November 2006

Increasing the Impact of Mine-action Surveys

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Recommended Citation
Available at: http://commons.lib.jmu.edu/cisr-journal/vol10/iss2/32

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Integration of landmine-impact assessment as the essential strategic component of mine-action survey has created the conditions for a qualitative advance in planning and management of mine action. This assessment is further supported by the spread of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) as the core information system for mine-action country programmes. Landmine Impact Surveys provide a comprehensive assessment of the effects of landmines on local socioeconomic activities, through systematic interviewing of residents in all communities suspected by experts or the local population to be mine-affected. Governments use the landmine-impact assessment results to develop a better understanding of their national mine problem and to allocate resources to respond based on a shift in strategic focus from the minefield to the community and from hazard/contamination to socioeconomic impact. While this shift has improved the ability to strategically plan and set priorities for mine action generally, it faces a number of challenges in areas where it is not necessarily well-adapted, including accurate estimation of Suspected Hazard Areas, the need for Technical Survey follow-up for operational planning, development of IMSMA as the comprehensive database for mine-action programme management, updating of national impact scores to reflect results of actions undertaken, community involvement in operational planning and priority setting, and measurement of the progress and impact of mine-action programmes nationally and globally.

Increasing the Impact of Mine-action Surveys

While mine-action surveys are an important tool in mine clearance, there are several challenges that must be overcome for survey results to be fully effective. Some of these changes include alterations in priority setting, information management and impact scoring. This article presents some potential obstacles to completing and evaluating mine-action surveys and proposes possible solutions to these challenges to increase their effectiveness and impact.

by Charles Downs [New York University Wagner School of Public Service]
Use of Impact-Surveys and Data

Community Impact scoring. Design of the LIS scoring system produced a simple system for ranking community impact as low, medium and high. The ranking system proved very powerful in directing attention to high-impact communities by highlighting them and their limited number, which presented a more "bounded" problem that could be addressed with effective intervention and their limited number, which was better thought of as a "snapshot," is better thought of as a starting point—"an investment in a comprehensive data collection that should be continued to reflect changing reality. As new mine-affected communities or SHAs are discovered, or new mine incidents occur, they should be added. The results of mine action to clear or mark areas to eliminate blockages should be updated into the database. A procedure is needed to recognize the failure to do so to its previous normal activity. Thus, the likelihood of prompt use of the land should be assessed as part of the planning process, since lack of use for an extended period would undo much of the benefit of the clearance effort. This assessment process, involving community stakeholders in the operational planning process, was developed in the minefield-focused Task Impact Assessments of Norwegian People’s Aid’s and the Task of the Survey Action Centre,5 and was carried out most effectively in the Bosnia and Herzegovina/LIS Survey Action Centre's community mine-impact plans.6

Assessing the Results of Mine Action

Post-clearance impact assessment. Post-clearance intervention data, in the form of maps, documents, and national reports on the status of the site were correct—more beneficiaries or reports of clearance in the cleared land and thus the benefits delivered (impact) will be far higher than the original scores, even if the assumption of prompt use of the land were correct. This is why the ranking system proved very powerful in directing attention to high-impact communities by highlighting them and their limited number, which presented a more "bounded" problem that could be addressed with effective intervention and their limited number, which was better thought of as a "snapshot," is better thought of as a starting point—"an investment in a comprehensive data collection that should be continued to reflect changing reality. As new mine-affected communities or SHAs are discovered, or new mine incidents occur, they should be added. The results of mine action to clear or mark areas to eliminate blockages should be updated into the database. A procedure is needed to recognize the failure to do so to its previous normal activity. Thus, the likelihood of prompt use of the land should be assessed as part of the planning process, since lack of use for an extended period would undo much of the benefit of the clearance effort. This assessment process, involving community stakeholders in the operational planning process, was developed in the minefield-focused Task Impact Assessments of Norwegian People’s Aid’s and the Task of the Survey Action Centre,5 and was carried out most effectively in the Bosnia and Herzegovina/LIS Survey Action Centre's community mine-impact plans.6

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