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An Assessment of Mine-Risk Education Needs in Croatia

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Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining

**AN ASSESSMENT OF
MINE-RISK EDUCATION NEEDS IN CROATIA**

Geneva, April 2002

This needs assessment was researched and written by Andy Wheatley. The project was managed by Eric Filippino, Head, Socio-Economic Section, Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) (e.filippino@gichd.ch). Funding for the assessment was provided by the Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC).

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key findings

Finding 1.

Recent and coming organisational changes will have significant implications for the role of the Croatian Mine Action Centre in mine-risk education.

Mine-risk education (MRE) capacity rests with three main bodies – the Croatian Red Cross (CRC)/ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Ministry of Education, and the Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC). Each organisation has recently undergone, or will shortly face, substantial programming changes.

There is a continued need for a body to lead the process of MRE co-ordination and information support. CROMAC is not currently implementing its mandate to *co-ordinate* all mine action activities as far as MRE is concerned. To date this has not been a problem given the strong co-operation between the key agencies. However, given the changes outlined below it will be important for CROMAC to develop its capacity to lead MRE programming. This will have resource implications.

Finding 2.

The withdrawal of ICRC support for the Croatian Red Cross will have major implications for the development, delivery and implementation of MRE programming.

The CRC is the key implementer of MRE across the 14 affected counties of the 21 counties in Croatia. To date, its MRE programme has benefited substantially from capacity building by the ICRC. Such support has been crucial in the development of material, the channelling of information to at-risk groups and in developing internal systems to support MRE programming. ICRC support will be withdrawn in June 2002 as part of a reappraisal of programming priorities.

In addition, the implications of the recently-adopted “Red Cross Law”, are far from clear. The law will mandate the CRC as the body responsible for MRE *implementation* in Croatia, however the surrounding funding and resource issues are still to be clarified. There is also scope for confusion given CROMAC’s mandate – responsibility for the *co-ordination* of all mine action initiatives, which by definition includes MRE activities.

Finding 3.

The Ministry of Education – the second major MRE player – faces substantial changes in its implementation capacity.

UNICEF funding for material distribution ended prior to the current academic year, i.e. in autumn 2001. Since 1992, UNICEF has provided assistance to MRE, most noticeably through the “Yellow Box Programme”, and other similar initiatives. These were designed to develop and distribute suitable school-based MRE material, along with training, to all primary schools in the mine- and UXO-affected counties.

There appears to have been problems in the implementation of this programme – few schools visited during the research for this needs assessment were aware of the initiative or the material produced. As a result most school-based programming is either reliant on MRE presentations and material prepared by the CRC, or are implemented by particularly motivated teachers undertaking MRE activities as part of a school-based initiative, often supported by the CRC. Material support and programming assistance from the national ministry appears to have been extremely limited in the schools and districts visited.

While fully recognising the importance of ensuring MRE continues to reach children, the CRC has expressed a desire to concentrate limited resources outside of school settings, providing greater MRE to other sectors of the population such as hunters, fishermen, and so on. If the Ministry of Education capacity to deliver quality MRE can be strengthened with CROMAC assistance this will be welcomed by CRC.

Finding 4.

MRE has tended to be marginalised within CROMAC with priority accorded to humanitarian demining activities. Once the new county mine action plan becomes operational the need to consult and liaise closely with local government and county representatives will become even more important – an activity which can be facilitated by those involved in MRE on the ground.

CROMAC is shortly to embark on a process of internal change as regional offices receive greater autonomy as part of an overall decentralisation process. Linked to this, CROMAC will shortly be expanding, with plans to increase staff from the current 92 to 152 nationally. Each regional office will practically double in size from 12 to 22 staff – the newcomers will consist mainly of trained surveyors and deminers. Currently there are no plans to increase the resources provided for MRE activities, which are undertaken by one Sisak-based Mine Awareness Co-ordinator.

Key personnel within CROMAC express themselves satisfied with the programme to date, however the key issue of focus within CROMAC is demining, and the survey, quality assurance and database support that links with that. There would appear to be a view that MRE equates with school-based educational activities. While this is one narrow aspect of the current mine awareness programme, encouraging a wider perspective as to what constitutes MRE may lead to closer linkage between the needs of the survey/marketing/quality assurance staff on the one hand and the MRE staff on the other.

Finding 5.

Currently there is no clear set of goals and objectives to allow for the implementation of MRE strategy.

The amended and updated National Law On Demining is shortly to be put to Parliament. This will give responsibility for the *co-ordination* of all mine awareness activities (along with all other aspects of mine action) to CROMAC. In contrast to the situation with mine and UXO clearance, where all funding goes through CROMAC to the bodies undertaking the clearance, funding for mine awareness activities will not be channelled through CROMAC. This results in a very different operational dynamic between CROMAC and MRE implementers, one which relies very much on co-ordination and co-operation amongst the key players, both at national and regional level.

Finding 6.

There is a firm belief in the need to continue the MRE campaign in Croatia, though a new direction and operational focus will be needed.

The success of the MRE campaign in Croatia is very difficult to assess. Falling mine victim numbers suggest some successes, although these cannot be attributed solely to MRE activity as in part this is due to mines being removed, or local populations becoming more familiar with the dangerous areas. However, every organisation and focus group consulted strongly felt MRE activity should continue. There was a consensus that children should remain the core target group for information dissemination and MRE activities.

The breadth, depth and quality of MRE material produced by all Croatian organisations involved in MRE programming is impressive. Much material has been developed by the ICRC/CRC, or local initiatives such as the Happy Fields Association in Osijek. School-based material has also been developed by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF. Material is discussed in more detail in the section below entitled *Analysis – Quality of Materials and Presentations*.

To date, programming has focused on issues of mine and dangerous area recognition, ‘do’s and don’ts’ to ensure safety, and reporting suspicious objects or confirmed mine sightings. This has undoubtedly been of great value – witnessed in part by the steady decline in civilian mine casualties. However, six years into an MRE programme it would appear that all major stakeholders recognise the limitation of this approach and the need to change with the times, particularly as latent baseline knowledge on mines and their dangers has grown.

Most delivery of MRE, be it through small group MRE presentations or larger events, is reliant on (primarily CRC-supported) volunteers. While basing the implementation of programming on the capacity of volunteers does present certain limitations, it is clear that a remarkable amount has been achieved as a result of this approach. Now may be the time to consider a change of approach in terms of the scope and the nature of presentations. (See the below section on recommendations for more on this.) Successfully implementing a new phase of programming, identifying and using new channels of dissemination and more targeted information will be the challenge for the coming years.

Finding 7.

There is a need to strengthen liaison between the mine and UXO-affected communities and the mine action community in Croatia. MRE is well placed to undertake this function.

The principal request of those consulted in focus group meetings was for improved *communication* between CROMAC/demining organisations on the one hand and local authorities and organisations on the other as to the status of suspected and known minefields, and current and future work plans. Linked to this was a desire for improved minefield marking and the revisiting and repair of previously marked areas.

CROMAC has invested heavily in an extremely effective database and GIS system. While detailed and accurate information now exists as to the location and nature of the mine/UXO threat, this information is not widely shared externally, particularly at community level. For a very limited outlay, through sharing of maps and similar information, communities could be

much more effectively informed of the current mine threat in their area. It must be stressed that while this information may exist at county level within certain government bodies, the key from the community perspective is ensuring that information is shared at village level.

10 With regard to minefield marking – clearly CROMAC recognises this as an issue and to their credit have begun to address this as a priority during 2001. However this issue will require some creative solutions if known and suspected minefields are to be marked, and previously marked areas regularly repaired. As with many countries the issues of minefield markings being removed presents an ongoing problem and one which community education may play some small part in overcoming.

Programmatic Recommendations

1. The CROMAC MRE programme should review existing programme documents in conjunction with key external agencies. Clear precise and realistic goals, objectives and indicators should be developed and a strategy to operationalise these developed. This should be undertaken in close co-operation with key partners (Ministry of Education, CRC) and their agreement negotiated.

2. Close attention should be given to the manner in which the MRE programme works in support of, rather than parallel to, the wider mine action programme. With the introduction of the new county mine action planning process there is a clear opportunity for the MRE programme to play a vital role in enhancing co-operation and cohesion at county level. This should be developed further and resourced accordingly. The focus should be on the delivery of information on the location and existence of mine/UXO contamination in communities, the distribution of CROMAC mine maps as well as the presentation of mine safety messages.

3. CROMAC should use the above process to seek funding for a minimum two-year programme of support. A dedicated (and expanded) budget should be sought to allow CROMAC MRE activities to fit in two broad categories: developing national strategy with key stakeholders, and developing and strengthening co-ordination mechanisms at regional office level. This process should be evaluated at the end of the two-year period.

4. CROMAC should redefine activities and strengthen co-ordination between key players (CROMAC, CRC and the Ministry of Education, mine victims' associations, and others) at a regional level. This would best be achieved by either recruiting one MRE co-ordinator for each office, or refocusing the activities and job description of existing staff members. It is recommended that CROMAC fund a mine awareness co-ordinator for each of the three regional offices, with a brief to co-ordinate with communities, government bodies the CRC and other key players. Additionally a national co-ordinator should oversee the work of these individuals and work closely with national bodies such as the Ministry of Education and CRC.

5. Linked to this CROMAC should strengthen and formalise links with key national level bodies, in particular the Ministry of Education and the CRC. This will allow for greater co-operation, and information sharing between programmes leading (hopefully) to greater efficiency and impact.

6. Central to any new MRE programming developments should be a move to increase the dissemination and sharing of *information* as well as *educational* materials. Communities require detailed information on location of known/ suspected mine contamination as a prerequisite for ensuring they and their families stay safe. That information now exists. CROMAC MRE staff should concentrate on developing mechanisms to ensure that information, maps and regular updates reaches affected communities in a manner and location that is beneficial to them. This can be undertaken in a number of ways – CROMAC and partners should investigate and agree appropriate mechanisms of delivery.

7. Mine action is developing rapidly, with much international learning on issues concerning effective MRE programming. The Croatia programme has much to contribute, and in turn would also benefit from close links with this learning process. CROMAC MRE staff should ensure that they allow themselves time to benefit and contribute to this process. Crucially perhaps, key partners such as the CRC and the Ministry of Education should be included in this learning. Ideally an educational budget line should be included in MRE programming budget for such activities. As a minimum, CROMAC should ensure that MRE staff and partners are aware of the current international mine actions standards and the relevance these have for mine action in Croatia. These should be translated and disseminated where relevant.

8. CROMAC collects substantial amounts of information. There is a need to ensure such information is adequately analysed and regularly updated. Information from OSCE has indicated a number of trends with regard to mine victims. With the withdrawal of the OSCE mine awareness programme in 2002, CROMAC should ensure it is in position to undertake similar analysis as a means of supporting mine safety and MRE programming.

9. CROMAC should investigate further the need for post-clearance survey of land usage and utilisation and the role MRE staff can play in this process. Given the development of the County Mine Action Plans and the crucial role socio-economic indicators play within this prioritisation process it is appropriate that this issue be continually re-evaluated. This issue should also be considered in the light of the Norwegian People's Aid experience in Benkovac.

10. Currently the target population for mine awareness as defined by the national mine awareness strategy consists of eight distinct groups¹. It is recommended that CROMAC now review this list with key partners and consider whether this needs to be adjusted in light of experience and impact to date. While extensive, this list may be too wide to allow effective impact and consideration should be given to reducing this down to a more manageable size. A detailed strategy should be developed for each target group, including consideration to indicators of success, measurement etc.

11. CROMAC should seek to establish a meeting with the Ministry of Tourism and key tourist agencies (including representatives of international tourist firms) to discuss the impact of mines on the tourist industry. There is a need to understand better the perception of the problem from the perspective of tourist agencies, and develop an action plan to ensure appropriate action is taken.

¹ See section, *Evolution of Mine Awareness Programming in Croatia*.

INTRODUCTION

Terms of Reference

This needs assessment of mine-risk education in Croatia was conducted on behalf of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and the Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC). Detailed terms of reference are attached as Appendix 1 to this report. Its findings are based on field research carried out in Croatia by a GICHD consultant in January 2002.

The mine and UXO problem in Croatia

The mine and UXO problem in Croatia affects 14 of its 21 counties, covering an estimated 1,700 square kilometres, which represents three per cent of the country. Improved survey work has reduced the area of suspected contaminated areas from an estimated 13,000 square kilometres in 1998 to the figure of 4,000 square kilometres in 2001. At the end of 2001, it was reduced still further to 1,700 square kilometres as a result of a “multi-criterial analysis”.²

Mines are densely concentrated along former confrontation lines especially around larger towns, particularly around the towns of Benkovac, Karlovac, Knin, Osijek, Sisak, and Vukovar (CROMAC, 2001c:4). Mines were laid by both Croat and Serbian forces.

The mine war in Croatia can be viewed in five stages (*ibid*:5):

Phase I (August 1990 - August 1991) was characterised by limited mine deployment, either in small groups at strategic sites or often individually in support of roadblocks and pickets.

Phase II (August 1991 - early January 1992) was characterised by the laying of large numbers of minefields in front of defensive positions or possible directions of attack. A wide variety of mines from Yugoslav army stockpiles were used by both sides. Yugoslav army and Serbian forces tended to lay mines according to standard principles and procedures, influenced by the large number of professional soldiers in these forces, while mine laying by Croatian forces was less well documented and mapped, reflecting the initial poorer training and cohesion of Croatian forces. The quality of documentation and precision of mine patterns apparently improved with time.

Phase III (January - April 1994) saw the arrival of UN forces and the cessation or reduction in hostilities in areas under UN control, and a limited withdrawal of forces away from the immediate confrontation lines. This period saw the **partial movement of mines to new locations (meaning?), false (dummy?)** mine deployment, reinforcement of certain minefields and a general realignment of defensive positions.

Phase IV (April 1994 and early 1998) saw the establishment of a demining centre for Eastern Slavonia, based in Osijek, and the establishment of the United Nations Mine Action Centre Croatia (UNMACC) in August 1996, followed by the creation in March 1998 of CROMAC

² Information provided by CROMAC, 4 April 2002.

(known locally as HCR, an acronym of the Croat name Hrvatski Centar Za Razminiranje³). This period also saw the launching of “Operation Flash” and “Operation Storm” to retake the Krajina. This period saw the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) take control of the mine situation, and begin the process of marking and maintaining minefields. Following the military operations to retake the Krajina, the number of minefields in government-held areas increased significantly. During this period, some limited military and piecemeal humanitarian demining was conducted by a combination of organisations including the Croatian army engineers and AKD Mungos.⁴

Phase V is the current period of humanitarian demining managed and controlled by Croatian government bodies, in which commercial organisations bid for clearance contracts of areas selected by CROMAC and local government institutions. The first non-commercial body, the Norwegian NGO Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA), only commenced clearance activities in January 2002.

Very few minefields were marked when laid by the combatants. The need to locate and mark these minefields has been, and continues to be, a demanding problem requiring the allocation of resources. The presence of mines and UXO is seen to be a major impediment to the recreation of normalcy, public safety, and the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country. Very little reconstruction can take place without some form of mine action, whether in the form of clearance, or mine awareness for those working on projects or returning to former confrontation zones.⁵

It is believed that in total there have been 1,360 mine and UXO incidents since 1991 resulting in 1,818 deaths and injuries. Information on those killed or injured by landmines is relatively complete, however information for the period prior to 1995 is less detailed. The below graph gives detail of casualty numbers.⁶

³ CROMAC is the English language terminology for the Croatian Mine Action Centre. HCR translates directly as the Croatian Demining Centre – note the reference to *demining* rather than *mine action*, which reflects the priority accorded to clearance over other mine action activities, including MRE.

⁴ Mungos is a Croatian demining organisation run along commercial lines but established and managed by the Croatian Ministry of Interior

⁵ View of CROMAC, UNICEF, and Red Cross officials repeatedly stated throughout the mission

⁶ Information obtained from D. Kozaric-Kovacic *Evaluation of Knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of adolescents in regard to protection from mines and destructive explosive devices* Zagreb 2001.

County A	No of		Cases – Annual					Number of cases involving children					Total
		95	96	97	98	99	Total	95	96	97	98	99	
Sisak-Moslavina	100	50	38	24	21	25	158(16 per cent)	10	12	3	2	2	29(19 per cent)
Lika-Senj	72	31	21	23	23	22	120(13 per cent)	7	7	3	3	1	21(13 per cent)
Zadar	68	44	20	22	10	21	117(12 per cent)	7	7	1	1	1	16(10 per cent)
Vukovar-Srijem	59	38	17	13	21	12	101(10 per cent)	5	6	1	1	1	14(9 per cent)
Brod-Posavina	38	40	15	1	4	2	62 (6 per cent)	3	3	1	1	1	8(5 per cent)
Pozega-Slavonia	36	22	21	7	3	7	60 (6 per cent)	2	2	0	1	1	6(4 per cent)
Sibenik-Knin	24	23	11	0	5	2	41 (3 per cent)	1	1	1	2	0	5(3 per cent)
Osijek-Baranja	29	19	3	0	14	1	37 (4 per cent)	2	1	1	1	1	6(4 per cent)
Split-Dalmatia	15	8	7	7	1	7	30 (3 per cent)	1	2	0	0	1	4(3 per cent)
Karlovac	18	3	4	6	8	7	28 (3 per cent)	1	1	1	1		5(3 per cent)
Dubrovnik-Neretva	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0 per cent)	0	0	0	0	0	0(0 per cent)
Sub Total	459	278	157	103	110	106	754 (77 per cent)	39	42	12	11	9	113(73 per cent)

County		No of Casualties	Cases - Annual						Number of cases involving children					
B			95	96	97	98	99	Total	95	96	97	98	99	Total
	Koprivnica-Krizevac	50	22	35	0	3	2	62 (6 per cent)	2	3	0	1	1	7 (4 per cent)
	Bjelovar-Bilogora	28	12	12	8	2	2	36 (4 per cent)	2	3	1	0	0	6 (4 per cent)
	Zagreb	25	11	6	9	4	5	35 (4 per cent)	2	2	1	1	2	8 (6 per cent)
	Primorje-Gorski Kotar	16	11	10	3	5	4	33 (3 per cent)	1	1	0	0	1	3 (3 per cent)
	Varazdin	14	2	6	11	5	5	29 (3 per cent)	1	1	1	0	0	3 (2 per cent)
	Krapina-Zagorje	6	3	1	0	5	4	13 (1 per cent)	1	1	1	1	0	4 (3 per cent)
	Virovitica-Podravina	4	0	1	0	4	4	9 (1 per cent)	1	1	0	1	1	4 (3 per cent)
	Istria	2	0	1	1	0	0	2 (0.5 per cent)	0	0	0	0	0	1 (1 per cent)
	Medimurje	1	0	0	1	0	1	2 (0.5 per cent)	0	0	1	1	0	2 (1 per cent)
	Sub Total	146	61	72	33	28	27	221 (23 per cent)	10	12	6	5	5	38 (27 per cent)
	TOTAL	605	339	229	136	138	133	975 (100 per cent)	48	54	18	17	14	151 (100 per cent)

Section A represents the counties affected directly by mines and UXO, Section B represents counties not directly affected.

It should be noted from the above chart that only 77 per cent of casualties from mines or UXO are directly related to the explosive remnants of the war. A substantial minority of casualties were caused by explosive devices found in the home. For example, 13 per cent of all casualties and 18 per cent of all child casualties were as a result of the unauthorised handling of weapons.

In addition, an analysis of mine victim information for 2001 (excluding incidents involving qualified deminers) indicates that by far the most incidents occurred when collecting firewood (11) or farming land (9). No children were involved in incidents during 2001 (CROMAC, 2002). As with most mine- and UXO-affected countries men of active economic age made up the vast bulk of casualties.

EVOLUTION OF MINE ACTION IN CROATIA

The Croatian Demining Law

The Demining Law, the basis of all mine action in Croatia, was passed in March 1996, and a subsequent bill on changes and amendments to the laws on mine clearance was passed in June 1998. The Law stipulates how clearance activity is governed and managed and sets out the basic relations, rights and obligations of parties regarding mine clearance. It calls on the government to prepare and oversee a plan of clearance, but stipulates that demining operations are to be undertaken by commercial companies. The law regulates issues of clearance Standing Operating Procedures, the recruitment and working conditions for deminers, details of training and licensing, and quality assurance issues. It is also the legal basis for the later establishment of CROMAC, the only body allowed to oversee humanitarian mine action in Croatia. CROMAC was established on 19 February 1998.

At one time, only Croatian demining organisations were permitted to work in the country, but this has now been changed, partly following donor and World Bank pressure. Subject to a registration and accreditation process external organisations can compete for contracts. There are currently 17 authorised commercial mine clearance companies and one NGO (NPA) working in Croatia, employing a total of around 500 deminers. With the exception of NPA none of these organisations provides mine awareness or a community liaison function. It is believed that existing capacity can clear between 20 and 35 square kilometres per year (CROMAC, 2000:Section 2.3). **The national mine action plan aims to have cleared all but 600 square kilometres by 2010.**

The national mine action programme in Croatia recognises the need for further changes to the Demining Law, as well as amendments to the law on VAT and customs and generally the need to enhance existing financial arrangements and secure future funding.⁷

United Nations Mine Action Assistance Programme in Croatia (UNMAAP)

United Nations mine action assistance began in 1995 with the creation of a mine action centre under the control of UNPROFOR. This had the role of co-ordinating international assistance to the Croatian mine clearance programme and to provide specialist advice and support to develop Croatian clearance capacity. Initially activities focused on developing a database on known or suspected mined areas, and on lobbying for the creation of national demining capacity. Following the creation of CROMAC in February 1998, the UNMACC changed to the UNMAAP and was managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Following an evaluation of the UNMAAP programme (UNDP, 2001) and the successful building of capacity within CROMAC the UNMAAP programme has scaled down to two international advisors focusing on support to institutional development and long-term strategy building issues. The programme is due to close by the end of 2002.

⁷ At the time of the needs assessment mission in January 2002 a second updated version of the demining law was being drafted. The content and the date of presentation to parliament are not known.

Western European Union Demining Assistance Mission (WEUDAM)

The WEUDAM mission has been operational since May 1999. Its mandate was to “provide advice, technical expertise and training support to CROMAC in the area of programme management, planning and project development, geographical information systems operation and in the vital area of level II [technical] survey and QA [quality assurance], as well as assist CROMAC with an evaluation of its present methods”. (CROMAC, 2001b:110)

In order to limit confusion and overlap with the UNMAAP initiative the WEUDAM mission has seemingly tended to work more closely with the regional offices, while the UNMAAP focused more closely on CROMAC headquarters level. The WEUDAM programme has steadily reduced its international staff presence from nine to four. The programme was closed at the end of November 2001.

CROMAC

CROMAC was established in February 1998, into which the WEUDAM mission was integrated in May 1999 and UNMAAP in June. CROMAC defines mine action as having a five aspects: technical, humanitarian, economic, social and health. These are to be implemented through four basic complementary components:

- Mine awareness education and training in risk reduction;
- Minefield survey, mapping, marking and mine clearance;
- Mine victim assistance including rehabilitation and reintegration; and
- Ratification of the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty. (CROMAC, 2000: section 6.1)

CROMAC is tasked with ensuring that Croatia is mine-free by 2010, (CROMAC, 2000: section 4) and, towards that end, co-ordinating all mine action activities within the country. This is undertaken through establishing the framework for mine action and monitoring the implementation process: survey, prioritisation, tasking, overseeing clearance contracts, undertaking Quality Assurance post clearance, as well as area reduction and minefield marking. Additionally CROMAC plays a role in monitoring the development of new technology, and owns and leases a number of mechanical clearance assets.

CROMAC estimates there will be a need for over US\$1 billion if current targets are to be reached by 2010, i.e. approximately \$100 million per annum. This is outlined in the table below. How achievable this figure is remains to be seen, but does indicate substantial commitment to the issue of mine action. Of this figure approximately US\$1.2 million is considered necessary for mine awareness i.e. 0.1 per cent. While mine awareness requires substantially less resources than does clearance, it is questionable how effective the mine awareness programme as envisaged (see next section) can be when receiving average annual funding of US\$110,000.

Predicted Funding Needs for CROMAC 2000 - 2010⁸

Description	Area planned 2000-2010	Funding Required (USD)			Total
		2000	2001-2003	2004-2010	
Mine clearance	600	2,730,208	246,188,800	587,389,070	836,308,078
General survey	3,620				
Technical Survey	280	1,420,320	71,016,000	192,690,080	265,126,400
Sub Total	4,500	4,150,528	317,204,800	780,079,150	10,029,434,478
Marking		355,080	2,130,480	2,201,496	4,687,056
Mine Awareness			355,080	828,520	1,183,600
Victim Assistance			177,540	414,260	591,800
Total funds Required		4,505,608	319,867,900	783,523,426	1,035,896,934

CROMAC is shortly to embark on a process of internal change as regional offices receive greater autonomy as part of an overall decentralisation process. As a result of this, CROMAC will shortly be expanding to consist of 152 staff nationally (up from 92) with each regional office practically doubling in size from 12 to 22 staff – the new staff consisting mainly of trained surveyors and deminers.⁹ Currently there are no plans to increase the resources provided for mine awareness. Mine awareness activities are undertaken by one Sisak-based co-ordinator. Key personnel within CROMAC express themselves satisfied with the programme to date, however CROMAC's main focus is on demining, and the related survey, quality assurance and database.

The other major change currently being undertaken, in tandem with the decentralisation process, is the development of a detailed socio-economic impact study for the prioritisation of mine clearance. This process has been piloted in one county (Sisako-Moslavacka) and will be used throughout the 14 mine-contaminated counties as part of their planning for 2002. This ambitious process is attempting to stress the link between mine action and the reconstruction and rehabilitation process. Currently, mine clearance activities within CROMAC are planned in accordance with the annual mine clearance plan for Croatia. This mainly reflected national and county government needs for infrastructure clearance assistance, and has been criticised for a lack of transparency and accountability.

In an attempt to ensure that future clearance activity is focused on ensuring greatest economic and social benefit a series of indicators are being developed to ensure consistency and clarity in the annual planning process. It is believed this will promote a more effective and efficient use of resources, ensure that land cleared is quickly turned into a productive asset, and allow better long-term strategic planning.

Mine awareness is seen as a key component of this process and, together with victim assistance, is integrated within the overall planning and implementation process at county and local level for the first time. This is to be strongly welcomed and should provide a solid

⁸ Table taken from UNDP (2001).

⁹ Discussions with CROMAC Assistant Director for International Relations, CROMAC, Sisak, 22 January 2002.

foundation for enhanced co-ordination of activities. Once the new county mine action plans become operational the need to consult and liaise closely with local government and county representatives will become even more important: an activity that can be facilitated by those involved in mine awareness at county and local level. However, for this process to become a reality, it will require detailed and close co-ordination of key government, mine awareness and CROMAC officials at county level. This in turn will require the commitment of resources.

EVOLUTION OF MINE AWARENESS PROGRAMMES IN CROATIA

Mine awareness programmes, aiming to inform those living in and around mine-contaminated areas how to minimise their exposure to risk, has been undertaken in Croatia since 1995. Key national level players consist of CROMAC, ICRC/Croatian Red Cross (CRC), the Ministry of Education/UNICEF and, to a lesser extent, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Many small NGOs or individuals are involved in programme implementation and delivery.

The information given in the section entitled “Findings – The Mine and UXO problem in Croatia” indicates the scale of the threat. The number killed and injured has gone down substantially to only 25 (non-clearance-related) casualties in 2001, none of which were children.

The amended and updated National Law on Demining shortly to be put before Parliament attributes responsibility for the *co-ordination* of all mine awareness activities (along with all other aspects of mine action) to CROMAC. Unlike with clearance activities (where all funding goes through CROMAC to the bodies undertaking clearance activities), funding for mine awareness activities will not be channelled through CROMAC. This results in a very different operational dynamic between CROMAC and mine awareness implementers, one based on co-ordination and co-operation amongst the key players both at national and regional level. This Relations with the ICRC and CRC have worked reasonably well in practice, but co-ordination with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF has so far been poor. This should be borne in mind when considering future activities.

The national strategy for mine awareness training (CROMAC, undated) indicates a wide variety of groups for targeting. These are indicated in the table below along with the key means of delivery and the responsible organisation.

KEY TARGET GROUPS	WHO WILL TARGET	PRINCIPLE MEDIUM FOR DELIVERY
Those living or working in or near mine-contaminated areas	ICRC	Direct contact/ presentations and media campaigns.
Refugees living in third countries	ICRC/ UNICEF	Via leaflets and material handout via The Office of Displaced Persons and Refugees
Adults who do not live in mine contaminated areas	CROMAC/ICRC/CRC	National and local media, posters, leaflets
Primary school age children (7-14 years old)	UNICEF/ Ministry of Education	Direct training of teachers and through media campaigns at local/ national level
Adolescents (14-18 years old)	Ministry of Education/ CRC	Via a wide variety of small scale activities targeted specifically at this group
International personnel working in Croatia	UN/CROMAC	Direct mine awareness training
Other visitors to Croatia	Dissemination of literature information and	Ministry of Tourism via embassies and local tourist boards
Elite Groups: journalists celebrities etc	CROMAC	Direct training and through organising specific promotional/ training events

The current status of this plan is not known, nor to what extent the objectives have been met. There will be a need to review this in light of the withdrawal of ICRC assistance.

Key messages disseminated are:

- Don't touch anything suspicious;
- Mark the location and inform others/ police; and
- When in a minefield – stay still and shout for help.

In the past there has also been instruction to retrace your footsteps if in a minefield, and also some information with regard to prodding your way to safety. These are no longer promoted.

Below can be found an outline of the activities of the key players. This is followed by an outline of some of the key organisational findings and issues impacting on the delivery and targeting of the information.

CROMAC

Mine Awareness activities are undertaken by one person – a Sisak based Mine Awareness Co-ordinator. From the creation of CROMAC up until December 2001 this post has been held by Ms. Vanja Sikirica. Since this date the post has been held by Ms **Ljiljana Calic-Zmiric**.

Key personnel within CROMAC express themselves satisfied with the mine awareness programme to date, and key documents fully support the concept of mine awareness¹⁰. The focus of activities within CROMAC remains on clearance, and the survey, QA and database support that directly assists it. Mine awareness and mine victim support do not appear central to CROMAC activities at present.

There would appear to be some confusion as to the role and output expected of the mine awareness co-ordinator. It was not possible to find a job description for the post, although this may have been as a result of the recent change in personnel and the move to new premises. However certainly there is scope for now reviewing the job description and expected role of the Mine Awareness co-ordinator in light of the developments in the programme nationally and the changes shortly to be introduced.

The inevitable pressure of work on an organisation such as CROMAC have often resulted in the mine awareness co-ordinator being asked to undertake tasks outside of her brief. This tendency is enhanced in the case of both the previous and current mine awareness Co-ordinator since both have strong English language skills– a scarce and important resource within CROMAC.

Currently there is a lack of clarity concerning the goals and objectives of the programme and this appears to have had an impact on the implementation of the programme. Certainly CROMAC's goals and objectives with regard to *mine awareness programming* were not well known to partner agencies or within CROMAC.

¹⁰ For example – all key documents such as the National Mine Action programme, the National demining law and key planning documents clearly support the role, function and concept of mine awareness. However there does appear to be a gap between this and the reality of programming and resource allocation.

The CROMAC 2002 state budget currently being finalised totals 137 million Kuna (approximately US\$15.5 million). Of this 56 per cent will be for funding demining contracts, 30 per cent will go on technical surveys etc, approximately 1 per cent will be for fencing and approximately 0.3 per cent will be for mine awareness activities. It is envisaged that this will be supplemented with external donor funds, but this cannot be guaranteed. The experience over the last few years suggests minimal external funding can be obtained. However this is on an ad hoc basis and does not allow for long term planning, and thus limits the programmes capacity. This issue will become more crucial as ICRC funding is withdrawn as the programme draw to a close, thus removing one source of existing funding assistance.

ICRC/CRC

The CRC is the key implementing body in the delivery of mine awareness throughout the 14 affected counties of the 21 in Croatia. The CRC mine awareness programme (MAP) was introduced in co-operation with the ICRC in spring 1996. The strength of the programme lies in the strong network of local Red Cross branches (48) and mine awareness instructors (96). The volunteer instructors ensure that the mine awareness messages are regularly repeated and disseminated in a variety of ways through a number of different channels. As with all volunteer-based programming the continued motivation and enthusiasm of this key group of volunteers is crucial to the successful delivery of mine awareness messages.

Within the framework of a volunteer based programme and the limitation this implies, the programme would appear to be an effective one. During the needs assessment mission all agencies expressed their satisfaction with the quality of the current activities.¹¹ To date, programming has focused on issues of mine/dangerous area recognition, 'do's and don'ts' to ensure safety, and reporting suspicious objects/confirmed mine sightings. As the programme moves forward there will be need to refocus activities to a channelling of updated information on the current status of the mine threat (see recommendations).

The focus of CRC MAP programming to date is currently directed at children, mainly through school-based presentations. The CRC staff and volunteers expressed the desire on numerous occasions to move on and focus on other groups. However the view was expressed that the Ministry of Education is not currently in a position to fill the vacuum if the CRC were to withdraw this school-based activity.¹² This is a cause of substantial frustration and concern.

In addition, in discussions with regional CRC offices, a number of volunteers and staff have expressed the need to rethink the manner in which mine awareness activities are undertaken. There is a recognition that attracting people to the subject of mine awareness is increasingly difficult as people feel they have a sufficient knowledge of the topic – it is becoming 'stale'. As such, there is a desire to move away from events organised *about* mine awareness, to including a mine awareness component to other gatherings, e.g. social, sport or leisure

¹¹ While all expressed their appreciation and satisfaction with the level of commitment and quality of delivery of the local branches, a number of bodies and individuals expressed concern at the capacity of the national office to manage and adequately support and direct the process. Additionally there was a feeling, also expressed by many Red Cross staff and volunteers, that there is now a need to review the direction and content of activities and refocus the manner in which the MAP is disseminated and also strengthen the link with the clearance bodies in line with the new county mine action plan.

¹² It should however be noted that in a number of schools there are dynamic and very impressive local initiatives run by small local NGOs or associations. These are usually school-based and the few visited were highly impressive. However, these have very limited coverage.

activities. This, it is felt, will ensure the topic of mine awareness remains discussed, while fresh delivery ideas will add quality and variety to the presentations.

As noted previously, the breadth, depth and quality of mine awareness material produced by all Croatian organisations involved in mine awareness programming is impressive. The CRC/ICRC (along with the Ministry of Education) has been responsible for developing most of this. While it was not an objective of this needs assessment to review and assess in detail the quality of materials and the effectiveness of these – it would appear from the time spent in country that these are generally of high quality. While the value of certain approaches (such as posters) can be questioned – and indeed there is much debate about this issue at a global level, certainly the materials seen avoid many of the pitfalls seen elsewhere. Generally messages are clear and well expressed and easily understood. Material consists of poster, booklets and fliers, a series of seven TV spots played almost daily on prime-time State television, as well as interactive performances of theatre events such as ‘ne- ne mine’¹³ aimed at younger children.

To date, the mine awareness capacity of the CRC has benefited substantially from capacity building by the ICRC. This has had as its primary objective the wish to strengthen the CRC through the provision of finance and managerial capacity-building and support.¹⁴ The support has been crucial in the development of material, the channelling of information to at-risk groups and in developing internal systems to support programming. ICRC support will be withdrawn from June 2002 as part of a reappraisal of programming priorities. This will have major implications for the development, delivery and implementation of CRC programming.

Unlike most other countries ICRC does not collect information on mine victims and incidents. This is because such this information is adequately collected and collated through other bodies, principally the State Ministry of Health and the Croatia Union of Physically Disabled Persons Associations. ICRC delegates noted, however, the need to adequately analyse and use this information once it has been collected. It appears that information on casualties and incidents is not (yet) used in the planning and prioritisation process for deciding locations for clearance operations.

Additionally the implications of the ‘Red Cross Law’ currently before Parliament, are far from clear. This will mandate the CRC as the body responsible for mine awareness *implementation* in Croatia, however, the funding and resource issues which surround this are yet to be clarified. There is also scope for confusion here, unless carefully co-ordinated and managed, since CROMAC is mandated with responsibility for the *co-ordination* of all mine action initiatives, which by definition includes MRE activities.

Discussions with local county branch offices indicated a desire for better co-ordination and sharing of information at regional level – and a desire to interact more closely with key players at this level. There would appear to be much scope for close interaction and improved partnership with the CROMAC regional offices for example. This approach may help overcome some of the bottlenecks regarding information and support for the local CRC branches at national level

¹³ A pun on words. ‘Ne ne mine’ can either mean ‘no not us’, or ‘no no mines’.

¹⁴ Discussions with Robert Pokrovac ICRC MAP Co-ordinator.

The Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education faces substantial changes in its implementation capacity. It began activities to combat the mines threat in 1992. This was initially on a small scale, but grew substantially in 1996 when UNICEF agreed to assist the ministry in developing the programme. The most obvious outcome of this partnership was the Mine Awareness Kit for Teachers – the so-called ‘yellow box’. This programme developed and distributed suitable school based mine awareness material, along with training, to all primary schools in the mine- and UXO-affected counties. Material included a video, slides, a teacher’s manual, posters, a booklet on the rights of the child, fact sheets, games and puzzles. This proved to be a model for similar UNICEF support to Bosnia and Herzegovina. This was followed up in the year 2000 with the distribution of a smaller, similar set of materials. UNICEF assistance ended in 2001 and this is already having a substantial impact on the availability of resources for the Ministry of Education programme.

Initially the focus was only on primary schools, and in 1998 was adjusted to include secondary schools as well. The key strategy for mine awareness in schools was drawn up in 1995 and will run until 2005 when it will be reviewed. Mine awareness is not part of the curriculum, but is integrated within the *safety in schools campaign* (along with issues of drugs, domestic violence, etc) where these issues are included through, for example, language and drama classes.

The objectives of the programme are to:

- Highlight the threat posed by weapons, mines, UXO;
- Highlight how children can protect themselves and others;
- Develop corrective/preventive behaviour; and
- Promote ways for children to avoid becoming exposed to the danger.

Within this the message promoted is ‘Be careful’ but don’t be unnecessarily afraid. In theory, the programme is reviewed annually with teacher and headmaster feedback. Much is made of the fact that in the year 2001 no child was killed or injured due to mines or UXO and this is seen as being (at least partly) due to the role played by the mine awareness programme.

The programme as outlined was reviewed in a detailed evaluation undertaken by the police academy in 1999. (Ministry of Interior Police Academy, 1999) This indicates that the programme has had a very limited impact to date and is discussed in more detail in the following section. Problems have seemingly been encountered in the implementation of this programme: few schools visited were aware of the initiative or the material produced. As a result most school-based programming is reliant on either presentations and material prepared by the CRC, or are implemented by particularly motivated teachers undertaking mine awareness activities as part of a school-based initiative, often supported by the CRC. Material support and programming assistance from the national ministry appears to have been extremely limited in the schools and districts visited. As referenced above the CRC has expressed its desire to withdraw from this programme of support to schools if suitable conditions can be created. Likewise the Ministry of Education has expressed its concerns as to the somewhat *ad hoc* nature of CRC involvement in schools.

No school visited was aware of a Ministry of Education resource base or kit for teaching mine awareness. None of the teaching staff¹⁵ met during focus group discussions felt they had sufficient training and orientation in mine awareness nor did the schools have. Few teachers were aware of the 'yellow box' programme, and while some were aware of the annual distribution of (UNICEF Funded) awareness material, this has not happened so far in 2002 due to the ending of funding.

Discussions with the Ministry of Education¹⁶ indicate that the ministry would like a closer working relationship with CROMAC. There appears to have been some tension in relations with the CRC. The Ministry recognises it could and should improve its programme further, much of it having been self-taught.

UNICEF

UNICEF assistance to mine awareness activities has been limited to assisting the Ministry of Education and providing funding to review and evaluation programmes. UNICEF is in the process of substantial change in Croatia. Most programming support has ended and UNICEF is in the process of developing itself into a national fundraising committee. This has meant that those responsible for assistance to the mine awareness programme are no longer in country. Substantial assistance was provided in the creation of the mine awareness kits (mentioned above) and funding the production and distribution of posters and leaflets. UNICEF also funded the 1999 'learn to survive' study (Ministry of Interior Police Academy, 1999) at a cost of US\$138,000. This was followed by funding for a further evaluation entitled 'Evaluation of knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of adolescents in regard to protection from mines and destructive explosive devices' published in 2001.

OSCE

OSCE's mission to Croatia began in 1996, and grew to a point where it employed approximately 400 staff. Its prime function in this period was to ensure both sides were fulfilling their responsibilities as stipulated by the Dayton Peace Process. The mission is now reducing in size and currently numbers less than 90 staff with a prime focus on ensuring a sustainable return of refugees. Many factors affect this process, including property repossession, reconstruction, reconciliation and economic development. Landmine contamination also affect the capacity to return to an area.

It is this role that promoted a mine awareness capacity since the fear of mines was proving to be a hindrance to those wishing to return. The OSCE has therefore developed a programme of mine awareness in eastern Slavonia focused on providing support to CROMAC/UNMAAP co-ordination. This programme will end in December 2002.

In discussions with OSCE staff the need for co-ordination and liaison activity with affected communities was seen as being a key gap to the existing programme. Commercial companies have no mandate and little desire to provide local populations with regular updates as to their activities nor report back post-clearance as to what has been done. Such a report would, though, be of value to the community. OSCE staff also see value in this process for CROMAC, in that local populations have a good understanding of the details of the mine

¹⁵ With the exception of Mrs Kunic, the Director of the Osijek Happy Fields Association

¹⁶ Discussions with Mrs Jovicic, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Education and Sports, and Mrs Ivankovic, Head of the Mine Awareness Programme.

threat in their area. This is a crucial source of local intelligence not yet sufficiently exploited by CROMAC,¹⁷ which would also involve and empower the community concerned. This role has in part been undertaken by the OSCE, however this should be instituted more widely, possibly by the CRC. All players would apparently have something to gain and nothing to lose from enhanced co-operation and communication.

The marking and maintenance of known minefields – crucial if people are to move about with safety – were seen as requiring greater attention even though there had been a distinct improvement in 2001 as a result of increased efforts by CROMAC.

Concern was expressed as to the quality of mine information available to refugees and internally displaced persons prior to return. This has resulted in refugees being killed or injured by mines in numbers disproportionate to their overall numbers in a given location. This issue is discussed in greater depth in the following section.

The OSCE representative felt there was a need for mine awareness activities to continue. However, the quality of presentations should be improved – making greater use of mine victims to present their testimony, and using a wider variety of materials during presentations, including dummy mines.

In addition to the above groups there are large numbers of local initiatives, such as Happy Fields in Osijek, focusing on the mines issue. In addition the NPA programme will shortly be starting, which will no doubt highlight further issues of community linkage and feedback.

Analysis

This analysis will draw on a variety of indicators, including the evaluations of the Ministry of Education programme funded by UNICEF, as well as questionnaires and focus group responses undertaken as a result of the needs assessment itself. The section will seek to develop an understanding of mine awareness knowledge amongst key at risk groups, gain a better understanding of key media channels and develop an understanding as to the relative importance of mine awareness compared to other needs.

Focus group discussions were held with children and teenagers (5), and key adults groups (7). Key informant discussions and meetings were also held to discuss similar issues with local government officials and individuals closely associated with the mine awareness programme. The chosen approach has been to rely on qualitative rather quantitative data, however due to time limitations survey questionnaires were used in an attempt to widen the informant network.

Questionnaires were handed to eight schools for completion by one senior and one junior class from each, i.e. approximately 400 students. However, only 215 responses were received from a total of six schools,¹⁸ of which 135 responses were received from children between the

¹⁷ This point was proved during a meeting in Karlovac on 31 January 2002. A meeting had been arranged with the local hunters' association – the first time CROMAC had met with this group. During this they informed the CROMAC representative of the existence of a minefield unknown to CROMAC.

¹⁸ Schools were selected through the local CRC representatives and in theory reflect a reasonable cross section of children. However, in some of the schools, particularly in Osijek, children were perhaps more informed than would be considered usual. Schools in Zadar county, eastern Slavonia and Karlovac county responded to the survey.

ages of 11 and 14, and 80 responses came from children aged around 9. Although this cannot be considered a scientifically robust survey, the aim was to gather a snapshot response in support of the focus group work from a more extensive group than would have been possible from focus groups alone. In addition, 15 teachers from four schools also completed questionnaires. Thus information presented below is generated from studies and findings prior to the needs assessment, a total of 12 focus group meetings, a series of meetings with key informants and information from 230 questionnaires provided by children and teachers.

Capacity to identify dangers associated with mines/UXO

The ‘learn to survive’ evaluation of the impact of the Ministry of Education programme of school-based mine awareness indicates that levels of knowledge about mines and UXO changed little as a result of the programme. In the initial phase of the evaluation (prior to mine awareness being undertaken) 66 per cent of children were considered to have given correct answers to seven questions about the dangers posed by UXO and what to do in response to discovery of a item of UXO/mine, or in the event of an incident. This information can be found in the chart below.¹⁹ (Ministry of Interior Police Academy, 1999:26, figure 2)

Question	Initial phase (May-September 1996): Percentage of correct answers	Late 1997-early 1998 Percentage of correct answers
1. Can a bullet shell cause wounding?	76	76
2. Can fragments of an exploded projectile explode later?	26	20
3. Can an professionally deactivated bomb/mine explode?	50	58
4. What is the police phone number?	95	95
5. What is the fire brigade phone number?	89	90
6. What is the emergency medical aid phone number?	87	90
7. What is the information centre phone number? (only lower grade children)	39	42
TOTAL	66	67

During the second phase, i.e. following mine awareness activities, only 67 per cent gave correct answers – a statistically insignificant improvement of 1 per cent. If the answers referring to phone numbers were factored out the correct average response regarding UXO and mine dangers falls to 50 per cent in the initial phase and 51 per cent in the second. This is worryingly low, particularly as it follows a supposedly intensive and successful programme of awareness by the Ministry of Education.

The survey therefore suggests that the overall level of knowledge of children within schools as to the dangers posed by mines/UXO, and the actions they should undertake to limit their exposure to danger, is limited.

A similar survey was conducted for a study in 2001 (Kozaric-Kovacic, 2001). This gave the following results:

¹⁹ The choice of questions appears curious, but it is not for this paper to contest this issue.

Question	Initial phase (1999) Percentage of correct answers	Phase 2 (2000) Percentage of correct answers
1. Can a bullet shell cause wounding?	49	48
2. Can fragments of an exploded projectile explode later?	50.5	52
3. Can touching or moving activate an explosive device?	89	88
4. Can an explosive device be hidden in small things?	99	99
5. Does a bomb explode within 10-15 seconds of delay?	56	58
TOTAL	68.6	69

This would indicate a substantial improvement on the previous survey, however the figures are still lower than might have been expected.

The responses given by children to the questions asked during the needs assessment were more encouraging. No less than 88 per cent of those aged 10-15 and 96 per cent of those aged 7-10 could correctly indicate one way a mine could explode, while 27 per cent of those aged 10-15 and 50 per cent of those aged 7-10 could correctly identify two ways of triggering mines.

Similarly 62 per cent of those aged 10-15 and 78 per cent of those aged 7-10 could correctly identify at least two potentially mined areas, and 33 per cent and 28 per cent of these, respectively, could identify three.

Asked to identify areas that could be generally considered safe, 77 per cent of those aged 10-15 and 91 per cent of those aged 7-10 correctly identified at least one, and 44 per cent and 59 per cent, respectively, identified two or more types of safe area.

More worrying, however, was that 28 per cent of those aged 7-10 and 11 per cent of those aged 10-15 believed all minefields were clearly marked. This is a cause for concern given the currently limited marking of minefields. When asked to name two types of warning signs that might indicate the presence of mines 82 per cent of those aged 10-15 and 78 per cent of those aged 7-10 relied on official warning signs such as mine tape, posts, flags, boards, etc, and a very small percentage mentioned deserted buildings, uncultivated fields, signs of fighting, etc.

The results of the needs assessment suggest an improvement in knowledge among the children involved in the survey since the 'learn to survive' evaluation. However, this conflicts with findings from the second survey referred to, which was undertaken in 2001, and given the seriousness of the issue involved and the exposure most children have had to messages, the number of correct answers was lower than expected. This is an area for concern.

Knowledge of safe responses – “do’s and don’ts” when encountering mines

The key messages of the mine awareness campaign are:

- Don’t touch anything suspicious;
- Mark the location and inform others/the police; and
- If in a minefield, stay still and shout for help.

In the past there has also been instruction to retrace your footsteps if in a minefield, and also some information with regard to prodding your way to safety. These are no longer promoted although it would appear from the responses received that (particularly with older children) this message is still being acted upon.

When asked what they would do if they found themselves in a mined area 64 per cent of those aged 10-15 said they would try and retrace their footsteps, while 6 per cent said they would run out. Only 23 per cent said they would stand still and call for help. With 7-10-year-olds the figure was more encouraging – 79 per cent said they would stand still and call for help and 16 per cent said they would try and run out, and 4 per cent said would retrace their footsteps. With the older age group in particular this is an extremely worrying response, indicating either ignorance or forgetfulness on the part of older children, or acting on old information previously disseminated, or a substantial gap between theory and reality.

When asked what they would do if they saw a friend in a known mined area an encouraging 73 per cent of those aged 10-15 and 96 per cent of those aged 7-10 said they would either tell them to stand still while they got help or would call for help immediately. However, a worrying 23 per cent of those aged 10-15 said they would either go into the minefield to help their friend, or would tell them to retrace their footsteps.

When asked what they would do if they saw a friend playing with a mine/UXO 67 per cent of those aged 10-15 said they would shout a warning or tell them to put it down or not to pick it up, although only 3 per cent claimed that they would then go and get help. Of the younger age group 80 per cent said they would shout a warning or tell them to put it down or not to pick it up, of which 41 per cent also said they would then run and get help. Sixteen per cent of those aged 10-15 and 9 per cent of younger children said they would just run for help.

The above response is encouraging. Of worry, however, is that in the 10-15 age group, 4 per cent said they would take the item off the friend, while 4 per cent said they would instruct the friend to throw it as far away as possible. Both actions are potentially very dangerous and should be discouraged. With the younger age group 6 per cent said they would instruct the friend to throw it as far away as possible. Again, a relatively low figure compared to correct responses, but worrying nonetheless.

In discussions with adults during focus group meetings nearly all gave adequate answers as to the dangers presented by mines, the distances one should be to avoid injury from exploding mines, etc. However, it would appear that while the theory is known a number of people expressed scepticism as to whether this theory is translated into practice: i.e. real behavioural change. To some extent interviewees, particularly those in rural areas, indicated that the credibility of the safety messages were undermined by the pressure of the daily economic reality of survival and the need of some to enter known dangerous areas.

In other cases adolescents indicated that mines and UXO are collected and traded between friends. It was stated on a number of occasions that adolescents frequently exposed themselves to danger, knowingly ignoring safety advice in order to pursue this hobby. One group stated that it will only be as a result of death or injury to a friend while engaged in this type of activity that they will react or reconsider their actions.

Particularly amongst adult men, and even more so amongst ex-military or militia members, there is an attitude that they are aware of the dangers, the location of mined areas, and the ways in which they can protect themselves. It was not felt that there is much more they should do to minimise their exposure. Likewise there was an unwillingness to be 'held hostage' by mines and the war detritus in these areas and to therefore re-establish patterns of life from before the war – hunting and fishing in the old areas, etc. Worryingly, men did not see that their actions would have an effect on their children, i.e. that their apparent lack of respect for mines would have an impact on the manner in which their children behaved – the copy cat factor as children attempt to emulate their parents. Of particular note was that while adult males tended to feel they had sufficient knowledge and capacity to stay safe from mines, there was an ongoing fear for their children

In sum, responses from younger children indicated they knew more or less what they should do when faced by mines and UXO. With older children (10-15-years-old) the response was much less satisfactory, suggesting that either the wrong message has been received, messages have been forgotten, or that other issues such as peer pressure or bravado were influencing answers. There is a need to review the manner in which messages are promoted and to regularly review and evaluate understanding and take up of messages.

Key media channels

Television came out consistently as a strong medium for information dissemination among children focus groups, and came across in the questionnaires as consistently the most widely seen medium. National TV channel 1 was widely viewed. Local TV, on the other hand, was seen as too parochial, rarely watched and had little credibility among children. In questionnaires, when asked what would be the best way to teach younger children and teenagers about mine awareness messages most children (20 per cent of each age group) saw this as the best medium. Eighty per cent of 10-15-year-olds had seen mine awareness material transmitted on TV compared to only 19 per cent of the younger age group. Adults saw TV as important but were divided as to whether it was the most *effective* medium, seeing verbal presentations, community discussion and more informal face-to-face presentations that allow for interaction as the most effective means of information dissemination.

Talking with parents/peers/teachers came out strongly from focus group discussions with all age groups as an effective means for the transmission of messages. Interactive presentations, provided they allowed for discussion and questions, and were well resourced/presented, were seen as being important and useful. Likewise teachers saw workshops and school-based activities as being the strongest means of conveying information on the mine threat. When asked for the most effective medium for reaching younger children, 10-15-year-old children ranked teachers second. For educating teenagers this age group ranked teachers and school-based activities second and discussions with peers and friends third.

Paper based activities, such as posters and leaflets, received a very mixed response. Most adults were aware of the leaflets that children received at school and it would appear these were widely read around the home although they were not considered very effective as a medium. Only 29 per cent of those aged 10-15 and 12 per cent of younger children had seen leaflets and paper-based resource material at school. Similarly, while few older children remembered seeing posters, 20 per cent of the younger age group questioned had seen these. These are surprisingly low results given the quantity of material and the amount of money spent on their development.

Radio consistently came out as the least respected and useful medium for information transfer. Although widely listened to, this was purely for music and news and information tended to be ignored or screened out. All children and adult focus groups ranked it as the two least useful channels (adults tended to see it least useful equally with newspapers). In questionnaires only 9 per cent of those aged 10-15 thought it useful (ranked in fifth place) and only 7 per cent had heard any mine awareness messages on the radio. Among younger children radio was ranked fourth – behind TV, posters and teachers/school activities.

Newspapers were considered a poor medium for information transmission. These were not mentioned at all in the questionnaires, while in focus groups with children they were rarely raised. In rural areas adults in particular said they were of little use since they could rarely afford them. Of those who did mention newspapers – the ‘black chronicle’ section appeared to be the most read. [\[what is this?\]](#)

Quality of material and presentations

In discussions with children and adults the following suggestions were made. A large majority of children indicated that presentations and in particular TV spots should be more frequent. It was also felt that TV spots sufficiently targeted adults (being shown during peak evening times around major news bulletins) but were not shown at times likely to catch adolescents and younger children. Scheduling times should be reviewed to fit with youth-orientated programming.

Materials and presentations should also focus more on the *consequences* of mine/UXO death or injury. Teenagers felt that this would be more hard-hitting and therefore more effective. Generally children felt that images should be stronger and more realistic. This contrasts with the adult’s view that material was rather shocking and should be toned down for children.

Linked to the above point is that many children and adults felt that presentations would be far more effective if they used mine victims themselves to give their story and explain the manner in which they were hurt and the consequences of the accident.

Generally there was a feeling that presentations should be made more interesting through a greater use of material, models, dummy mines, interactive activities and generally a more imaginative response. According to teachers, school-based presentations should also attempt to include the parents of children.

Material, whether advertisements on TV or written information, should include more focused information with specific information about mine safety according to 9 per cent of the children, although this contrasts with 7 per cent of responses who want material to be made easier to understand.

Focus group discussions often mentioned the *PLOP* cartoons. These were well received and considered well designed for getting the messages across to younger people. There was a number of requests for more cartoons like this.

Key target groups

All groups consulted believed that children should continue to be the key body to be targeted, despite the fact that no children were killed or injured during 2001. Most people interviewed felt that the obvious location for the education of children in mine awareness should be through schools, as at present. However, as stated previously, there is some concern within the CRC as to how and who would undertake this given the current weaknesses within the Ministry of Education programme.

In addition it was felt that hunters were an at-risk group – although when speaking to hunters they considered themselves to be well informed – both with regard to how to stay safe, and also regarding location of mines and minefields. Hunters spoken with, however, indicated they would welcome greater contact with CROMAC, particularly with regard to updated mine maps.

Of particular interest however was the issue of returning refugees as highlighted by a recent OSCE report on this issue (Rutherford, 2001)²⁰ which suggests that returnees and internally displaced persons make up a disproportionately large percentage of those killed or injured by landmines and UXO compared to their numbers. The report indicates that, since 1995, 344,804 persons have returned home, of whom 126,722 were from third countries. According to this report, there have been 1,360 incidents with 1,818 mine victims in Croatia between 1991 and 2001.²¹ A total of 613 returnees/IDPs were killed or injured by landmines – accounting for 33.7 per cent of the total number of victims. In the ten-year period returnees have represented a high of almost 60 per cent of all casualties in 1998 to a low of around 20 per cent in 1994.

It would appear from case samples of returnee mine victims that this group is forced to take more risks due to their poor socio-economic situation. Additionally it is likely that those from third countries have not been exposed to the regular drip effect of mine awareness messages received within Croatia itself. Currently there is very little if any information given to returnees or potential third country returnees as to the dangers posed by landmines or the nature of the contamination in their area. UNHCR does not undertake any programming in this regard prior to return, and nor do any of the mainstream mine action players in Croatia. It would therefore appear that returnees should receive particular attention in future mine awareness programming.

Why continue with mine awareness ... is it still necessary?

When asked in questionnaires whether they had entered into a minefield, children appeared to give the answer that was expected of them – i.e. ‘no they had not’. Only 4 per cent of older children and 14 per cent of younger children said they had entered a minefield (some strayed accidentally, others out of curiosity to see what mines looked like). However, when asked if they knew of friends who had gone into a minefield the response rate was much higher – 35 per cent for older children and 66 per cent for the younger age group.

Among older children who knew of friends or other people who had gone into a minefield, the largest percentage said they had gone there to ‘play’. Twenty-four per cent said they knew people who went into areas to demine and clear mines while 21 per cent said it was hunting

²⁰ This section of the needs assessment draws from this document.

²¹ Note these figures differ marginally from figure presented in section entitled ‘Findings – the Mine and UXO problem in Croatia’. This is explained by different cut-off dates for victim incidents, and confusion with data pre 1995. This difference is not considered significant.

that took friends into these areas. It is believed, though is not certain, that this refers to professional deminers. Of particular note is that 19 per cent of the older children who knew of people who had entered said they did so accidentally: because of the lack, or removal, of minefield markings.

Other reasons given for entry into minefields are agricultural work and hunting. There would seem to be something of a statistical anomaly in answers from the younger children since 54 per cent said they did so to go bird watching. Hunting and agriculture were other key reasons highlighted. This would suggest that a large percentage of children and adults still enter minefields, which in itself is evidence of an ongoing problem. However, this also suggests that the current programme is not achieving its objectives of keeping children safe.

When adult, teacher and children focus groups were asked whether there was still a need for mine awareness the answer was almost universally yes – mine awareness should continue – particularly focused on children and adolescents. Most adult focus groups²² included mines as being in their top three problems, particularly coastal communities and focus groups in Karlovac. However, mines were not mentioned by the (predominantly Serbian) population of Silas village in Osijek. In Vukovar the feeling was that unemployment and housing were key problems, however the link to this and mines/ UXO was clearly understood.

Children were less quick to place mines amongst their top three problems, and, in all but one case, only mentioned mines when prompted. Problems related to a wide variety of local factors, including lack of adequate drinking water, places to play, drugs, road safety, lack of employment and alcoholism/domestic violence. However most children's focus groups did include the issue of limited safe playing areas, and this would appear to be in part, at least, due to the existence of mines, particularly in Eastern Slavonia and the coast areas. All child focus groups included at least one (and usually more) participant who had first-hand experience of seeing mines and UXO, and most children knew of someone killed or injured by mines.

Adults would appear to still fear for their children's safety with regard to mine and UXO dangers. There is a suggestion that the ongoing existence, and dissemination of mine awareness programmes and messages has a psychological impact – parents feel their children are safer as a result of the programmes, and therefore are happier or more relaxed themselves. This in itself may be sufficient justification for an ongoing programme of mine awareness. However, there is a need to guard against developing a false and unwarranted sense of security.

Improving community linkages

During the course of the assessment it became evident that communities want more than just the traditional mine awareness messages and delivery as delivered at present. Communities have learnt, more or less, to live with their mine problem. The CROMAC programme has now entered a period of maturity. Much investment has gone into the creation of a detailed database on the location and extent of mines and suspect areas.

²² Held in Eastern Slavonia (Silas Village – rural Osijek, urban areas of Vukovar), Zadar county on the Dalmatian coast (teachers and parents in Skabrnja village) and Karlovac county (hunters, ex-frontline village of Brodani village, and suburban Karlovac town).

Communities constantly expressed the need for a greater *sharing* of information: they felt that to date information has flowed one way with little information feeding back into the community. Focus groups and key informants expressed frustration at the fact that CROMAC has information about current mine contamination issues, improved polygons identifying the location of dangerous areas, information regarding past and planned clearance activities, completed tasks, etc. It is not clear to the communities concerned what has happened and where this information can be accessed.

There was a request from almost every community visited during the course of the assessment for CROMAC to develop channels for the sharing of information, the dissemination of updated mine maps and polygons and the provision of an opportunity to regularly review activities undertaken in their area. There was a lack of clarity as to how areas are selected for clearance, what criteria is used and when communities and villages can expect to have their land cleared. This is considered key to empowering local communities and developing a feeling of optimism about the future – in the knowledge that something is being or will be done to overcome the contamination of their land. Such information systems may also prove useful in overcoming the frustration and powerlessness evident (particularly in rural areas) that has led to local demining initiatives, often with fatal results.

Closely linked to this has been the issue of marking and regularly maintaining of previously marked minefields. Clearly this is a source of frustration for CROMAC, since there is an ongoing problem with the removal or destruction of minefield markings, and CROMAC must also be congratulated for increasing the resources being placed into this aspect of the work. From a community point of view, however, the lack of marking of minefields is more dangerous than the lack of mine awareness messages: knowing where is safe and where is dangerous – and having these areas clearly marked – will help reduce mine incidents. A number of groups spoken to during the course of the assessment have expressed a willingness to assist in the ongoing maintenance of minefield markings; indeed, in one case,²³ a community already does maintain markings in its area on a regular basis. There may be scope for CROMAC to build on such initiatives and enter into a partnership with villages and communities in developing such interim safety measures prior to clearance taking place.

²³ Brodani village in Karlovac county.

CONCLUSIONS

There is public demand for the continuation of a mine awareness programme aimed at children. The public perceive mines as being a threat and mine awareness as one of the means of combating this. The success of the mine awareness campaign in Croatia is very difficult to assess. Falling mine victim numbers suggest some impact but these cannot be attributed solely to mine awareness activity, for in part it is as mines are removed, or as local populations become more familiar as to the location of mines and UXO in their area. Most members of the general public spoken to expressed a strong desire for the continuation of mine awareness delivery. It was also universally stated that children should remain the core target group for information dissemination and Mine Awareness activities. On this basis mine awareness should continue. However, the format and content of these delivery sessions should be adapted and developed further (see below the recommendations section).

There is a need to refocus programming to include a greater degree of information sharing and the channelling of updated information on minefield location, safe areas, past activities, and planned future work to affected communities. Awareness could and should include an awareness of the location of the existing threat, not simply abstract concepts of safe behaviour. Specific action and information must be tailored to specific communities. This is crucial if communities are to see the continued value and relevance of CROMAC and continue to support its activities.

There is a strong desire from communities for improved minefield marking. There is scope for the development of imaginative partnership arrangements with communities to undertake maintenance of minefield markings. This will be crucial to the future credibility of the mine awareness *and* the clearance programme.

There is a need to focus further on third country returnees to mine-contaminated countries by providing information and safety messages before repatriation. Further investigation should be undertaken to determine whether returnees are disproportionately affected by the mine threat as the OSCE report indicates, and activities targeted accordingly.

There is a need for the CROMAC mine awareness programme to receive more resources, both funding and personnel, if CROMAC is to undertake its mandate of co-ordinating mine awareness activities. Funding should be provided on a multi-year basis. Currently there is the danger of a leadership vacuum appearing as activities of the key agencies are changed. This is linked to a need to revisit goals and objectives of the programme, reformulate these with the input of key players, and ensure that activities undertaken are regularly reviewed to ensure they are leading to the attainment of these goals. There is also a need to develop indicators of success to prove the impact of the mine awareness programme and prove continued donor investment is worthwhile. The programme should be reviewed in two years, and the continuation of the programme determined on the basis of this.

There is a need to develop closer links with key players (mine awareness delivery organisations, clearance agencies and key organisations at county level) and co-ordinate activities under the umbrella of the new county mine action planning process. Similar levels of activity and resources will have greater impact if activities are well co-ordinated at national and county level.

There is a need to further develop mine delivery messages and the quality of messages given. The results from the needs assessment would suggest that there is an improvement in knowledge amongst those children involved in the survey since the “learn to survive” evaluation. However, presentations should attempt to be more interactive and focus on consequences of activities. Greater co-ordination with the Croatian Mine Victims Association would allow individuals to deliver their own testimony as part of the mine awareness session – considered to be more credible and hard hitting according to those surveyed.

There is a need to review the implementation of the Ministry of Education (and UNICEF) programme and consider how best Ministry of Education involvement can be managed in the future. This would appear to have been of limited impact to date, with an excessive focus on material development and insufficient attention paid to implementation on the ground. Most schools appear unaware of the existence or details of this programme other than the periodic distribution of material (now ended). With the CRC now wishing to focus elsewhere the nature of this partnership needs review and detailed strategies developed for the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Programmatic Recommendations

- The CROMAC mine awareness programme should review existing programme documents in conjunction with key external agencies. Clear precise and realistic goals, objectives and indicators should be developed together with a strategy to operationalise them. This should be undertaken in close co-operation with key partners (Ministry of Education, CRC) and an agreement negotiated.
- Close attention should be given to the manner in which the mine awareness programme works in support of, rather than parallel to, the wider mine action programme. With the introduction of the new county mine action planning process there is a clear opportunity for the mine awareness programme to play a vital role in enhancing co-operation and cohesion at county level. This should be developed further and resourced accordingly. The focus should be on the delivery of information on the location and existence of mine/UXO contamination in communities, the distribution of CROMAC mine maps as well as the presentation of mine safety messages.
- CROMAC should use the above process to seek funding for a minimum two-year programme of support. A dedicated (and expanded) budget should be sought to allow CROMAC Mine Awareness activities to fit in two broad categories: developing national strategy with key stakeholders, and developing and strengthening co-ordination mechanisms at regional office level. This process should be evaluated at the end of this period.
- CROMAC should redefine activities and strengthen co-ordination between key players (CROMAC CRC and Ministry of Education, mine victims associations and others) at a regional level. This would best be achieved by either recruiting one mine awareness co-ordinator for each office, or refocusing the activities and job description of existing staff members. It is recommended that CROMAC fund a mine awareness co-ordinator for each of the three regional offices, with a brief to co-ordinate with communities, government bodies the CRC and other key players. In addition, a national co-ordinator should oversee the work of these individuals and work closely with national bodies such as the Ministry of Education and CRC.
- Linked to this CROMAC should strengthen and formalise links with key national level bodies, in particular the Ministry of Education and the CRC. This will allow for greater co-operation, and information sharing between programmes leading (hopefully) to greater efficiency and impact.
- Central to any new mine awareness programming developments should be a move to increase the dissemination and sharing of *information* as well as *educational* materials. Communities require detailed information on location of known/suspected mine contamination as a prerequisite for ensuring they and their families stay safe. That information now exists. CROMAC mine awareness staff should concentrate on developing mechanisms to ensure that information, maps and regular updates reach affected communities in a manner and location that is beneficial to them. This can be

undertaken in a number of ways – CROMAC and partners should investigate and agree appropriate mechanisms of delivery.

- Mine action is developing rapidly – with much international learning on issues concerning effective mine awareness programming. The Croatia programme has much to contribute, and in turn would also benefit from close links with this learning process. CROMAC mine awareness staff should ensure that they allow themselves time to benefit and contribute to this process. Crucially, perhaps, key partners such as the CRC and the Ministry of Education should be included in this learning. Ideally an educational budget line should be included in mine awareness programming budget for such activities. At a minimum, CROMAC should ensure that mine awareness staff and partners are aware of the current International Mine Action Standards and their relevance for mine action in Croatia. These should be translated and disseminated as appropriate.
- CROMAC collects substantial amounts of information. There is a need to ensure such information is adequately analysed and regularly updated. Information from OSCE has indicated a number of trends with regard to mine victims. With the withdrawal of the OSCE mine awareness programme in 2002 CROMAC should ensure it is in position to undertake similar analysis as a means of supporting mine safety and mine awareness programming.
- CROMAC should investigate further the need for post-clearance survey of land usage and the role mine awareness staff can play in this process. Given the development of the county mine action plans and the crucial role socio-economic indicators play within this prioritisation process it is appropriate that this issue be continually re-evaluated. This issue should also be considered in the light of the NPA experience using this approach in Benkovac.
- Currently the target population for mine awareness as defined by the national mine awareness strategy consists of eight distinct groups.²⁴ It is recommended that CROMAC now review this list with key partners and consider whether this needs to be adjusted in light of experience and impact to date. While extensive, this list may be too wide to allow effective impact and consideration should be given to reducing this down to a more manageable size. A detailed strategy should be developed for each target group, including consideration to indicators of success, measurement, etc.
- CROMAC should seek to establish a meeting with the Ministry of Tourism and key tourist agencies (including representatives of international tourist firms) to discuss the impact of mines on the tourist industry, to better understand the perception of the problem from the perspective of tourist agencies, and develop an action plan to ensure appropriate action is taken.
- CROMAC should ensure that key sections of this needs assessment be translated into Croat and shared with key partners, and internally to CROMAC regional offices. This should be followed by a series of meetings to discuss findings and plan activities.

²⁴ See, above, the section ‘Findings - Evolution of Mine Awareness Programming in Croatia’.

Delivery/ implementation issues: Recommendations

- CROMAC should seek to strengthen the feedback and information loop to communities following activities undertaken in their area. Confusion still remains as to areas cleared, areas still unsafe, and areas yet to receive quality assurance.
- Accidents will be prevented through marking of dangerous areas. Further consideration should be given as to how minefields and suspected areas can be adequately marked, and how such markings can be *maintained*. A number of communities visited expressed a willingness to repair markings, or monitor markings and report to CROMAC when these have been taken or need replacing. Such community initiatives should be investigated and a pilot programme established and closely monitored.
- CROMAC should encourage the implementation and delivery organisation bodies to refocus message delivery. Most players express frustration about how difficult it is to attract people in key at risk groups to presentations on mine awareness. It may now prove a more effective approach if such bodies seek to include a mine awareness component to gatherings or events arranged for other purposes (e.g. football matches, theatre or musical events, etc).
- The results of the focus groups indicate that cartoons are considered a extremely effective manner in promoting mine safety, and are more likely to be watched on a repeat basis than the 'real' TV slots. Funding should be sought for the remaining 11 'PLOP' agency cartoons (currently written and reviewed but seeking funding of DM25,000 each) for use in mine awareness campaigns. It should be noted there may be is scope for using these cartoons elsewhere, either in the region or in other countries. The potential, suitability and feasibility of this should be further investigated, as should legal issues of ownership and copyright.
- Hunters and fishermen are considered the main target population following children. Greater effort should be made to focus activities on these groups. Hunters spoken to expressed a desire for greater information and education. This could be arranged through hunters' associations or as considered appropriate. The (small) sample of hunters spoken to also expressed a willingness to repair minefield signs in their concession areas in exchange for updated information/maps on mine locations from CROMAC.
- Mine victims should be used in mine awareness presentations wherever possible. All groups and age ranges expressed a view that this would greatly strengthen the credibility of the message. This may now be possible now that the mine victim association is in the process of establishing itself as a national organisation with branches in most counties.
- A similar issue is that most focus groups recommended that presentations should include presentations from deminers. This again will increase the credibility of the message and its impact.

- Delivery and impact will be improved if greater co-ordination can be established between key stakeholders at local office level. CROMAC should seek to strengthen this co-ordination capacity in the three regional offices.
- Message delivery should not seek to use radio or, in rural areas, newspapers, since all focus groups consider these to be poor channels for the dissemination of information. TV and direct word of mouth were considered the key media, with school-based activities considered the most appropriate way of reaching children, particularly primary school children.
- Greater attention should be paid to dissemination of information to the displaced in third countries. OSCE reports indicate that returnees make up a consistently disproportionate percentage of mine casualties. CROMAC should identify and actively use channels and strategies for the dissemination of information on the mine threat and demining plans to displaced groups. Use of UNHCR contacts and regional offices should be encouraged, as well as NGOs and international organisations in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, websites, such as that being established by the Danish Refugee council.
- It is understood that a road smartness concept is used to promote road safety in Croatia, primarily through school classes. The scope for copying this approach for class-based mine smartness campaigns should be investigated.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1. Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

In its capacity as the national co-ordinating body for mine action activities the Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC) has led the way in promoting the operationalisation of mine awareness education at field level. In order to further develop these activities and take stock of the mine awareness educational needs for the future, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) is collaborating with CROMAC in order to undertake an in-depth needs assessment of community mine awareness activities in Croatia.

The GICHD will provide a comprehensive and participatory needs assessment that adds to the existing body of knowledge in Croatia. Further, it is hoped that through the process and development of specific recommendations the breadth of experience of local operators will be enhanced, thereby leading to improved programming.

2. Needs Assessment Goals

The specific goals and objectives of a needs assessment of this type are three-fold:

- To review the impact of current mine awareness information provision and educational needs of the Croatian population living in former front-line areas.
- To review planning, prioritisation and effectiveness of those operators currently running programmes and make recommendations as appropriate.
- To highlight examples of good practise of community mine awareness activities and recommend appropriate strategies for design and co-ordination of future programming.

Furthermore, the GICHD believes an additional goal of a needs assessment is to improve field-based tools and strategies for community awareness education through a process of internal staff development. Through the involvement of local operational partners in the development of the methodology and the implementation of the assessment, and a process that elicits the views and knowledge of the affected communities, we believe the capacity and general understanding of the programme will be further strengthened, leading to more local involvement in programming issues.

3. Intended Beneficiaries of the Needs Assessment

The needs assessment will provide guidance and focus primarily to programme planners and managers, but also to donors, giving them analytical tools to more effectively assess the relative validity and benefits of various community mine awareness activities. The ultimate beneficiaries of the assessment should of course be the affected communities themselves who will benefit from the improved delivery of mine awareness services.

4. Proposed Methodology

Through country specific research that engages discussion with affected communities the needs assessment will document the current operational status of community mine awareness in Croatia.

The needs assessment will begin with a detailed overview of community mine awareness initiatives, both past and present, highlighting the development of existing mine awareness initiatives. In general, there are some broad methodological issues to be considered.

For a needs assessment of community level mine awareness activities, as they make up a national organised programme, the needs assessment team believes that a normative point of reference should be a broad community based risk analysis to determine the community perception of risk as well as its priority vis-à-vis other constraints. Building on this community perception the team would employ standard participatory rural appraisal techniques, including community focus groups, interviews and control group sampling as well as other participatory techniques.

The make-up of the research team is of obvious importance. The GICHD proposes to contribute two specialists to the needs assessment team. The Project Manager, a GICHD staff member (the time invested by the GICHD Project Manager will be funded through existing resources). In addition, a consultant researcher will be selected.

5. Proposed Activities

In summary, the primary activities of the needs assessment will be to:

- Provide an overview of community mine awareness initiatives, both past and present.
- Document the current operational status of community mine awareness in Croatia.
- Assess current levels of awareness among the Croatian population with particular emphasis on those living in direct proximity to former confrontation lines.
- Assess the degree to which mine awareness is seen as being a priority by affected communities compared to alternative development/ rehabilitation inputs.
- Identify current operational shortfalls in mine awareness operations, the extent to which needs have been met versus behaviour changed.
- Make viable recommendations for the improved co-ordination, integration and actualisation of community mine awareness programmes.
- Undertake a literature and operational review of local media/communication strategies.
- Finalise the report on the needs assessment, including specific recommendations for action

In preparation for the above the team will first need to:

- Identify and agree upon participatory methodology for the needs assessment.
- Identify and agree upon a representative sample population for participative interaction on community mine awareness issues.
- Depending on timeframe and logistical feasibility field test methodology with an appropriate sample population.
- Negotiate and agree appropriate logistical and administrative support from appropriate bodies.
- Undertake needs assessments in selected communities representing the scope of the mine and UXO problem and the mine awareness response.

Appendix 2. Glossary of acronyms

CRC	Croatian Red Cross
CROMAC	Croatian Mine Action Centre
GIS	Geographic Information System
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
HCR	Hrvatski Centar Za Razminiranje (CROMAC)
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IO	International Organisation
IDP	internally displaced person
MRE	mine-risk education
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMAAP	United Nations Mine Action Assistance Programme
UNMACC	United Nations Mine Action Centre Croatia
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
UXO	unexploded ordnance
WEUDAM	Western European Union Demining Assistance Mission

Appendix 3. Survey instruments

A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 10-15 YEAR OLD SCHOOL CHILDREN ABOUT MINE KNOWLEDGE.

CROMAC – is the Croatian mine clearance and removal authority. As well as destroying mines we also help people stay safe by providing information about what to do if you see a mine or UXO . We are trying to improve the quality of the information we give out. It would really help us if you could fill out the below form – it will only take 10-15 minutes . This will help us help others stay safe from mines and UXO injury.

THANK YOU.

Please, write the name of your town, school and grade in the box below

Town:	School:
Grade:	

Messages about mines and unexploded bombs

UNDERSTANDING OF THE DANGERS OF MINES /UXO

1 Can you name two ways that a mine can explode

2 How far away from an explosion must you stand to avoid being hurt

Recognising and using mined areas

3 Can you name three types of areas which may be mined

4 Can you name two types of area that are usually safe

--	--

5 Are all minefields always marked with warning signs

6 Can you name two ways you might know you are in a dangerous area (i.e. what would make you worried about entering an area – what warning signs might you see)

Reaction to danger

7 What would you do if you find yourself in a mined area

8 What would you do if you saw your friend in a minefield

Advising each other / adults

9 What can YOU do to be sure others know about mines

--

10 What would you do if you saw your friend playing or touching a mine/UXO

--

Usefulness of mine awareness programmes and materials

11 What do you think are the best ways to teach younger children (i.e. Approx. 5-10 years old) about mines /UXO.

(number the below in order of preference – 1 to 5)

Adverts on TV	
Adverts on radio	
Posters	
Booklets	
Theatre	
Famous respected Personalities explaining the dangers	
Discussions and information from friends	
Teachers / school	
Other - PLEASE SAY WHAT IN BOX BELOW	

--

12 What do you think are the best ways to educate teenagers about mines/UXO

(number the below in order of preference – 1 to 5)

Adverts on TV	
---------------	--

Adverts on radio	
Posters	
Booklets	
Theatre	
Famous respected Personalities explaining the dangers	
Discussions and information from friends /family/parents	
Teachers / school	
Other - PLEASE SAY WHAT IN BOX BELOW	

13 Have you seen any mine awareness material such as posters, TV/ radio adverts, plays etc

 yes

 No

Only answer the questions 14, 15 and 16 if you have ticked YES to question 13

14 What material ? - where ?

15 Do you think the mine awareness material you have seen is useful or not ?

 yes

 No

16 Can it be improved ? How ?

Using mine fields

17 Do you know anyone who has been in a minefield

 yes No

18 **If yes to the above** Can you say why they were there (i.e. gathering wood, hunting etc)

19 Have you even knowingly gone into a mined/ suspected mined area

 yes No

Why did you go there ?

20 Do you know others who have gone into suspected / mined areas

 yes No

Why did you go there ?

Thank you very much for helping us with this survey – it will help keep others safe

A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 7-10 YEAR OLD SCHOOL CHILDREN ABOUT MINE KNOWLEDGE.

CROMAC – is the Croatian mine clearance and removal authority. As well as destroying mines we also help people stay safe by providing information about what to do if you see a mine or UXO . We are trying to improve the quality of the information we give out. It would really help us if you could fill out the below form – it will only take 10-15 minutes . This will help us help others stay safe from mines and UXO injury.

THANK YOU .

Please, write the name of your town, school and grade in the box below

Town:	School:
Grade:	

Messages about mines and unexploded bombs

UNDERSTANDING OF THE DANGERS OF MINES /UXO

1 Can you name two ways that a mine can explode

--	--

*Answers for moderator : stepping on one
A tripwire
Remote control
Setting fire to one
Opening/ tampering/playing*

2 How far away from an explosion must you stand to avoid being hurt

10 metres	50 metres	250 metres
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Recognising and using mined areas

3 Can you name three types of areas which may be mined

--	--	--

Answers for moderator :

Power stations, Electricity pylons, Military bases, Trenches, Firing positions, Dams and water pumping stations, Airstrips, Bridges, Unused / overgrown Footpaths, Stream crossings, Checkpoints, Irrigation Ditches or canals, River Banks, Elevated terrain – small hills, rises etc Shady areas in open terrain, Destroyed Houses

4 Can you name two types of area that are usually safe

--	--

Answers for moderator :

*Tarmac roads
Well used paths
Inhabited towns and villages
Cultivated land*

5 Are all minefields always marked with warning signs

yes	No
-----	----

6 Can you name two ways you might know you are in a dangerous area (i.e. what would make you worried about entering an area – what warning signs might you see)

--

--

Answers for moderator:

Evidence of past fighting

Animal carcasses or skeletons

Trenches, bunkers or battle positions

Changes in vegetation or unnatural disturbances on the ground

Mounds of soil where holes may have been dug for mines

Heavy logs or branches placed across a path or road (ambush site)

Ammunition packing cases, wrapping and military debris

Pieces of wire or tape strewn around

Partially buried pieces of metal, and any metal which seems in a strange place or out of place (middle of forest, away from human settlement)

Unused or overgrown paths, fields or roads

Damaged or disabled vehicles

Reaction to danger

7 What would you do if you find yourself in a mined area

- a) run for help
- b) run to an adult for help
- c) stay still and shout for help
- d) try and remove the mine
- e) other, if so please write what _____

8 What would you do if you saw your friend in a minefield

- a) run to help him/her
- b) get scared and runaway
- c) tell your friend to stay still whilst your go and get help
- d) prod your way through and help your friend yourself
- e) other, if so please write what _____

Advising each other / adults

9 What can YOU do to be sure others know about mines

10 What would you do if you saw your friend playing or touching a mine/UXO

Usefulness of mine awareness programmes and materials

11 What do you think are the best ways to teach younger children about mines /UXO

12. ????

13 Have you seen any mine awareness material such as posters, TV/ radio adverts, plays etc

yes

No

14 If so what

Only answer the below if you have ticked yes to question 13 seen any mine awareness messages

14 Using mine fields

14 a Do you know anyone who has been in a minefield

14 b **If yes to the above** Do you know why they were there (i.e. gathering wood, hunting etc)

Have you ever entered the mine suspected area that you knew was dangerous before you went into it?

Y/n

Do you know others who have gone into suspected / mined areas

Y/n