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Unsung Hero: Alison Bock

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As the founder and president of Landmines Blow!®, Alison Bock has built an influential organization that raises awareness about landmines and unexploded ordnance, and helps victims all over the world. In the eyes of many people, Bock is truly an Unsung Hero.

by Matthew Vespe

In today’s world, sometimes it seems intimidating to stand up and make a difference. That feeling was no different for Alison Bock, founder and president of the non-governmental organization Landmines Blow!, when she attended the summit on Mine Free World in Nairobi, Kenya in November 2004. “When we addressed the summit, it was the first time I met real landmine survivors from everywhere,” says Bock. “I was overwhelmed at how many people needed help and wondered how I could really make a difference because the problem was so huge and we were so small. But in the mine-action community, this defeatist attitude is not an option. Thus I met a landmine survivor from Cambodia who told me to focus on making a difference in the life of one person at a time. You can make a difference in one life, so I did it and the rest, as they say, is history.”

Bock was selected as a Volvo for Life Award semi-finalist from the state of Illinois because of her work to educate young Americans about the landmine crisis abroad and also assist survivors, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Cambodia and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. “I am a much stronger person mentally and more patient and empathetic,” explains Bock. “I think that it needs people who are passionate about it to get the job done,” Bock says that it needs some new champions because it is still a significant problem.

New programs are coming soon for the organization, including a new initiative called H2O–Help to Others. Along with this new program, expanding the already successful Project Safe Water to other countries and creating a buzz in the mine-action world. “I think that mine action needs some new blood,” remarks Bock. “I think that it needs people who are passionate about it to get the job done,” Bock says that it needs some new champions because it is still a significant problem.

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