering the restrictions set by the Taleban, the current tools, materials and methodologies appear to serve the training staff well. Those exposed to mine awareness through this approach appear to be more 'mine smart' than those not exposed to training, but direct correlations with 'mine smart' knowledge and incident reduction can still not be made.
- ⇒ This evaluation considers the BBC drama to be an excellent tool that they should take full advantage of in terms of encouraging their MC and Nomaindas to promote the drama. Its popularity is proven and due to HI's involvement with BBC they are in a strong position to help guide the producers concerning the content of the broadcasts.
- ⇒ Buying cheap radios is a false economy and that in the future better quality radios should be purchased and that radio distribution should be seen as an essential tool of all mine committees

2.6 Community Involvement

The involvement of the community in CBMAP operations should not be exaggerated and neither should there be unrealistic expectations. CBMAP is essentially an *information transfer system* that enables the communities to benefit from mine awareness and other mine action intervention (EOD, marking, prioritised clearance, victim rehabilitation..) and which enables the concerned external agencies understand and react to the mine problem more effectively. The community participate through recognition of the problem they face in respect to mines and UXO and their co-operation with the

volunteer representative (MC), through attending mine awareness training, and the reporting to the MC of any information concerning victim data, minefields and UXO sightings.

Not surprisingly communities are very positive about any mine action intervention and generally the CBMAP has met with high co-operation from all communities it has visited in the last 5 years. Provincial and district authorities have also been very positive about the programme. Beyond this there are no tangible issue where the community can be more active in terms of participation except in the obvious area of changing behaviour (to minimise risk) following the mine awareness training,

2.7 Technical assistance requirements

The programme appear to be operating very well as it is currently run by the Afghan co-ordinator and his staff, overseen by the Country Director. There has been a gap of 4 months since the last expat co-ordinator of the CBMAP left the programme. The programme has had 5 different expatriate co-ordinators in 5 years. This is a relatively high turn over which damages project continuity and follow-through of new initiatives.

A new expatriate co-ordinator has been recruited and is due to start working in the programme in June 2001. It is hoped that he is a specialist in either education, training and/or communications. This is the technical profile required of those co-ordinating mine awareness programme. Previous mine related experience is less important and can be learnt in-country. Previous military experience is neither necessary nor appropriate.

3.0 Evaluation of Sustainability

This report considers the CBMAP to have established an conceptual approach and operational structure that allows mine awareness to be highly sustainable in a target area and population group of considerable size. This is already being achieve with increasing economies of scale a the project currently expands in Ghazni and Farah, while consolidating in Helmand, Zabul and Kandahar. The programme is culturally and socially appropriate in design and its structure allows a single community based Nomainda to monitor and interface with a large number of MCs. Mine awareness seeks to reduce dangerous and risk-taking practises through the teaching of 'mine smart' knowledge: as long as there are mines and UXO this is a damage *limitation* exercise and not a damage *control* exercise. There will never be the perfect mine awareness programme but a community based, voluntary and self-sustaining network of trainer and information collectors is a significant achievement that deserves recognition.

Considering the different aspects of sustainability and the specific evaluation requirements set out in the TOR the following subject will be briefly examined.

3.1 MC coverage and MC reputation:

There may be problems concerning the MC coverage of their communities. In many of the case studies (which were normally conducted in communities where there were functioning MCs) those interviewed in the 'semi-structured interviews' did not know who exactly the mine committee and neither had they received training from them. In the villages where MC exist and where questionnaires were conducted it is true that 88% of adults and 81% of children confirmed that they had received some mine awareness training. A weakness in the questionnaire design does not enable us to identify whether this training was given by the district Nomainda or by the mine committee.

Due to the informal training methods of the MC, (as opposed to the formal approach of the Nomaindas who furthermore arrive in the village on motorbikes) the fact that he almost certainly does not describe himself as a 'mine committee,' and the fact that he may already be known as the mullah, or teacher or as the respected shop-keeper, the other villagers may not *identify* the MC to outsiders successfully.

They may not even describe the way the MC trains them as 'training' when asked in a formal questionnaire. This does not mean the MC is not doing his training effectively and that the knowledge of mine awareness is not gradually spreading throughout the village. The uncertainty here is more a reflection on the limitations of the evaluation and questionnaire techniques than evidence that MCs do not reach a large number of these communities.

Nevertheless, some villages are large and MCs will operate in their section of the village and normally use the mosque which they frequent (and its associated *madrassa* or school) as the venues for most 'training'. This automatically limits the scope of coverage for each MC and is why CBMAP has more than one MC in many villages. If the documented statistics from HI are accurate they indicate that on average each MC has given indirect training to over 600 people. This appears to be a very high average, which suggests that some degree of double-counting may be taking place. However when this average figure is divided by the number of years of programme operation and months the resulting monthly average is only 10 people per MC. That MC, on average train 10 people a month is entirely believable.²⁴

Findings of 3.1 MC coverage and MC reputation

- ⇒ Generally this evaluation finds that the supervisors and Nomaindas need to monitor MCs more carefully to ensure that where there are sections of the community or village where the MC cannot train, they consider creating new MCs.²⁵ Achieving maximum coverage is important.
- ⇒ It is noted that villagers appear to associate their memory of receiving mine awareness training much more with the visit of the Nomainda than the informal training of the MCs. This does not necessarily indicate that the MCs are less successful. CBMAP will need to look into these issues in more detail (through questioning villages and selected case studies) if a deeper analysis is needed.
- ⇒ Issues concerning coverage and reputation of the MC are directly related to the sustainability and the efficiency of the programme.

3.2 Assess monitoring requirements to supervise MA delivered by Mine Committees.

The CBMAP has developed various forms and mechanisms to monitor and test different issues and staff within the project including the MCs. For example they use;

- Training Observation Forms (for Field Officers and Supervisors to monitor training given by Nomaindas and MCs)
- Mine Committee Test and Evaluation Forms, (which MCs have to pass to start in the programme.)
- MC Assessment Forms,
- Questionnaire to the MC,
- Radio Monitoring Forms,
- Training Materials Analysis Forms

The frequency of training and numbers trained (by age and gender) are well documented and the Nomaindas and MCs appear to be regularly checked by Field Officers and Supervisors to ensure that they are closely following the curriculum and remain engaging to the local population. Feedback Forms

²⁴ Clearly this is only a statistical example using averages and should not be quoted out of context.

²⁵ Often people link themselves to mosques and a useful guide to how many MCs are needed in each village can be based on the number of mosques.

allow supervisor to give MCs and Nomaindas constructive feedback and support concerning their delivery of the message following assessment.

Findings of 3.2: Monitoring requirements to supervise MA delivered by Mine Committees

- ⇒ There is a need for occasional evaluation of the coverage and success of transfer of knowledge among the villagers themselves. The village questionnaires conducted during this evaluation were the first of their kind in terms of assessing the mine smart knowledge and other issue of the trainees themselves. In terms of assessing the coverage of the MCs the programme needs to monitor villagers to establish how successful the MC is in reaching their community. The results of the questionnaires and in particular the case studies indicate that while almost all the MCs claim they are reaching all their communities, the evidence suggests their coverage is far lower. These aspects of the work of the MCs needs more monitoring.
- ⇒ The monitoring of the MCs themselves by the monthly Nomainda visits and through spot checks by Supervisors and Field Officers testing appear to be sufficient. It is also an effective information transfer opportunity for HI as during these visits the Nomainda collects village data (accidents, minefields and UXO) as well as training numbers.
- ⇒ Nomaindas should be commended on their considerable dedication in visiting such a large number of MC every month in difficult climatic and geographical conditions but they should not be overburdened with too many MCs or else the quality of their monitoring will undoubtedly fall.

3.3 The time frame required before a Mine Committee is able to fulfil its duties.

After 12 years of mine survey, mine marking and mine clearance MAPA consider that they have only cleared 39% of all high priority land. 61% remains to be cleared. Overall, considering high and low priority land (low priority clearance has not begun) 40% of all mined areas are considered low priority. In addition to this new information about previously unrecorded mines continues to be collected by the CBMAP and other agencies. UXOs are another aspect of the problem (and one that claims an increasing, proportionately, amount of lives) which is only beginning to be addressed after an internal analysis in MAPA that showed that only 5% of MAPA resources were devoted to dealing with UXO despite the scale of the problem and high risk to the population (especially the youth).²⁶

The scale of the mine problem in Afghanistan is vast: mine clearance and EOD is very slow. A some of the case studies have revealed, villager can still face considerable risk even after mine clearance teams have performed some clearance around their village. Current tasking and prioritisation by MAPA dose not necessarily result in mine/UXO free villages after a clearance team has left (see case studies 2 & 9 in particular.)

The unfortunately reality is that villagers and especially the kuchi continue to be at risk. In all the case studies where villagers considered their village itself to be risk-free the population requested a continuation/or start of mine awareness as their people travelled into other areas regularly, they grazed animals far from the village and searched for wood on distant mountains or hills. Mine awareness needs to continue and be repeated. Mines and UXO have a long life-span and will continue to affect subsequent Afghan children and adults. Children born after the end of the last war are currently dying and being maimed. This new generation need mine awareness as will the next generation. Whether they get it or not will depend on the commitment of agencies to deliver it and donors to fund it. It is

²⁶ Handicap is included in the new initiative that will raise new EOD teams in existing agencies spread over the country (Halo Trust, ACT, DDG, MCPA and HI)

therefore paramount that low-cost and sustainable systems are established to disseminate mine awareness and make it part of the village life and culture.

Findings of 3.3: Time Frame Issues

- ⇒ The duties of a MC can be defined in terms of ideals or absolutes: When all the village or community is knowledgeable about mine awareness and avoid any risk taking behaviour and are able to successfully pass on this information to new comers and their new generation of children, then the duties to the MC may be complete. Also when there are no accidents to report and when all UXO and ammunition or newly identified minefields are reported then there will be no need for a MC. It is highly unlikely that the international community will continue to fund mine action to reach these objectives. The need to create a sustainable and cost-effective mine awareness system is therefore crucial. It appears that the CBMAP has developed a powerful mechanism to achieve this.
- ⇒ The CBMAP system is evaluated to be very appropriate to facilitate a long term or short term involvement by HI. They have set up a low cost systems with considerable 'economies of scale' advantages that requires low staff and low maintenance. In terms of sustainability 98% of MCs interviewed indicated that they would continue to act as the mine committee even if the Nomaindas (i.e. CBMAP) stopped to support them or visit them.
- ⇒ Theoretically the life-span of MC can continue until the mines/UXO threat in rural areas has ended. More realistically HI will probable need to develop a criteria for exit from one area in order to devote more recourses to another province or set of districts. Criteria such as; number of accidents, number of minefields, their proximity to the village, number of UXO reports, assessed level of 'mine smart' knowledge in the village and how many years HI has already worked in the village would need to be part of the exit assessment. The interesting aspect concerning a potential exit of CBMAP from certain villages is that there is a high chance that the MC created there will continue in their role.

3.4 The life-span of a Mine Committee and the reasons for stopping delivering MA.

It must be recognised that the MCs are volunteers and unpaid. As such the CBMAP may have expectations of the MCs and may seek to encourage and support MCs but clearly can not obligate MC to perform. The reality is that there are very active MCs and others who are less active. Personal circumstances sometime require MC to be absent from their villages from time to time in an some cases they leave for many months and on rarer occasions leave the country. This should be expected when dealing with a volunteer corps of over 1300. It is the Nomaindas and supervisors duty to monitor the progress of MCs in this regard.

To date very few trained MC since the start of the programme have stopped working and withdrawn. Those who have left the programme since 1996 are only 6% of the total trained. Some ex-MCs were located and questioned. All said they stopped working due to personal circumstance and all said they considered the continuation of mine awareness to be important. Section 2.4.1 above covers these issue in more detail.

Considering the period of time that many of the MCs have been operational (3-5 years) it is remarkable that the drop-out rate is not higher. Even with paid staff one would expect a higher turn-over over a similar time period. The overall approach of the CBMAP combined with the particular social and cultural attitudes of rural Afghanistan appears to result in a highly appropriate and sustainable network system. This evaluation sees no reason for the situation to change in this regard.

3.5 Considering 'Exit Strategies'.

If Nomaindas are 'servicing' an maximum of 65 mine committees in their districts²⁷, the cost of paying a Nomainda (with additional supervision and transport costs) to visit each MC every months to supervise the work of the MC and collect data is very low. This should be considered carefully before HI develops a strategy to 'exist' communities that may have received the CBMAP for some years. A simplistic division of *total* project costs between current numbers of MC indicates that MC cost approximately \$20 a month. However by the end of 2001 for the same *overall* programme costs the increase of MCs created could reduce the costs per MC to between \$10- \$15 per month. This cost could fall further as the programme develops the number of MC. With the current structure the co-ordinator considers that they could comfortably service over 2,400 MCs, i.e. double the current level.

It is instructive to examine the all the various benefits that accrue form this low MC cost:

- ⇒ It enables a Nomaindas to give direct training to as many members of the community (incl. kuchi) as possible and establish a MC.
- ⇒ The established MC gives refresher training and holds radio forums repeatedly to the villagers.
- ⇒ HI obtains precise information on a monthly basis about any accidents in the area .
- ⇒ HI obtains precise information on a monthly basis about any UXO/ammunition in the area which will be passed on to MAPA but will be used by their EOD teams in the near future for direct intervention.
- ⇒ HI obtains information on a monthly basis about any previously unidentified mined areas from the villagers.
- ⇒ HI is able to offer referral advice to mine victims in rural locations concerning medical assistance prosthetics and rehabilitation.
- ⇒ Of course included in this 'per-MC' cost are the benefits of the central and provincial offices, the interaction between HI Afghanistan and the wider mine action community in country (MAPA) and world-wide, and linkages with other initiatives (EOD, ICBL activities, Landmine Monitor, etc).

Despite these considerable benefits that are obtainable over a wide are of rural Afghanistan and relatively low cost, 'exit' issues need to be raised. In the 3 provinces where CBMAP has been operating the longest (3-5 years) the questionnaire results indicated that 81% of adults who had not received any mine awareness felt that their village was directly at risk from mines . In these provinces (Helmand, Zabul and Kandahar) it has been assumed that the district Nomaindas have already covered all affected villages with direct training and created MC where necessary. The results of the questionnaire raises some serious doubt over their selection process. Perhaps the resources aimed at the villages where MCs have been active for 3-5 years should be directed to other villages that consider themselves at risk but which have been 'missed' or ignored by the CBMAP for some reason. As mentioned in other sections 2.2 this indicates a weakness in allowing the Nomaindas to make the village selection at the district level.

HI needs to examine their selection of villages, especially in areas where HI has been involved for some years but where there is evidence that some villages that perceive themselves to need mine awareness but are not receiving any.

HI needs to develop a criteria for reducing, or curtailing its activities in selected villages and/or districts. This report cannot suggest a policy but recommends that the criteria for reconsidering the status of a village should at least include the following:

1. An assessment indicating that the MC is active and that 'mine smart' knowledge is high in the community.
2. Indication that there are no reports of injuries and deaths by mines or UXO in the community.
3. That there are no longer reports of UXO and minefields coining from the community.

²⁷ This figure was suggested by the current national co-ordinator of CBMAP

If any of the above criteria is not occurring then, due to the low marginal cost of each MC, the 'exit' could be delayed. If all criteria are evident then CBMAP should consider a limited or total withdrawal of their contact with the village and allow the Nomainda to concentrate on other areas. In areas where there is very low risk and where MCs appear to be active and able to complete form, HI may want to consider that the Nomaindas only visit the village on a less frequent quarterly basis for example. At the moment the project implementation is somewhat black and white with villages fully integrated in the network or totally outside it. This does not allow for the subtleties of reality where different villagers in CBMAP have different risk levels. HI needs to develop its 'servicing' or contact with MCs according to different criteria.

Findings of 3.5 Concerning Exit Strategies

- ⇒ The development of the MC structure has not been maximised with the existing, funded structure and there can be increase with some effort but little extra cost. HI should try to maximise the impact of created MC before withdrawing, or moving to other provinces
 - ⇒ The MC structure yields at low cost a wide range of important information that would otherwise be costly to obtain.
 - ⇒ Nevertheless an exit strategy does need to be developed, not for theoretical reason but practical reasons: to allow HI to work in other area and meet unmet needs within the provinces they cover. Also to allow the MCs to be sustainable and 'free-standing'.
 - ⇒ Due to an identified dubious selection process where the Nomaindas have chosen the district MC, HI needs to combine a *reduction* of attention in areas where they have worked for some years with an increased focus on outstanding areas of perceived need.
-

Summary of all findings with specific recommendations and conclusions:

The findings here are summarised for ease of reading and to relate recommendations to specific findings and some general conclusions.

Findings of 1.1 Achievements as set against stated goals, aims and objectives.

⇒ **Specific results**

With respect to these specific results the CBMAP has, between August 1999 and April 2001 (two months short of the contract period with the EC) :

- Trained (direct and indirect) in mine awareness over 736, 000 villagers and pastoral nomads (Kuchie). This is an over achievement of 350% above the target number.
- Created 542 new mine committee. This is an over achievement of 135% above the target level.
- Documented and collected 1664 ammunition reports from affected villages. An over achievement of 277%.

These achievements are very commendable and illustrate that the system in place to achieve these different project output are working well and to far higher levels than expected. Possibly they also show that HI set their targets low or are not aware themselves of the capacity of their system to generate these results. It should be clear that these levels of achievement will probably not be repeated in the future in the same areas: There will be a finite limit to how many Mine Committees (MCs) a province needs and how many people need training. Equally there will be a limit to how many ammunition reports HI will receive from the same areas over time.

⇒ **Reducing mine incidents**

With respect to the stated goal of reducing mine incidents in the project area it must be said that seeking to establish a direct correlation between changes in mine/UXO incidents and mine awareness dissemination is problematic and misleading. By isolating mine awareness training as a single factor affecting mine/UXO incidents this evaluation would be ignoring the fact that mine / UXO incidents are the result of a complex interplay of physical, seasonal and attitudinal factors. There are serious limiting factors in assessing this objective. This has also been found to be the case in other countries where an evaluation of mine awareness impact has been attempted as well as in a previous national mine awareness evaluation (CIET 1998) in Afghanistan. Nevertheless some findings concerning this central CBMAP objective and these can be found below in section 1.4.

⇒ **Sustainable mine awareness capacity and mine information network**

Concerning the creation of a sustainable mine awareness capacity and mine information network, the programme has developed an approach that has proved to be sustainable (to date) and has resulted in an effective mine information network that almost entirely covers mine affected districts of southern Afghanistan, including Ghazni to the east and Farah to the west. In addition it appears that the network of information gathering and mine awareness dissemination will be sustainable in the long term due to the structure of the CBMAP and the particular social and cultural conditions of rural Afghanistan. This is discussed throughout the report and particularly section 3.

⇒ **Information transfer network**

Currently the programme covers hundreds of villages in 41 districts in the five provinces. Three districts regarded as mine affected and needing mine awareness (according to HI's internal needs assessment) are not yet covered. The network of mine committees continues to grow every month increasing CBMAP's coverage. The approach currently used for this *information transfer* from HI to villagers (i.e. mine awareness) and from villagers to the mine action community (victim data and munitions reports via HI) is judged to be an extraordinarily effective network in terms of reaching a large amount of rural people through a relatively low-cost and low-maintenance staffing structure. The details of the level of

effectiveness of this mine awareness approach, and the substance, reliability and end use of the information network is evaluated in various sections below.

Conclusion: As the rest of the study will illustrate, the CBMAP is clearly meeting its targets and aims very well in terms of measurable indicators. Where the indicators are not measurable there is strong circumstantial evidence to suggest the programme is successful in achieving a sustainable methodology and which transfers information but it cannot be proved that CBMAP is directly reducing accidents and injury.

Findings of 1.2.1: Statistical comparison between villages in terms of 'mine smart' knowledge

- ⇒ In terms of 'mine smart' knowledge, based on the key, repeated messages of CBMAP, those villagers within Handicap's mine awareness programme clearly have a higher knowledge than those outside the programme. The kuchi, some of whom had received *some* direct training scored a little higher than those communities that had received no training at all.
- ⇒ Many of the questions relating to mine awareness in general are common sense and therefore it is not surprising that those not trained by the CBMAP still scored relatively highly overall (70%) on mine awareness questions. (e.g. When asked *whether 'there is ever a situation where it is good to touch a mine.'* extremely few people would respond to the affirmative whether they had been trained or not!)
- ⇒ It is pertinent that those villagers *outside* of CBMAP activities scored lower on the more demanding questions concerning *recognition of minefields, how to recognise mine marking, natural signs and what are the safest activities when you find yourself in an unknown or mined area.* The mine smart knowledge concerning these kinds of questions require a range of responses and need to be taught for people to be aware of them. Where HI has been training the knowledge is significantly higher on these issues, particularly when comparing the children.
- ⇒ We can conclude that the statistics from the results of the questionnaires illustrate that adults and children within CBMAP possess significantly more 'mine smart' knowledge. This is a positive affirmation of the programmes success in transferring 'mine smart' knowledge. It does *not*, however, illustrate to what level this knowledge may influence changes away from risk-taking behaviour.

Conclusion: The statistics indicate that people exposed to mine awareness through the direct and indirect methodology do develop higher levels of mine smart knowledge . The system can be said to be successful in this regard.

Findings 1.2.2: Gender separation

- ⇒ A very small percentage of women receive mine awareness through CBMAP. Although there are low levels of accidents among women they should have access to mine awareness education. Islamic culture and the particular interpretation by the Taleban regime currently restricts this.
- ⇒ A greater number of girls have access to mine awareness but it is still far less than the number of boys. CBMAP can take advantage of the access to pre-pubescent girls and offer mine awareness training to this group where possible.

- ⇒ Village boys are generally about 10% more 'mine smart' than girls (according to the questionnaire results) whether they have received mine awareness training or not. Kuchi girls and boys were found to be about equal in terms of 'mine smart' knowledge.
- ⇒ In villages where CBMAP operates girls scored well on questions concerning touching and contact with mine/UXO but weak on the more practical situational questions.

Recommendation 1:
That HI continues to strive to reach as many girls and women as possible. Today's girls are tomorrow's women. Nomaindas and MCs should be encouraged in this regard. HI should continue to examine alternative approaches that may enable them to teach women more (husband and wife teams etc).

Findings of 1.3: Impact of training on behavioural change

- ⇒ The evidence from the 210 adult villagers and 76 adult kuchi interviews indicates that people themselves regard mine awareness as having changed their behaviour in relation to mines/UXO. They value mine awareness and want regular refresher indirect training as they see it as being linked to safer behaviour around mines/UXO.
- ⇒ The Mine Committees questioned for this evaluation (60 in 5 provinces) all claim that their communities have changed their behaviour towards mine/UXO to some degree. They list particular changes of activities as evidence of this. If their claims are accurate this is a positive indicator that mine awareness is having an impact in this regard.
- ⇒ The statistical data in one province (Helmand) strongly indicates a big reduction in injuries and deaths between 1996-2000. Within this data the number of child-victims due to playing and tampering also greatly reduced as a proportion of the total. This *could* indicate that CBMA has been successful at some level, but unfortunately data from other provinces that have also been receiving CBMA for some years do not indicate similar trends. The data is too weak to draw reliable conclusions.
- ⇒ That the successful development of large amounts of ammunitions reports from villagers through the MCs cannot be used as a indication of behavioural change, even though there is strong circumstantial evidence to suggest that people no longer *touch* items and make an effort to *report* them to the MC as a result of the presence and trainings of the MCs. This is a positive indicator of safer practices resulting from the project.
- ⇒ That the measurement of behavioural change continues to be a challenge to those implementing and evaluating mine awareness where no reliable baseline victim data or behavioural analysis exists. Without these no serious conclusions can be drawn during or following programme implementation.

Recommendation 2:
To measure behavioural change HI will have to maintain more rigorous data collection concerning victims of UXO and mines. In addition a system to document behaviour before and after HI interventions should be established. There is still a chance to start such a baseline in Ghazni and any new provinces. Without these tools HI will never be able to measure these central aspects of their programme.

Findings for 1.4.1 Poor Data

- ⇒ What this means is that MAPA (and its implementing partners including HI) have not realised, and therefore have not set as a priority over the last 12 years of operations, the considerable power of victim data as a planning tool to direct humanitarian mine action intervention. Neither have they or other mine action agencies recognised the critical need to establish a baseline data in terms of victim data in order monitor progress. The central aim of humanitarian mine action is, presumably, the relief of the threat of mines for the population and not simply the clearance of land.
- ⇒ From a national point of view it is clear that the collection of reliable data is in a very poor state and the current dependency on national data from the ICRC is seriously flawed. Any quotations of changes in injury/death levels in recent years in Afghanistan must therefore be resisted as there is no method of substantiation. People are talking about a significant drop in casualty rates but there is no reliable data to support this at the national level. A rigorous system needs to be put in place as soon as possible along the lines of the HI proposal of 2000. Further discussion of this is beyond the scope of this evaluation.

Conclusion: The establishment of a national systematic and dedicated service for victim data collection is essential in Afghanistan, as soon as possible.

Findings of 1.4.2 Constraints to finding correlations

- ⇒ Data collection of mine and UXO victims in Afghanistan is poor and has been neglected for many years. The low commitment to data collection is indicative of a lack of awareness of how important this data is to prioritising and planning mine action intervention as well as providing a basis for programme evaluation.
- ⇒ HI have created the basis for a good data-collecting network in selected provinces but have not processed the information consistently and have not prioritised this aspect of their work among their staff. Nevertheless victim data has been reported by HI every month in their reports and submitted to MAPA, despite MAPA's repeated failure to manage and process this information in their own reports or publications.
- ⇒ A correlation between CBMAP and changes in victim data can not be made. The available data is ambiguous and because it lacks consistency no conclusions can be made. There is no statistical evidence that accidents reduce where CBMAP operates. This does not, however mean that it is not happening, just we can not show it statistically. If data is collected in areas where CBMAP do *not* operate (and which are mine/UXO affected) it may be possible to illustrate, in future years, that the impact of CBMAP reduces accidents. At this stage it is impossible.
- ⇒ Even where reliable data-bases of victims exist (only Cambodia at present) there is no substantiated evidence that mine awareness or any activity of mine action *directly* leads to mine accident reductions. In a post-conflict and rehabilitation situation there are simply too many other factors that account for these changes and mine action activities can rarely be isolated as the main causal factor of change.

Recommendation 3:
HI makes every effort to maintain a consistent and systematic coverage of the 41 districts where it works in terms of victim data collection. Supervisors and Nomaindas needs to understand the importance of this. Furthermore that it seeks funding as a matter of priority for the Mine Victim Information System for which it wrote a proposal approximately 16 months ago. Not only would this provide an important contribution to mine action in Afghanistan but would increase HIs credibility.

Findings for all 1.5: Capacity and motivation assessment of direct and indirect mine awareness trainers.

- ⇒ The Nomainda –based system is highly effective at developing a pyramidal structure with fast expansion capacity for information gathering as well as mine awareness dissemination.
- ⇒ Nomaindas perform a central task in the CBMAP under difficult conditions. Their determination and continuity should be commended.
- ⇒ The selection and recruitment of MCs appears to be appropriate and the concept of using only village volunteers is a central aspect of HI's concept in CBMAP.
- ⇒ The ability of MCs to reach all members of their community must not be exaggerated. It is clear this is not the case and remedial attention is required by HI to address this deficiency.
- ⇒ The motivation of MCs is primarily religious and humanitarian. Afghanistan may be a unique context in which a system of this nature can flourish. Possibly not replicable in other countries.
- ⇒ The effectiveness of this 'information transfer system' could be harnessed for other humanitarian concerns outside of mines.
- ⇒ HI's failure to develop a different structure to address the issue of meeting the needs of the Kuchi represents a lost opportunity and should be corrected .
- ⇒ The potential for expansion of the HI system is considerable.
- ⇒ HI's role in their current 5 provinces will change over time as they consolidate the programme: 'production' figures will cease to be meaningful as a measure of the programmes' success and dynamism.
- ⇒ Measure of the success of the programme needs to focus more on change of behaviour, increase in mine smart knowledge and clear reduction in numbers of preventable accidents.

Conclusions: That the current village volunteer system is highly effective, sustainable and appropriate in the Afghan context. HI should remain committed to this approach, expand it where possible and assist other agencies to see the benefits of this approach.

Recommendation 4:

That HI immediately instruct the Nomaindas and supervisors to begin checking how much of their designated community the MCs actually have contact with. In areas where the risk is still high and it is found that the MC do not reach a high number of the population new MCs should be created.

Recommendation 5:

HI must develop a new approach to dealing with Kuchi groups that are moving about the south of Afghanistan but are missed by the MC system. They are the most vulnerable sections of the community and sustain a high proportion of the accidents. HI needs to prioritise this group as soon as possible.

Findings of 1.6 Community perceptions and expectations of mine awareness interventions.

- ⇒ The perception of the vast majority of the communities where CBMAP operates is highly supportive of the existence and continuation of mine awareness training. HI have clearly developed a methodology and approach which is both acceptable and perceived as relevant to communities.
- ⇒ Communities indicate a strong desire for mine awareness to continue and with frequency. This suggests that there is a strong basis for the sustainability of the programme.
- ⇒ That the kuchis have a high interest in receiving more mine awareness and due to their uniquely vulnerable status in Afghanistan in relation to mines HI should put more emphasis into providing

kuchis with systematic mine awareness training in stead of the *ad hoc* visits by Nomaindas and MCs.

Findings of 1.7: HI/CBMAP as part of the overall Mine Acton Programme for Afghanistan(MAPA)

- ⇒ Strategically and operationally it is important for HI to remain a participating member of MAPA despite the fact that the programme has felt few direct benefits in terms of mine awareness ideology or shared experience from other mine awareness agencies and MAPA itself.
- ⇒ That the volunteer network in many hundreds of villages in affected areas gives HI a high capacity for valuable information transfer . This can be seen in the high levels of trainees as well as the victim data information and ammunition reports which are useful to MAPA.
- ⇒ That HI's link through the RMAC with EOD teams in other agencies has enabled ammunition reports to be addressed in the past. Due to the high number of requests generated there is a need for more EOD teams and that HI's plan to develop 2 new EOD teams in 2001 is commendable, if not overdue.
- ⇒ That despite the disappointing standard of victim data collection and processing nationally, HI is establishing a solid basis and is well placed to improve the data collected in its regions substantially. That it should continue to submit all victim data to MAPA as it tries to improve its management of this data. In this regard HI should vigorously promote the establishment of the national data collection plan as laid out in the AMVIS proposal written in 2000.

Conclusion: That HI can afford to raise it profile and effectiveness in mine action in Afghanistan. It has a structure and a credibility and 6 years of experience. The recent decision to establish EOD teams is an excellent development. Establishing a national database would also be of great value.

Recommendation 6:

HI is a mine action NGO and therefore should not restrict itself to certain sub-sectors like mine awareness within mine action. The aim is to reduce injuries and clear away the threat.. HI should take a more proactive approach and be less hesitant in this regard. After 12 years of mine action in Afghanistan the accident rate are still unacceptably high.

Findings of 2.1: Project structure and resources

- ⇒ This evaluation finds the management structure to be simple and effective, with a low level of paid staff able to control a network that benefits 41 districts, thousands of villages and reaches hundreds of thousands of people . The Nomaindas and supervisors should be commended for their dedication in particularly difficult geographical and climatic conditions, having to traverse vast areas of the 41 districts they cover in Southern Afghanistan.
- ⇒ The current structure has considerable potential for further expansion in terms of reaching more communities with mine awareness (creating more MCs) without increasing the number of paid staff. The current co-ordinator feels that the number of MC could double (giving each Nomainda and average of 65 MC each) without increasing the staff number or structure. These 'economies of scale' are a major benefit of the CBMAP design

Recommendation 7:

That considering the economies of scale with the CBMAP system, HI seeks to maximise its capacity within the current structure by maximising the number of MCs under each Nomainda.

Findings of 2.2: Project coverage and selection mechanisms

- ⇒ This evaluation realises that this section is inconclusive and sheds little light on the scope of HI's coverage. Nevertheless it is clear that in the 5 provinces there are 38 Nomaindas working in the most affected districts. Their duty is to give direct training throughout the district in mine affected villages and kuchi camps. To what extent this is occurring cannot be measured at this stage except by the considerable numbers of trainees in all locations and the establishment of large numbers of MCs (over 1150) and visits made to at least 4,200 villages in the last 6 years.
- ⇒ As indicated there is a weakness in the selection system concerning villages within districts. HI needs to have a more rigorous process of ensuring that other villagers that are not currently included in the work of Nomainda and MC are not at risk. The questionnaire result appear to show that many people living in such areas consider themselves at risk and in need of mine awareness.

Recommendation 8:
That HI reviews the selection system at the district level as soon as possible to ensure that villages that regard themselves at risk have not been left out of the mine awareness network. Evidence from the questionnaires suggest this is the case. Village selection of MCs should not and cannot just be left to the Nomaindas.

Findings of 2.3: Staff monitoring and training

- ⇒ The current structure of monitoring and training appear to be working well and meeting the needs of different levels of management. The frequent 3-monthly training for Field Officers, Supervisors and Nomainda is judged to be very positive in terms of keeping a close control of standards, monitoring problems as they arise, and developing a strong team spirit.
- ⇒ This evaluation found that more control was needed concerning the understanding by field staff of the importance of coverage and village selection. This is discussed in more detail above in section 2.2.

Findings of 2.4.1 Status & function of the Mine Committee

- ⇒ The social status of the Mine Committees appears to be appropriate to the task in so far that they operate within social groups of which they themselves are part.
- ⇒ The fact that the community themselves indicate to the Nomaindas whether they want a MC operating in their village, and that the MC himself volunteers knowing there are no incentives (except the honour), is a good measure of the willingness of villages to participate in HI's mine awareness network.
- ⇒ The fact that the majority of the MC volunteers are respected members of their communities indicates that mine awareness training as developed through this programme is taken seriously by community leaders which in turn guarantees a high level of attendance by villagers at indirect training sessions.
- ⇒ Considering the social and cultural context of Afghanistan this evaluation finds that the current system of MC recruitment and support works well and is appropriate for settled communities. The current system with respect to Kuchies appears to be weak with only 5 active MC in these communities. If the existing recruitment and support structure for MC is not appropriate for Kuchies and alternative needs to be found as soon as possible.

Findings of 2.5 Materials and Methodologies

- ⇒ Considering the restrictions set by the Taliban, the current tools, materials and methodologies appear to serve the training staff well. Those exposed to mine awareness through this approach appear to be more 'mine smart' than those not exposed to training, but direct correlations with 'mine smart' knowledge and incident reduction can still not be made.
- ⇒ This evaluation considers the BBC drama to be an excellent tool that they should take full advantage of in terms of encouraging their MC and Nomaindas to promote the drama. Its popularity is proven and due to HI's involvement with BBC they are in a strong position to help guide the producers concerning the content of the broadcasts.
- ⇒ Buying cheap radios is a false economy and that in the future better quality radios should be purchased and that radio distribution should be seen as an essential tool of all mine committees.

Recommendation 9:

HI takes full advantage of the BBC dramas and make it an immediate priority to provide decent radios and batteries to support and promote village forums among as many villages as possible. It may also be a good approach for Kuchi. In terms of per-village cost it is a very low-cost way of enabling people to hear mine awareness (and other public health messages). The cheapest radios should be avoided.

Findings of 3.1 MC coverage and MC reputation

- ⇒ Generally this evaluation finds that the supervisors and Nomaindas need to monitor MCs more carefully to ensure that where there are sections of the community or village where the MC cannot train, they consider creating new MCs. Achieving maximum coverage is important.
- ⇒ It is noted that villagers appear to associate their memory of receiving mine awareness training much more with the visit of the Nomainda than the informal training of the MCs. This does not necessarily indicate that the MCs are less successful. CBMAP will need to look into these issues in more detail (through questioning villages and selected case studies) if a deeper analysis is needed.
- ⇒ Issues concerning coverage and reputation of the MC are directly related to the sustainability and the efficiency of the programme.

Conclusion: MC coverage and reputation appear to be of a high standard which bodes well for the sustainability and effectiveness of the programme.

Findings of 3.2: Monitoring requirements to supervise MA delivered by Mine Committees

- ⇒ There is a need for occasional evaluation of the coverage and success of transfer of knowledge among the villagers themselves. The village questionnaires conducted during this evaluation were the first of their kind in terms of assessing the mine smart knowledge and other issue of the trainees themselves. In terms of assessing the coverage of the MCs the programme needs to monitor villagers to establish how successful the MC is in reaching their community. The results of the questionnaires and in particular the case studies indicate that while almost all the MCs claim they are reaching all their communities, the evidence suggests their coverage is far lower. These aspects of the work of the MCs needs more monitoring.

- ⇒ The monitoring of the MCs themselves by the monthly Nomainda visits and through spot checks by Supervisors and Field Officers testing appear to be sufficient. It is also an effective information transfer opportunity for HI as during these visits the Nomainda collects village data (accidents, minefields and UXO) as well as training numbers.
- ⇒ Nomaindas should be commended on their considerable dedication in visiting such a large number of MC every month in difficult climatic and geographical conditions but they should not be overburdened with too many MCs or else the quality of their monitoring will undoubtedly fall.

Recommendation 10:

That, at least every year, HI try to conduct village based questionnaires to find out how successful the mine awareness message transfer is going using the nomaindas and MCs. The aim of the programme is to effect this transfer and that this in turn should effect a change in behaviour. HI must have an internal mechanism to monitor the progress of these issues.

Findings of 3.3: Time Frame Issues

- ⇒ The duties of a MC can be defined in terms of ideals or absolutes: When all the village or community is knowledgeable about mine awareness and avoid any risk taking behaviour and are able to successfully pass on this information to new comers and their new generation of children, then the duties to the MC may be complete. Also when there are no accidents to report and when all UXO and ammunition or newly identified minefields are reported then there will be no need for a MC. It is highly unlikely that the international community will continue to fund mine action to reach these objectives. The need to create a sustainable and cost-effective mine awareness system is therefore crucial. It appears that the CBMAP has developed a powerful mechanism to achieve this.
- ⇒ The CBMAP system is evaluated to be very appropriate to facilitate a long term or short term involvement by HI. They have set up a low cost systems with considerable 'economies of scale' advantages that requires low staff and low maintenance. In terms of sustainability 98% of MCs interviewed indicated that they would continue to act as the mine committee even if the Nomaindas (i.e. CBMAP) stopped to support them or visit them.
- ⇒ Theoretically the life-span of MC can continue until the mines/UXO threat in rural areas has ended. More realistically HI will probable need to develop a criteria for exit from one area in order to devote more resources to another province or set of districts. Criteria such as; number of accidents, number of minefields, their proximity to the village, number of UXO reports, assessed level of 'mine smart' knowledge in the village and how many years HI has already worked in the village would need to be part of the exit assessment. The interesting aspect concerning a potential exit of CBMAP from certain villages is that there is a high chance that the MC created there will continue in their role.

Findings for 3.5 Considering 'Exit Strategies'

- ⇒ The development of the MC structure has not been maximised with the existing, funded structure and there can be increase with some effort but little extra cost. HI should try to maximise the impact of created MC before withdrawing, or moving to other provinces
- ⇒ The MC structure yields at low cost a wide range of important information that would otherwise be costly to obtain.
- ⇒ Nevertheless an exit strategy does need to be developed, not for theoretical reason but practical reasons: to allow HI to work in other area and meet unmet needs within the provinces they cover. Also to allow the MCs to be sustainable and 'free-standing'.

- ⇒ Due to an identified dubious selection process where the Nomaindas have chosen the district MC, HI needs to combine a *reduction* of attention in areas where they have worked for some years with an increased focus on outstanding areas of perceived need.

Recommendation:

The criteria for reconsidering the status of a village should at least include the following:

1. An assessment indicating that the MC is active and that 'mine smart' knowledge is high in the community.
2. Indication that there are no reports of injuries and deaths by mines or UXO in the community.
3. That there are no longer reports of UXO and minefields coming from the community.

If any of the above criteria is not occurring then, due to the low marginal cost of each MC, the 'exit' could be delayed. If all criteria are evident then CBMAP should consider a limited or total withdrawal of their contact with the village and allow the Nomainda to concentrate on other areas. HI needs to develop its 'servicing' or contact with MCs according to different criteria.