The Impact of ERW on Children

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Although CBD reduces some of the security threats, it does not eliminate them. In fact, the program has been experiencing some challenges. Although there have been some incidents, including two prominent kidnappings in December 2010, the deminers were soon released safely with the intervention of community elders because most members of the CBD teams were from mine-affected communities. Alternatively, the kidnapping of 32 CBD project members in Farah province, Afghanistan in July 2011, which resulted in the killing of four of them, shocked the government of Afghanistan, as well as the Taliban, condemned the kidnapping and killing of the deminers, who were working to serve people. Educating the community on the benefits of demining operations and demonstrating these benefits is the best insurance against attacks on deminers. Further, bringing money and jobs to mine-affected communities through CBD will help to minimize resentments and hostility toward demining groups. By using CBD, and thereby benefiting the local community, MAPA hopes to continue to expand its operations to other mine-affected regions currently inaccessible to demining teams.

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The EU and the U.S. Provide Grant to Lao PDR

MAG (Mines Advisory Group) has recently been tasked with a new project to collaborate with the UXO sector in Lao PDR to clear UXO from Boualapha, Mahaxay and Xatbuathong of Khammouane province. Valued at 700,000 euros (US$975,026), the European Union and the United States cosponsor the project, with the EU contributing 600,000 euros (US$835,613) and the U.S. Government granting US$142,721 (102,442 euro). In addition, the EU plans to launch another UXO program in 2012. The EU promised the Lao Government a grant for this clearance project if it fulfilled its UXO obligations under the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

On 8 July 2011, the EU issued its first funding disbursement for the new MAG clearance project; this is the fourth partnership between the EU and MAG, and it builds on previous funding by the European Commission. From 2000 to 2010, the EC and various EU member states provided roughly 29 million euros (US$39,438,046) in assistance to Lao PDR. During that same time period, the U.S. dedicated more than $36 million (25,844,700 euros) to UXO action in Lao PDR. In 2010, the United States contributed $5,102,000 (3,662,687 euros) for mine-action support to the country, of which $1,400,000 was used to fund MAG operations.

According to MAG Country Programme Manager David Hayter, the opportunity for MAG to work with local authorities will ensure optimal use of resources; moreover, MAG will complete a UXO survey for the National Regulatory Authority—Lao PDR’s UXO and landmine organization—and provide land clearance for contaminated areas within Khammouane province.

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