

# Need To Know?

## Mine Action Education Resources

This article reports on a U.S. Department of State (DOS)-supported programme to gather and share mine action knowledge in parts of southern Africa. Information was gathered during 2000 with help from Programa Acelerado de Desminagem (PAD, formerly UNADP), People Against Landmines (MgM), Mines Advisory Group (MAG), the HALO Trust and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). Training resource packs for Mozambique and Angola were then produced.



Golden West Humanitarian Foundation

by **Andy Smith, for Golden West Humanitarian Foundation (GWHF)**

### Mine Action and Demining – “Black-Arts”?

Surveyors and deminers practice a profession that is often represented as being both brave and mysterious. This myth may seem harmless, but it is not. It is a form of intimidation. You, the public, are supposed to accept that demining is dangerous, macho-man stuff and you should shut up and trust us. That's fine if you live in Washington, D.C., but not if you live in a mined area.

If you live in a mined area, you usually cannot learn what you need to know by simply getting hold of a training course. Practical mine action training courses for deminers, surveyors and the general public are often no more than a list of topics that must be covered. Training is often limited to cover what the trainees must do, not what they may want to understand. Training of the public is usually limited to admonitions *not* to do things,

with no real attempt to explain why or offer alternatives.

### Information, Not Intimidation

Most of the information needed for training is available. There is an encyclopaedic range of technical data on mines and ordnance (fascinating if sometimes contradictory). There are many works on training methods and cross-cultural communication, adult learning and competence building. What are not often available are technically correct training resources for use with the courses that are already being run throughout the humanitarian mine action industry.

I recognised the need for training resources two years ago and set out to produce some with the GWHF. Colin King advised and was the technical editor. I began by producing a pilot for field review. The pilot was widely applauded and is still in demand. Based on the success of the pilot, we were able to gain U.S. DOS support to produce two country-specific packs. The training resource pack for Mozambique is in the field, and the resource pack for Angola is ready for release.

Each resource pack is a large format ring-binder containing 55 plastic-laminated sheets (A3, or USB). One side shows a photograph or photographs. The other side has text in Portuguese and English explaining the pictures and suggesting teaching uses. Pages can be separated for sharing or for pinning to the wall. The pictures illustrate a generic mine action education course, covering information needs of the surveyor, deminer and general public in that country.

The training resources are not designed as complete courses but are intended to enhance existing ones. However, where no course exists, the resource provides a comprehensive starting template.

The photographs show real devices in a relevant context and include varied levels of technical detail that the teacher can choose to stress or gloss over depending on the needs of the audience. When possible, aged mines and UXO are featured. These can look very different from the same item direct from the stores. Photographs taken in the region are used to give the images a more immediate relevance to people who have not travelled far. They are also proving compulsive to ex-pat visitors.



■ (Above) Trainers with PAD in Maputo, Mozambique, helped in the production of the Mozambique training resource and have been using it for more than six months. (Right) The Mozambique and Angola training resources.





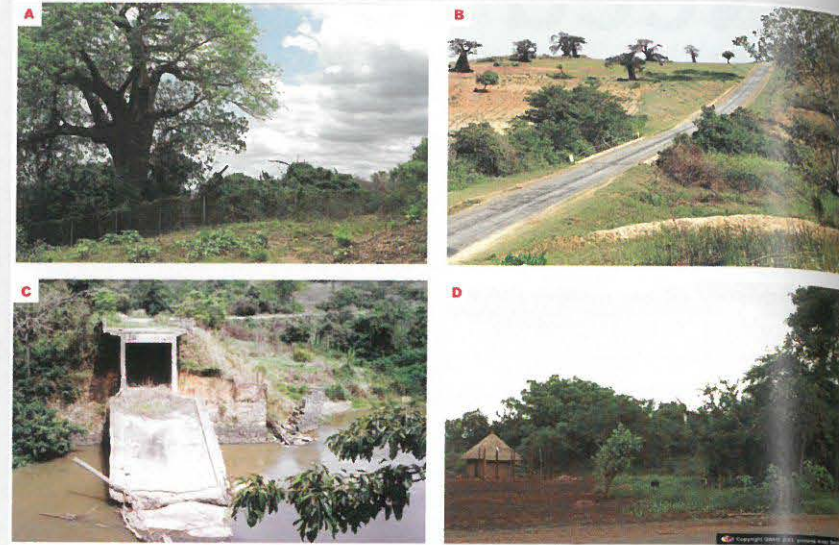
### Range of Indicators

The following is an abbreviated list showing the broad range of the generic mine action training course covered in the "Mined Area Indicators – Mozambique" pack.

A list like this will leave many readers cold. Using the same teaching approach as the resource, the following examples "show" you what the resource is like.

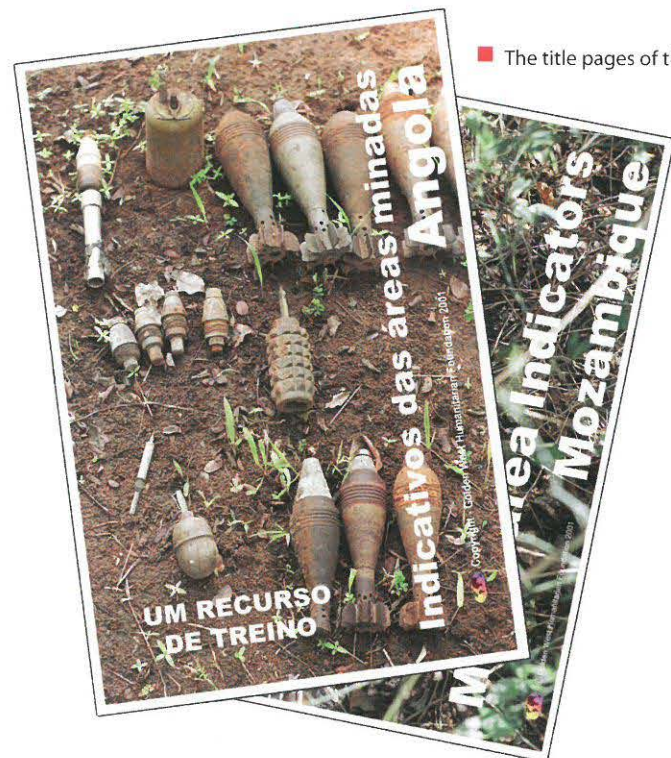
- 1. The context, covering why mines were placed.**  
Defensive - military. Defensive - infrastructure to defend power lines, bridges, buildings, railway lines, observation points, etc. Defensive - to defend crops and settlements. Route and area denial. Banditry. Individual defensive. Offensive (ambush).
- 2. Basic mine and UXO information.**  
Explaining the appearance of each type and how it may be set off. Covering AP blast, AP fragmentation (stake mounted), AP fragmentation (bounding), AP fragmentation (directional), anti-vehicle mines, UXO, and generic identification of other ordnance. Also covering the kinds of injury associated with mines.
- 3. Official and improvised marking.**  
Covering official warning signs, fencing and examples of the locally improvised marking in use.
- 4. Indicators of suspect areas.**  
Evidence of military presence and/or fighting. Visible parts of mines/UXO. Evidence of defensive works in the form of mounds, hollows or trenches. Unmaintained areas alongside roads where ambushes were carried out. Parts of clothing or footwear. The remains of camps, latrines or temporary structures. Wire defences. The debris of vehicles damaged in fighting or explosions (civilian). Abandoned military vehicles and equipment. Remains of ammunition cases or packaging and munition boxes, ration tins, etc. Ruined buildings marked by battle. Road damage in ambush or checkpoint areas. Unused/abandoned areas close to land that is used. Fruit and nut trees that are not harvested. Wooded areas close to villages where wood is not gathered. Unexpected diversions on roads or paths. Abandoned roads and paths. Abandoned buildings, especially where items of value (contents, but also doors, window-frames, guttering and roofing material) have not been removed. Washout areas where water may have carried items from their original place. Casualties - people and animals (remains or victims).
- 5. Technical detail.**  
Direct indicators of mine and UXO use in the area such as packaging, wires, spools, stakes, safety pins/caps and parts discarded when munitions are used. Mines, detailing the common mines and UXO found in Mozambique and covering how mines age, fuzes and detonators, and booby traps.

### Example 1: Recognising Mined Areas



For most audiences, a trainer will want to show how to recognise areas that are obviously dangerous. The scenes above all include an obviously suspicious area.

There is not enough space to explain each image here. The general message is that while sometimes you can recognise a suspicious area, more often you can tell when an area is safe, which is just as useful.



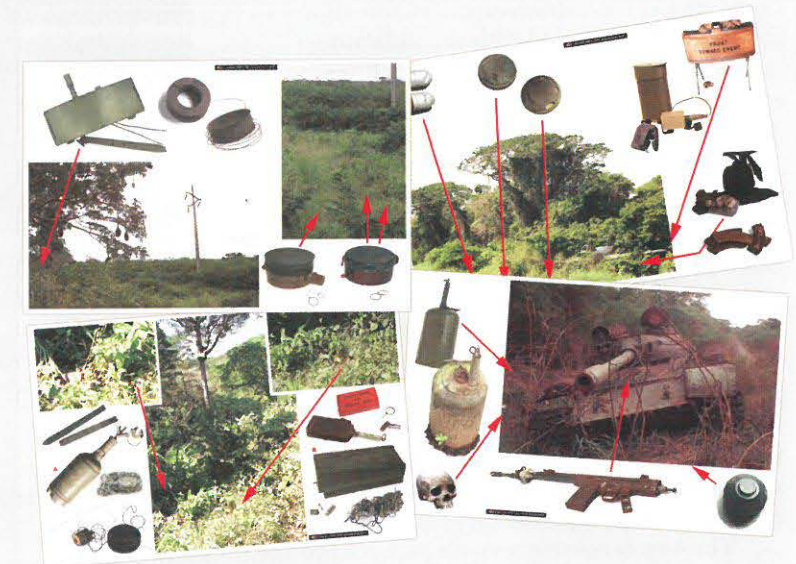
■ The title pages of the training resources.

### Example 2: Levels of Detail

(Below) The resource uses appropriate scenes like these to introduce each topic.



(Right) The introductory pages are followed by pages in which mine and ordnance are clearly shown.



(Below) Technical audiences want to know more about the devices and how they work. So in many cases a third level of detail is included.

The pictures are selected from both the Angola and the Mozambique packs.



## Mine Awareness Education

■ Reading clockwise from the top left the picture shows (UN)ADP surveyors using the pack for reference in Maputo Province; Handicap International's surveyor, deminer and MRE trainers during a workshop in Inhambane Province; MineTech's MRE staff reviewing the training resource in Harare, Zimbabwe; MgM deminers using the resource in Gaza Province; Handicap International staff holding an MRE session with overseas visitors; NPA trainers at a workshop in Tete Province.

### Mozambique Workshops

During March, I visited PAD in Mozambique and MineTech in Zimbabwe to follow up on their usage and find out what they liked and disliked. I also visited MgM, Handicap International (HI), Instituto Nacional de Desminagem (IND- the Mozambique MAC) and NPA to hold workshops introducing the resource to their trainers.

These workshops were with surveyor and deminer trainers as well as those involved in mine risk education work with the general public. The resource was well received by all. The trainers suggested that almost all of the images could be used with any audience.

The large loose-leaf format was liked and there was enthusiasm for the use of photographs taken in-situ. The inclusion of a generic mine action course and teaching notes on the reverse of each page was also appreciated. The trainers particularly liked the fact that the text was in Portuguese and English—so recognising their own language and incidentally helping them to learn an English demining vocabulary. Unexpectedly, field surveyors and deminers use the resource for reference—and asked for some technical detail to be expanded.

Following the workshops, IND formally requested 640 resource packs to be donated for distribution to every district in Mozambique via the Ministry of Education. The GWHF is currently seeking funding to enable them to comply with this request.

The Angola training resource pack is scheduled for distribution during the summer of 2002, which may have happened by the time you read this. ■

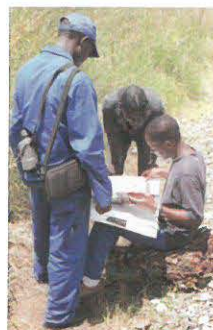
### Acknowledgements

The following individuals were consulted when planning this programme or gave help and advice during it. Any weaknesses in the resource do not reflect on them:

Matthew Chambers, Florencio Chongo, Ken O'Connell, John Dingley, Justin Bradley, Mike Wilson, Dieter Guelle, Roger Hess, Havard Bach, Robert Thomson (Tommo), Chris Pearce, John Flannagan, Mario Nunes, Bob Keeley, Tim Lardner, Steve Priestley, Jan Ole Robertz, Fredrik Pålsson, Jacky D'Almeda, Helder Cruz, Mark Manning, Filipe Muzima, Felix Andrea, Peter Fuyane, Christiaan (Burg) Geel, Aderito Ishmael, Hugh Lawrence, Theo van Dyke, Derek Baxter, Andy Frizzell, Sr Verissimo, Nicholas Finnister, Thomas Augusto, Willie Lawrence, Marcus van Zyl, Hendrik Ehlers and Hans Georg Kruessen. Thanks also to the main translators, Anabela Bach and Cláudio de Sousa.

During dissemination, the following organisations were of great help: IND, PAD (UNADP), HI, NPA, MgM and MineTech.

Finally, our thanks to all at U.S. DoS for the funding support that made this possible.



*GWHF is a charitable foundation based in the USA. It is dedicated to supporting humanitarian mine action. Andy Smith is an independent HD consultant.*

*\*All photos courtesy of the author.*

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