Norwegian People's Aid

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Norwegian People's Aid

Founded in 1939, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) is one of Norway's largest non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Although NPA is currently involved in more than 300 projects in thirty countries, the organization still adheres to the basic principles set forth by its founders: solidarity, unity, human dignity, peace, and freedom. The range of NPA's projects is diverse, from extensive outreach programs for the people of Palestine, to short-term emergency relief programs and long-term development cooperation in over twelve countries in Africa, and more. One of NPA's most notable efforts is its humanitarian demining activities, centered in Asia and Africa.

A History of Excellence

It should come as no surprise that the founding principles of the NPA should have guided it to take a place as a driving force behind the world-wide humanitarian demining effort. Starting in 1992 with mine work in Cambodia, NPA has expanded their operations into several other countries, especially Mozambique, Angola, and Iraq. In accordance with the spirit of its founding principles, NPA not only tackles the physical problem of landmines, but the social and political factors that make mines such a deterrent to the development process of these recovering countries. The landmine must be addressed not only as a physical threat, but also as a symbolic anchor on the efforts to rehabilitate and rebuild a country.

With this in mind, NPA has developed a multi-faceted mine program that is easily adaptable to individual local needs, but always contains the following elements:

- **Mapping of mine fields**—NPA is quick to point out that the mapping of mine fields is nothing new, but the social angle which the organization imparts to the activity is. To NPA, mapping is not only an aid to the operation of demining, but an important psychological step to empowering the local population by limiting their paralyzing fear of the mines.
- **Training**—NPA has developed a three-program step for training deminers, and a two-program step for training accompany-memorial personnel. The eventual goal of both programs is to make the local population self-sufficient, and eliminate the need for Norwegian presence within five years.
- **Demining**—NPA's demining operations are based on models used by the Norwegian Army, altered to fit peacekeeper goals. NPA points out that it has set the official UN standards for demining in many areas. One of the most successful elements of the organization's demining program is the dog-sniffing project, started in October 1994. The dogs make a viral contribution to the demining effort by sniffing out mines and helping to define the borders of mine fields, so miners do not waste time and resources clearing areas where there are no mines in the first place.
- **Mine Awareness**—NPA realizes that the extent of the landmine problem is so great, that even with the best of clearance efforts, the local populations of seriously affected countries will have to live with the daily threat of mines for at least the next thirty years. The organization's mine awareness program consists of instructor training and day-long courses for the local population. The secret of the program lies in the choice of instructors. NPA points out, "It is not enough for the person to be a good instructor, he or she also be an important resource person that most of the local people will trust. In this way we ensure that the projects will continue for a long time without our presence."  
- **Methodology**—NPA is actively involved in the development of new demining equipment, with experienced project workers collaborating with organizations such as the Norwegian Armed Forces, the Norwegian Institute for Industrial Design, and The Foundation for Scientific and Industrial Research at the Norwegian Institute of Technology (SINTEF).

In 1989, Sen. Patrick Leahy started a fund to get medical aid to victims of landmines. There are an estimated 100 million unexploded landmines in over 60 countries, where they kill or maim an estimated 26,000 people each year. Vast areas of countries like Cambodia, Bosnia and Angola have become death traps.

In 1992, Leahy sponsored an amendment to stop U.S. exports of anti-personnel landmines: the first law of its kind anywhere in the world. In 1993, the amendment to extend landmine bans passed the Senate 100-0, and in 1997, President Clinton adopted it as permanent U.S. policy. The senator sponsored a 1995 amendment to ban U.S. use of anti-personnel mines for one year, beginning in 1999. That amendment was passed in the Senate 67-27, and was signed into law by Clinton on February 12, 1996. The law reads as follows:

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1997 treaty negotiations in Oslo, Norway.
- Establishment of working relationships with survivors in Africa, Asia, and Europe willing to promote cooperation on landmine issues, including better rehabilitation services.
- Development of an easy-to-use database to link landmine survivors with the resources available to help them.
- Over 35 public presentations and speeches, and well over 300 media interviews to build support for a ban treaty and victim assistance.

Since its inception, the Landmine Survivors Network has been building a worldwide network of landmine survivors with the resources available to help them. LSN is developing the first comprehensive database designed to track the rehabilitation needs of mine victims and the organizations that can channel urgently needed assistance to the impoverished survivors who need it most.

Contact Information
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1420 K St. NW, Suite 650
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 646-0007
Fax (202) 646-0011
E-mail: LSN@landminesurvivors.org
Website: http://www.landminesurvivors.org

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Several of NPA's most notable efforts are:
- Anti-personnel landmines: the term "anti-personnel landmine" refers to any unexploded anti-personnel landmine. (2) EXEMPTIONS: The term "anti-personnel landmine" does not include canisterminated Claymore munitions.

The Future of NPA's Mine Program

One of the only voluntary organizations that specializes in mine work, the NPA continues its efforts in accordance with the organization's founding principles of solidarity, unity, human dignity, peace, and freedom. To NPA, it is not enough to address only the physical problem of landmines, the political and social implications of the mine problem must also be addressed as an integral part of an affected country's rebuilding and reintegration process. And for as long as the mine problem exists, NPA will be there to guide the part of the solution.

Patrick J. Leahy War Victims Fund

Leahy Amendment Moratorium on Use of Anti-personnel Landmines

In 1989, Sen. Patrick Leahy started a fund to get medical aid to victims of landmines. There are an estimated 100 million unexploded landmines in over 60 countries, where they kill or maim an estimated 26,000 people each year. About one-quarter of countries with landmines have become death traps.

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The presence of mines along roads. The samples are collected by mine proofing vehicles, and then given to specially trained dogs to sniff out the presence of mines.

In Mozambique, 1997 was a milestone year for NPA's demining efforts. Control of the demining program was handed over to Mozambican personnel. NPA continues to support its Mozambican partners in their quest to achieve effective and efficient demining through measures for regional development, mine clearance, and organizational and institutional development. So far, almost two million square meters of land have been cleared of landmines, 39 percent more land than NPA originally planned.

Technology (SI NTEF).

• International campaign—Motivated by the everyday tragedy NPA bears witness to in project countries, NPA supports the international ban on landmines, and takes an active part at both the national and international level in the international battle to ban landmines.

Some Individual Successes

Employing 500 deminers, 18 dogs and 2 demining machines, NPA is the largest operator in the mapping and clearance of mines in Angola. Since starting the NPA surveying unit has managed to register the dimensions of the landmine problem in ten out of eighteen provinces and turn this valuable information over to the National Landmine Institute of Angola. Recent efforts include the use of new, time-saving technology to boost our mapping efforts.

NPA Website: http://www.landminemine.org

Leahy Amendment Moratorium on Use of Anti-personnel Landmines

Sec. 583. (a) UNITED STATES MORATORIUM: For a period of one year beginning three years after the date of enactment of this Act, the United States shall not use anti-personnel landmines except along internationally recognized national borders or in demilitarized zones within a perimeter of ten miles that is monitored by military personnel and protected by adequate means to ensure the exclusion of civilians.

(b) DEFINITION AND EXEMPTIONS: For the purposes of this section:

(1) ANTI-PERSONNEL LAND MINE: The term "anti-personnel landmine" means any munitions placed under, on, or near the ground or other surface area, delivered by artillery, rocket, mortar, or similar means, or dropped from an aircraft and which is designed, constructed or adapted to be detonated or exploded by the presence, proximity or contact of a person.

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