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Educating the United States: Landmines In and Out of the Classroom

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survivors. But certainly it affects them in so many ways. There's an organization—CVF, Cambodia Vision and Development—that works with vulnerable people; most of them are landmine victims. If you can imagine the area and the land in Cambodia, I mean there are hardly any roads in big parts of the country. The roads they have, in the rainy season, become just mud. So, if you're somebody that has just one leg, or blind with no arms and you have children and you're trying to work, and earn some money, and take care of your home, it's hard enough to be a parent and do all of that normally. It seems impossible and probably would be impossible without the help of a lot of these organizations. Organizations like CVF put a lot of these people together so they can work in a group. They are amazing. Then you go to some places where it's so hard for them to access limbs, depending where they are in the country. And young children, if they survive and they have lost a limb, their bodies are still growing so they have to go back quite often. They don't have the cars or local hospitals. It's a big trek to go in and find somebody who will volunteer to refit you and shave the bone down. They are going to have that their whole life because they are growing. It's a really horrible thing.

JL: While you were in Cambodia, or Pakistan or Africa, did you ever personally feel in danger because of landmines or any other issues?

MJ: Well, landmines specifically would be Cambodia. Yeah, I went off into certain areas where you were just told that nothing had exploded in this area therefore it's not considered a high-risk area, but you along with everybody else stay on a very clear path that has already been walked. You don't stray from it. You know in the middle of the night when I had to go to the bathroom in the bushes and was not really sure where the path was. It's crazy the thought that you really don't know, and for people to live like that all the time. There were times when we would go wandering off in Cambodia and had to be extremely careful where we were going and to know the area. For anybody that works in any kind of demining or any kind of humanitarian aid work, there is danger and it's always a high risk area.

JL: I am sure you have met many influential people and heard many amazing stories. Are there any of these experiences that you would like to share?

MJ: There are so many. Really it's just person after person in every different country that has a life that I can't even imagine and has gone through horror that I can't even imagine. And yet, in every country, every family was more generous than I have met in other countries with their time or whatever they had. Trying to find food or tea or something and give you a smile, and [they] are so grateful for what they have left—unbroken spirit. And that was remarkable for me that that was not specific to one place or one person. That continues to be the majority of these people out there. For whatever reason, I don't know why, but they've learned something in their suffering and their struggle that we have lost touch with.

JL: What do you feel being an Ambassador for UNHCR has done for the organization?

MJ: I hope it has brought more awareness. That's all I can hope for. I hope what it's done for me, but I hope it has brought more awareness. I feel it has because people tend to ask me questions, and I have received a lot of letters from young people talking about the things they are doing to make a difference. And that's been a very nice thing because I didn't get letters like that before. The most important thing, or the thing I think I accomplished most was going to these places and sitting down with the families for about an hour, and I think..., what matters most of all is that you go out of your way to sit down with people and listen to their stories and talk with them and show them somebody cares and is listening.

JL: Do you have any other future plans for further involvement with other humanitarian programs, or more specifically landmine organizations?

MJ: Yes, with landmines, well the film I just finished deals with a lot of things but it also deals with landmines which has been great, a very interesting thing to have the whole crew learning about the effects of landmines. But yes, I certainly will. We were just in Namibia, and I am more aware of that area. That area is... changing and I don't know if we will understand more about the landmine situation there. And in Afghanistan, I'm sure with UNHCR moving back in there will be a lot they will be dealing with, and they will be dealing with working hand in hand with deminers. And in Cambodia, I have... funded some schools and I plan to move to Cambodia, and have a house there and a place to live. So all of that has to be demined. The schools have already been demined. The land will have to be demined. There's also organizations too, like the Campaign to Ban Landmines. I've met with Jody Williams, and spent some time with her, we've had an evening at the house to raise awareness. There's a lot to do. Hopefully, it will stop all the manufacturing and everybody will sign off, because that's what has to happen before anything.

JL: Do you have any future plans with UNHCR?

MJ: I will be in Washington for Refugee Week, and then its looks like I'm off to South America.
Landmine Studies program has been a two-day visit to Fort Leonard Wood, a nearby Humanitarian Demining Training Camp (HDTec). On this trip, 22 students and two faculty members woke up at 6:00am, ate breakfast with soldiers, trained, learned about the different types of landmines/UXO, dressed up in demining gear, and prodded for artillery in an inactive minefield. Many of the students earned an even higher respect for deminers across the world as they experienced firsthand how dangerous and frustrating demining can be.

**Interim Experience**

Several SMSU students wanted to gain further experience in the mine action community and decided to intern at landmine-related organizations in the United States. During the summer of 2001, four students participated in internships at the Center for International Rehabilitation (CIR), Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVA). Of those four, the least two plans to continue working in the mine action field. In addition, two other Landmine Studies students are currently working at LSN.

**University of Denver's Landmines: Exploring the Hidden Crisis**

**Background**

The best time to get people involved in global issues is at an early age. As a result, a number of faculty members from the Center for Teaching International Relations at the University of Denver—supported by a grant from the U.S. PM-HDP—have put together Landmines: Exploring the Landmine Crisis educational packets for upper elementary school, middle school- and high school-age students. These programs involve a series of extensive activities that not only make students more aware of the landmine crisis but also demonstrate how the United States Interacts on a global level. Each packet includes instructions for class activities as well as a number of handouts and other valuable resources. (Packet can be downloaded or ordered for free online at http://www.dtu.edu/cits/pubs_free.html)

**Upper Elementary Program**

The Upper Elementary Program correlates with a Social Studies class and is designed to teach students about politics, geography, international affairs, current events, analytical thinking and problem solving. The curriculum includes up to 10 hours of in-class education with three major activities: a presentation on a specific landmine-related topic, a persuasive letter to a government official or publication editor and a poster related to mine action. To assess students' understanding of the global landmine crisis, the course concludes with a final persuasive speech, where students "will present that they have been asked by the United Nations Fact Finding Committee to testify before their committee as an expert on landmines." (p. 6)

**Middle School Program**

The Middle School program is also geared to a Social Studies class focusing on geography and civics, and involves up to 13 50-minute class periods of instruction to complete (if the teacher chooses to complete all activities). For the final assessment, students should complete an essay based on the "My Turn Essay" portion of Newsweek. In this essay, students discuss the landmine situation in a designated country, describe the United States' contributions to demining in this country, take a stand on the landmine crisis and suggest methods for spreading the word about the landmine crisis. Further activities include watching landmine-related videos, learning to create maps that demonstrate specific mine action statistics, studying and discussing The Landmine Threat, and recent literature, and conducting a mine awareness survey, comparing each country's needs and developing a mine action plan for the country with the greatest needs. Other suggested activities cover various aspects of mine action, including production trends, the Ottawa Treaty and the Global Mine Action Treaty, the Korea Exception and U.S. involvement in the mine action world, and the Adopts-A-Mine field campaign. The program can be altered to include all or some of the activities (complete all nine activities involves nine 50-minute class periods).

**Messiah College's Landmine Action Project**

**Background**

Since 1997, students and faculty of Messiah College in Grantham, PA have actively researched Landmine issues, and a number of students have used this research to design low-budget detection and clearance techniques for countries that cannot afford other machinery. In the fall of 2001, a group of students in Messiah College's Senior Engineering Design Projects course worked with the help of Dr. Donald Pratt, Director of the Messiah College Landmine Action Project (MCLAP). Through this project, students hope to increase awareness in the Messiah community, to further research on the global landmine crisis and to design more projects to enhance the mine action community. Currently, there are nine students actively involved in MCLAP. During the summer of 2003, Aaron Dahlstrom, student and co-facilitator of MCLAP, conducted extensive research on the landmine issue and the number of resources available. This research has provided a foundation for future efforts at the College.

**Senior Engineering Design Project**

In order to fulfill graduation requirements, students in the Engineering Department at Messiah College must complete a Senior Engineering Design Project. A number of these projects have dealt specifically with the landmine issue. Related projects have included using acoustic sound waves and infrared photography to detect buried landmines, training ferrets to sense landmines, building a device to contain a dog while it is detonating and designing an enhanced field system that is more efficient and less costly.

**MCLAP Activities**

The MCLAP team is divided into three separate teams: the Vapor Detection Research Team, the Robotics Team and the Education Team. The Vapor Detection Team is continuing work with ferrets by training them to work in the field. The Robotics Team is designing a robotic vehicle that will deliver tools into minefields. This robotic vehicle is geared towards a desert environment, and students hope that it will be inexpensive and easy to use. The Education Team will focus on providing awareness to students and faculty members. In mid-September, students will host a mine awareness week, which will include games, displays and a peace-pipe commemoration. Additionally, students will take a day trip to Fort Belvoir, VA to watch a Landmine Technology demonstration.

**NewswEEK's Issues Today Map "Landmines: Eliminating the Hidden Threat"**

**Background**

The NewswEEK Education Program has developed a number of activities for teaching global issues and current events in the classroom. A part of this program is creating an Issues Today Map outlining the topics covered in their programs. Working with the U.S. Department of State in 2002, Newsweek designed a "Landmines: Eliminating the Hidden Threat" wall map. The Department of State requested this project in order to provide humanitarian and mine action organizations with an extensive map outlining current statistics on the landmine threat.
The "Landmines: Eliminating the Hidden Threat" wall map provides color codes each landmine-affected country by severity, but also provides brief profiles of Afghanistan, Angola, Colombia, Croatia, France, Jordan, and Vietnam. Other information provided on the map includes descriptions of different aspects of mineaction, pictures of common AP mines, a list of basic statistics about the landmine threat and a graph outlining Mine Action Funding by country. This map provides a valuable resource to both the mine action community and educators interested in covering the global landmine crisis. NGOs can obtain a copy of the map by contacting the U.S. Department of State Humanitarian Demining Program; interested schools and teachers who are not a part of the Newseum Education program should contact them for a copy of the map and related activities (1-800-256-2995).

Related Activities
Along with the "Landmines: Eliminating the Threat" wall map, Newseum also created a Study Guide with information and discussion questions about the landmines issue and related educational activities that could be used in a Social Studies classroom. The Study Guide includes an overview of the landmine crisis, survival stories of a person, a minefield, and an entire nation, descriptions of the different demining techniques, and a look at future mine action endeavors. Discussion questions in the guide include finding out different world leaders' opinions of the landmine crisis, researching opportunities for landmine survivors and profiling the landmine crisis in a specific country. The online portion of the program (http://www.newseum.org/landmines) includes a list of useful web links and two intensive activities that correspond with the Issues Today Map and mine awareness programs.

Global Care Unlimited, a separate non-profit organization that receives donations and tacos by the public to support different demining techniques, and a look at future mine action endeavors. Discussion questions in the guide include finding out different world leaders' opinions of the landmine crisis, researching opportunities for landmine survivors and profiling the landmine crisis in a specific country. The online portion of the program (http://www.newseum.org/landmines) includes a list of useful web links and two intensive activities that correspond with the Issues Today Map and mine awareness programs.

Tentafly Middle School and Global Care Unlimited

Background
Students at Tentafly Middle School (Tentafly, NJ) were first introduced to the global landmine crisis during an inspiring speech from Ken Rutherford at a student-organized Human Rights Day. As a result, interested students, with the help of a middle school teacher Mark Hymans, organized a Student Landmine Awareness Club and started taking steps to sponsor a demining in a sister city in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Once fundraising efforts began, students and other interested parents and community members formed Tentafly Middle School and Global Care Unlimited.

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Global History: A near-continuous state of war from the early 1990s until the late 1970s has left an enormous legacy of land mines and UXO.

Impact: There are an estimated 3.5 million land mines and 300,000 tons (872 million kilograms) of UXO in the country. The most mine-affected region is the Quang Tri province, which contains the former border between North and South Vietnam. Vietnam suffers an estimated 2,000 casualties a year from mines and has one of the world's highest concentrations of amputees as a result.

Progress: As of early 2001, the Vietnamese Army had cleared 97 anti-personnel and antitank mines and 25,541 UXO (more than 7,000 UXO and 200 mines were located and destroyed by the British Mines Advisory Group.}

Additional Programs

United Nations CyberSchoolBus: Schools Demining Schools

In an effort to spread awareness to students around the world and encourage them to support the clearance of mine-infected schools and play areas, the UN CyberSchoolBus program has created the Schools Demining Schools initiative. Participating schools have the ability to correspond with deminers in Afghanistan and Mozambique through e-mail, allowing students to ask specific questions about the deminer's job and how to answer common questions that have arisen during fundraising efforts. Some of the students have even made pen pals with young landmine survivors in their adopted country.

The Schools Demining Schools program also includes three in-class teaching units covering the scope of the landmine crisis and different aspects of mine action. The activities, as well as sample correspondence between students and deminers/survivors, can be found on this website (http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/bammines/index.asp). Schools can register with this project by sending an email with the subject "Bam Mines" to cyberschoolbus@un.org.

Creative-Action Service: Landmine Removal Project

As a part of the Creative-Action Service requirement for the International Baccalaureate diploma, high school students from Oregon and Washington have decided to adopt a minefield in Cambo- dia. Efforts include spreading awareness to the local residents and raising money for the adoption. As of April 7, 2001, the goal for each participating high school was to raise $10,000. Since then, the designated minefield has been cleared and over 100 schools across the United States and Canada have joined the effort to adopt additional pieces of land.

Shenandoah Minefield Adoption Project

A group of student employees from the MAIC, along with a number of volunteers from the JMU community, have developed the Shenandoah Minefield Adoption Project (SMAP) in order to promote awareness in the JMU community and surrounding areas. This past spring, SMAP participants sponsored a landmines awareness week where they passed out statistics and discussed the landmine problem with interested students and faculty members. In addition, Ken Rutherford from LSN shared his story, and Amelia Kahany from Adops- A-Minefield presented the logistics of minefield adoption. SMAP participants were inspired by their fellow classmates’ enthusiasm towards the subject. This fol- lowing year, SMAP will further their efforts by adopting a minefield in a country that will be selected by interested community members in September. Planned fundraising activities include a Field Meet with food and music, a raffle, and an International dinner. Eventually, the students hope to expand involvement to other nearby high schools and Colleges.

Useful Resources

There are a number of useful resources available for educators interested in adding the global landmine crisis to their curriculum. Listed below are a few of the ones recommended by the programs mentioned in this article.

Sprinkle: Educating the United States: Landmines In and Out of the Classroom

Mark Hymans hopes to dis- tribute this film, along with an educational guide that he created for the March landmine conference, to other middle schools throughout the United States. For more information see Mark Hymans’ contact information below.)

Articles

"A Time to Plant Mines, A Time to Make Arrows": This article, originally published in Stew Rap Journal, tells the story of a man who planted mines for a guerrilla movement as a child and has since dedicated his efforts to clearing his native land. This article is available for $2.50 from the New York Times (http://query.nytimes.com/search)."

"Connecting Global Education with Activism: Building A Local and Global Community": This article, written by Education Liaison for Mercy Corps Marta Colburn, describes methods for getting students involved in global activities. It also includes a Landmines In Af- ghanistan classroom activity for students in 4th-12th grade. The article and activity were published in issue 16.1 of the Journal (http://www.jmu.edu/journal/6.1/issues/features/colburn/colburn.html).

"One Step at a Time: A Landmine Ramlal Initiative": This article, written by Mark Hymans of Tentafly Middle School and Global Care Unlimited, Inc., describes the steps that his middle school students took in developing a Student Landmine Awareness Club and adopting a minefield in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It was published in the May/June 2001 issue of Middle Level Learning and can be ordered for $7.50 (while supplies last) through the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) publications services at 1-800-983-0812. Copies of Middle Level Learning may also be available at your local library.
University library, and free online copies are available at members of NCSS website (sign up at https://www.socialstudies.org).

"Schools Demining: A Glo­bal Teach-In". This article, published in the September 1998 issue of The Social Educa­tion, provides a number of materials for teaching the landmine crisis in the class­room and for getting students more involved in the mine action community. A copy of this article can be ordered for $7.50 (while supplies last) through the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) publication services at 1-800-683-0812. Copies of Social Education may also be available at your local Uni­versity library or high school Social Stud­ies department, and free online copies are available to members of NCSS (sign up at http://www.socialstudies.org).

Books
The C ommomon Tree: This 208-page novel tells the story of a young girl who loses a leg in a landmine accident and how she struggles to regain her life and to help spread awareness to those around her. This novel can be downloaded for $7.95 (list price) or less from Amazon.com: (http://www.amazon.com).

Videos
Documentary Films on K-9 Demining Corps by the Marshall Legacy Institute: This documentary provides an overview of mine dog teams and can be ordered by contacting the Marshall Legacy Institute: info@marshalllegacy.org (http://www.marshalllegacy.org).

The Menace of Landmines: This documentary, created by UNMAS, provides graphic footage of mine-torn countries, an overview of the global landmine crisis, and descriptions of the different areas of mine action. It can be downloaded from the Adopt-A-Minefield website (http://www.landmines.org/multimedia/index-mm.asp).

Website
ICBL Media Reports (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/icblmedia/message/) contains a collection of news articles on recent activities in mine ac­tion. Interested users can also subscribe to the ICBL Media Report mailing list at http://www.icbl.org/media.

Oneeworld.net Full Coverage: Landmines (http://www.oneeworld.net/themes/topic/126.shtml) contains over 100 documents related to landmine topics as well as a number of useful guides and links to other affiliated organizations.

U.S. Department of State Humanitarian Demining Program (http://www.state.gov/t/ipm/hdp) contains information about U.S. involvement in demining including their policy and budget as well as fact sheets and reports on recent activities.

U.S. Department of State Office of Mine Action Initiatives and Partnerships (http://www.state.gov/t/ipm/map/) contains information about U.S. invol­vement in other areas of mine action in­cluding detection and clearance, aware­ness, survivor assistance, and research and development.

Glossaries and Abbreviations MAIC: http://maic.jmu.edu/research/glossary.htm http://maic.jmu.edu/research/abbrev.htm

U.S. Department of State: http://www.state.gov/www/global/arms/rep_9890_damnke_m03.xml


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Update: The Landmine Situation in Chechnya

Stemming from the ongoing war between Russian and Chechen forces, the use of anti-personnel mines throughout Chechnya continues today. As the landmine victim toll increases, much is being done in an attempt to alleviate the current state of affairs.

by Hayden Roberts, MAIC

Introduction
After the collapse of the former Soviet Union in 1991, many of the ethnic and minority groups on the outskirts of the surrounding area began to secede and declare themselves newly independent republics. The first three to do so were Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia—the southernmost of the Soviet republics. The area to the north of these republics continued to be a part of the new Russian federation, although the people of these areas were not Russian but rather ethnic Muslims. At time went on, several of the ethnic groups in this area began to press for their autonomy from Russia. The Chechens were one of the most vocal members of these ethnic groups.

Today, the new republics comprise an area in southeast Europe called the Caucasus. Located in the northern tip of the Caucasus is Chechnya, situated in the Caucasian Mountains, Chechnya extends from west to east for about 600 miles be­tween the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. One thousand miles to the south of Moscow, the republics of Dagestan, Georgia, North Ossetia and South Ossetia surround Chechnya.

Background: The Chechen War

During the past decade, Chechnya has been ravaged by an ongoing war with Russia. The sides’ stances are highly polarized from one another and this has intensified the conflict of the war. The Chechens’ efforts to gain independence has stood in stark contrast to Russia’s claims of absolute sovereignty over the republic. However, these polarized standpoints have led each side to commit severe human rights abuses during the war. Completely obscuring the reasoning that lay behind both the Chechens and Russian positions, this has made the conflict very difficult to un­derstand for anyone not directly involved. Although the middle of 2000 saw a

One aerial view of war-ravaged Grozny. Decline in the amount of large-scale military action in Chechnya, aggression from each side still causes civilians to be victims of this unrelenting conflict. Landmines have become one of the staple weapons of the war and have been used at great lengths by both Russian and Chechen forces. Extensive use of landmines throughout the conflict has left the Chechen region a grim and blood­stained place where the population struggles with this dilemma on a day-to-day basis. The people who are affected the most are the estimated 300,000 internally dis­placed persons (IDPs) who have been moving to refugee camps and settlements in the neighboring area of Ingushetia. Once these people reach the camps, they usually remain. The main reason for their unwillingness to leave a camp is an absence of safety, for often the IDPs are the ones who stumble upon hidden mines. Experts have claimed that Chechnya has at least half a million UXO hidden throughout its roads, trees and countryside. As Russian and Chechen groups have moved across the republic, they have often left behind these forgotten landmines.

Thousands of people, many of whom are children, have become refugees due to the ongoing war in Chechnya. Interstate, children who have settled in Ingushetia await the day they can return home.

http://commons.lib.jmu.edu/cisr-journal/vol6/iss2/18