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That Landmine Thing: Students Take on the Landmine Crisis

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That Landmine Thing: Students Take on the Landmine Crisis

Adopt-A-Minefield and Landmine Survivors Network developed a program called "That Landmine Thing" to raise money to help solve the worldwide landmine problem. Middle and high school students from all over the world have raised more than $180,000 (U.S.) for the cause.

A dopt-A-Minefield® and Landmine Survivors Network have joined forces to create That Landmine Thing, a student campaign involving thousands of young people from across North America interested in mine action. That Landmine Thing is an international fundraising campaign created for and by students to help clear minefields, assist survivors and raise awareness about the landmine problem. Since its inception, the campaign has been incredibly successful, involving nearly 1,000 schools and raising over $180,000—clearing four minefields in Cambodia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as providing survivors with appropriate medical care and the means to establish a livelihood.

The collaborative venture of AAM and LSN was born out of the crossover between the philosophies and missions of the two organizations. Adopt-A-Minefield clears minefields so可以 rebuild, land can once again be farmed and refugees can return safely home. Landmine Survivors Network assists survivors in obtaining appropriate medical care, rehabilitation, peer support, job training and human rights advocacy training. There is a natural symbiosis between these two objectives, and AAM and LSN have found a way to work in cooperation, benefitting each organization, the students, and the mine-affectd communities they serve.

AAM and LSN, along with the International Baccalaureate North America Office, invited IB schools throughout North America to participate in a region-wide creative and action-oriented service project to raise funds for mine action. The response from IB students was so successful that a minefield was cleared in Pursat, Cambodia, and various LSN survivor assistance programs were funded as well. Thanks to the efforts of the students, 60 families in Pursat were able to return to their previously mined land to farm the rice fields that serve as their main source of food and income.

The two organizations have demonstrated that the landmine issue is a natural draw for students. By participating in a fundraising campaign for mine action, students are developing critical thinking and leadership skills, tapping into their creativity, and learning about community, teamwork and service. By studying the impact of landmines around the world and doing something to solve the problem, students become true global citizens.

Each year, students across North America think of new, imaginative ways to raise money for global landmine clearance and victim assistance. Students have held dinners in the past four years to support Adopt-A-Minefield and Landmine Survivors Network. With each school event, support for the issue grows, and more importantly, awareness for this worldwide crisis builds. In just a short time, That Landmine Thing students have become models for how we can work together to educate our communities and make a difference.

That Landmine Thing is now in its fourth year of working with the IB students and is expanding to other schools. Its newsletter—also named That Landmine Thing—helps teachers incorporate the material into their curricula to expose students to fact information. Funds raised in the program clear minefields and help landmine survivors regain their lives. The campaign strengthens schools, allows students to act as a collective force and creates global citizens. But perhaps most importantly for these students, the campaign allows them to actively participate in eliminating one of the world’s most pressing humanitarian challenges before even graduating from high school—the global landmine problem.

By Zach Hudson [Adopt-A-Minefield] and Karla Fuentes [Landmine Survivors Network]
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