The Humpty Dumpty Institute Forges Innovative Public-Private Partnerships for Landmine Clearance in the Caucasus

Daniela Kempf  
*Humpty Dumpty Institute*

William Rouhana  
*Humpty Dumpty Institute*

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The Humpty Dumpty Institute (HDI) is a New York-based, non-profit organization dedicated to establishing effective and innovative public-private partnerships to ameliorate the global landmine crisis. The Institute has ongoing partnerships with a variety of public and private organizations. Together, these partnerships have raised over $1.5 million, and are now preventing thousands more square meters from being infected by landmines in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Mozambique, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, and Eritrea.

At the end of 1998, HDI was a home for "venture philanthropists" and business leaders who are interested in foreign policy issues. HDI puts its private sector expertise to work in the public sector by turning good ideas into operational programs and by providing its partners with creative content, intellectual capacity, critical venture capital and marketing expertise. "While our mission is intended to be humorous and memorable, our mission is very serious—we try to put the pieces back together," notes Ralph L. Coverman, President of HDI.

Our comparative advantage is our ability to identify common interests among governments, corporations and engaged citizens to address cutting-edge issues and form meaningful partnerships. It is through these partnerships that the Institute has managed to leverage more than $1.5 million for landmine clearance programs in six countries.

As a result of the Institute's work in the area of landmine clearance and awareness, the U.S. DOS applauded HDI's decision to launch a new initiative—the National Mine Action Group (NMAG). NMAG organizes a wide network of corporate executives, foundation directors, private entrepreneurs and other parties interested in supporting worthy projects to eliminate landmines. NMAG looks at seed funding and possible areas of collaboration for programs addressing landmine clearance, mine victim assistance, research and development of new demining technologies, and mine awareness in mine-affected countries.

In Sri Lanka, for example, HDI's landmine action program focuses on clearing high-priority minefields scattered across the Jaffna Peninsula and the Vanni. HDI has partnered with the One Sri Lanka Foundation to raise funds for HALO Trust mine-clearance operations in the field. $60,000 has already been raised to fund one demining team for 12 months. Additional funding is planned for the future.

HDI has also sponsored three mine-detection dog (MDD) teams in Lebanon, Mozambique, and Armenia—in partnership with the MI1 and a number of other organizations. Each team consists of about $400,000 or more to train, purchase, and sustain one team for a period of four to six years. HDI's dog teams in Lebanon and Eritrea, operating since 2002, recently reached a milestone—the dog teams have now covered over 160,000 sq. of land.

Another example of a successful partnership for landmine clearance is HDI's program in Mozambique, which will, with a contribution of $250,000 from the Toronto-based SkyLink Aviation, Inc. and the U.S. DOS, fund advanced training courses for indigenous humanitarian demining personnel in Mozambique and purchase much-needed demining equipment.

HDI's Involvement in the Caucasus

Landmines continue to negatively affect the economy and threaten the lives of people who live in the mine-contaminated areas throughout the Caucasus. This need, combined with the increasingly important geostrategic role of the Caucasus for the United States and the world, is the basis for HDI's involvement in the region. The U.S. DOS, local governments and a number of other organizations to initiate innovative landmine clearance programs in the region.

In Azerbaijan, HDI and its partners are raising funds to demine approximately one million square meters in the Fuzuli District of western Azerbaijan. This part of the country was once a regional center of grape growing and wine production. Currently, landmines are scattered across thousands of hectares once-productive vineyards in the region. HDI's goal is to raise sufficient funds to clear the landmines, restore the vineyards, and revitalize the wine industry.

In Georgia, HDI is working with the Georgian Government to identify a number of areas throughout the country (including Abkhazia) that are contaminated with either landmines or UXO. Many of these areas are found around what once housed former Soviet military bases and are now preventing thousands of hectares of arable land from being used.

In Armenia, HDI is working with the government to purchase, train, and send another team of mine-detection dogs in partnership with HDI, COAF, ITF, and the U.S. DOS.

Azerbaijan

Landmines in Azerbaijan and Armenia are the legacy of the 1988-1994 conflict. According to UN estimates, landmines have killed or injured more than 4,000 Azerbaijani civilians since 1988, and more than one million Azerbaijani citizens became refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs). As reported in the Landmine Monitor Report 2001, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) believes that up to 45 of Azerbaijan's regions may be mine-affected, which is some 50 square miles worth of land (according to the International Eurasia Press Fund survey in 2001) with the strongest impact on western Azerbaijan, including the Fuzuli District. The Monitor Report 2002 further reports that the mine-damaged areas are farmland and cropland, but mines are also found in the irrigation systems and river basins, as well as in high voltage power lines and walls with drinking water. Recognizing the imperative to clear the land and revitalize the local economy, the Institute has partnered with the New York Wine and Grape Foundation (NYWGF) to remove landmines in the Final District of Azerbaijan and revitalize the region's dormant wine industry. Prior to the 1988-1994 conflict, grape growing in the Final region of Azerbaijan employed 20,000 people, with 20,000 hectares under cultivation, producing 120,000 tons of grapes per year. In 1995, those figures were reduced to approximately 100 hectares and 3,000 tons of grapes. The drop in productivity is primarily a result of landmines. The situation has continued to deteriorate over the last eight years.

The NYWGF is a private, not-for-profit organization representing 160 wineries in New York State. It is responsible for developing and executing promotion and research programs in support of all New York grapes grown in all regions for all uses and centralizing these functions for the grape and wine industry. The Foundation's comprehensive research program has enhanced the economic viability of growing grapes in New York, improved the overall quality of New York wines and juices, and strengthened the marketability of New York grape products.

The first phase, which HDI is working on in conjunction with Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) and the U.S. DOS, concentrates on clearing a series of mine-contaminated vineyards (near one million sq. m), at a cost of approximately $750,000. HDI has secured $400,000 in direct or matching grants and is now working with a number of partners to raise the remaining funds.

ANAMA was established by Presi dential Decree on July 19, 1998. It operates under the State Commission for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction and is responsible for overall management, planning, coordination, resource mobilization and quality of all mine action operations within Azerbaijan. The organization's demining priorities include clearing areas with life-threatening dangers, supporting resettlement of IDDs, clearing reconstruction sites as requested by aid and development agencies, and providing food security through the clearance of agricultural and grazing lands.

The second phase of this partnership calls for the restoration of the cleared land into productive vineyards, revitalization of the area's wine industry and the creation of new jobs for displaced Azerbaijanis who
The government of Armenia is developing its humanitarian landmine clearance capacity. The U.S. government began assisting Armenia in 2000 by supplying demining equipment and by purchasing MDDs. Later, the U.S. government helped Armenia to renovate its demining facilities, train staff at the National Mine Action Center, carry out mine risk education and develop survey capabilities. That work culminated on March 16, 2002, when the Armenian National Mine Action Center was officially opened in Echmiadzin.

"Our mission is to remove the tens of thousands of landmines scattered around Armenia, provide its people with an opportunity to work the land again and help rebuild the region's economy by creating jobs and reviving its agriculture," says HDI President Ralph Coleman. The Institute established a partnership with the COAF in December of 2002. Founded by Dr. Garo Armen, Chairman and CEO of Antigenics, a leading biotechnology firm, COAF/HDF successfully raised more than $180,000, mostly from the Armenian-American community, to procure, train and deploy a team of six MDDs to Armenia.

The partnership is the result of collaboration between the Institute, the COAF, the IFT, the MLI, and the U.S. DOS Office of Mine Action Initiatives and Partnerships (PMAP).

In the coming weeks, the six MDDs will be bought in Europe, trained at the Global Mine Action Center in Addis Ababa, and then transported to Armenia after three months of specialized training. When this phase of the training is complete, the dogs will be shipped to Armenia and given to the Armenian National Mine Action Center in Echmiadzin. One or two Global Academy trainers will accompany the dog teams to Armenia and train the local dog handlers. The dogs will also be re-trained to work with their new handlers. After testing, they will receive certification and begin work in the field.

**Raising Public Awareness**

Raising public awareness about the landmine tragedy is a top priority for HDI as well. To showcase the capabilities of mine-detecting dogs, HDI and the Children of Armenia Fund held a series of public events in the greater Boston Armenian community in April 2003.

"HDI and its partner dog demonstration teams at two local schools in Boston to announce the successful completion of their fundraising campaign at a demonstration of MDDs' capabilities," says Michael Sonnenfeld, HDI's founder and co-chairman, presented HDI's role in this project: "Our mission at the Humpty Dumpty Institute is to "help put the pieces back together" by bringing like-minded people and organizations together to forge new and unique public-private partnerships in the fight against landmines. We strongly believe that such partnerships provide the greatest impetus for effective humanitarian action."

The key speaker of the evening was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Sara Boo, who explained the role of the U.S. DOS and shared her personal involvement and commitment to eradicating the landmine problem. "The first time I visited a landmine-affected area was in Sri Lanka," remarked Deputy Assistant Secretary Boo. "I was surprised to see that I was being welcomed into the heart of a town. I had always envisioned that emplaced persistent mines were contained in remote, marked fields, away from the places where people lived and worked. To see land mines next to a school building, land mines in a soccer field, the nearest busiest part of a town is to understand that emplaced mines have the ability to affect every aspect of civilian life. I am proud to say that the Department of State is dramatically reducing the impact of persistent landmines through its humanitarian mine action demining programs, and public-private partnerships with organizations such as the Humpty Dumpty Institute and Children of Armenia Fund."

Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Jr., special representative of the President and Secretary of State for mine action, addressed the participants in a video speech, prepared and taped especially for this occasion, "The landmine problem affects public health, hinders economic growth, threatens social stability and colors Armenia's relations with its neighbors. Fortunately, you're in good hands with these non-governmental organizations—the Humpty Dumpty Institute and the Children of Armenia Fund—to help you implement this initiative."

On June 18, the HDI celebrated this success with its partners in the historic Rayburn Room at the U.S. DOS. This event commemorated innovative public-private partnerships that will facilitate demining efforts in Armenia. Secretary Bloomfield hosted the ceremony and said of HDI's partnership with the U.S. DOS: "The State Department and the Humpty Dumpty Institute have worked together for five years to develop additional partnerships that engage the private sector and civil society in humanitarian mine action. As Secretary of State Powell has said, governments cannot solve the global landmine problem by themselves. Today's presentations are the latest examples of a productive Humpty Dumpty Institute/State Department collaboration to remove landmines and help reintegrate mine-affected areas and communities into the global community."

In the coming year, HDI intends to build on this base of activity to include Georgia, as well as other countries around the world. The Institute will continue to raise funds and reach out to new constituencies through innovative partnerships with an entrepreneurial flair. With its partners, the HDI will continue to put the pieces back together again."