

Mine risk education

More than 80 countries are affected by the remnants of armed conflict and more than 40% of those killed or injured by landmines and exploded remnants of war (ERWs) are children.

Threats	Impacts
Detonation and explosion	Death or injury to people or livestock reduces communities' capacity to carry out everyday activities
Destruction of land / natural resources	Food insecurity as pastures and arable land unusable. Lack of access to water sources and destruction of woodland. Roads and bridges made unusable, affecting access to markets
Restricted movement	Social isolation as individuals and communities become socially and economically isolated
Trauma	Populations living in fear even long after a conflict has ended
Displacement	Refugees and IDPs prevented from returning home Rehabilitation and post-conflict reconstruction hampered

Mine action

Mine action refers to activities which reduce the social, economic and environmental impact of landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). As well as clearing affected land it is also about supporting people affected by landmine and ERW contamination.

International mine action standards (IMAS) provide guidance on safety, efficiency and effectiveness in mine action and promote a common and consistent approach to mine action operations. IMAS comprises five groups of activities:

- mine risk education (MRE)
- humanitarian demining, i.e. mine and ERW survey, mapping, marking unsafe areas, documenting cleared areas and, when necessary, clearance
- victim assistance, including rehabilitation and reintegration
- stockpile destruction
- advocacy against the use of anti-personnel mines (APM)

Community liaison and mine risk education (MRE)

Simply warning people about the dangers and fencing off affected land is not enough. People need to be encouraged to behave in ways that reduce risks.

MRE aims to reduce the risk of injury from mines and unexploded ordnance by raising awareness and promoting behavioural change through public information campaigns, education and training and liaison with communities.

Community engagement may begin well in advance of demining activities with a view to building capacity to assess risks, manage information and develop risk-reduction strategies. Effective systems are needed for exchanging information between national authorities, mine action organisations and communities in order to:

- enable communities to inform local authorities and mine action organisations about the location, extent and impact of contaminated areas
- enable mine action projects to address community needs and priorities
- inform communities of planned demining and related activities, such as technical surveys, marking and clearance operations, the exact locations of marked or cleared areas and risk reduction and survivor-assistance services



Actions for individuals and communities

Clearly identify affected areas - which may change as tides, floods or rainwater carry landmines to formerly uncontaminated areas.

Avoid travelling in landmine risk areas.

Develop reporting processes for sightings.

Educate children about the dangers.

Develop awareness campaigns on:

- recognising and reporting dangerous items
- areas of risk and contamination
- what to do in an emergency and how to keep others safe

Use a range of methodologies:

- face-to-face discussions and meetings
- radio and TV broadcasts
- billboards and posters
- drama and music

Train and equip community focal points and volunteers to conduct first aid and deliver mine risk education.

Additional resources on All In Diary website

Assistance to Victims of Landmines and ERW © UNICEF, 2014
Mine/ERW Risk Education © UNMAS 2010
Community Mine Action Liaison, © IMAS 2005
Landmines and ERW Safety Handbook, © United Nations 2005

Web links for further information

<https://www.mineactionstandards.org/standards/international-mine-action-standards-imas/imas-in-english/>
<http://www.mineaction.org/issues/education>
<http://www.maginternational.org/what-we-do/community-liaison/>