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The Road to Mine Action and Development: The Life-Cycle Perspective of Mine Action

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The Road to Mine Action and Development: THE LIFE-CYCLE PERSPECTIVE OF MINE ACTION

There are four main steps to completing the life cycle of mine action, and demining is just a small part. Without development, citizens continue to live in poverty and under oppression. The authors outline the four-step life cycle of mine action.

Like any development activity, a mine action programme evolves over its life cycle. It is important for mine action managers to understand this evolution, as priorities and partnerships—who we’re working with—change as part of this process. As we in the mine action community know, most mine action begins in the chaotic period immediately following armed conflict. It is during this complex humanitarain emergency phase that former warring parties will ask the international community to provide assistance in the form of peacekeeping or broader peacebuilding missions. Where such efforts appear to be successful—or where major countries deem their national interests at stake—the peacekeeping phase will lead to a major reconstruction effort, financed by donor countries and multilateral financial institutions.

Although in many cases “traditional” development work (new investments in infrastructure, social services, private sector development and the like) would never have stopped entirely, the government and major donors initially focus on peacekeeping/peace-building and subsequently concentrate on the reconstruction programmes. However, as the restoration of key infrastructure (roads, railways, ports, electrical utilities, water systems, etc.) progresses, increasing attention will shift to more traditional development programmes, and these shifts will continue over some years. For example, large construction programme eventually do begin; therefore, some sort of transition must occur. The important issue for us at this point is not to miss the details of any individual country’s transition, but rather the dynamics of such transitions in general and the implications of the situation for those planning and managing mine action programmes, particularly the following:

- The country’s social, political and economic environment will evolve over time, in some aspects, quite rapidly.
- The size and relative importance of the different types of international assistance—humanitarian, peace-building/stabilisation, reconstruction and development—will evolve over time.
- Because of this evolution, the international actors present in the country, their primary objectives and their relative powers to influence local affairs will change over time.
- It is vital to emphasise that starting and ending points of the different phases will not be clear-cut; rather, phases overlap. For example, we will not see an abrupt end to the reconstruction programme followed by a start-up of more traditional development activities. Instead, the reconstruction programme will build to a peak of activity, then decline over a few years. During these years of decline, donors will shift proportions of their funding to standard development approaches. Perhaps they will build on smaller, localised development efforts that international non-governmental agencies have supported, even during the conflict. Thus, there will be shifts in the relative importance of these two types of programming, and these shifts will continue over some years. For example, large "priority reconstruction programmes" are often planned to last five years, although delays in disbursements and implementation might add years before the programme ends.
- The principal outputs of mine action (safe land and facilities; public awareness of dangers posed by landmines and UXO; amputees fitted with prostheses; etc.) are not ends in themselves; each mine action output is a means to an end. Therefore, mine action is (or should be) at the service of the mine-affected country and its citizens. At any point in time, it should be focusing the lion’s share of its resources in support of the most strategically important efforts under way in the country. More precisely, mine action should be focusing on those most important efforts constrained by landmine and UXO hazards. For example, the provision of resources—should also change as the emphasis shifts from humanitarian assistance through stabilisation to reconstruction and finally to development. Again, these typically will be relative shifts over time rather than abrupt changes, so there may be periods when the mine action programme is working in support of three types of programmes: humanitarian, reconstruction and development.

When segmented in this manner, the pattern of mine action expenditures over time might appear as depicted in Figure 1. Two additional types of changes will be occurring that also are vital to the performance of a country’s mine action programme. First, the programme’s capacities will be growing with new assets, training, better organisational management systems and experience. As well, capacities can be enhanced if countries adopt special legislation covering mine action, if public support for mine action grows, etc. Some of the likely developments over time for a mine action programme are listed at the bottom of the programme stages in Figure 1.

Getting Quickly to Development

The life-cycle perspective emphasizes that the links between mine action and development do not simply happen; rather, they emerge over time. The problem for mine action is that, over much of a programme’s life cycle, the attention is not on development but on other related

Figure 1: Stages of a mine action programme. Figure by GiCHD/MARC.
Humanitarian Demining as a Precursor to Economic Development, Lundberg [from page 53]  

1. D창b, J. [from page 55]  

The Road to Mine Action and Development: The Life-Cycle Perspective of Mine Action, Patterson and Filipino [from page 55]  

1. This phrase is from The World Bank, which has been in the forefront of planning, managing and post-conflict reconstruction since the wars arising from the break-up of Yugoslavia. The central role played by The World Bank in one of the defining features of post-conflict reconstruction offers, and during such periods the Bank may be an important source of financing for demining and rehabilitation.

2. Regional leaders would receive a strong similarity to Figure 1 in the article from Issue 9-1 (Chip Bertmon, “The Mining Link in Strategic Planning: ALABRA and the End-state Strategy Concept for National Mine Action Planning”), which was developed independently in 1998 by Chip Bertmon to illustrate the “End-state Strategy” approach to developing country mine action strategy for Camford, GICHD personnel developed the life-cycle perspective to illustrate not only the size of a programme but could eventually lead to the identification of cost-effective strategies for mine clearance.

3. Raw data does not help decision-makers unless it is analyzed into information. Information is the right data presented in the right format at the right time to the right people.

Mine Action and the Millennium Development Goals, Von Der Linden [from page 58]  


Environmental Applications in Demining, McLean [from page 60]  

1. Humanitarian and Environmental Demining, Geneva, Switzerland.


Chapter 23, Domberow [from page 62]  

1. To meet EOD level-three qualifications, a derminer must have specific training in disposal by detonation of larger UXO and artillery ammunition up to 240 mm. A level-three derminer should be qualified to render safe UXO for safe removal from the demining worksite and to undertake its final destruction.

2. These books can only be purchased by contacting Chris North at chintherth@btinternet.com or through his publisher, The Old Potter House.

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