

*Protecting Civilians from*

# **Explosive remnants of war**

A Guide to Providing Warnings under CCW Protocol V



The background of the entire page is a photograph of a large pile of unexploded ordnance (UXO) inside a building with peeling walls. The ordnance consists of numerous cylindrical metal shells, some with visible fuses and markings, scattered across the floor. The lighting is somewhat dim, and the overall tone is a warm, orange-brown color.

## Acknowledgements

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## Foreword

A key objective of Norwegian foreign policy is to support and participate in international work aimed at reducing the threat posed by the use of inhumane weapons. Our government wishes to contribute to international work focusing on the suffering caused by explosive remnants of war.

Unexploded ordnance is killing and maiming large numbers of innocent civilians and has a severe and prolonged impact on rebuilding programmes.

International and non-governmental organisations merit appreciation for having brought these effects to the attention of the international community. Their initiatives and dedication in this respect over the last years were rewarded last November, when the meeting of State Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) adopted a much-needed legally binding protocol on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW).

A core element in this new instrument is the clear obligation it imposes on parties to a conflict to remove or destroy all explosive remnants from the battlefield without delay after the cessation of active hostilities.


Humanitarian clearance operations are essential for social recovery and economic development. However, clearance of mines and unexploded ordnance is a long and costly process. Thus, complementary provisions are necessary. Warnings and other forms of risk education are such complementary measures. If implemented with knowledge and skills and in accordance with the needs of the affected communities, risk education is a highly effective measure in itself, but would also enhance the end product of other measures being executed.

This publication provides guidelines necessary for effective execution of this important post-conflict remedial measure. It will support the implementation of obligations contained in the new ERW-protocol. We welcome the work of Landmine Action, which we feel merits the utmost attention of States and other parties to a conflict.

Let me therefore thank Landmine Action for this valuable and essential contribution to the international effort to reduce the humanitarian impact of ERW.

Norway's funding of the research and production of this guide is in line with our overall principles for humanitarian work.

*JAN PETERSEN, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norwegian Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs*



# Introduction

## ***The need for the guide***

Unexploded and abandoned ordnance – munitions such as bombs, shells and grenades – kill and injure thousands of civilians worldwide every year in dozens of countries across Asia, Africa, the Americas, Europe and the Middle East.

With the adoption in November 2003 of Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), States now have legal obligations to protect the civilian population against the threat of these explosive remnants of war, including through the provision of warnings and other risk education.

This guide is intended to assist governments and their armed forces and international and non-governmental organisations in the appropriate delivery of warnings against explosive remnants of war. It is based on the experiences of humanitarian organisations in this field over the last 15 years.

A second guide, also published by Landmine Action, *Protecting Civilians against Explosive Remnants of War: A Guide to Providing Risk Education under CCW Protocol V*, focuses on the provision of broader risk education. In addition to being available in hard copy, both documents can be downloaded from the Landmine Action website: [www.landmineaction.org](http://www.landmineaction.org). Hard copies can be requested by e-mail at: [info@landmineaction.org](mailto:info@landmineaction.org).

As explained below, although the international legal definition of explosive remnants of war (ERW) specifically excludes landmines and booby-traps – explosive traps designed to be victim-activated by pressure or tripwire – programmes and initiatives intended to protect civilians should cover all explosive devices left on the territory of a country during or after a conflict.

## ***The preparation of the guide***

*Protecting Civilians against Explosive Remnants of War: A Guide to Providing Warnings under CCW Protocol V* has been written by Laurence Desvignes, Stuart Maslen and Johan Sohlberg for Landmine Action. Input into the development of the guide was requested from States Parties to the CCW and



*Various items of unexploded ordnance – Iraq*

drafts of the guide were circulated widely for comment among specialist organisations before its finalisation; their input is gratefully acknowledged.

The project was managed by the Director of Landmine Action, Richard Lloyd, and funded by the Norwegian Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### ***How to use the guide***

This guide is intended to provide straightforward guidance on how to protect civilians against explosive remnants of war by providing warnings prior to, during, and immediately following, the use of munitions in armed conflict. It is written for the newcomer to the discipline, so no prior technical knowledge is assumed or required.

A more specific objective of the guide is to support the implementation of obligations to conduct or facilitate warnings and risk education contained in Protocol V to the CCW. In this, it is directed primarily to States, including

their armed forces, as well as to other parties to a conflict. (Other parties to a conflict are non-governmental armed groups, for example armed opposition groups, rebels or guerrillas.) It is also hoped that the guide will further strengthen the work of international and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The guide is divided into three main sections.

Section 1 looks at the international legal framework for warnings and risk education. It describes the limited obligations under international humanitarian law, identifies the requirements of CCW Protocol V, *including the definition of warnings*, and reviews the relationship of Protocol V to the obligations laid down by the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

Section 2 summarises best practice in the delivery of warnings, looking at some of the myths that proliferate in this sector. Hard lessons have been learnt in mine risk education (also called *mine awareness*) since the beginnings of mine action in the late 1980s.

Many different actors are involved in carrying out or supporting warnings and other risk education. Section 3 reviews the actual (or potential) roles and responsibilities of these actors, describing briefly their mandates and experiences in the field. Beyond States and other parties to a conflict (sometimes called non-State actors), we look at the United Nations and its relevant bodies and agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and NGOs.

The three Annexes contain: selected resources, including key documents and websites and contact information for the main actors (Annex 1); key extracts from CCW Protocol V (Annex 2); and adapted extracts from the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) (Annex 3).

# 1 Obligations under international humanitarian law

## ***Civilians must receive general protection***

According to 1977 Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, which governs international armed conflicts, the civilian population and individual civilians shall enjoy **“general protection against dangers arising from military operations.”** Similar obligations are included in 1977 Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions, which governs internal (civil) armed conflicts.

These obligations demand that parties to a conflict at all times “distinguish” between the civilian population and objects and military objectives, meaning they must direct their operations only against military objectives. It also requires that parties to a conflict take precautions in any attack to minimise civilian deaths and injuries.

These rules are generally considered to be customary international law, which binds every party to a conflict – government or armed opposition group – whether or not it has ratified the relevant Protocol. Subsequent treaties have built upon these general rules and provide more specific reference to the provision of warnings and risk education.

## ***Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons***

Protocol V to the CCW was adopted in November 2003 after a year of formal negotiations. Article 5 of the Protocol requires that States Parties and parties to a conflict take **“all feasible precautions in the territory under their control affected by explosive remnants of war to protect the civilian population, individual civilians and civilian objects from the risks and effects of explosive remnants of war.”** The article also provides that such precautions **“may include warnings, risk education to the civilian population, marking, fencing and monitoring of territory affected by explosive remnants of war.”**

Warnings are defined in the Technical Annex, rather than the body, of the Protocol: **“Warnings are the punctual provision of cautionary information to the civilian population, intended to minimise risks caused by explosive**

***remnants of war in affected territories.***

The Technical Annex is not legally binding, but gives guidance to the States Parties on “best practice” in the implementation of their obligations under the Protocol. The provisions of the Technical Annex are discussed in Section 2 below.



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*Various items of unexploded ordnance – Iraq*

A number of remarks are relevant here. First, the legal obligations under the Protocol are quite narrow as far as warnings are concerned: they are limited to territory under the control of a given State Party or party to a conflict. This means that a State Party bombing the territory of another State Party is not strictly required to provide warnings except on territory over which it also has control. There is nothing to prevent it providing warnings in other circumstances, however, and in a number of instances in the last few years this has occurred.

Second, the obligations are only to take “all feasible precautions” not all necessary precautions. Feasible precautions are defined in the Protocol as ***“those precautions which are practicable or practicably possible, taking into account all circumstances ruling at the time, including humanitarian and military considerations.”*** This leaves considerable latitude to the States Parties, who should be encouraged to accord the greatest importance to the humanitarian imperative in reaching any decision.

Third, warnings are ***not*** restricted to information given in advance. Indeed, Protocol V refers only to the “punctual” provision of cautionary information, which can therefore be delivered before and/or as soon as possible after the use of explosive ordnance. (Such information can even, theoretically, be delivered during a bombing campaign.)

Fourth, Article 4 requires States Parties “to the maximum extent possible and as far as practicable” to record and retain information on the use or abandonment of explosive ordnance, to facilitate risk education and the provision of relevant information to the party in control of the territory and to civilian populations in that territory.

## ***Amended Protocol II to the CCW***

The obligations laid down in Protocol V follows the logic of those imposed by Amended Protocol II to the CCW whereby “all feasible precautions” must be taken to protect civilians from the effects of landmines and booby-traps.

The protocol also requires, however, that “effective advance warning” be given “of any emplacement” of mines or booby-traps “which may affect the civilian population, unless circumstances do not permit.” It further obliges parties to the conflict to record the location of landmines and booby-traps and to take all necessary and appropriate measures to protect civilians from the effects of these weapons in areas under their control.

## ***Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention***

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention requires that States Parties “in a position to do so” provide support for *mine awareness* programmes, as part of a broader framework of international cooperation and assistance. The phrase “in a position to do so” is not defined in the Convention, but considerable resources have been allocated to mine awareness. In addition, while clearance of anti-personnel mines is ongoing, States Parties are required to mark and fence affected areas to protect civilians following the obligations in Amended Protocol II.

## ***A few words on terminology***

Mine awareness is what mine risk education used to be called (and many key actors, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), still prefer to use the term *mine awareness*). For some, including the ICRC, the two terms are synonyms.

According to the International Mine Action Standards issued by the United Nations, risk education includes not only public education but also community liaison (*see Protecting Civilians against Explosive Remnants of War: A Guide to Providing Risk Education under CCW Protocol V for a detailed discussion of community liaison.*)

As has been seen, Protocol V refers to both warnings and risk education.

## ***A comprehensive risk education programme – not two separate programmes!***

Of course, a well-structured awareness or risk education programme should include information on the dangers of all types of explosive remnants of war (including abandoned or looted ammunition as well as the threat posed by abandoned fighting vehicles and abandoned small arms and light weapons) and similarly a so-called “ERW risk reduction” programme should address, where relevant, the dangers of landmines.

There should, therefore, be no question of conducting separate programmes for mines on the one hand and explosive remnants of war on the other, on the basis of minimum legal requirements in the two different legal instruments: the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and CCW Protocol V. Where the threat to the civilian population comes both from landmines and from unexploded or abandoned ordnance, a single programme or initiative must address both aspects even where this goes beyond minimum legal obligations.

## ***Integration into the national mine action programme***

It is generally agreed that, as far as possible, warnings and other risk education should not be stand-alone programmes, but should be integrated into the national mine action programme.

Mine action comprises four other key components in addition to risk education: victim assistance, humanitarian demining (which includes marking, fencing, survey, clearance and community liaison), stockpile destruction, and advocacy against the use of anti-personnel mines. Thus, for example, messages could also inform the population where to seek medical assistance in case of injury in an incident involving ERW or to report findings of ERW so that they can be cleared.

Of course, as far as warnings are concerned, they are typically conducted in an emergency situation and the main focus is on preventing accidents through the provision of information. Anyone conducting warnings should, however, bear in mind the other aspects of mine action and see if other messages can be conveyed without detracting from that main focus.



## 2 Best practice in delivering warnings against ERW

### ***The objective of warnings***

Warnings thus have the sole objective of reaching as many people as possible within the shortest possible time with messages and advice on dangers and the correct behaviour to be adopted. Typically, warnings are delivered through one-way communication channels (public information campaigns) using primarily mass media items such as TV or radio spots, leaflets, posters, billboards, presentations, and so on.

But a warnings programme is only a temporary stop-gap measure and every effort should be made to evolve into a full risk education programme as soon as possible.

### ***The Technical Annex to Protocol V***

The non-legally binding Technical Annex to Protocol V outlines a number of “best practice elements of warnings and risk education”, as discussed below (*see also* Annex 2).

1. All programmes of warnings and risk education should, where possible, take into account prevailing national and international standards, including the International Mine Action Standards.

Only a small number of affected countries have so far adopted national standards based on the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), although the number is growing. Where national standards exist, these should of course be followed.

The IMAS “are standards issued by the United Nations to guide the planning, implementation and management of mine action programmes. They have been developed to improve safety and efficiency in mine action.”<sup>1</sup> They can be accessed at: [www.mineactionstandards.org](http://www.mineactionstandards.org).

Standards for mine risk education (MRE) have been approved as drafts and were due to become full standards by mid-2004. In total, seven standards deal with MRE, namely:

- IMAS 07.11 Guide for the management of MRE;
- IMAS 07.31 Accreditation of MRE organisations and operations;
- IMAS 07.41 Monitoring of MRE programmes and projects;
- IMAS 08.50 Data collection and needs assessment for MRE;
- IMAS 12.10 Planning for MRE programmes and projects;
- IMAS 12.20 Implementation of MRE programmes and projects; and
- IMAS 14.20 Evaluation of MRE programmes and projects.

Standard 07.11 should be read prior to reading the other six MRE standards and guides.<sup>1</sup> According to this IMAS, the term “mine risk education” (MRE) refers to educational activities which seek to reduce the risk of injury from mines and UXO by raising awareness and promoting behavioural change, including public information dissemination, education and training, and community mine action liaison.

MRE aims to ensure that communities are aware of the risks from mines, UXO and/or abandoned munitions and are encouraged to behave in a way which reduces the risk to people, property and the environment. The objective is to reduce the risk to a level where people can live safely; to recreate an environment where economic and social development can occur free from the constraints imposed by landmine contamination.

MRE has three components: public information dissemination, education and training, and community mine action liaison. They are complementary and mutually reinforcing. Descriptions of the three components are given below.

### ***Public information dissemination***

Public information in mine action refers to information which describes the mine and UXO situation, and is used primarily to inform and update a broad range of stakeholder groups, including populations at risk. Such information may focus on local risk reduction messages, or may address

<sup>1</sup> For an easy-to-read overview of the content of each of the IMAS, including those dealing with MRE, see e.g. *A Guide to the International Mine Action Standards*, GICHD, Geneva, December 2003, available at: [www.gichd.ch](http://www.gichd.ch).

broader national issues such as complying with legislation, or to raise public support for the mine action programme.

Public information dissemination as part of MRE refers primarily to public information activities, which seek to reduce the risk of injury from mines and UXO by raising awareness of the risk to individuals and communities, and by promoting behavioural change. It is primarily a one-way form of communication transmitted through mass media, which may provide relevant information and advice in a cost-effective and timely manner.

Public information dissemination projects may be “stand alone” MRE projects that are implemented independently, and often in advance of other mine action activities. In an emergency post-conflict situation, due to time constraints and lack of accurate data, public information dissemination is often the most practical means of communicating safety information to reduce risk. Equally they may form part of a more comprehensive risk reduction strategy within a mine action programme, supporting community based MRE, demining or advocacy activities.

### ***Education and training***

“Education and training” in MRE refers to all educational and training activities which seek to reduce the risk of injury from mines, UXO and/or abandoned munitions, by raising awareness of the threat to individuals and communities, and promoting behavioural change. Education and training is a two-way process, which involves the imparting and acquiring of knowledge, attitude and practice through teaching and learning.

Education and training activities may be conducted in formal and non-formal environments. For example, this may include teacher to child education in schools, parent to children and children to parent education in the home, child to child education, peer to peer education in work and recreational environments, landmine safety training for humanitarian aid workers and the incorporation of landmine safety messages in regular occupational health and safety practices.

### ***Community mine action liaison***

Community mine action liaison refers to the system and processes used to exchange information between national authorities, mine action organisa-

tions and communities on the presence of mines, UXO and abandoned munitions, and of their potential risk. It enables communities to be informed when a demining activity is planned to take place, the nature and duration of the task, and the exact locations of areas that have been marked or cleared.

Furthermore it enables communities to inform local authorities and mine action organisations on the location, extent and impact of contaminated areas. This information can greatly assist the planning of follow on mine action activities such as technical survey, marking and clearance, and if necessary the provision of assistance to landmine survivors. Community mine action liaison creates a vital reporting link to the programme planning staff, and enables the development of appropriate and localised risk reduction strategies. Community mine action liaison aims to ensure that mine action projects address community needs and priorities.

Community mine action liaison should be carried out by all organisations conducting mine action operations. These may be MRE-specific organisations, or MRE individuals and/or “sub-units” within a mine action organisation.

Community mine action liaison with the affected populations may start far in advance of demining activities and may help the development of a capacity at the community level to assess the risk, manage the information and develop local risk reduction strategies. This may assist communities gather the necessary information to lobby the relevant stakeholders and advocate for mine action and other assistance intervention.

### **Guiding principles for MRE**

According to the IMAS, guiding issues and principles for MRE programmes can be grouped into eight generic requirements:

- stakeholder involvement,
- coordination requirements,
- integration,
- community participation and empowerment,
- information management and exchange,

- community targeting,
- educational tools and methods, and
- the provision of appropriate and effective training to those responsible for implementing MRE projects.

2. Warnings and risk education should be provided to the affected civilian population which comprises civilians living in or around areas containing explosive remnants of war and civilians who transit such areas.

Defining the target groups for warnings is one of the starting points for any effective intervention. In addition to the obvious at-risk groups already living in affected areas, the displaced, including refugees, often fall victim to explosive remnants of war. To hope to be effective, warnings should be given prior to, if possible during, and following return or repatriation.

The return of refugees and/or internally displaced persons could be a planned activity or spontaneous return decided on by the population themselves. Regardless, experience has shown that population movements are one of the main triggering factors for an increase in incidents involving ERW.

There are basically two reasons for this. First, the areas that displaced populations evacuated are sometimes deserted until their return. If they are, this means there will be a lack of knowledge about where and when the clashes took place, what weapons were used and whether there have been any earlier incidents involving ERW. (Where areas are not entirely deserted, of course, there may be a reliable local source of knowledge for returnees.)

Second, there is a naturally strong will to investigate the normal habitat. Even though returning populations may have been warned about possible dangers and advised to obtain local knowledge about the situation before approaching their own home, they very often go directly home into their deserted gardens and houses to see what has happened while they were gone. This very often results in tragic incidents in the very first days of return.

3. Warnings should be given, as soon as possible, depending on the context and the information available. A risk education programme should replace a warnings programme as soon as possible. Warnings and risk education always should be provided to the affected communities at the earliest possible time.

It is clear that time is of the essence in any warnings or other risk education programme. In fact, warnings should be considered a subset of risk education, not a completely separate discipline as is often believed. What distinguishes the two is that warnings are delivered by inherently one-way communication channels in an emergency, whereas risk education is (or should be) a more long-term and participatory process.

The name of the generic subject is “risk education” (usually called *mine* risk education, as it is under the IMAS, even when the ordnance in question is ERW and not mines). Risk education covers all initiatives based on information, education and training intended to instil safe behaviour and thereby reduce the risk to the civilian population from landmines, abandoned and unexploded ordnance.

4. Parties to a conflict should employ third parties such as international organisations and non-governmental organisations when they do not have the resources and skills to deliver efficient risk education.

The best-placed entity to deliver warnings should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Some of the issues to consider in reaching a decision on this include the community perception of the militaries involved (e.g. are they considered an impartial authority or is what they say automatically deemed to be propaganda?), their expertise in risk education and their logistical set-up. Of course, it may not necessarily be an either/or situation: the military, civil defence and humanitarian organisations may all be able to contribute to saving lives and limbs.

It is important to keep the issue of time in mind when deciding who should be involved. The national authorities (military units, civil defence, etc.) have the resources and skills to deliver an effective programme in the long run. But humanitarian organisations can also be usefully involved at the outset of a warnings and risk education campaign, as their experience gained in other contexts may save valuable time and avoid the need to “reinvent the wheel”.

5. Parties to a conflict should, if possible, provide additional resources for warnings and risk education. Such items might include: provision of logistical support, production of risk education materials, financial support and general cartographic information.

Here, it is implicit that in situations where the military is not best placed to

deliver warnings directly, it can still support others in doing so. A word of caution, however. Although this part of the Technical Annex refers to the production of risk education materials, care must be taken not to just adapt materials taken from another context. Cultural and linguistic factors **must** be taken into account otherwise the entire venture may be a waste of time and effort. This issue is discussed further in the section on myths below.

One of the best ways of supporting an international organisation conducting the warnings is to ensure or facilitate access to public information sources without having to jump through unnecessarily complicated administrative hoops and, if possible, at no cost. This could be access to broadcasting times on government media (TV and radio stations), the opportunity to include public announcements in newspapers or to facilitate delivery of warnings through the national postal service, and by putting up public warning announcements in public institutions. In the long run this would also mean that the Ministry of Education would facilitate the inclusion of warnings and risk education in the national educational curriculum.

### ***Some common myths exploded***

There are many “myths” in mine action and the field of warnings and other risk education is no exception. This subsection discusses some of the key ones.

#### ***Myth 1 To protect themselves effectively, civilians need to be able to identify the different types of munitions around and their fusing mechanisms.***

For the non-expert, most military munitions are simply lumped together under the term “mine” or “bomb”. But what is important is not detailed technical information, such as whether the danger in question comes from a bounding fragmentation mine or a rocket-propelled grenade, but the dangers that may arise if any explosive items are disturbed.

A lot of time in risk education programmes is wasted on materials that show dozens of different types of ordnance, with little benefit to the civilian population. Sometimes, they have even tempted children into trying to collect the different items in order to get “a set”!

Efforts should concentrate on giving civilians useful information about how to prevent death or injury and what to do if they encounter abandoned or

unexploded ordnance. If, however, specific munitions are to be illustrated on any materials, they should at least be life-size, the correct shape and colour and preferably depicted *in situ*.

***Myth 2 The best way to warn civilians about the dangers from explosive remnants of war is to put up posters and hand out T-shirts with safety messages on them.***



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*Distribution of leaflets – Iraq, April 2003*

There is no generic formula for the communication media to be used to reach the target population. It is ALL context-dependent. But there are a few hard and fast lessons to be heeded:

- First, so-called “small media” like posters and leaflets and T-shirts are relatively expensive and reach a small audience, who have to be able to read the language(s) on them.
- Second, research has shown that local or community radio (and television where there is access to it) is one of the most underused resources in risk education.
- Third, a mix of communication channels (mass media, small media, traditional media, such as song and dance, and interpersonal communication – people talking to each other) is always best.
- Fourth, over the long-term positive messages (indicating action that can be taken to keep oneself alive and well, such as “Stay on the safe path”) are better than negative messages (Don’t touch!).

***Myth 3 There’s no time to assess the specific needs of the civilian population. In an emergency, you just have to get out there and do something useful.***

Of course, time is limited and the pressure to “do something” is intense. But even taking a little time to plan warnings activities will pay dividends.



*Explosive remnants of war near a football pitch in southern Iraq*

- ***What is the threat actually being faced?*** Although unexploded artillery shells dominate the threat in one part of the country, other areas might be affected by different types of ordnance, such as cluster munitions.
- ***Who is really at risk? Everyone equally?*** Stable communities as much as the displaced or nomadic communities? Urban as well as suburban or rural communities? Children as well as adults?
- ***How do people pass on information to each other?*** Think about what will be most effective and consult people who come from the local culture and who, inevitably, know more than you do!

Although it may be difficult, it is normally possible to involve some representatives of the affected communities even in the planning for a warnings programme (especially in a refugee situation). This will strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of the programme and help to avoid cultural and linguistic mistakes that have often plagued risk education in the past.

***Myth 4 There's no need to design new materials for every new conflict – what's worked in one place, will work in another. And slogans can be easily translated into the local language.***

This is a far too common error in risk education. Again, pressure to do something leads to what can only be termed laziness. And this laziness may be at best less effective and at worst dangerous.

So if you decide to design any materials for your warnings programme, start from scratch using local expertise as far as possible and on the basis of whatever knowledge you have, however limited it may be. It's not that time-consuming, it just needs a little thought and organisation.

***Myth 5 The military and humanitarian organisations speak different languages so there's no point in talking to each other about warnings and risk education.***

It is not only possible, it is essential that the military and humanitarian organisations talk to each other. To the maximum extent, therefore, actors involved in providing any form of risk education should share all the information they have on the threat and their response to it and coordinate their activities.

If a national or regional mine action centre is functioning, this body will be responsible for operational coordination of all risk education. They may have a mine action database, such as the IMSMA (Information Management System for Mine Action) in which case, all actors should contribute to it – and consult it.

***Myth 6 Trying to evaluate the effectiveness of the warnings you provide is wasting time. What's done is done.***

Every programme needs evaluating and we all need to learn from our successes as well as our failures. Too often, programmes launch into the production of expensive materials before knowing whether they are (a) needed, (b) appropriate, and (c) effective. Again, a little time and effort will pay dividends.

But certain risk education organisations have finally begun to evaluate their programmes more systematically. Some, such as Handicap International and the ICRC, have even posted the results on the internet so that others can learn from their experiences.

## ***How to provide warnings in ten easy steps***

So, based on these lessons, here's what you can do quickly and cheaply to plan, deliver and evaluate warnings about explosive remnants of war in ten easy steps.

Setting up a full risk education programme takes time, which is why most warnings initiatives are started as soon as possible, rather than waiting for a fully-fledged education programme. As stated earlier, warnings have the sole objective of reaching as many people as possible within the shortest possible time with messages and advice on the dangers and appropriate behaviour.

Of course, the more time and money you have, the better you can target those at risk. In any event, as soon as possible after launching a warnings programme it should be the ultimate aim to change it to a full risk education programme. This issue should already be taken into account when beginning to plan and implement the warnings programme.

Plan for a full mine/ERW risk education programme from the first day!

### **Ten steps to success...**

These ten steps are in the order in which they should be carried out. This does not, however, exclude the possibility of skipping one or two of them to get things moving - so long as you come back later to fill in the gaps.

#### **1 Assess the situation**

Finding the answers (as best you can) to these basic questions will help you design the warning programme:

- **What is the threat actually being faced?** What type(s) of ERW are injuring or killing people? What is the geographic area affected and what is the population's access to the area? Is the problem different in different areas of the country?
- **Who is really at risk?** Who is moving in the affected areas? Adults or children (or both)? Men or women (or both)? Are incidents prevalent among

certain occupations? Are settled, displaced or nomadic populations at particular risk? What are common behaviours and beliefs that lead to incidents? Are dangerous areas known and/or marked as dangerous?

- ***How do people pass on information to each other?*** Think about what will be most effective and consult people who come from the local culture and who, inevitably, know more than you do. What means do the authorities normally use to convey information to the public? Are TV/radio messages, newspapers, printed material or information sessions equally effective and efficient or would one be preferred over the other?

Targeting the specific information needs of different target audiences is desirable, but in this emergency phase, you may have to generalise and just get the main messages across to as large a population as possible in the shortest possible time. But don't be tempted to skip this first step altogether: even a little time spent investigating and reflecting will pay dividends.

## ***2 Establish reporting procedures***

When the population starts to receive information and warnings about the danger they will also need to be able to report on what they have seen. Decisions therefore have to be taken on reporting procedures in order for the authorities to deal as soon as they can with the ERW contamination.

Using already established reporting channels (e.g. emergency phone numbers) is obviously preferable, otherwise it may be necessary to establish a special report line with a simple telephone number. This has been done in a number of affected countries, such as Croatia and Lebanon. Where there is no access to a phone the local authorities or police should normally be the first point of contact.

Staff taking calls on these numbers must receive basic training on what to do with the information and what advice to give to the caller. This could be a simple set of questions to be asked (e.g. what is the problem?, location?, quantity of ERW?, proximity to inhabited areas?, known incidents?, etc.).

At the same time, an initial decision will have to be taken on which authority or authorities are to be tasked to deal with the ERW clearance (i.e. military units, civil defence, police, etc.).

### **3 Determine the key messages**

To design the messages use information coming from the field, if any is available; analyse the results of your assessment (see step 1); interview refugees or the displaced on the ERW threat; and, of course, talk to the military who are using ordnance.

Do not copy material from another context! You can, if absolutely necessary, use it for inspiration, but even this approach has dangers as the temptation to copy may be too strong.

Make use of in-country resources as much as you can, for example, but using local artists and designers.

When formulating the messages:

- Make sure the messages are relevant,
- Use words that attract the eye and are catchy (i.e. slogans, rhymes and wordplays all make it easier to remember the messages),
- Make sure the language used is simple (i.e. short words are better than long sentences and complicated words),
- Be aware of what is socially, culturally and religiously appropriate,
- Avoid using dialect that could be misunderstood if the messages end up in the wrong location/community.

So, for example, don't say:

"Explosive remnants of war can be hazardous or fatal and should be avoided. It is forbidden to move closer to them..."

Say:

"Military objects are dangerous and can kill you! Do not approach! Report any objects you find to the police."

### **4 Select the communication approach**

As important as it is to have good printed material and well-made radio/TV spots, it is also crucial to have a plan for how the messages should be

communicated. Establish a plan of action for the communication with the target audience. This plan could be made in a simple matrix:

Target group	Main message	Media to be used	Time frame	Responsible

## **5 Train your staff**

Train your staff to ensure that they understand, at a minimum:

- Questions and answers covered by the assessment,
- Why they should not talk about how mines/ERW technically work,
- Basic communication techniques, and
- Procedures for reporting dangerous areas and ERW incidents.

## **6 “Mini” field-test the messages and the communication approach**

Field-testing procedures normally take some time but even if time is very limited a “mini” field-test should always be carried out before programme activities are actually launched.

Selecting a sample group from the intended target population to represent the geographical areas, different social levels in society, gender, age, religions etc. is the easiest way to get this done. This group will then see/listen to media spots, as well as read the printed materials. Then information will be gathered on:

1. How the group actually comprehends the messages, and
2. How they like the material/approaches.

By this simple exercise it is possible to identify problems in the messages and approach chosen and to make adjustments. The testing procedure should be repeated following changes of the messages/approaches.

## **7 Keep warnings simple**

Typically, warnings are one-way communication channels (public information campaigns) using primarily mass media and small media items:

**TV/Radio spots:** A mix of different stations is normally the best as different people watch/listen to different stations. It is good, however, to make use of as much local media as possible for local adaptation of warning messages as well as language. This might be the only information means possible for some target audiences, in occupied territories for example.

General rules for the use of media are:

- Keep it short and concise - don't confuse your audience with too much information;
- Use simple, straightforward language;
- Offer specific, practical advice;
- Organise the information clearly and logically; and
- Repeat the information.

**Handouts:** Leaflets can easily be printed in large quantities and distributed either by the national postal service or through community networks. It is important, however, to keep in mind that this information will only be effective if the population feels attracted to read it and actually understands the information it gives.

**Public announcements:** Billboards and posters along roads and in urban areas are other passive information carriers that can be used. Again, it's important that the message is clear, comprehensible and relevant to the target audience.

**Avoid fancy design companies and complicated production procedures. The simple aim is to get the information to the target audience as soon as possible.**

Channels and procedures typically used by the authorities for public information are probably the best option, as everyone involved will know how it is "normally" done. If TV and radio are to be used the best option is

probably to use well-known newsreaders to give warning messages rather than unknown actors.

NEVER show images or footage of someone touching ERW.  
REMEMBER that one of the basic messages is:  
***“Bombs or grenades should never be touched  
– they may explode and kill or maim you!”***

## **8 Make your programme as participatory as you can**

If possible, some interactive/participatory (two-way) communication techniques should be used in a small-scale warnings campaign. This can later be developed once a full risk education programme replaces the warning campaign. Remember, the more people are actively involved in the programme, the more likely they are to follow your advice.

**Presentations:** These can sometimes be more of a one-way communication approach, but we strongly encourage using professional teachers or actors to convey the messages in an interactive way. This can either be done through traditional methods (i.e. songs, dances, theatre, public story telling, puppet theatre etc.) or by teaching activities at schools and other public places (e.g. community meetings, religious meetings etc.).

**Community networks:** These are commonly part of a long-term approach, but can easily be developed by training information resources in the local community (e.g. teachers, community leaders, religious leaders, etc.). This normally builds on person-to-person communication to ensure the best results.

**Curriculum activities:** For a government-run warning campaign it should be possible to ensure that the messages and activities are included in the national educational curriculum. This is not only effective in reaching the younger generations but can also reach parents, as children get assignments to carry safety information home and report on the local ERW situation back to the classroom.

**Move to a full risk education programme as soon as you can!**

## **9 Report on what you've done**

Setting up an efficient reporting system to follow what has been achieved, for what target audience, and in what geographical area will greatly benefit the programme, especially when it develops into a risk education programme. It also helps to integrate your programme into the national mine action programme. Reports will also serve as good information sources when reporting to media and donors.

## **10 Learn from your mistakes and your successes**

If we follow the evolution of the warnings programme and the way it is being implemented it is also possible to see if the messages and communication approach chosen are appropriate and effective.

- Are you reaching the people you want to reach?
- Are they understanding your advice?
- Are they following it?
- If not, why not...?

It is therefore important to look at both the failures and the successes of the programme. When the programme is government-run it is possible to use the same function as public media organisations use to monitor the population's opinions (e.g. Ministry of Information research departments, polling companies etc.).

## **Other measures to be taken...**

In addition to the warnings look also at the possibilities of:

- Posting warning signs close to dangerous areas,
- Fencing dangerous areas,
- Patrolling certain dangerous areas for the safety of the population, and
- Changing national legislation to make handling and possession of ERW, as well as entering into marked dangerous areas, a criminal act.



## 3 Partners in warnings and risk education

There are many different actors potentially involved in supporting or conducting ERW risk education at field level. We now look at some of the main ones, notably the future States Parties to CCW Protocol V and other parties to a conflict falling under its scope (who will have moral as well as legal obligations to fulfil), the UN, including its relevant bodies and agencies, regional organisations, the ICRC, and other organisations such as NGOs and the GICHD.

### ***States Parties***

As we have seen, under Protocol V States Parties have obligations to seek to protect civilians, the civilian population and civilian objects from the effects of explosive remnants of war. The obligation on States Parties includes involving the relevant ministries of affected countries (e.g. of education or health).

These obligations can be fulfilled by direct provision of warnings, notably by a State Party's armed forces, or by providing financial support to an organisation or body better placed to provide such warnings.

### ***Other parties to the conflict***

Similar obligations apply to other parties to a conflict (sometimes called non-State actors) falling under the scope of CCW Protocol V. These armed groups may not have the financial, human or technical capacity to fulfil the requirements and aspirations of the Protocol. They can, however, offer unfettered and safe access to affected populations and cooperate in the implementation of a programme by an organisation or agency.

### ***The United Nations***

UN peacekeepers, under the control of the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), have sometimes been involved in risk education activities (in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, for example). Within the UN system, UNMAS – the Mine Action Service – is the focal point for all mine

and UXO-related activities. It is located within the DPKO in the UN Secretariat.

UNICEF – the Children’s Fund – has primary responsibility for risk education for all sections of the population, not just children. In this capacity, UNICEF supports programmes in nearly 30 countries and has completed the drafting of international standards for mine risk education within the context of the IMAS (International Mine Action Standards) issued by the UN.

In any given conflict, all three of these bodies may have an important role to play in supporting and/or coordinating risk education activities.

### ***Regional organisations***

A number of regional organisations, military and civilian, also have potential roles and responsibilities in providing or supporting risk education to at-risk communities. These include the European Commission, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Southern African Development Committee (SADC). Their precise involvement will of course depend on the context – geographical, military and political.

### ***The International Committee of the Red Cross***

The ICRC, whose mandate, given by the international community, is the protection of the victims of war, is one of the leading actors in mine/ERW awareness, with programmes in many countries worldwide. The ICRC always works in close collaboration with the national Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in the programme implementation.

Beside the mine/ERW awareness programmes (in ICRC normally referred to as Towards Safer Communities), the ICRC and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies provides assistance to victims, as well as promoting international humanitarian law through dialogue with authorities. Although not directly involved in clearance activities, the Red Cross movement will advocate for demining, and/or marking of dangerous areas, and through its community links speak for the local community in terms of socio-economic needs, with the aim of ensuring an effective prioritisation of clearance efforts.

The ICRC normally works in close collaboration with the clearance organisations and has both had agreements on clearance work – for example in the territory of Kosovo, and providing mine-field marking materials to clearance teams in Lebanon and Iraq – as well as provided ambulances to support the clearance operation in Nicaragua.

The Red Cross movement's mine action work is guided by:

- Guidelines on RC/RC involvement in mine-clearance activities (1997), and
- Movement Strategy for Landmines (adopted by Council of Delegates in 1999).



© Johan Söhlberg, ICRC

*Female deminer in Kosovo*

## ***Non-governmental and other organisations***

Humanitarian NGOs are organisations that are typified by their objectives – to promote development and to ease suffering around the world. To date, they have been among the major implementers of risk education programmes and some of the best innovators of new programme approaches. Indeed, their often close relationship with the community is an invaluable asset in any warnings and risk education programme.

### **International NGOs**

Several international NGOs that are specific to, or have a considerable involvement in, broader mine action, such as Danish Church Aid, the HALO Trust, Handicap International, Mines Advisory Group, Norwegian People's Aid and the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, also have a risk education component.

## **Local NGOs**

Many local or indigenous NGOs have also been involved in direct implementation of risk education activities, typically with the support of the UN and/or international NGOs.

## **Commercial companies**

Increasingly, commercial companies are also involved in providing risk education, normally as part of a demining programme, but sometimes as a joint venture with an NGO.

## **Academic and research institutions**

Academic and research institutions have been playing an important role in surveys, analysis, training and developing methodologies and tools for information gathering. The Mine Action Information Centre at James Madison University, for example, has a useful online database ([www.hdic.maic.edu](http://www.hdic.maic.edu)), which includes discussion of lessons learned in mine action.

## **The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining**

The GICHD is a Swiss-based organisation that provides operational and technical assistance in mine action, including risk education. It has an outreach component that can support training in risk education programmes upon request.

### ***Annex 1 Selected resources***

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) has expertise on risk education, including the provision of training, within its Socio-Economic Section. For further information contact Eric Filippino (tel: + 41 22 906 1660; fax: + 41 22 906 1690; e-mail: [e.filippino@gichd.ch](mailto:e.filippino@gichd.ch)). It has published a guide to improving communication in mine risk education, available at: [www.gichd.ch](http://www.gichd.ch).

Handicap International

Handicap International France has developed a basic guide to planning and implementing mine risk education: *Mine Risk Education Guide*, Handicap International, Lyons, France, 2001. See Handicap International's website: [www.handicap-international.org](http://www.handicap-international.org).

IMSMA

The Information Management System for Mine Action

This is the UN's preferred database system for managing mine action information and is used by most of the mine action centres around the world. It has a module specifically for recording information related to risk education programmes. See [www.gichd.ch](http://www.gichd.ch) for details.

IMAS

The International Mine Action Standards

The International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), including the IMAS on mine risk education, are available online at: [www.mineactionstandards.org](http://www.mineactionstandards.org).

The International Committee of the Red Cross

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has a specialist at its headquarters dealing with mine awareness. Contact the Communication Department (tel: + 41 22 730 6001). See also the ICRC website: [www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org).

The United Nations Children's Fund

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is the UN focal point for mine

risk education (MRE) and has developed the MRE standards for the IMAS.  
Contact UNICEF HQ in New York (tel: + 1 212 326 7000; e-mail:  
*landmines@unicef.org*; website: *www.unicef.org*)

## ***Annex 2 Protocol V (extracts)***

*The High Contracting Parties,*

*Recognising* the serious post-conflict humanitarian problems caused by explosive remnants of war,

*Conscious* of the need to conclude a Protocol on post-conflict remedial measures of a generic nature in order to minimise the risks and effects of explosive remnants of war,

(...)

*Have agreed as follows:*

### ***Article 2 - Definitions***

For the purpose of this Protocol,

1. Explosive ordnance means conventional munitions containing explosives, with the exception of mines, booby traps and other devices as defined in Protocol II of this Convention as amended on 3 May 1996.
2. Unexploded ordnance means explosive ordnance that has been primed, fused, armed, or otherwise prepared for use and used in an armed conflict. It may have been fired, dropped, launched or projected and should have exploded but failed to do so.
3. Abandoned explosive ordnance means explosive ordnance that has not been used during an armed conflict, that has been left behind or dumped by a party to an armed conflict, and which is no longer under control of the party that left it behind or dumped it. Abandoned explosive ordnance may or may not have been primed, fused, armed or otherwise prepared for use.
4. Explosive remnants of war means unexploded ordnance and abandoned explosive ordnance.
5. Existing explosive remnants of war means unexploded ordnance and abandoned explosive ordnance that existed prior to the entry into force of this Protocol for the High Contracting Party on whose territory it exists.

### ***Article 4 - Recording, retaining and transmission of information***

1. High Contracting Parties and parties to an armed conflict shall to the maximum extent possible and as far as practicable record and retain information on the use of explosive ordnance or abandonment of explosive ordnance, to facilitate the rapid marking and clearance, removal or destruction of explosive remnants of war, risk education and the provision of relevant information to the party in control of the territory and to civilian populations in that territory.
2. High Contracting Parties and parties to an armed conflict which have used or abandoned explosive ordnance which may have become explosive remnants of war shall, without delay after the cessation of active hostilities and as far as practicable, subject to these parties' legitimate security interests, make available such information to the party or parties in control of the affected area, bilaterally or through a mutually agreed third party including *inter alia* the United Nations or, upon request, to other relevant organisations which the party providing the information is satisfied are or will be undertaking risk education and the marking and clearance, removal or destruction of explosive remnants of war in the affected area.
3. In recording, retaining and transmitting such information, the High Contracting Parties should have regard to Part 1 of the Technical Annex.

***Article 5 - Other precautions for the protection of the civilian population, individual civilians and civilian objects from the risks and effects of explosive remnants of war***

1. High Contracting Parties and parties to an armed conflict shall take all feasible precautions in the territory under their control affected by explosive remnants of war to protect the civilian population, individual civilians and civilian objects from the risks and effects of explosive remnants of war. Feasible precautions are those precautions which are practicable or practicably possible, taking into account all circumstances ruling at the time, including humanitarian and military considerations. These precautions may include warnings, risk education to the civilian population, marking, fencing and monitoring of territory affected by explosive remnants of war, as set out in Part 2 of the Technical Annex.

## Technical Annex

### **2. Warnings, risk education, marking, fencing and monitoring**

#### *Key terms*

- (a) Warnings are the punctual provision of cautionary information to the civilian population, intended to minimise risks caused by explosive remnants of war in affected territories.
- (b) Risk education to the civilian population should consist of risk education programmes to facilitate information exchange between affected communities, government authorities and humanitarian organisations so that affected communities are informed about the threat from explosive remnants of war. Risk education programmes are usually a long term activity.

#### *Best practice elements of warnings and risk education*

- (c) All programmes of warnings and risk education should, where possible, take into account prevailing national and international standards, including the International Mine Action Standards.
- (d) Warnings and risk education should be provided to the affected civilian population which comprises civilians living in or around areas containing explosive remnants of war and civilians who transit such areas.
- (e) Warnings should be given, as soon as possible, depending on the context and the information available. A risk education programme should replace a warnings programme as soon as possible. Warnings and risk education always should be provided to the affected communities at the earliest possible time.
- (f) Parties to a conflict should employ third parties such as international organisations and non-governmental organisations when they do not have the resources and skills to deliver efficient risk education.
- (g) Parties to a conflict should, if possible, provide additional resources for warnings and risk education. Such items might include: provision of logistical support, production of risk education materials, financial support and general cartographic information.

*Marking, fencing, and monitoring of an explosive remnants of war affected area*

- (h) When possible, at any time during the course of a conflict and thereafter, where explosive remnants of war exist the parties to a conflict should, at the earliest possible time and to the maximum extent possible, ensure that areas containing explosive remnants of war are marked, fenced and monitored so as to ensure the effective exclusion of civilians, in accordance with the following provisions.
- (i) Warning signs based on methods of marking recognised by the affected community should be utilised in the marking of suspected hazardous areas. Signs and other hazardous area boundary markers should as far as possible be visible, legible, durable and resistant to environmental effects and should clearly identify which side of the marked boundary is considered to be within the explosive remnants of war affected area and which side is considered to be safe.
- (j) An appropriate structure should be put in place with responsibility for the monitoring and maintenance of permanent and temporary marking systems, integrated with national and local risk education programmes.

### ***Annex 3 The International Mine Action Standards (extracts)***

IMAS 07.11 – Guide for the management of mine risk education (edited extracts)

#### ***The development of international standards for mine risk education***

In 1998, International Guidelines for Landmine and UXO Awareness Education were developed by UNICEF with the aim of providing an internationally agreed approach to planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating mine risk education (previously referred to as “mine awareness”) programmes. At that time it was understood that these “Guidelines” would be subsequently reviewed to reflect developing mine action practices and norms.

Mine risk education (MRE) is one of the five components of mine action. The others are: demining, victim assistance, advocacy to stigmatise the use of landmines and support of a total ban on anti-personnel landmines, and stockpile destruction. The first two editions of the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) did not include MRE-specific standards and guides. This guide and others in the MRE series addresses the particular needs of MRE, as an integral part of mine action.

As with all IMAS, the purpose of the MRE standards and guides is to improve the safety and the efficiency of mine action. As the MRE standards and guides require a strengthened link between mine action operators and the affected communities, they also assist to improve the effectiveness of mine action operations.

This Guide for the Management of MRE and the other IMAS standards for MRE have been developed from, and replace, the aforementioned 1998 UNICEF Guidelines. The MRE series of IMAS has been sponsored and developed by UNICEF in recognition of its role as focal point for MRE within the United Nations. Input has been received from national mine action authorities, UNICEF field offices, and other organisations and individuals involved in the implementation of mine action.

In this Guide and other related IMAS documents the term mine awareness has been replaced by mine risk education – the meaning and scope of the term MRE is explained in this Guide.

### ***The application of IMAS to mine risk education***

The MRE series of IMAS have been developed to improve the quality of mine action programmes and to ensure that MRE can effectively meet the needs and priorities of the affected communities. They assist national mine action authorities to develop national standards and national standing operating procedures (SOPs) by establishing a frame of reference which can be used, or adapted for use, as a national standard. They also assist in the development of mine action organisations' SOPs.

The MRE standards and guides provide a common language, and recommend the formats and rules for handling data that enable the accurate and timely exchange of information. They also encourage national authorities to develop the tools and capacities to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate MRE within an integrated national mine action programme.

The MRE series of IMAS do not define the way in which MRE requirements are to be achieved in the field – that is covered in national and local SOPs, instructions and codes of practice. Guidance on the preparation of national and local SOPs for MRE, together with a portfolio of MRE tools and methods is given in the series Guidelines for Implementing MRE Programmes.

### ***Mine risk education***

The term “mine risk education” (MRE) refers to educational activities which seek to reduce the risk of injury from mines and UXO by raising awareness and promoting behavioural change, including public information dissemination, education and training, and community mine action liaison.

MRE aims to ensure that communities are aware of the risks from mines, UXO and/or abandoned munitions and are encouraged to behave in a way which reduces the risk to people, property and the environment. The objective is to reduce the risk to a level where people can live safely; to recreate an environment where economic and social development can occur free from the constraints imposed by landmine contamination.

MRE has three components: public information dissemination, education and training, and community mine action liaison. They are complementary and mutually reinforcing. Descriptions of the three components are given below.

### ***Public information dissemination***

Public information in mine action refers to information which describes the mine and UXO situation, and is used primarily to inform and update a broad range of stakeholder groups, including populations at risk. Such information may focus on local risk reduction messages, or may address broader national issues such as complying with legislation, or to raise public support for the mine action programme.

Public information dissemination as part of MRE refers primarily to public information activities, which seek to reduce the risk of injury from mines and UXO by raising awareness of the risk to individuals and communities, and by promoting behavioural change. It is primarily a one-way form of communication transmitted through mass media, which may provide relevant information and advice in a cost-effective and timely manner.

Public information dissemination projects may be “stand alone” MRE projects that are implemented independently, and often in advance of other mine action activities. In an emergency post-conflict situation, due to time constraints and lack of accurate data, public information dissemination is often the most practical means of communicating safety information to reduce risk. Equally they may form part of a more comprehensive risk reduction strategy within a mine action programme, supporting community based MRE, demining or advocacy activities.

### ***Education and training***

The term “education and training” in MRE refers to all educational and training activities which seek to reduce the risk of injury from mines, UXO and/or abandoned munitions, by raising awareness of the threat to individuals and communities, and promoting behavioural change. Education and training is a two-way process, which involves the imparting and acquiring of knowledge, attitude and practice through teaching and learning.

Education and training activities may be conducted in formal and non-formal environments. For example, this may include teacher to child education in schools, parent to children and children to parent education in the home, child to child education, peer to peer education in work and recreational environments, landmine safety training for humanitarian aid

workers and the incorporation of landmine safety messages in regular occupational health and safety practices.

### ***Community mine action liaison***

Community mine action liaison refers to the system and processes used to exchange information between national authorities, mine action organisations and communities on the presence of mines, UXO and abandoned munitions, and of their potential risk. It enables communities to be informed when a demining activity is planned to take place, the nature and duration of the task, and the exact locations of areas that have been marked or cleared.

Furthermore it enables communities to inform local authorities and mine action organisations on the location, extent and impact of contaminated areas. This information can greatly assist the planning of follow on mine action activities such as technical survey, marking and clearance, and if necessary the provision of assistance to landmine survivors. Community mine action liaison creates a vital reporting link to the programme planning staff, and enables the development of appropriate and localised risk reduction strategies. Community mine action liaison aims to ensure that mine action projects address community needs and priorities.

Community mine action liaison should be carried out by all organisations conducting mine action operations. These may be MRE-specific organisations, or MRE individuals and/or 'sub-units' within a mine action organisation.

Community mine action liaison with the affected populations may start far in advance of demining activities and may help the development of a capacity at the community level to assess the risk, manage the information and develop local risk reduction strategies. This may assist communities gather the necessary information to lobby the relevant stakeholders and advocate for mine action and other assistance intervention.

## IMAS 12.20 – Implementation of mine risk education programmes and projects (edited extracts)

The term “mine risk education” (MRE) refers to educational activities which seek to reduce the risk of injury from mines/UXO by raising awareness and promoting behavioural change; including public information dissemination, education and training, and community mine action liaison.

The term “MRE organisation” refers to any organisation, including governmental, non-governmental, civil society organisations (e.g. women’s union, youth union, red cross and red crescent societies), commercial entities and military personnel (including peace-keeping forces), which is responsible for implementing MRE projects or tasks. The MRE organisation may be a prime contractor, subcontractor, consultant or agent.

The term “national mine action authority or authorities” refers to the government department(s), organisation(s) or institution(s) in each mine-affected country charged with the regulation, management and co-ordination of mine action. In most cases the national mine action centre (MAC) or its equivalent will act as, or on behalf of, the national mine action authority. In certain situations and at certain times it may be necessary and appropriate for the UN, or some other recognised international body, to assume some or all of the responsibilities, and fulfil some or all of the functions, of a national mine action authority. In such cases the UN should provide appropriate technical support including suitably qualified personnel, experienced in MRE.

### ***Project implementation***

The successful implementation of an MRE project depends on the proper application of MRE tools and methods, revised as necessary to reflect changing needs, and based on feedback from the monitoring and evaluation of MRE projects.

The implementation of MRE should be conducted in close cooperation with the implementation of other mine action activities, and mine action organisations should share information with nearby activities.

MRE activities, messages and methodologies should be piloted or pre-tested with a representative group among the target population prior to full-scale project implementation.

## ***Public information dissemination***

Public information dissemination as part of MRE refers primarily to public information activities, which seek to reduce the risk of injury from mines and UXO by raising awareness of the risk to individuals and communities, and by promoting behavioural change. It is primarily a one-way form of communication transmitted through mass media, which may provide relevant information and advice in a cost-effective and timely manner.

Public information dissemination projects may be “stand alone” MRE projects that are implemented independently, and often in advance of other mine action activities. In an emergency post-conflict situation, due to time constraints and lack of accurate data, public information dissemination is often the most practical means of communicating safety information to reduce risk. Equally they may form part of a more comprehensive risk reduction strategy within a mine action programme, supporting community based MRE, demining or advocacy activities.

The needs assessment and planning phases should have identified access to mass media and patterns of radio listening, TV viewing and reading behaviour of the target groups. These may vary significantly between various groups and geographical areas, and the implementation of public information activities should recognise these differences. In addition to using the mass media, public information may also be disseminated via “small media”, such as posters and leaflets. Such media may be disseminated to areas with reduced access to mass media or as a support to mass media approaches. Posters and leaflets have limited value alone and should always be used in support of a wider MRE project.

For MRE projects of limited scope and duration, the implementation phase may be relatively short. However, for larger projects with several stages of varying duration, the implementation phase may be complex and difficult to manage. It may involve transferring management responsibilities from international staff to local employees, funding arrangements may change, and the operating environment may change from one of open conflict or humanitarian emergency to a more stable environment focused on development, requiring a change of the MRE tools and methods used to communicate with at-risk populations.



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