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The Mines Advisory Group (MAG), U.K. Registered Charity No.1020441, started in 1992. MAG's programs integrate mine/UXO survey, demarcation and clearance with awareness-raising activities to reduce landmine risks to affected populations. MAG's integrated approach prides itself on working with conflict-affected communities to identify and address their most pressing needs.

Through close liaison with the communities, MAG can focus its work on the priority areas that the communities have identified. By training and employing people from mine-affected countries, MAG is transferring technical and management skills to local citizens who can sustain this work.

Mine Action Teams concentrate on tackling urgent tasks, such as providing safe access to water, paths and land for housing, farming and the development of social services. Where applicable, these teams will also survey and mark wider areas of dangerous ground for clearance. The community liaison staff undertakes information gathering and community awareness work; a medic and driver support them. MAG is creating, through its mine action teams, greater flexibility, more multi-skilling and more responsiveness to the broad impact of landmines. MAG will also propose other clearance aids, such as dogs and machines, vegetation and brush cutters and mini-flail machines, in order to better serve the people and their communities.



MAG has established an evaluation process in order to incorporate lessons learned to better serve landmine-affected people and their communities. Recent strategic plans include new development partnerships and an increased emphasis on training in the field. MAG also deploys, where appropriate, its emergency reaction team and a rapid assessment team, which has seen recent work in the West Bank and in southern Sudan.

Current Programs

Kosovo

MAG entered Kosovo in June 1999, initially deploying a Khmer Mine Action Team while training some 60 Kosovans in mine action tasks. MAG is UNMACC's lead agency in the Mitrovica region. In 2000, MAG is fielding three teams and the "minecat" 230 mini-flail. MAG plans to add further appropriate mechanical assistance. In addition to its own mine awareness program, MAG is conducting a Child to Child awareness program funded by UNICEF.

LAO PDR

MAG started work in Xieng Khouang Province in 1994. Since 1996, MAG has been working with UXO LAO, the national coordinating body for all UXO clearance activities. MAG has over 200 male and female nationals trained and deployed. Along with direct public education work, their community awareness programs have the integral role in the identification and tasking of clearance teams. In 1998, MAG started

Clearing soil from a Romanian Mai-75 anti-personnel mine, Moxico Province, Angola.

Photo c/o MAG

work in Saravane Province, southern LAO PDR. Most of the work involves UXO contamination resulting from the bombardment of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. In 2000, MAG is handing over control of the majority of its national staff to UXO LAO.

Angola

The Moxico Province program had been running since 1994. At its peak, it employed 15 mine-clearance, mine-awareness and mine-action teams, consisting of 325 local staff in three locations. Instability and fighting led to the program being suspended in mid-1998. Since then, MAG has fielded four active Mine Action Teams in Cunene Province and plans to restart the program in Luana, Moxico Province in the second half of 2000. There are currently two operational mine action teams to respond to the immediate needs of mine-affected communities in the region.

Northern Iraq

Since the program began in 1992, MAG



MAG's work provides benefits to its staff and the local community in addition to the removal of mines and UXO from their land. The wages that the staff earn working for MAG will usually go to support an extended family. This money promotes the economic efforts of the broader community.

Photo c/o MAG

has cleared some one-half million landmines and items of ordnance. With around 650 trained local staff, MAG is one of the region's largest employers. MAG currently fields 17 Mine Action Teams and has built up a comprehensive mine field database which has been made available to other agencies operating in the area. Since 1998, EOD operations have been scaled down as the bulk of surface-laying ordnance was destroyed.

Cambodia

MAG's program, which began in 1992, now employs nearly 400 Cambodian civilians, including 48 amputees and 46 women deminers. MAG's effective information gathering network collated 70 percent of the accidents reported to the national Mine Incident Database. In 1998, a new operation began in Kompong Speu Province where four mine action teams were deployed. Since the onset, improved political stability in 1999 has increased the return of refugees and IDPs into former KR areas, MAG has responded to emergencies in Samlot District near Pailin, and in Kompong Speu province to minimize risk of accident. MAG fields data gathering, community liaison and mine awareness teams in seven

provinces, and Mine Action Teams in five. 2000 sees four teams beginning operations in Preah Vihear province.

Namibia

In 1998, MAG conducted a preliminary assessment and general survey of the UXO problem facing the population of northern Namibia. MAG is hoping to help develop a program to tackle this problem.

Southern Sudan

In partnership with OSIL and several development NGOs, MAG undertook a six-week capacity building initiative in 1998, and is planning follow up in 2000, with further capacity building and training in management, technical and data gathering/mine awareness disciplines.

Vietnam

MAG's project is fielding one demining team of 25 civilian deminers. The initial project site is 120 hectares around a heavily mine- and ordnance-contaminated former fire-base in Qio Linh district, Quang Tri province. Phase two of the project, later in 2000, will see the introduction of mechanical means to assist with the clearance.

West Bank

MAG is to conduct a short assessment and clearance operation in a mined area near Bethlehem.

Azerbaijan

A MAG "Training and Supervisory Team" is conducting an eight-month training program with UNOPS for the local demining capacity, Relief Azerbaijan. Forty-five deminers are being trained to tackle the mine and UXO problem, initially in the Fizuli region.

In April 2000, the British Ministry of Defense donated 11 vehicles to MAG for use in its mine action projects.

MAG is also considering other requests for assistance in Africa and the Middle East, in South Asia and in South America.

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Ms. Sengmanee

EOD Technician, Lao PDR.

Ms. Sengmanee was the first female technician in MAG's new program in Saravane Province, Lao PDR. She is from the district of Ta Oi, on the former Ho Chi Minh Trail, where MAG opened an operations base in 1998.

"The people of Ta Oi are very poor and they need more land to farm. A lot of land contains unexploded ordnance that remains from the bombing of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The people are afraid when they are winding in the rice fields. I want to destroy all the UXO in this district to help my people live safely."

