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Exchange for Peace

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Prevention:
• Decline in the number of landmine incidents, from 169 in 1999 to four in 2003.
• Training of 6,130 school children to spread awareness messages.
• Distribution of leaflets, posters and manuals.
• Conducting of 39 monthly MRE visits.

Assistance to Mine Victims:
• 30 mine victims and 30 members of mine victim families have received vocational training in English, computers, drawing and videography.
• Mine have found work doing wedding videos and photography in their villages.
• 10 others work in beekeeping.
• A revolving loan fund has been created to set up sustainable support for victims.

Local authorities are paying more attention to mine victims, including distribution of small grants to 18 families who lost houses and property during the conflict.

Logistics assistance is being provided, including information on rehabilitation and transportation to medical appointments.

Recommendations for Future Action in Albania

Based on the analysis of the current mine problems in Albania and the results of previous mine action activities, the following suggestions are recommended for Albanian mine action in the future:

• Anti-mine committees should be trained to write proposals to win funding. It calls for completing mine clearance of high- and medium-priority areas by 2006 (low-priority areas are not inhabited and will be closed in coming years), with a modest budget of $5.7 million (U.S.). This would make Albania the second post-conflict country in the region free of mines and UXO.

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practitioner or scholar in key aspects of mine action. It is intended to reflect current realities in a fast-developing humanitarian concern. Again, "A Guide to Mine Action" is available via the GICHCD website, and hard copies have been printed in English, French and Spanish, and will soon be available in Russian and Arabic.

Finally, as this edition of the Journal of Mine Action has the theme of "Research, Development and Technology in Mine Action," I am pleased to advise that the GICHCD has just established a staff post of "Technology Officer." This has been made possible through a partnership arrangement with the government of Canada. The post will focus on practical ways that new and existing technologies for mine action can be delivered to the field.

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In March 2000, the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) assumed responsibility of the Mine Risk Education (MRE) Program implemented by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) from 1997 to 1999. Through training mine risk educators and implementing an MRE program in affected communities and refugees, ANAMA is hoping to reduce the number of incidents in Azerbaijan.

Program Activities

The activities in the frame of the program have been conducted mainly on the basis of the general survey data on suspected mine/UXO areas and involved with the people involved in 11 war-affected districts of Azerbaijan. The number of mine/UXO victims in surveyed territories since the start of the conflict is estimated to be 1,248. According to the ANAMA Mine Victim Database, 391 people—mainly civilians and children—became mine/UXO victims since the signing of the ceasefire agreement in May 1994. That was a main reason for making a decision to implement MRE for the civilian population living in frontier and bordering districts.

Firstly, MRE master trainers were trained in February 2001 and they had two refreshers training courses, in March and during July to August 2002, with participation of 18 interns. During September to December 2001, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Education, 12 training sessions of 30 three-day training sessions for 500 health personnel, and 59 four-day training sessions for 1,042 teachers in 12 frontline districts—Agdam, Agjabadi, Agdam, Aghdash, Gubadly, Goygol, and other governmental institutions, as well as in internally displaced person (IDP) camps. Four hundred volunteers from the villages of targeted districts were trained in August 2002 to implement community-based MRE.

An MRE Technical Working Group formed in early 2001, consisting of representatives of several related ministries and other government institutions, as well as international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have played and are playing an active role in implementation and coordination of MRE activities. Training sessions are aimed to disseminate MRE safety messages and safe behavior roles among the population and to convey specific mine risk messages through IDPs.

A total of 220,000 MRE brochures for adults and children, 150,000 children's notebooks, 10,000 training manuals and 7,000 T-shirts were produced for the purpose of the program. MRE materials were distributed to health and education departments and civil defence headquarters of the targeted districts as well. Ten sets of mine/UXO models were prepared for

Way to Save Lives

by Musa Jalalov and Vagif Sadigov, MRE Cell, ANAMA

Introduction

According to the Azerbaijan Mine Action Program, MRE is to be supported by and integrated with other forthcoming mine-related activities in Azerbaijan. MRE is considered to be a core pillar of mine action, the first step in decreasing mine/UXO injury and death rates among the civilian and contaminated areas.

In May 2000, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the U.S. Embassy to Azerbaijan on funding the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) MRE Program for Azerbaijan. The program was implemented and concluded in close cooperation with ANAMA during 2001 and 2002.

Azerbaijani children learn about the dangers of mines through MRE programs. c/o ICRC