



COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING MRE AND PERCEPTIONS OF DEMINERS



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ACRONYMS

AFP	UN Agency Funds and Programmes
AMAC	Area Mine Action Centre
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
ANSO	Afghanistan NGO Safety Office
AOG	Armed Opposition Group
AP	Anti-Personnel
ARCS	Afghan Red Crescent Society
AT	Anti Tank
CBD	Community-Based Demining
CBMRE	Community-Based Mine Risk Education
DAFA	Demining Agency for Afghanistan
DDG	Danish Demining Group
DMC	Department of Mine Clearance
ERW	Explosive Remnant of War
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards
IP	Implementing Partner
KAPB	Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and Belief
LIS	Landmine Impact Survey
MA	Mine Action
MACCA	Mine Action Co-ordination Centre of Afghanistan
MAPA	Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan
MoE	Ministry of Education
MRE	Mine Risk Education
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
OMAR	Organisation for Mine Clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As one of the world's oldest mine action programmes, the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) has managed to continue its work through conflict and instability over a series of regime changes since its establishment in 1989.¹ With a new wave of transition already underway with the drawdown of foreign support and the transfer of greater responsibility to the government of Afghanistan, the MAPA will continue to serve Afghan communities through the delivery of mine action services. However, like many initiatives dependent on funding from the international community, it will need to achieve more with less in a tenuous political, economic and security environment.

Faced with these challenges, the Mine Action Co-ordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA) has commissioned Samuel Hall to assess the MAPA's current approach to MRE and community perceptions of deminers in order to provide strategic recommendations for a more cost-effective approach that meets the needs of the changing environment.

The findings in this report are based on fieldwork conducted in February and March of 2012 in the provinces of Kabul, Parwan and Paktia. These provinces were selected based on their concentration of hazards and history of deminer incidents. A number of qualitative and quantitative tools were used for the study including a quantitative survey of 500 individuals; focus group discussions with community members (men, women, children, teens), deminers, and land mine survivors; case studies with survivors and key informant interviews with relevant stakeholders.

PART I: MINE RISK EDUCATION

LOCAL RISK CULTURE

The impact of Mine Risk Education (MRE) is difficult to measure because risk behaviours are not a one-time output, but rather a series of decisions and actions that are perpetually influenced by a wide range of risk determinants. Individuals living in contaminated areas develop "mine smartness"² as a survival strategy based on available information; local norms and beliefs; personal/household needs; as well as the conditions and constraints of their environment.

While the impact of exogenously planned MRE is likely to be limited, "mine-risk education that takes into account the endogenous culture, building on risk-adverse behaviour and providing alternatives to risk-taking behaviour within this culture, could have a direct positive impact on individual practice."³

The awareness that mines and ERW exist and are dangerous is generally taken for granted by Afghans living in mine-affected areas, as this fact is part of their everyday reality. People in at-risk communities collect information about mine risk from a variety of sources over time. Most

¹ Paterson, Ted, Faiz Paktian and William Fryer (2008), "Assessment of the Mine Action Centre of Afghanistan (MACA), Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), Geneva.

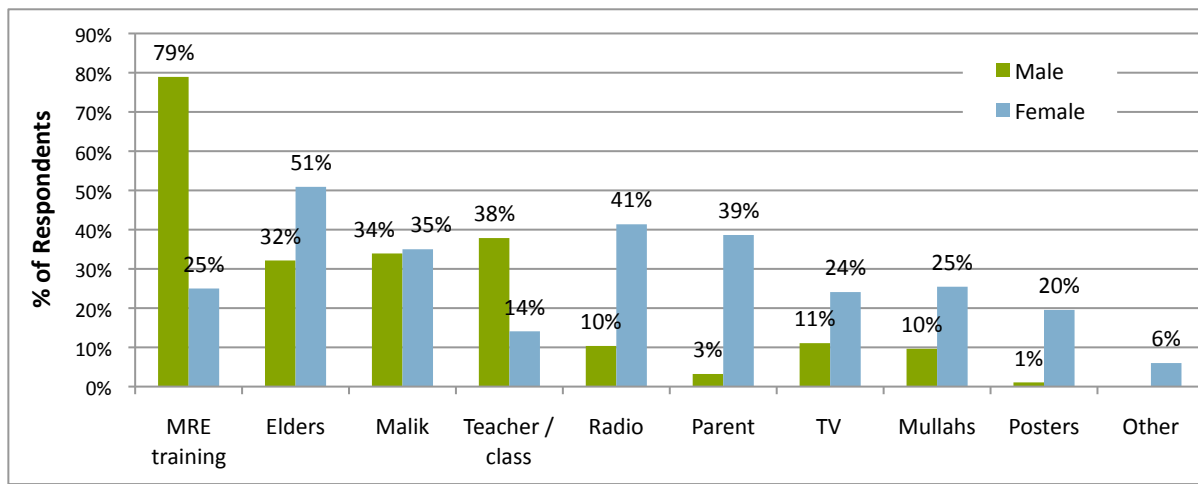
² "Mine smartness" is inspired by the term "street smart." *Source: Andersson et al, 2003.*

³ Andersson et al, 2003.

individuals surveyed reported that they had learned about mine risk from at least two sources, relying primarily on interpersonal communication as opposed to mass media.

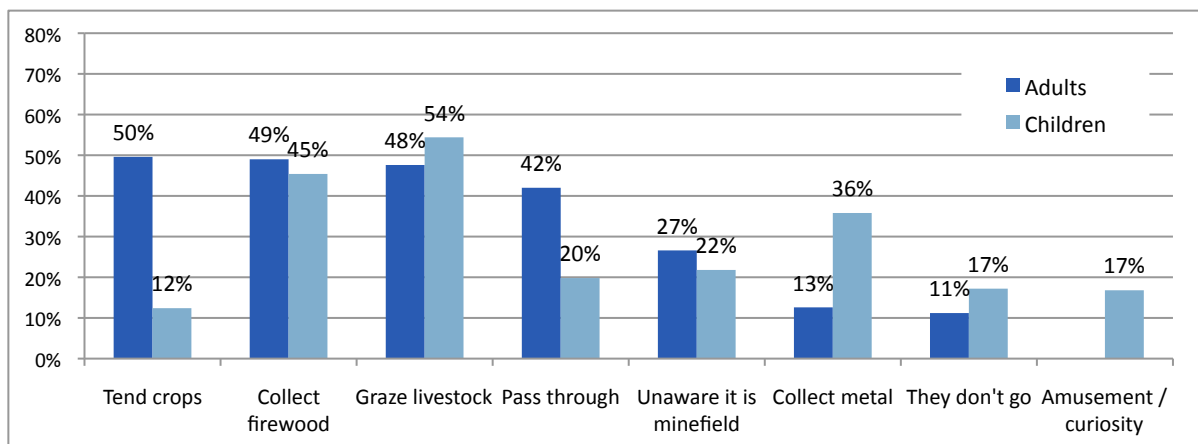
Sources of information about mine risk differ for men and women as strict observance of gender segregation alters the way they access and share information (FIGURE 0.1). Male adults and youth are more likely than women to learn about mine risk through formal channels such as MRE training in communities and schools. Community leaders and family were the most common sources of mine risk information for women. This also indicates that many recipients of MRE training follow the advice of discussing what they have learned with others.

FIGURE 0.1. SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT MINES AND ERW BY GENDER
 Q8. How did you learn about mines and ERW? (multiple answers possible)⁴



Despite awareness and information sharing amongst the general population mine and ERW-related accidents continue to occur at a rate of 34 per month.⁵ Adult and child risk takers are largely motivated by economic factors. When asked why adults in their area entered mined areas, survey respondents reported tending crops, grazing livestock, and collecting firewood as the top reasons (Figure 0.2). For children, the main motivations identified included grazing livestock, collecting firewood, and collecting metal.

FIGURE 0.2. REASONS FOR ADULTS & CHILDREN ENTERING CONTAMINATED AREAS
 Q10 & 13. For what reasons do adults/children in your community go into areas that are mined?



⁴ Based on responses from 280 male and 220 female survey participants. Answers for “Other” included other family members, friends/classmates, health centre, etc.

⁵ Average calculated based on statistics provided by the MACCA for 2011.

Focus group participants and surveyed individuals emphasised the role the community should play in disseminating MRE messages. While the responsibility for clearance was placed on deminers or the government, participants felt MRE was a shared responsibility that should be shared by families, community leaders, and teachers.

Clear preferences for certain modes of MRE delivery were demonstrated in the quantitative survey. For children, respondents felt MRE training in schools (35%) and communities (27%) were the best ways to communicate mine risk, followed by posters/pamphlets (22%). For adults, a majority of respondents preferred MRE training in communities (66%), followed by MRE delivered through community leaders (17%). A minority of respondents for each question selected TV and radio.

EVALUATION OF CURRENT APPROACH

The MAPA's current MRE approach is analysed through the prism of the three key elements of MRE: *i)* community mine action liaison; *ii)* education and training; and *iii)* public information dissemination. Each of the three categories is assessed based on coherence with community needs, cost-efficiency, and sustainability.

Community mine action liaison

Two types of mine action community liaison are currently being implemented: *i)* Community-Based MRE (CBMRE), which trains networks of volunteers to spread MRE, and *ii)* community liaison, which focuses on facilitating demining activities.

Community mine action liaison fits very well with the needs and preferences of at-risk populations in Afghanistan. Communities already feel implicated in mine action, and prefer MRE tools that directly involve communities. However, some of the at-risk populations are not always included in tight-knit community networks (*e.g.* returnees, Internally Displaced Persons, *Kuchi* nomads), and are therefore not included in community liaison processes.

Community mine action liaison is time consuming in the early stages, but more cost-efficient in the long run. Volunteers are trained to continue promoting MRE in their communities long after the initial training. Its emphasis on local ownership also fuels informal information sharing networks that might not otherwise be activated through less participatory approaches.

By working *with* the local mechanisms for coping with risk, rather than creating a parallel system, community mine action liaison is the most sustainable element of MRE efforts in Afghanistan. Its sustainability could be improved if liaison efforts for MRE and the rest of mine action were better integrated.

Education and training

The MAPA's current approach to education and training is placing increasing emphasis on incorporating MRE into pre-existing mechanisms that target the same beneficiaries as the MAPA (*e.g.* the national public school system, community development councils and encashment centres). The more traditional side of the MAPA's approach to education and training focuses on IPs providing training directly to beneficiaries through a variety of delivery methods including: MRE sessions in communities (often in mosques), mobile cinema, Mobile Mini Circus for Children, and MRE materials distribution.

The participatory nature of current MRE training and education initiatives corresponds well with the endogenous risk culture. Interpersonal communication was the common theme of those modes of

MRE delivery preferred by survey participants: MRE in schools, MRE in communities, MRE through community leaders, etc.

While proven to be effective in spreading awareness, direct delivery of one-shot MRE training in communities is not as cost-efficient or sustainable as community mine action liaison. They are most useful where a rapid response is needed to prevent casualties while clearance is conducted or while a more sustainable, community-based risk management mechanism is established. Direct delivery should still be a part of the MAPA's approach to MRE; however, greater emphasis should be placed on training community volunteers to conduct the same types of training.

Partnerships with pre-existing structures (*e.g.* UNHCR, MoE, MRRD/NSP) represent a cost-efficient and sustainable strategy that should be pursued further. It ensures that multiple networks engaged in at-risk communities are armed with the knowledge to deliver MRE as necessary in the field.

Public information dissemination

Broad public information dissemination through mass media is no longer a central element of the MAPA's approach to MRE, as a large proportion of the general population is already aware of basic MRE principles. Public information dissemination is an effective way to raise visibility of an issue, but it does not create long-lasting behaviour change and it is very costly. It was important in the early years of raising general awareness, but as progress continues to be made to clear land of mines and ERW, a more targeted approach is needed to reach those most in need of risk reduction strategies.

MRE RECOMMENDATIONS

Community Mine Action Liaison

Prioritise community mine action liaison within the MRE strategy to:

Ensure that communities have ownership of risk reduction efforts

Local communities have already demonstrated a desire and capacity to spread MRE through their communities. MRE efforts need to capitalise on this momentum and work with communities to develop local solutions to risk reduction that target at-risk populations.

Gain access to remote and insecure areas

By using community-based MRE, volunteers from the communities are trained to promote MRE in areas where mine action professionals do not have access. CBMRE, as well as community-based demining has already proven to be an effective, cost-efficient means of reaching previously inaccessible areas.

Collect information and data from communities

Community liaison is about information sharing in both directions, not just raising awareness. The network of community representatives and volunteers engaged in this process should be better utilised to collect data that informs mine action initiatives (*e.g.* victim data collection). SMS technology for reporting should be considered to facilitate this process.

Streamline delivery of MRE and other mine action messages

Community mine action liaison should focus on all aspects of mine action, not one aspect (*e.g.* clearance or MRE). Communities do not distinguish between MRE initiatives and demining initiatives, so all people involved in community liaison should be able to communicate with people on the different aspects of mine action. Some organisations already do this, but these measures should be standardised throughout all mine action organisations:

- **Train all deminers to share basic MRE messages** when interacting with communities.

- **Keep MRE trainers and local volunteers informed of local clearance initiatives** so that they can share information and answer questions from the community.

Education and training

Utilise direct delivery of MRE training for:

Emergency response

The advantage of direct delivery is that it is faster and easier to implement than community liaison processes. It is ideal for responding quickly to areas where accidents are occurring or are anticipated, *e.g.* when IDPs are settling into a contaminated area or when neighbourhoods expand into mined areas due to rapid urban expansion.

... and targeting marginalised groups

The most at-risk populations are often excluded from local risk reduction mechanisms (*e.g.* information sharing about locations of prior accidents). More focus should be placed on identifying and targeting at-risk individuals, notably marginalised groups, to ensure they are not overlooked.

BUT decrease dependence on direct delivery as a primary MRE tool for general audiences

Less emphasis should be placed on direct delivery as a standard MRE practice, as community liaison provides a more sustainable solution. Direct delivery should be reserved for emergency response or in the beginning of community liaison processes.

Continue efforts to incorporate MRE training into pre-existing structures and pursue additional partnerships to target specific at-risk populations

Incorporating MRE into existing initiatives is a cost-effective, sustainable way to spread MRE to hard-to-reach areas (*e.g.* through the nationwide network of the NSP) as well as to targeted populations (*e.g.* reaching students through the MoE and displaced populations through UNHCR).

Public Information Dissemination

Public information dissemination through mass media should not be a priority

A more targeted approach that promotes local ownership of risk reduction is what is needed now to reduce mine and ERW casualties. Most forms of mass media are not suitable for this kind of approach. Local radio programmes, notably call-in shows or round table discussions, could be useful to facilitate discussions about mine action, but initiatives should be tailored to local communities and paired with community liaison processes.

PART II: COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF MINE ACTION AND DEMINERS

Part II of the report examines community perceptions and misconceptions of deminers and their work - identifying how this could potentially compromise their ability to operate. This section will also provide recommendations on how to decrease the number of incidents targeting deminers through strategic communications and community engagement.

DEMINER SAFETY

Deminers are intimidated and threatened for a variety of reasons. According to this study's findings, communities perceive threats and attacks on deminers to be driven by financial incentives, political motivations, and a general opposition to "outsiders" or "unknowns". Observations from the field stress the importance of establishing and maintaining good community relations. This relationship is significantly more important when working in remote and insecure areas, taking into consideration discussions with communities and deminers that revealed regardless of the motivation, the involvement of the community to facilitate the release of the deminers is of the utmost importance. Though motivations behind incidents may vary, the intervention on the part of community elders was often if not always the method of ensuring deminers were released unharmed. Communities generally understand that demining activities are neutral and non-political, which is key to their success and continued operations. By providing a platform to voice opinions and provide economic support through activities such as community based demining and the procurement of local goods, demining agencies are able to better ensure the security of their deminers.

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

Observations from the field revealed that the motivations behind threats or attacks on deminers are not related to general community dissatisfaction. They are rather driven by a minority of individuals and groups that seek financial or political gain. The community perception is still however important as communities play a crucial role in preventing and resolving incidents involving deminers. The study revealed that at-risk communities are well aware of the benefits of demining, which is why they are eager to request that deminers come to their area. Communities understand the need for demining and value its contribution to community safety, mobility, and economic opportunities.

In general communities also perceive deminers positively. Communities reported a high level of trust in deminers and understand that deminers are part of the solution and not the source of mine and ERW accidents. Furthermore, community members on the most part feel involved in the mine action process through community liaison and were satisfied with the transparency and community inclusion in the prioritisation processes.

Survey data and focus groups with communities did note a number of suggestions to improve relations between communities and deminers. The main suggestions related to clearance, co-ordination, information sharing/MRE and deminer behaviour. It was discovered that satisfaction is often tied to community involvement in the mine action decision-making processes and even problem solving. While generally the methods of community engagement adopted by demining IPs are satisfactory, improvements can be made. A better understanding of the motivations behind the threats on deminers, and community perceptions of the mine clearance process will lead to the ultimate goal of reducing incidents against deminers. Understanding leads to confidence in the work of the deminers and to overall better communication.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PERCEPTIONS OF DEMINERS

Communities are the solution, not the problem

Part II of the report was commissioned to achieve a clearer understanding of community perceptions towards deminers and based on these findings provide recommendations for a communications campaign targeting communities to better ensure deminer safety. The communications tools recommended are not intended to raise general awareness or support. They serve, rather, to suggest how these community bonds can be strengthened so that communities will continue to assist deminers and their work.

Create a framework for better communicate and liaison with communities.

Communities in general feel involved in the mine action process, and leaders and members alike are often eager to be included in decision-making processes (*e.g.* land prioritisation) and problem solving. Current processes of community liaison work very well; however, as they often focus on liaising with community leaders, awareness of these processes is communicated to others at the discretion of the leaders. A more systematic approach to communicating with the communities could help build greater support behind deminers.

This approach could include information on the mine action process to be communicated to community members by deminers themselves. This would include information on the process of demining, how the process of prioritisation works, how much the deminers work during the day, the expected time it takes to clear a piece of land etc. Materials could be created to explain “mine action” as a process, from prioritisation to actual clearance.

Secondly, a framework for community liaison should be created with the co-operation and approval of IPs. This framework should be flexible enough to take into consideration local cultural dynamics, but outline the major steps that demining IPs should follow during the community engagement process. This should also include guidelines for deminer behaviour and liaison with communities. Streamlining the process of community engagement across all IPs in Afghanistan will be important in order to ensure a consistent approach, reduce the likelihood of confusion regarding the demining process and can be the foundation to open communication channels for information sharing with the community.

General guidelines for the approach to community based demining (CBD) should be created by the MAPA. While observations from the field noted the general acceptance of CBD by communities, cases where communities were upset by the CBD activities appear to have been the result of miscommunication regarding the process of CBD i.e. the method by which community members were chosen. Considering the changing security dynamic within Afghanistan and the recognition that more CBD activities are likely to be required to access insecure areas, a more standardised approach for CBD across the demining IPs should be integrated into CBD activities by all IPs.

- **Local radio shows with call-in elements or roundtable discussions**

Participating in pre-existing programmes or creating low-cost radio programming on a local level would provide a venue for IPs and the MACCA to discuss the mine action process. Such programmes would provide an opportunity for local stakeholders and deminers taking part in community liaison to discuss their work and the benefits to the community. Call-in elements would allow locals in the community to ask questions and feel they are a part of the process.

Such radio programmes would be most effective in areas where little or no previous demining activity has taken place, or where deminers have encountered security incidents.

This is a method to notify, on a local level, both community members and other actors that there are deminers operating in the area, to explain their neutral role and the benefits that the demining process will bring to their communities.

- **Discussions in mosques with community leaders and deminers**

Mosques have proven an excellent forum for disseminating MRE. They can also be useful for deminers and community leaders to share information and answer questions about demining with the general population. Demining agencies should hold open forum discussions about the work they are conducting in local mosques at the beginning of the mine action process and then as required during demining activities. As with MRE, participants should be encouraged to share the information learnt at these sessions with family and neighbours not in attendance. After an initial meeting, community leaders, especially mullahs, should also be encouraged to give updates on the demining progress and to collect any questions members of their congregation that can then be relayed to the demining IP.

- **Greater cross-over with MRE**

The current community liaison processes do not always adequately incorporate MRE and information about demining. By systematically keeping MRE trainers informed of local demining initiatives, they can help answer questions and clarify misconceptions community members may have. This would be especially useful in cases of Community-Based MRE, where volunteers are permanently based in the communities they serve.

Deminers should be trained in MRE delivery and be encouraged to regularly share MRE informally with members of the community they encounter. While some demining IPs already conduct MRE in conjunction with the demining process, this is not universal. As the fieldwork has highlighted communities have been extremely appreciative of deminers conducting MRE

Establish a community-based monitoring hotline

The MAPA could create a “hotline” for community members to voice any concerns they have about the mine action process directly to the AMAC or the MACCA. This hotline could be introduced to the community at the same time as explanation of the mine action process, and on materials explaining the demining process. The hotline would consist of a toll free number directed to MACCA where community members could call if they wanted to ask any questions about the mine action process they see happening in their community. This will make communities feel more involved in the mine action process, and at the very least an avenue to voice any concerns or complaints they may have. This can also be a way for communities to notify MAPA about the behaviour of deminers in the community.

If the complaints received are valid, the demining agency could be notified to take necessary action. If the complaints are based on misconceptions about demining and how it works, the operator could clarify the issue directly with the caller and notify the demining agency to be aware of the misunderstanding for future notice. Communities have a true incentive to ensure that the land around their community is cleared effectively and efficiently, this would give them another avenue for involvement and improve relations between deminers and communities.

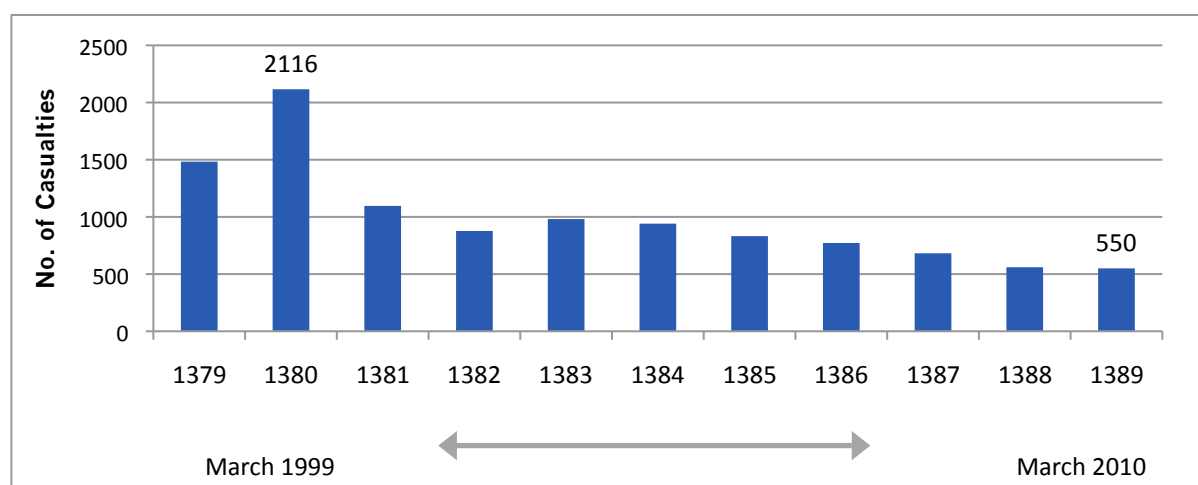
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

As one of the world's oldest mine action programmes, the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) has endeavoured to continue its work through conflict and instability over a series of regime changes since its establishment in 1989.⁶ With a new wave of transition already underway with the drawdown of foreign support and the transfer of greater responsibility to the government of Afghanistan, the MAPA will continue to serve Afghan communities through the delivery of mine action services. However, like many initiatives dependent on funding from the international community, it will need to achieve more with less in a tenuous political, economic and security environment.

Despite significant progress, Afghanistan remains one of the most mine-affected countries in the world.⁷ Demining efforts and mine risk education (MRE) have precipitated a dramatic decrease in casualties from mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) (Figure 1.1), however, Afghanistan's casualty rates are still higher than those of any other country.⁸ Achievement of goals set by the Ottawa Convention – the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty⁹ – have been set back by a number of factors including the discovery of new minefields, ongoing conflict, underfunding.¹⁰

FIGURE 1.1. MINE & ERW CASUALTIES IN AFGHANISTAN BY YEAR



Adapted from *MAPA Annual Report 1389*.

To continue decreasing casualties and clearing contaminated land, the MAPA will have to adapt to decreased funding as well as an uncertain security environment, all while greater responsibility is transferred to the Afghan government. The United Nations Mine Action Co-ordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA),¹¹ the primary co-ordination and planning mechanism for mine action in

⁶ Paterson, Ted, Faiz Paktian and William Fryer (2008), "Assessment of the Mine Action Centre of Afghanistan (MACA), Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), Geneva.

⁷ For the recent figures on clearance, see Table 11.1 in the Annex.

⁸ For an international comparison of casualties, see Table 11.2 in the Annex.

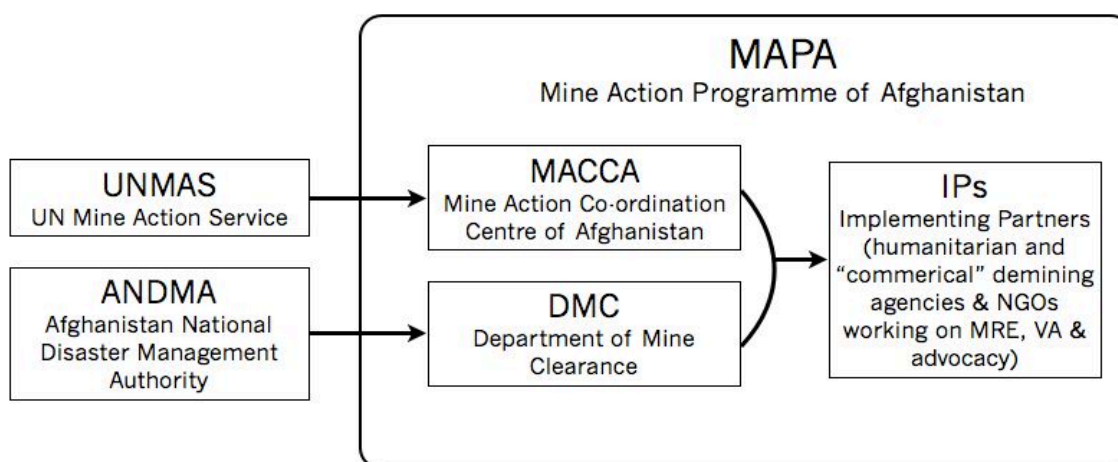
⁹ Afghanistan ratified the treaty in March 2003.

¹⁰ Ottawa Extension Request, Executive Summary, 2012.

¹¹ The MACCA is a project of the UN Mine Action Service and is executed by United Nations Office for Project Services.

Afghanistan, is gradually transferring greater responsibility to the Department of Mine Clearance (DMC) as well as line ministries (e.g. to the Ministry of Education for MRE).¹²

FIGURE 1.2. KEY MINE ACTION STAKEHOLDERS IN AFGHANISTAN



While the full extent of financial cutbacks in foreign aid is not yet known, current levels are clearly unsustainable. Afghanistan is the top recipient of aid in an already concentrated pool; half of official development assistance (ODA) to fragile states is allocated to only eight countries.¹³ As foreign troops withdraw, the heightened levels of international attention and aid (15.7 billion USD in 2010) will decline. The impact may be mitigated by the fact that “most international spending ‘on’ Afghanistan is not spent ‘in’ Afghanistan,”¹⁴ however, this has not been the case for the MAPA, which will face tough decisions to minimise the repercussions of funding cuts on beneficiaries.

While the Afghan government has agreed to assume some of costs and responsibility of MRE, it has only taken on a small portion of the total cost of mine action. The government lacks the capacity to assume all of the financial needs of mine action that are being covered by the Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF) and bilateral funding.

On the security front, the Afghan government is to assume full responsibility for the nation’s security by the end of 2014. International forces will still be present to assist in the “transformation” phase, should the national security forces falter; however, with the Afghan government in the lead, anti-government elements (AGEs) will likely continue to challenge the authority of the government as it has already shown in provinces that have begun the handover process.¹⁵

Conflict and insecurity add to the dangers deminers already face locating and neutralising dangerous explosives. It also limits the geographic scope in which organisations can operate providing MRE and in which the MACCA can provide Quality Assurance (QA).

¹² The DMC operates under the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) and currently works jointly with MACCA.

¹³ OECD-DAC (2011), “Ensuring Fragile States Are Not Left Behind: 2011 Factsheet on Resource Flows in Fragile States,” OECD, Paris.

¹⁴ World Bank (2011), “Transition in Afghanistan: Looking Beyond 2014,” Executive summary.

¹⁵ Ruttig, Thomas (2012), “Withdrawal in 2014? Myths and realities,” Afghan Analysts Network.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

Faced with these challenges, the MACCA has commissioned Samuel Hall to assess the MAPA's current approach to MRE and community perceptions of deminers in order to provide strategic recommendations for a more cost-effective approach that meets the needs of the changing environment.

At the core of these two issues is the MAPA's relationship with communities. In order to operate safely and sustainably in a cost-effective manner, communities must be implicated in mine action. With regards to risk behaviour around mines and ERW, communities have the capacity to reinforce and extend the lifespan of MRE messages after initial dissemination. The risk culture of the community can also enable or discourage behaviour change amongst individuals. For maintaining a license to operate in uncertain security environments, community support is absolutely essential. Communities have already demonstrated that they are key to preventing incidents and are essential to minimising harm when situations go awry.

With this in mind, this report seeks to analyse communication and liaison with communities for mine action. Analysis will be based on quantitative and qualitative data drawn from both a bottom-up (beneficiary needs and perceptions) and top-down (organisational capacity and strategy) approach.

Report objectives:

- Critically review the MAPA's approach to MRE and determine whether the approaches generate changes in the public's behaviour;
- Conduct a rapid assessment of community perceptions towards deminers; and
- Provide recommendations for strategic communications with targeted beneficiaries.

1.3 REPORT STRUCTURE

Part one will begin by evaluating MAPA's approach to MRE and determine whether the approaches it funds and advocates are the most effective means of delivering messages which will change public behaviour.

Part two sets out to examine community perceptions of deminers and their work in order to identify misconceptions that may compromise their ability to operate, and to provide strategic recommendations for decreasing the number of incidents targeting deminers through strategic communications and community engagement.

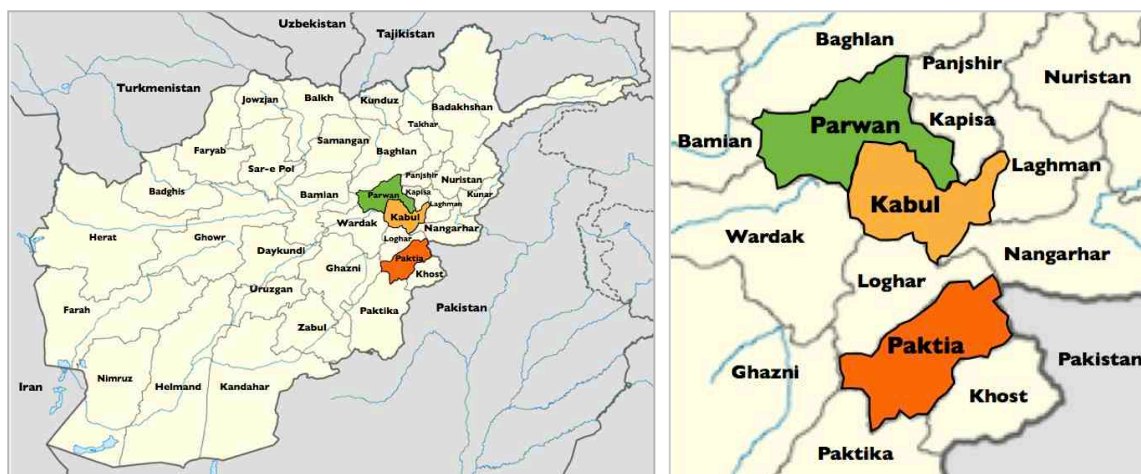
2 METHODOLOGY

Samuel Hall is committed to developing and implementing a rigorous scientific research methodology that meets the research objectives and local context. The challenges of the Afghan context can be daunting but also stimulating, as they require researchers to approach questions with an innovative and tailored approach. Such an approach has to begin with the design of methodologies used for fieldwork – the foundation of research and strategic analysis that strives to connect policy with people.

For every research project, a team of Samuel Hall international and national consultants is sent to the relevant provinces to gather first-hand, accurate and up-to-date information directly from the field. For this project, the evaluation team consisted of one international project director, two international project managers, two national team leaders, eight national interviewers and one national research assistant. A majority of the fieldwork for this rapid assessment was carried out over a two-week period from 21 February to 3 March 2012.

2.1 LOCATIONS

FIGURE 2.1. RESEARCH LOCATIONS: KABUL, PARWAN, PAKTIA



2.1.1 Provincial selection

Kabul, Parwan and Paktia were selected as the target provinces for the evaluation based on a number of factors related to the two key components of the evaluation – MRE and deminer perceptions.¹⁶

- **Concentration of hazards:** The selected provinces have large concentrations of mines and ERW. Kabul and Parwan are amongst the top three provinces in terms of number of minefields¹⁷ (with 741 and 600 minefields respectively, and all three have high concentrations of minefields on relatively small areas of land (Figure 2.2). Parwan and Paktia have 6,000 sq km each and Kabul province sits on 4,000 sq km of land.¹⁸

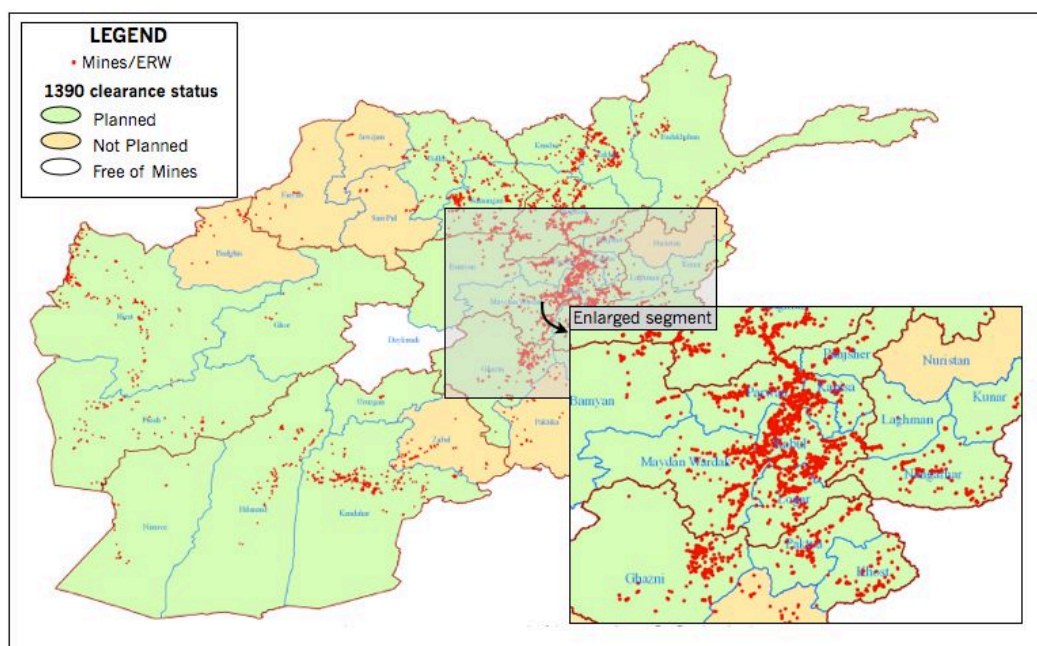
¹⁶ Fieldwork was originally planned to be conducted in Kunduz, but due to security incidents in the province that occurred at the time of the evaluation, the fieldwork in Kunduz had to be cancelled.

¹⁷ For provincial figures, see Table 11.3 in the Annex.

¹⁸ Afghanistan's total area is 644,000 sq km. Source: NRVA 2007/2008.

- **Deminer incidents:** Incidents threatening deminer safety or targeting demining equipment occurred in all three target provinces in the year 2011. Incidents ranged from equipment theft to abductions. While the incidents were serious, none of them resulted in loss of life, which was an important factor when also accounting for the safety of the evaluation team when entering communities to ask sensitive questions about perceptions of deminers.
- **Engagement of multiple actors:** Multiple demining agencies and NGOs conducting MRE activities are currently active in the targeted provinces and were engaged in these areas in 2011. In order to gauge the effectiveness of different approaches to community engagement, it was deemed necessary to conduct the fieldwork in areas in which implementing partners (IPs) are active for both MRE and demining.

FIGURE 2.2. 1390 PLANNED CLEARANCE AND CONCENTRATION OF HAZARDS¹⁹



Adapted from MACCA map of 1390 Planned, Unplanned and Free of Mine Provinces Locations in Afghanistan.

In order to cover more villages in a short amount of time, the interviewers were split into two groups, each led by a national team leader. One group worked in Kabul while the other worked in Paktia. However, to ensure a consistent approach to the fieldwork, both teams began by conducting their fieldwork together in Parwan. The team leaders and project managers worked with the interviewers to ensure a common approach to the fieldwork separating the teams to complete work in the two remaining provinces.

2.1.2 District and village selection

The evaluation team surveyed at least two districts per province – one district with the provincial capital and one representing a more rural population (Table 2.1) – in order to capture input from a more diverse range of populations. Villages or communities in each were selected if demining agencies were either actively working in them or had worked in them in the past. Ease of access and security were also important considerations during the village selection process.²⁰

¹⁹ The year 1390 corresponds with the following dates in the Gregorian calendar: 20 March 2011 to 19 March 2012.

²⁰ For a full list of the villages surveyed, see Table 11.4 - Table 11.6 located in the Annex.

TABLE 2.1. SURVEYED DISTRICTS

PROVINCE	DISTRICT
Kabul	Deh Sabz
	Paghman
	Kabul City – PD #6
	Kabul City – PD #7
Paktia	Gardiz
	Sayed Karam
Parwan	Charikar
	Bagram

2.2 EVALUATION TOOLS

Samuel Hall consistently uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative tools, as both are necessary to inform an accurate analysis of any subject. By using a variety of tools and consulting multiple sources, the evaluation team was able to triangulate information before drawing any conclusions from the fieldwork. In addition to data gathered directly from the field, the evaluation conducted a desk review of relevant literature pertaining to mine action both in Afghanistan and in other contexts.

2.2.1 Quantitative research

- Quantitative survey: 500 participants
 - 230 male and 220 female adults and youth age 13 and older
 - 50 Community leaders

A **quantitative survey** is an important tool for providing clear, easily comparable statistics. While its structure does not provide the depth and richness of a qualitative interview, it is an important tool for determining if the opinions espoused by a few focus group participants are held by many. In the case of this rapid assessment, 500 individuals were interviewed for the quantitative survey in order to quickly capture a broader snapshot of the views and perceptions of men and women at a community level.

The questionnaire for this study was designed and implemented so as to quickly develop a rapport with interviewees, allowing them to open up without developing survey fatigue, which can easily bias answers if interviews drag on too long. With 31 questions, the questionnaire took 20-30 minutes on average to complete. Participants were interviewed by a person of the same gender, and the survey was conducted in either Dari or Pashto, based on the native language of the participant, to ensure that participants understood and felt comfortable answering the questions.

Questions that addressed sensitive topics such as perceptions of deminers were posed indirectly so as interviewees did not feel they had to justify or account for their own perceptions but could indicate what members of the community thought, whether positive or negative. Questions were also left “unprompted” whenever possible, meaning that interviewees were not given the list of possible responses listed on the questionnaire. Thus, unexpected answers were still captured by the interviewers, while expected answers were easily recorded into pre-coded response sets. “Prompting” was only used when it was determined that a list of responses would not bias the

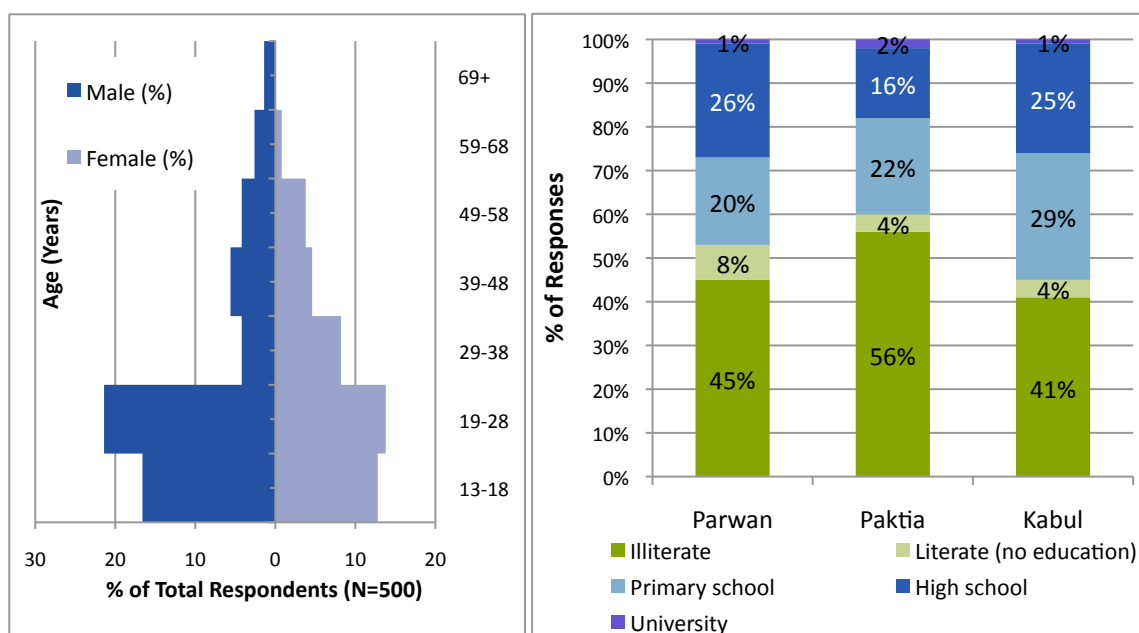
response but simply provide direction for uniform answering (e.g. to provide a uniform scale such as 1 - very likely, 2 - somewhat likely, etc.).²¹

Quantitative survey sample

Participants for the quantitative survey were selected using a quota sampling technique, a non-probability sampling technique that involves setting targets for the types of profiles needed for the research. For this project, both male and female youth and adults (ages 13 and up) were targeted for the quantitative survey (Figure 2.3). The proportion of male interviewees was intentionally set higher than that of female interviewees in order to capture an extra sub-group of male participants –community leaders – in addition to male community members. Men are more likely to be victims of accidents with mines and ERW and interact with deminers more frequently than women; however, it was still deemed of interest to interview women in order to understand how families and communities share information about mine action.

The survey sample was relatively young and largely illiterate or poorly educated. The majority of both men and women surveyed (65 percent) were age 28 or younger, which reflects the youthful demographics of the Afghan population (Figure 2.3). Educational backgrounds were fairly similar across the three targeted provinces, demonstrating high levels of illiteracy and poor levels of high school graduation. Participants in Paktia lag a bit behind with a higher rate of illiteracy and lower proportion of high school graduates.

FIGURE 2.3. AGE/GENDER BREAKDOWN & EDUCATION OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



As the survey targeted areas where mines and ERW are currently a problem or had been in the past, survey participants all had experience with deminers in their community and many of them had been significantly impacted by the presence of mines and ERW. All of the surveyed individuals reported that they had experience with deminers who had either worked in their village previously (82%) or were currently working in their community (18%) (Figure 2.4). Looking at the impact of mines on migration decisions, a significant proportion of respondents, notably in Paktia and Parwan, had considered moving or had moved due to the presence of mines (Figure 2.5).

²¹ For the English version of the questionnaire, see Section 11.2 in the Annex.

FIGURE 2.4. COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE WITH DEMINERS

Q20. Are deminers working around your community or have in the past? (N=500)

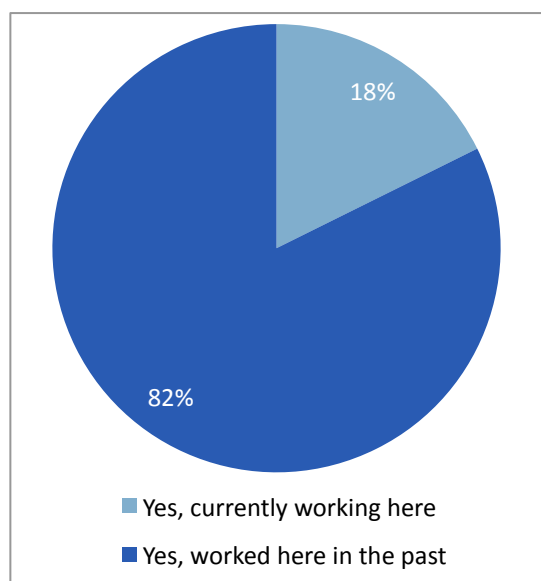
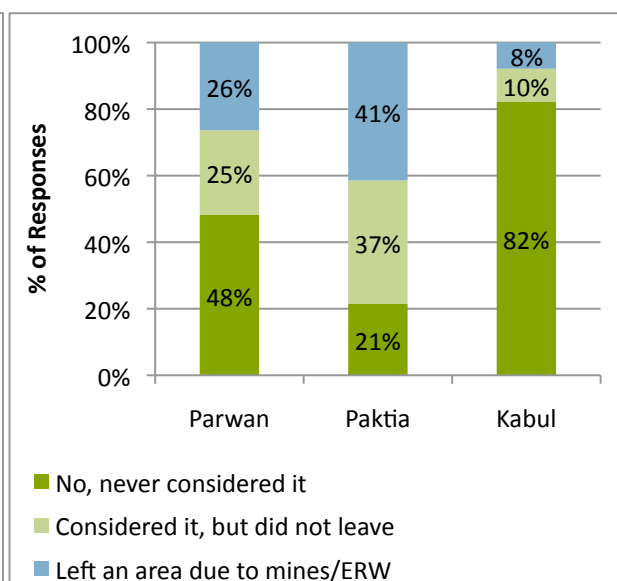


FIGURE 2.5. IMPACT OF MINES/ERW ON MIGRATION DECISIONS

Q5. Have you ever considered leaving an area because of the risk of mines or ERW?



2.2.2 Qualitative research

- 24 Focus groups discussions (FGDs)
 - 6 groups of male community leaders and members
 - 6 groups of women
 - 6 groups of children and teens
 - 4 groups of deminers
 - 2 groups of survivors – one with adults, one with children
- 10 case studies with survivors
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with MACCA representatives, AMAC managers, MoE, MAPA IPs, communications specialists and the Ministry of Public Health.

Qualitative data was collected from a number of sources during the research phase of the project. Focus group discussions, key Informant Interviews (KII) and case study interviews were conducted to gather information to qualify and clarify the quantitative data collected from the survey questionnaires and provide context for the research.

Focus group discussions and case studies

Focus group discussions were held with community leaders, men, women, children, deminers and landmine/ERW survivors. Each group was chosen to provide context and different perspectives on the effectiveness of MRE and perceptions towards deminers.

- Two groups of **community leaders and members** were interviewed in each province (6 total FGDs) to provide perspectives of community involvement in mine action and of deminers in general. As the community leaders are usually the first to be engaged in the community liaison process for mine action, their perceptions are an important determinant for how the rest of the community perceives and accepts the deminers. Moreover, male community members and

leaders were also able to offer insights to see how they understood the approaches used in MRE and the effectiveness of MRE tools.

- Focus groups with **women** offered a different perspective and a window into how families transmit MRE information amongst themselves. Women are much less likely to receive MRE information first hand due to strict observance of gender segregation in Afghan communities. Consequently, the channels through which they receive information about mine risk are important indicators as to how MRE is shared within families and communities. Similarly, as women rarely interact directly with deminers, they often hold different perspectives of the work and community engagement of deminers from that of men in the same community. Two focus group discussions with women were held in each of the three surveyed provinces.
- As the group most at risk of losing life or limb due to mines or ERW, **children** were an essential group to be included in focus group discussions, notably male youth. The perspectives of how children have received and understood MRE messages are very important to the research to gauge the effectiveness of current tools and for recommendations for future tools. Focus groups were held with a group of young children and a group of teens in each province (6 groups total).
- **Survivors** of landmine incidents provided the research team with first hand experiences to see how much knowledge of landmines and ERW victims before they were injured. However, finding groups of survivors was not easily achieved in the field. Therefore, interviewers conducted **case study interviews** with survivors as they met them in the field (10 in total), and two focus group discussions were conducted with adult and child survivors at the Afghan Landmine Survivors' Organization located in Kabul.
- Four focus groups of **deminers** representing large demining agencies were conducted to gather the perspectives of the deminers themselves about their work, their engagement with communities and the way they feel perceived by communities.

Five participants for each focus group with community members (men, women, children) were gathered using a snowball sampling technique to find villagers willing to participate in discussions with open-ended questions lasting 1-2 hours, depending on participation. The snowball sampling technique is a method whereby you build your respondents because there is no list of the population you want to research. This was conducted by the research team in the field by asking respondents if they know anyone else in the community whether they may be interested in taking part in an interview. Focus groups with deminers were facilitated through the demining agencies and those held with survivors were facilitated by the Afghan Landmine Survivors' Organization.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Mine action organisations in Afghanistan benefit from long institutional memories; many of them pre-date and continued operations during the Taliban regime. The key informant interviews were extremely informative for this evaluation, as interviewed representatives often had 15-20 years of experience in mine action and a wealth of knowledge of how they conduct their work in challenging and often volatile environments.

Key informant interviews were conducted with representatives of nine IPs, both demining agencies and NGOs; the MACCA; the MoE; as well as AMAC managers in the three targeted provinces. A representative of the Ministry of Public Health and the country director of Sayara Media & Communication were also interviewed as key informants.

PART 1 – MINE RISK EDUCATION

The purpose of Part I of this report is to evaluate the MAPA’s approach to Mine Risk Education (MRE) and determine whether the approaches it funds and advocates are the most effective means of delivering messages which will change public behaviour.

- **Chapter 3** begins by examining international trends in the conceptualisation and implementation of MRE for behaviour change.
- **Chapter 4** presents key findings from the fieldwork, which explores how Afghans develop “mine smart behaviour,” noting the interplay of endogenous and exogenous influences on risk behaviours.
- **Chapter 5** evaluates the MAPA’s current approach to MRE. It is not intended to serve as an evaluation of implementing partners’ activities, but rather to assess the general approaches promoted by MAPA.
- **Chapter 6** provides recommendations for the MAPA’s approach to MRE.

3 MRE THEORY AND PRACTICE

To properly assess the current approach to Mine/ERW Risk Education (MRE) used in Afghanistan, it is important to first clarify its definition and purpose. The conception and implementation of MRE is in a state of evolution, as the theoretical understanding of behaviour change is further developed and as implementers discover improved methods of application. This chapter will present two recent trends in MRE theory and practice: *i)* a change in paradigm for understanding behaviour change, and *ii)* a shift toward multi-level interventions and participatory communication.

3.1 THEORETICAL PARADIGM SHIFT

Broadened understanding of risk determinants

MRE has undergone a significant evolution over the past fifteen years. Aptly named mine awareness in its early stages, efforts were focused on simply raising awareness and disseminating information, based on the assumption that accidents occurred because people were not aware of the risk.²² The dominant paradigm relied heavily on socio-cognitive theory, which focuses on individual behaviours and lifestyle choices. Within this theory, three main factors influence these individual risk behaviours²³:

1. *Rational factor*: With enough knowledge, people will behave rationally.
2. *Practical factor*: If confident in their capacity to change, people will adopt a given behaviour change.
3. *Social network of interpersonal communication*: With the support of a group adopting the same behaviour, an individual is more likely to do the same.

While these factors are still important, they provide a limited perspective on how individuals make decisions about risk behaviours. As is the case with many risk behaviours, even when it is in one's own self-interest, many people do not change their behaviour for a multitude of reasons that extend beyond individual awareness. Therefore, increasing beneficiary knowledge of mines and ERW (*e.g.* mine/ ERW recognition, understanding of markings) is "not nearly enough to bring about risk-reducing behaviour."²⁴

The current paradigm for MRE addresses behaviour change as a process, rather than a one-time event.²⁵ The socio-economic systems model on which it is based posits that health and risk averse behaviour is a product of interdependence between individuals and their environment, and that the conditions of that environment must provide "economic and social conditions conducive to health and healthful lifestyles."²⁶ Within this model, the risk determinants include:

²² *Landmine Monitor Report 2009*, p. 62.

²³ UNICEF (2007), "Mine Risk Education Materials Development," Literature Review prepared for UNICEF by MAG and the National Regulatory Authority for the UXO Sector in Lao PDR, p. 3.

²⁴ Andersson, Neil, *et al.* (2003), "Mine smartness and the community voice in mine-risk education: lessons from Afghanistan and Angola," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 5, pp 873-887.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Green, L.W. & Kreuter, M.W. (1999), *Health Promotion Planning – An Educational and Ecological Approach*, McGraw Hill, New York, pp. 20-26.

1. **Predisposing factors:** knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, values, needs and abilities
Examples: Knowledge of markers that designate minefields; Belief that individual choices are not as important as God's will or destiny.
2. **Enabling factors:** factors that facilitate action
Examples: Presence of local scrap metal trade; Shortage of alternative income-generating activities,
3. **Reinforcing factors:** positive or negative feedback
Examples: Peer influences; Increase in scrap metal prices; Physical consequences (for oneself or others in community).

With this new perspective, not only did MRE undergo a name change, but it also expanded its scope of intervention. MRE is currently defined as "Activities which seek to reduce the risk of injury from mines and ERW by awareness-raising and promoting behavioural change, including public information dissemination, education and training and community mine action liaison."²⁷ The concept of MRE has been broadened to include two-way communication and mechanisms that enable continued communication beyond one-shot interventions (Box 3.1). In practice, MRE should include activities that work with communities to: *i)* identify means of reducing risk and promoting behaviour change, *ii)* provide information to clearance operators, *iii)* and contribute to victim assistance, and *iv)* raise awareness of the threat of mines and ERW.²⁸

This paradigm shift has been gradually incorporated in the field over the past decade, but there is still a gap between knowledge and practice. "The number of programmes that have adopted this approach has grown, though [...] many have failed to do so sufficiently."²⁹

BOX 3.1. THE THREE COMPONENTS OF MRE

Public information dissemination: Often one-way communication transmitted through mass media and designed to raise awareness and promote behaviour change.

Education and training: Two-way communication focused on sharing and gathering information about knowledge, attitudes and practices.

Community mine action liaison: Processes that facilitate the exchange of information between stakeholders (communities, mine action organisations, and government entities) and that prioritise community needs and locally developed risk reduction strategies.

Sources: GICHD, 2004.

3.2 CHANGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

Shift from one-shot to multi-level interventions

Reflecting the change in behaviour change theory mentioned above, there has been a distinct shift away from one-shot message dissemination toward more sophisticated, multi-level approaches to MRE. The shift began more than a decade ago. In 1999, the annual *Landmine Monitor Report* placed emphasis on mass media and posters (a form of small media) as key components of MRE.³⁰ Just one year later, the *2000 Landmine Monitor* reported that MRE "works best on the basis of two-way

²⁷ Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor (2011), *Landmine Monitor Report 2011*, Mines Action Canada, p. 71.

²⁸ *Landmine Monitor Report 2009*, p. 56.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor (1999), *Landmine Monitor Report 1999*, Mines Action Canada, p. 22.

information exchange, learning from communities how they survive the daily threat of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO), and working co-operatively to identify how the risk of death and injury can be minimised.”³¹

According to the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, “The most successful efforts to achieve mine-safe behaviours use a variety of interpersonal, mass media and traditional media channels.³² Small media (*e.g.* posters, brochures) still have a role, albeit a supporting one. What follows is a brief presentation of the strengths and weaknesses of the four modes of communication as applied to MRE:

- **Interpersonal communication** is direct contact that enables mutual understanding through two-way communication. It is considered to be “one of the most effective means of promoting behaviour change,” however, as a costly, time-consuming approach, it has a limited capacity to reach large audiences.³³ This mode of communication is especially challenging when operating in insecure areas.

More MRE programmes are beginning to train **community volunteers** to communicate with target audiences about the risks of mines and ERW. This promising approach renders MRE through interpersonal communication more cost-effective and sustainable, as volunteers maintain a long-term presence in their communities. It also helps overcome the challenge of operating in an insecure environment.

Interpersonal communication is not only used to disseminate MRE messages, but as a means of **community liaison** to: identify at-risk groups, analyse community needs and existing strategies for minimising risk exposure, and develop risk reduction strategies, all while building local ownership and responsibility. Greater consensus has been built around the idea that “ultimately the responsibility for community behaviour should reside with the communities themselves” if mine action is to have a sustainable impact.³⁴

- **Small media** consists of small items used to illustrate messages such as brochures, flash cards, T-shirts, flip charts, posters, etc. Such items are often attractive to programme implementers, as they are easy to plan and control. Distribution is also easy to quantify as a clear output (*e.g.* number of posters distributed), even if it does not translate into an outcome.

Small media are expensive to produce and disseminate, and “experience shows that the bulk of small media production remains in store rooms and is never distributed.” Without discussion, these items have limited impact, especially in an environment that has been flooded with such items for public awareness, as is the case in Afghanistan.³⁵

Such items should only be used as part of a larger initiative to help illustrate messages or reinforce messages, and should not be used as an independent communications tool, as they lack meaning for target audiences.³⁶ If re-used in multiple interventions, small media are more cost-effective. Materials should also rely primarily on images, as many target audiences are illiterate.

³¹ Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor (2000), *Landmine Monitor Report 2000*, Mines Action Canada, p. 33.

³² GICHD, 2004.

³³ UNICEF, 2007, p. 9.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 11.

³⁵ Based on interview with Fareed Payaam, Country Director of Sayara Media & Communication, 22 February 2012.

³⁶ GICHD, 2004, pp. 24-25.

- **Traditional media** is the term used for performance art that uses entertainment to transmit information. Examples include mobile theatres, storytelling, puppet shows, musical performances, etc. While it is more top-down than interpersonal communication, with information primarily flowing from entertainers to audiences, it does allow for some audience participation.

While traditional media have proven to be effective at raising awareness, it can be difficult to strike a balance to ensure that the entertainment element does not make the topic seem less serious than it is. In some cases, the use of traditional media has made landmine explosions appear to be comical events.³⁷ In other cases, the entertainment overshadows the messages it intends to convey.

Costly and time-consuming, traditional media also face the same challenges as interpersonal communication, and insecurity limits the geographic scope of interventions.

- **Mass media** is comprised of dissemination channels using indirect, one-way communication to reach large audiences. It includes radio, television, print media (newspapers, magazines, billboards), and cinema. While forms of mass media, notably television, are noted for being very powerful means of reaching large numbers of people, they are “not always appropriate for MRE for the simple reason that many people living in contaminated areas do not have access.”³⁸
 - While **television** is able to reach large numbers, its potential to reach extremely poor populations is limited, as many cannot afford televisions or do not have access to electricity.
 - **Radio** is believed to reach a larger number of poor individuals. Programmes that are tailored to local tastes and dialects and/or that feature respected figures can be quite effective, and call-in programmes offer a greater level of participation with audiences.
 - High illiteracy and limited circulation renders **print media** ineffective and inaccessible to many at-risk populations.
 - The **internet** and **social media** present new opportunities for communications; however, they are still inaccessible to most target audiences living in mine-affected areas.
 - **SMS technology** presents more potential for communicating with poor target audiences in remote areas, although illiteracy still limits its use. Collecting information from communities would likely be easier than disseminating information through SMS, as pre-determined codes with visual guides can be enable illiterate audiences to submit information for data collection.

Table 3.1 illustrates the strengths and weaknesses of different forms of media for MRE within the Afghan context. It is important to note that the rating system has been designed specifically with Afghan populations at risk of mine and ERW-related accidents in mind. Thus, it does not reflect the efficacy of these tools in other contexts or even with other Afghan audiences. There are several characteristics of these at-risk groups that should be considered when studying this table.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ UNICEF, 2007, p. 10.

- First, while television ownership has become much more widespread in Afghanistan, amongst households living near or in contaminated zones, viewership still remains limited. On the other hand, cell phone use has penetrated even remote markets and is steadily increasing.
- Second, after ten years of heavy exposure to public information (PI) campaigns, there has been growing scepticism of national PI campaigns amongst Afghan audiences. Local, respected individuals often have more credibility than national TV or radio programmes.
- Third, regional differences are even more important when communicating with different audiences than they were a decade ago. Languages, dialects, gender roles and even value systems vary significantly from one province to another, and even more so if comparing the capital city of Kabul with remote villages. Messages that are tailored to a specific audience are consequently more effective than large national campaigns.

For all of the forms of media presented, it is vitally important for targeted audiences to find the sources trustworthy and credible. These channels of communication are only as effective as the people transmitting the messages, whether through mass media, interpersonal communication or traditional media.

TABLE 3.1. BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF DIFFERENT MEDIA FOR MRE IN AFGHANISTAN

*Table adapted from Burke, 1999. It has been updated and adapted to the Afghan context.*³⁹

Legend	Potential to reach poorest	Participatory potential	Potential # of people reached	Cost effectiveness	Suitability for insecure areas
+++ Most likely to be applicable --- Least likely to be applicable					
Person-to-person communication					
Face-to-face MRE trainings	+	++	--	-	--
Training by community volunteers	++	+++	+	++	++
Small media:					
Posters & visual aids (disseminated only)	+	--	--	----	--
Posters & visual aids (re-used in trainings)	++	++	+	+	+
Traditional media:					
Mobile cinema	++	+	+	-	----
Mobile theatre	++	+	+	--	----
Mass media:					
Television	----	----	++	----	++
Radio	++	+	+++	++	+++
Internet / social media	----	+	++	-	-
SMS technology	+	++	+	++	++
* Depends if used by MRE trainers or local volunteers.					

³⁹ Burke, Adam, (1999), *Communications and Development: A Practical Guide*, DFID, London.

4 LOCAL RISK CULTURE

The impact of Mine Risk Education (MRE) is difficult to measure because risk behaviours are not a one-time output, but rather a series of decisions and actions that are perpetually influenced by a wide range of risk determinants. Individuals living in contaminated areas develop “mine smartness”⁴⁰ as a survival strategy based on available information; local norms and beliefs; personal/household needs; as well as the conditions and constraints of their environment.

While the impact of exogenously planned MRE is likely to be limited, “mine-risk education that takes into account the endogenous culture, building on risk-adverse behaviour and providing alternatives to risk-taking behaviour within this culture, could have a direct positive impact on individual practice.”⁴¹

This chapter will examine how Afghans develop “mine smart behaviour,” noting the interplay of endogenous and exogenous influences on risk behaviours. It will draw from quantitative and qualitative data collected through fieldwork in Kabul, Paktia and Parwan.

- **Section 4.1** on awareness will begin by identifying influential sources of information about mine safety, examining how individuals share information with others, and assessing what people actually understand and retain about mine risk.
- **Section 4.2** on behaviour will look at risk-taking amongst adults and children, assessing the intentionality and motivations of adult and child risk-taking, as well as the impact of accidents on community behaviour.
- **Section 4.3** on the role of MRE will present community perceptions of MRE and suggestions for minimising mine and ERW-related accidents.

4.1 AWARENESS

4.1.1 Sources of information about mine and ERW risk

The awareness that mines and ERW exist and are dangerous is generally taken for granted by Afghans living in mine-affected areas, as this fact is part of their everyday reality. Qualitative interviews demonstrated that even prior to the dissemination of formal MRE, community members understood that mines and ERW posed serious risks to life and limb – a conclusion they were able to draw following repeated incidents in which people and animals were injured or killed in their community.

When discussing awareness of mine risk, interviewees therefore concentrated on awareness of three issues: *i*) location and identification of contaminated areas; *ii*) identifying marks of mines and ERW; and *iii*) strategies to limit exposure to mine risk (*e.g.* understanding that they should not touch unknown objects).

People in at-risk communities collect information about mine risk from a variety of sources over time. Most individuals surveyed reported that they had learned about mine risk from at least two

⁴⁰ “Mine smartness” is inspired by the term “street smart.” *Source: Andersson et al, 2003.*

⁴¹ Andersson *et al*, 2003.

sources (Figure 4.1). Prior to technical surveys, which involve identifying and marking hazards, local knowledge of specific hazardous areas is generally based on experience with past accidents, which is shared amongst members of the community. Outsiders, such as *Kuchi* nomads (Box 4.1) or people from the neighbouring community, are not privy to this information and are thus more vulnerable when passing through the area.

Formal MRE deepens understanding of mine risk. For example, from simply understanding that “mines are dangerous,” recipients of MRE learn how to identify hazards and contaminated areas (those that have been marked) and are advised not to touch unknown objects. Individuals are also taught the importance of sharing information, notably with children, who may not yet grasp the consequences of their actions.

After formal MRE is introduced to a community, the informal mechanisms are still very important for retaining and spreading the information in the community. It is important that MRE messages flow through multiple sources that are considered credible and trustworthy. Informal channels also serve to extend the reach and lifespan of MRE messages.

BOX 4.1. KUCHIS: AN AT-RISK POPULATION

The *Kuchis* are especially vulnerable to mines and ERW due to their nomadic lifestyle. Their dependence on raising sheep and goats through traditional nomadic grazing practices exposes *Kuchis* to an elevated level of risk as they pass through land that is rarely prioritised for mine clearance. Because they are not welcomed and often even despised by local communities, the *Kuchis* do not receive information about mine safety from communities, and conversely, do not share information about casualties with communities. As a result, casualties amongst their population are likely underreported. One key informant even alluded to the fact that some communities are happy to have the *Kuchis* pass through contaminated fields as it “clears land” for the local population.

The mined areas have killed or injured the nomad people and their animals; because of that, we know which area is mined. – Boy, 13, Sayed Karam, Paktia

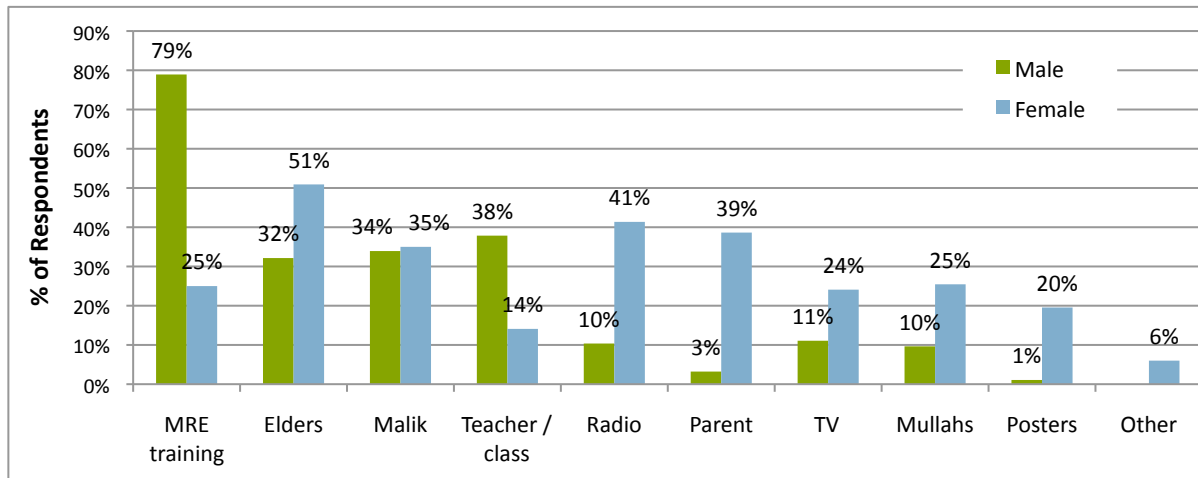
Some people – especially nomadic people – were injured when they were passing through mined areas because they did not know about mine risk and no one told them about it. – Woman, 60, Deh Sabz, Kabul

Some of the nomadic people get injured because they don’t know about mines and their risks and they have to graze their animals. They would be convinced (to change their behaviour) if they got information about mines and their risks. – Deminer, 40, Panjshir

Sources of information by gender

Strict observance of gender segregation in many Afghan households alters the way men and women access and share information. Male adults and youth are more likely than women to learn about mine risk through formal channels such as MRE training in communities and schools. Seventy-nine percent of male interviewees reported that they had participated in official training on MRE (Figure 4.1), and 38% had learned about mine risk at school. Community leaders were also an important source of information, notably *maliks* (community leaders) and elders. Qualitative interviews also revealed that some men also had personal experience with mines in the past, most notably if they were actively involved in conflict (e.g. former Mujahidin).

FIGURE 4.1. SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT MINES AND ERW BY GENDER
 Q8. How did you learn about mines and ERW? (multiple answers possible)⁴²



I learned about the risks of mines from the district government. There was a meeting between the leaders of the communities, when I went there, there were the deminers and they trained us. Then I requested for them to come into our village to inform our people about the risks of mines in the mosques. And also I have heard an MRE programme on the BBC radio. – Community leader, 50, Sayed Karam, Paktia

When nomads and their animals were killed by mines, we knew that area was mined. When the deminers come to our community they informed us at school and in mosques about different mines and ERW. They showed us pictures of different mines and ERW, and sometimes we heard about it from the radio. But we don't have a TV. – Shopkeeper, 35, Gardiz, Paktia

The percentage of individuals that learn about MRE at school will likely increase as the Ministry of Education has only incorporated MRE into class curriculum in the last few years. Focus groups with children demonstrated that many children had been exposed to MRE in the classroom.

My parents talked to me about mines. They said that in our community there are mines, and I asked: "What is a mine?" And they said that mines kill people and injure people. They told us that if you find metal, don't touch it, because it is dangerous. Also, our teachers in school talked about the mines, and showed the pictures of the mines. In the mosque they came, too, and talked about mines for four days. So, we are satisfied with them (the deminers) and we are very happy. I also saw some photos of the mines and ERW on the TV. – Boy, 9, Charikar, Parwan

When I was in first grade, they talked about mines and their risks with us. They also told us in the mosque. They showed us some posters that had pictures of some mines and ERW, and I know that mines and ERW are very dangerous. – Boy, 9, 7th district, Kabul

Community leaders and family were the most common sources of mine risk information for women. This indicates that many recipients of MRE training follow the advice of discussing what they have learned with others. Elders were the most commonly reported source (51%), followed by parents (39%), maliks (35%) and mullahs (25%). Qualitative data supported the importance of community leaders and suggested that the quantitative survey findings may even underestimated the importance of family in transmitting MRE messages to women. In communities where MRE training

⁴² Based on responses from 280 male and 220 female survey participants. Answers for "Other" included other family members, friends/classmates, health centre, etc.

had been provided, women in focus groups reported that they had been informed of mine risk by the men in their family or by their children. Women were most likely to have participated in formal MRE training if a women-only session had been provided with a female instructor.

While very few men received their information from mass media, this channel represented a more significant source of information for women, for whom formal MRE in the community and schools are often inaccessible. Radio was the most commonly cited medium (41% of female respondents), followed by television (25%) and posters (20%).

We have heard about the mines and ERW from the people because once the deminers came to the mosques and trained the men and children. Then they told the women in their families, and we heard from them. – Woman, 22, Sayed Karam, Paktia

Because many mines have been planted here, many people in our village were killed and injured by them. We knew about the mines and that they would kill people. Then the deminers came and told us about the mines. They showed us some pictures and films. There was a girl teaching us about the mines and their risks for one hour per day during a week, and showed us films and pictures. Now I know about the mines completely. – Woman, 40, Bagram, Parwan

We knew about mines because a lot of people and their animals – like sheep and cows – have been killed by mines. [...] We saw mines kill our relatives with our own eyes. The men in our family told us about mined areas and told us not to go into those areas because they had mines. No one trained us about mines and risks. – Woman, 25, Gardiz, Paktia

BOX 4.2. RETURNEES AND IDPs: AT-RISK POPULATIONS

Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are recognised by the international mine action community as being especially vulnerable to mine risk.⁴³ Whether travelling, returning to a community or arriving to a new location, these displaced populations lack information about contaminated areas and are often excluded from informal information sharing within communities.

The MACCA and UNHCR in Afghanistan have begun to increase co-operation to raise awareness of mine risk amongst returnees and IDPs. MRE is already being delivered to returnees at UNHCR transit and encashment centres by MAPA IPs, and IPs are also set to train relief agencies, UN agencies and relevant government staff on the Landmine Safety Programme, so that they can share information with at-risk populations when working in contaminated areas. Agreements have also been made to increase information sharing between the two agencies, so that the MACCA/MAPA can better respond to emergency need for MRE amongst returnees and IDPs.

Returnees

When we were coming from Pakistan to Afghanistan, they told us about mine risk at the border. They said that if you find anything like these, please don't touch them. – Community leader, 86, Deh Sabz, Kabul

MRE delivery in encashment centres is a good way to reach returnees upon re-entry before they disperse. However, the whirlwind affair of processing can be overwhelming, which does not promote maximum lesson retention. Between other appointments, MRE is often condensed to a 5-minute standard presentation, after which participants receive a handout. Longer, in-depth presentations are not realistic, but trainers could maximise impact if they could adapt their presentations to the audience, focusing on explaining to them why returnees are particularly vulnerable, rather than reciting a speech.

A more tailored, conversational approach may deliver less quantity but more quality information, better aimed at conveying the meaning that mine risk is a serious issue. Returnees would then be more likely to refer to their handouts after the training.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

While the number of returnees has been falling in recent years, the IDP population has been steadily increasing (from 128,801 in 2007 to 429,006 as of February 2012).⁴⁴ The implementation of UNHCR's Population Movement Tracking (PMT) Tool should help streamline data collection and allow for faster analysis of population movements and needs. If used effectively, UNHCR will be able to communicate this information to organisations providing emergency response. The MACCA should be able to use this information to direct MAPA IPs to the necessary areas to inform IDPs of mine risk before accidents happen.

This new partnership has yet to demonstrate significant results in targeting IDPs with MRE, but it is a partnership with potential. The MAPA needs to follow through with its commitment to IDPs, a growing at-risk population.

⁴³ *Landmine Monitor Report 2009*, p. 58.

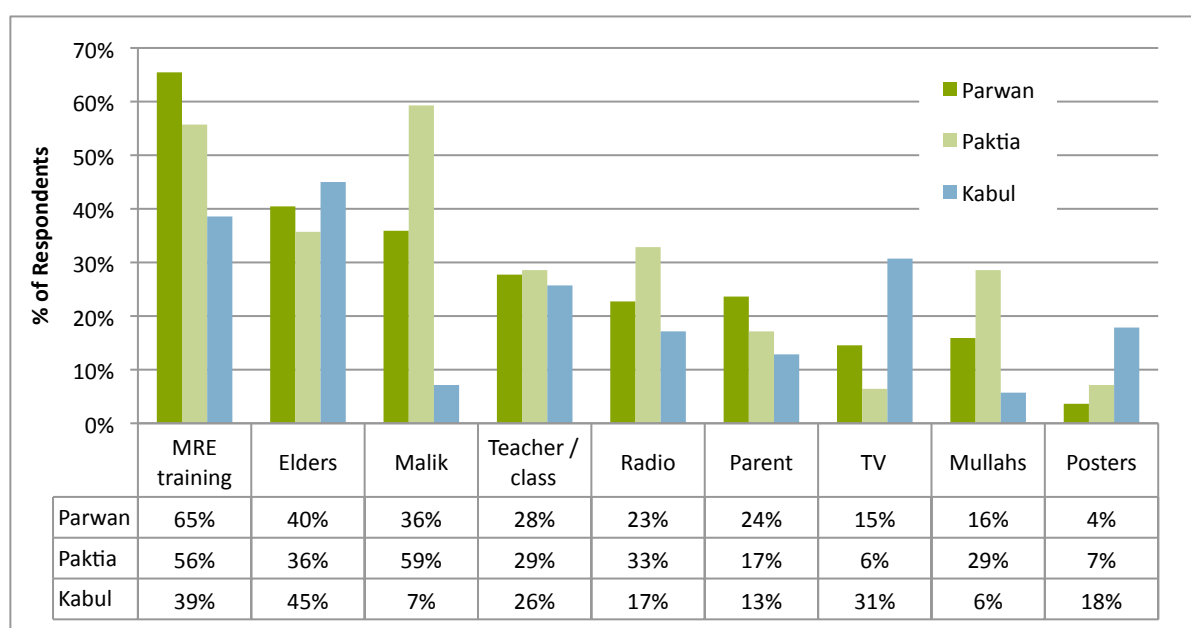
⁴⁴ UNHCR Afghanistan – Statistical Summary of Conflict-induced Internal Displacement in Afghanistan, 29 February 2012. UNHCR Update on Voluntary Return to Afghanistan, 29 February 2012.

Sources of information by location

According to the survey, sources of information also differed between provinces, albeit to a lesser extent than gender. The most notable finding relates to mass media. Television has clearly penetrated peri-urban and rural areas in Kabul province to a greater extent than surveyed districts in Parwan and Paktia (Figure 4.2). While 31% of participants in Kabul reported learning about mine risk on television, only 6% said the same in Paktia and 15% in Parwan. Kabul province residents were also more likely to have gathered information from posters.

There were also differences in the types of community leaders reported as sources of information (e.g. elders, maliks, mullahs). However, the role of community leaders in disseminating mine risk information was clearly important in all three provinces.

FIGURE 4.2. SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT MINES AND ERW BY PROVINCE
Q8. How did you learn about mines and ERW? (multiple answers possible)⁴⁵



4.1.2 Sharing information with others

The willingness of people to share information about mine risk is a major determinant of the sustainability of MRE programmes.⁴⁶ The sources of information discussed in the previous section already indicated an eagerness to share information with others, as many individuals, notably women, had learned about mine risk from community leaders and family members.

This willingness to warn others appears to be a relatively recent development and a direct outcome of MRE initiatives. In a 1997 CIET study, only 0.6% of survey respondents reported that they informed others of mine risk after receiving training.⁴⁷ In the survey for this report, only 1% of respondents said they *did not* share information about mine risk (Figure 4.3); this survey also included individuals that had not participated in formal MRE training. This is a major departure from information sharing practices 15 years ago, and indicates that MRE programmes have indeed had an impact on the endogenous culture of risk prevention.

⁴⁵ Based on responses from 280 male and 220 female survey participants. Answers for "Other" included other family members, friends/classmates, health centre, etc.

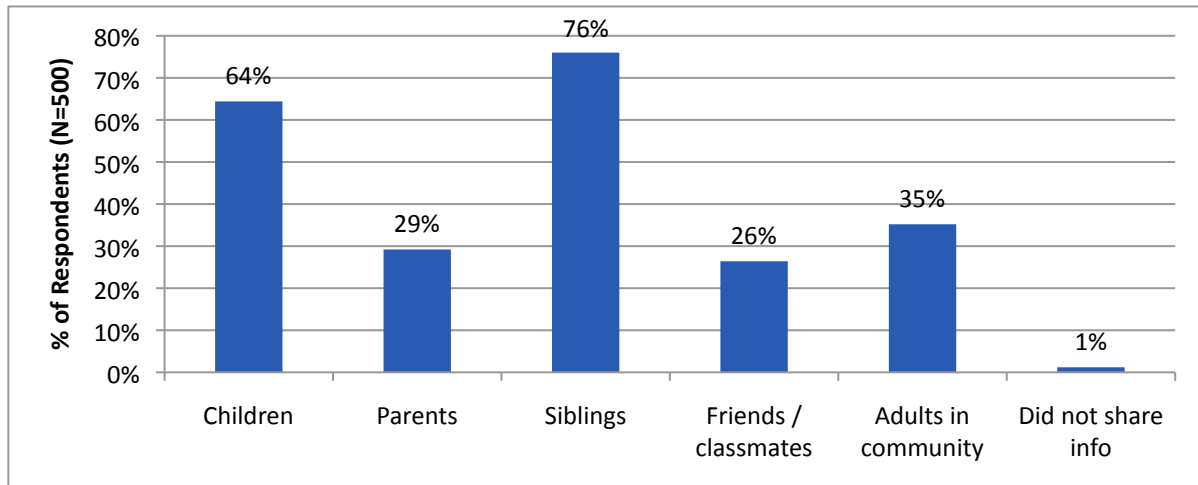
⁴⁶ Andersson *et al*, 2003.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*.

Survey respondents were most likely to discuss mine risk with members of their family, especially siblings and children. A significant portion of respondents also reported sharing information with other community members (35%) as well as friends and classmates (26%).

FIGURE 4.3. SHARING OF MINE RISK INFORMATION WITH OTHERS

Q9. Have you shared information about mines and ERW with others? (multiple answers)⁴⁸



4.1.3 Understanding MRE: lesson retention

Survey and focus group participants demonstrated understanding of basic MRE messages. They knew how to identify signs of contaminated areas and what they should do if they were to find an ERW. The only issue that appeared to create confusion was a situational question intended to gauge how respondents would react if a friend or relative was injured in a minefield.

A large majority of both male and female survey respondents – 87% and 90% respectively – were able to identify formal markings of mined areas, despite the fact that many women and a minority of men had not participated in formal MRE training either in the community or in school (Figure 4.4). Interviewees also provided a number of informal signs used to mark hazards such as piles of stones and a skull and crossbones.

When asked in focus groups what they would do if they found an ERW, children as young as seven knew what to do. In all three provinces, interviewed children said they would take care not to touch unknown objects and would inform an adult of any suspicious items.

I wouldn't touch it (an ERW), and I would tell someone that is bigger than me. Then they would inform police or the deminers to clear it. – Boy, 7, 7th district, Kabul

If I found any ERW or mine, I would put stones or wood around it to prevent people from getting close. Then I would inform the leader in our community or someone I saw first and ask them to help me. – Boy, 16, Sayed Karam, Paktia

When asked the same question, several women told stories of when they or their children *had* found an ERW or mine, and in which they had known how to react.

My daughter found a mine in our garden, and she told her father about it. Then the people informed the deminers, and the deminers cleared it. – Woman, 29, Gardiz, Paktia

⁴⁸ Based on responses from 280 male and 220 female survey participants.

Many years ago when we were working in our field, suddenly, we saw an ERW and nobody touched it. We told our children not to throw the stones on it, and we told for them: “You shouldn’t play with suspicious things.” Then we informed the deminers. They came and neutralised it. – Woman, 56, Deh Sabz, Kabul

FIGURE 4.4. UNDERSTANDING OF MINEFIELD MARKINGS

Q6. How do you know if an area has mines or ERW? Are there signs? (multiple answers possible)⁴⁹

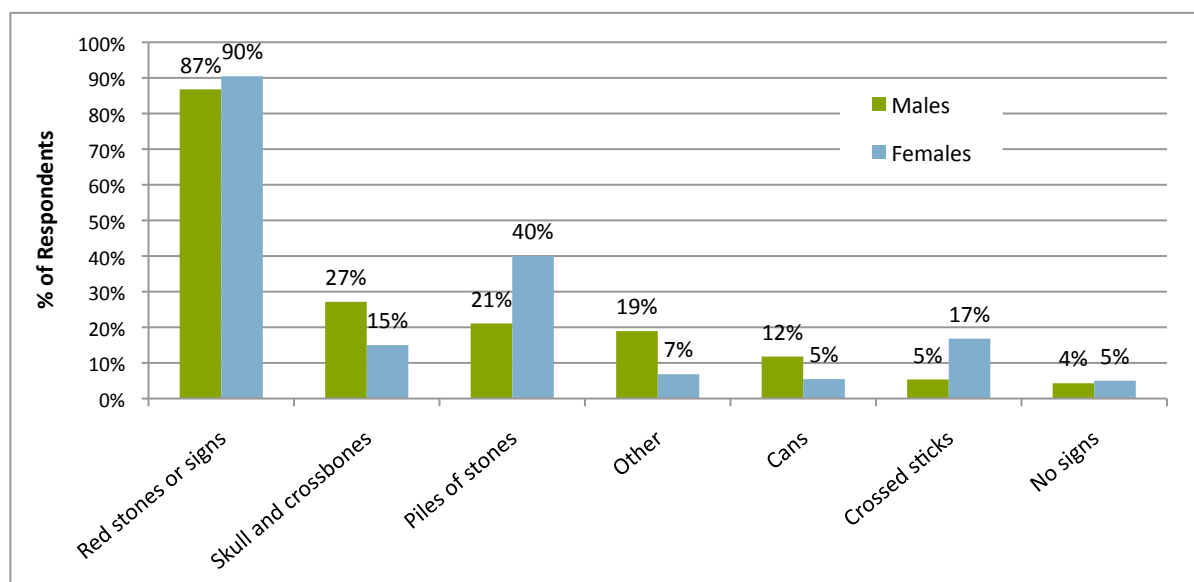
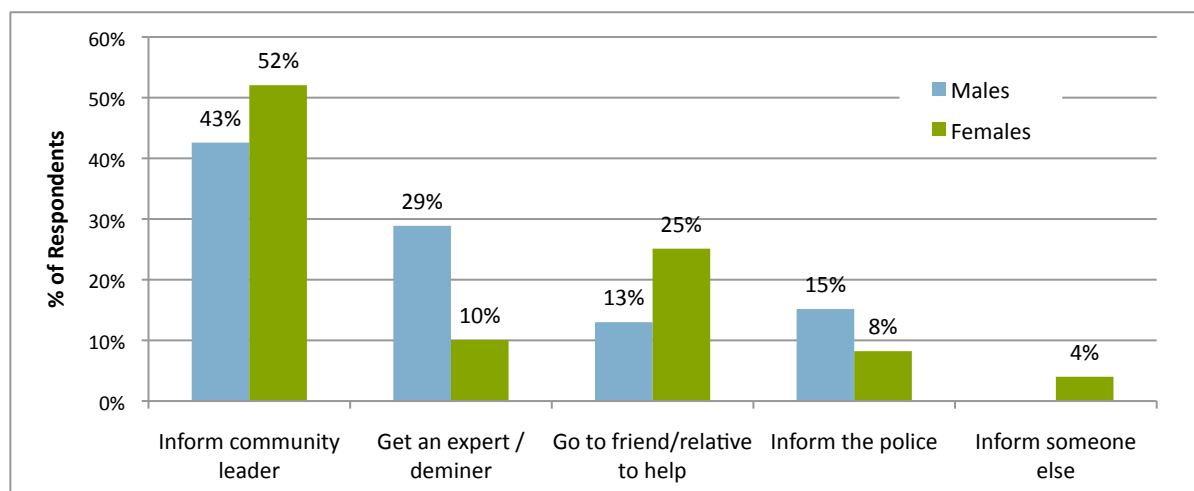


FIGURE 4.5. RESPONSE TO INJURED PERSON IN MINEFIELD

Q7. What should you do if a friend or relative is injured in a minefield? (one answer)⁵⁰



A majority of survey respondents knew that they should get help if a friend or relative is injured in a minefield; however, women demonstrated less understanding of the risks involved in entering a minefield than their male counterparts. Twenty-five percent of female respondents said they would run to help their friend/relative, compared with 13% of men. More revealing yet, a number of men in focus groups admitted that they knew they should not go to help their friend or relative, but that they would do it anyway.

⁴⁹ Based on responses from 280 male and 220 female survey participants. Answers of “other” included the presence of former military bases, security checkpoints or police stations; other signs of war; knowledge that people do not go there; blue signs; etc.

⁵⁰ Based on responses from 280 male and 220 female survey participants. Answers of “Inform someone else” were split between “inform the health centre” and “inform their family”.

If someone is injured in a minefield I would go in to the minefield and take him out of the area. One time, a person was injured in a minefield and I wanted to take him out of the place. He was pointing for me not to come in to the minefield, but I couldn't control myself and I took him out the area. – Farmer, 50, Bagram, Parwan

This finding introduces the conundrum that will be the focus of the following section on behaviour: even armed with information, some individuals will still take risks.

Key Points:

- People acquire information on mine risk from multiple sources including formal (training, school) and informal (community leaders, family) sources of MRE.
 - Interpersonal communication is more often cited than mass media as a source of MRE
 - At-risk populations are sharing MRE with family and community members, demonstrating the impact of MRE programmes on the endogenous risk culture
 - Awareness of basic MRE messages is high in surveyed areas, even among people that did not participate in formal training
-

4.2 BEHAVIOUR

Individuals assume risks with varying levels of information and intention (Box 4.3). According to survey findings presented in Section 4.1, at-risk populations in Afghanistan are generally aware of the danger posed by mines and ERW and have a basic understanding of safe behaviour.⁵¹ Despite awareness and information sharing amongst the general population mine and ERW-related accidents continue to occur at a rate of 34 per month.⁵² Often these accidents are linked to reckless or intentional risk-taking behaviour. This section will examine the intentionality and motivations of adult and child risk-taking, as well as the impact of accidents on community behaviour.

BOX 4.3. CATEGORIES OF RISK-TAKERS

Risk-takers are classified into categories based on their level of awareness of mine risk and safe behaviour as well as the intentionality of their actions.

Unaware: those who do not know about the danger of mines or ERW

Uninformed: those who are aware of mines but that do not know about safe behaviour

Misinformed: those who have incorrect information about safe behaviour

Reckless: those who know about but ignore mine-safe behaviour

Intentional: those who feel they have no choice but to assume risks

Source: GICHD, 2004.

4.2.1 Perceived motivations for adult and child risk-taking

When AMAC managers and IPs were asked why people continue to get injured by mines and ERW, one answer was consistently mentioned: people accept the risk out of necessity. As one key informant explained, “No matter how much you educate, people will accept the risk because they are desperate.” In addition to livelihood motivations, a few key informants mentioned the risk of mines that shift in the winter, rendering previously safe zones hazardous. They also said that cultural acceptance of the role of destiny plays a role in risk-taking decisions.

The findings from communities confirm these perceptions. While focus group participants were sometimes reluctant to admit it, only a small minority of survey participants denied that people in their communities continue to enter mined areas in one-on-one interviews (Figure 4.6). Most of the motivations they provided were related to livelihood activities such as farming or collecting firewood.

When asked if people that entered these areas understood the risk involved, more than half of surveyed individuals replied in the affirmative for adults, (Figure 4.7), with the greatest recognition of intentional risk-taking in Paktia province (74%). Half of respondents in Paktia and Kabul said that risk-taking children were aware of the danger involved, whereas fewer respondents in Parwan said the same.

⁵¹ New arrivals to an area, either due to nomadic lifestyles or displacement, and very young children that have not yet been informed of mine risk would be the few groups that may fall into the unaware or uninformed category.

⁵² Average calculated based on statistics provided by the MACCA for 2011

FIGURE 4.6. REASONS FOR ADULTS & CHILDREN ENTERING CONTAMINATED AREAS
 Q10 & 13. For what reasons do adults/children in your community go into areas that are mined?

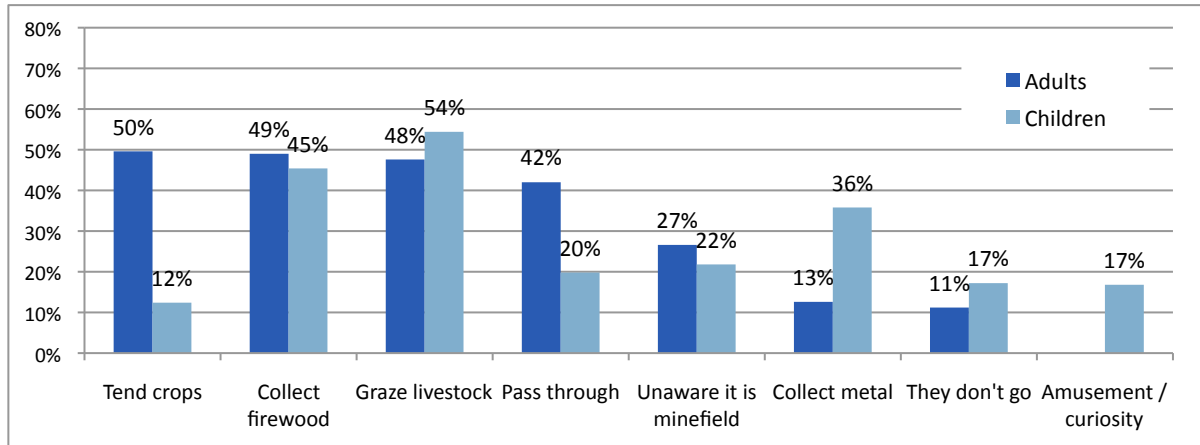


FIGURE 4.7. INTENTIONALITY OF RISK-TAKING BY ADULTS AND CHILDREN
 Q11 & 14. Do you think they understand the risk of going into these areas?

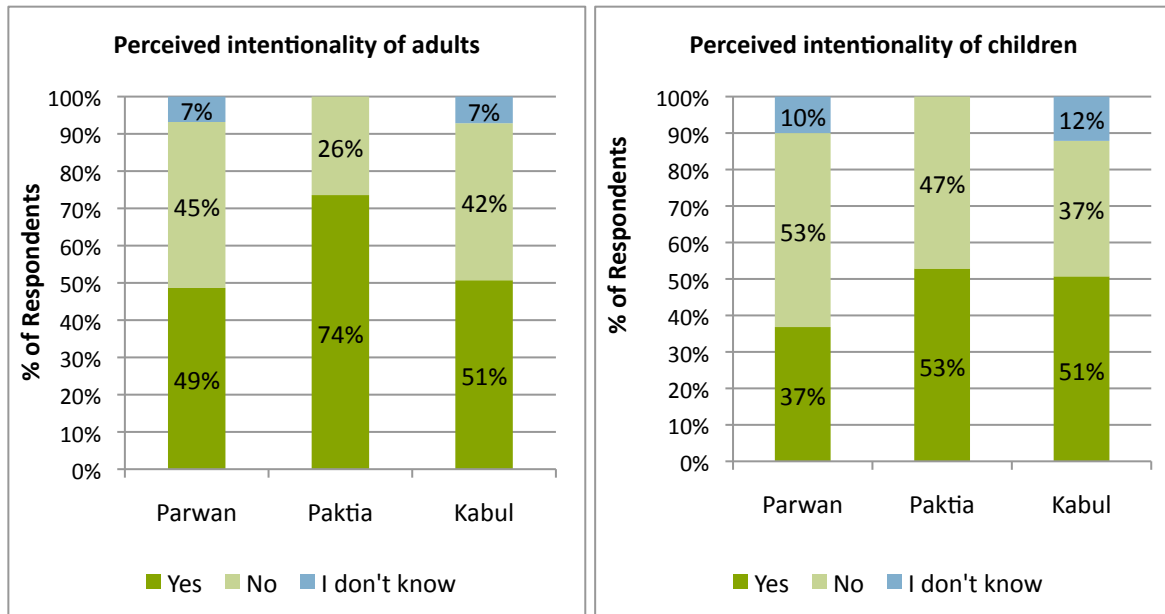
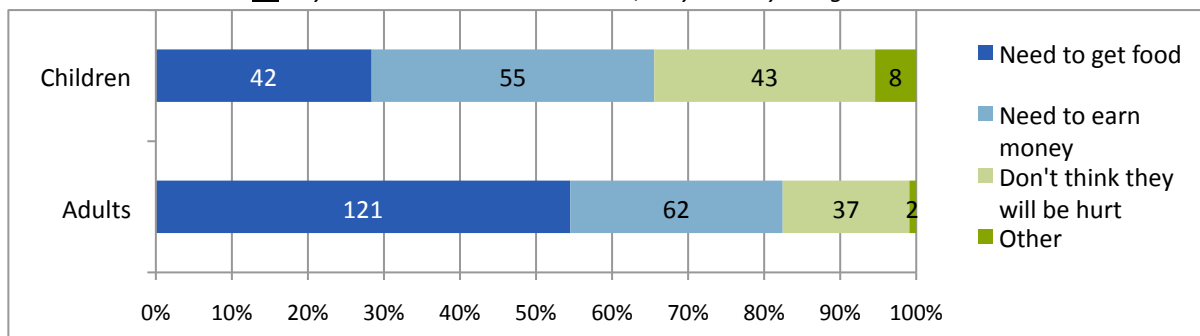


FIGURE 4.8. PURPOSE OF INTENTIONAL RISK-TAKING BY ADULTS AND CHILDREN
 Q12 & 15. If they understand the risk involved, why do they still go into these areas?⁵³



⁵³ Questions 12 and 15 were only asked of those respondents that answered yes to questions 11 (222 individuals) and 14 (148 individuals) about the intentionality of adult and child risk-taking. Answers of "Other" included for adults, the desire to show bravery and for children, parental neglect and not listening to parents.

Landmine and ERW survivors were the most frank about the awareness of risk-takers. A few survivors still insisted that if people understood the consequences, they would not take the risk of entering a contaminated area. However, most of the survivors interviewed for case studies explained that people continue to enter mined areas out of economic necessity, despite knowing the risk. They explained that people did not always know about the risk in the past, but that even after mined areas have been marked and MRE conducted, some people had no choice but to take risks intentionally.

The people still go to the mined area because of their economic problems. The people know about the risk, but they have to earn money for their family. – Landmine survivor, 45, Gardiz, Paktia

The people who do not have good economic situations go into risky areas to collect firewood and graze their animals. They would change their behaviour if the government provides them work opportunities, or if the government restrains them not to go in to the risky or mined areas. – Landmine survivor, 7th district, Kabul

I think people are afraid of the mined areas. They wouldn't even go near to the mined area because the people know about mines and their risks today. If a person knows about it, he would never go into the mined area. – Landmine survivor, 16, Bagram, Parwan

Excluding other factors, the third survivor above does describe the rational response when faced with the choice of entering a mined area. However, as a number of other survivors and community members acknowledged, there are other factors at play. Often entering a mined area appears to be the “survival choice,” as people in difficult economic situations have no other means of earning money or providing for their basic needs.

The need to earn money and provide for basic needs were two motivations were the main responses given by survey respondents asked to comment on the motivations of intentional risk-takers. The belief that they will not be hurt was the third (Figure 4.8). This touches on the two categories of risk-takers mentioned above. In the case of mine and ERW-safety, intentional risk-takers appear to be motivated primarily by economic factors, and reckless risk-takers represent a minority of risk-takers.

4.2.2 Economic factors driving intentional risk-taking

Adult and child risk takers are largely motivated by economic factors that are often linked to agriculture. Fifty-five percent of Afghan households derive their livelihood from agriculture, and 68% of households own some form of livestock.⁵⁴ In some cases, farmers and shepherds may feel they have no other choice but to take risks in areas contaminated with mines and ERW in order to feed their families.

When asked why adults in their area entered mined areas, tending crops, grazing livestock, and collecting firewood were reported by survey respondents as the top reasons (Figure 4.6). For each case, between 48-50% of respondents cited the activity as a reason why adults enter areas contaminated with mines and ERW. Focus group discussions supported this finding, acknowledging that in some cases people understand the risk, but that they must go because of economic pressures.

⁵⁴ CSO/MRRD (2008), National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment, Afghan Central Statistics Office and Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development.

The people know about mines and ERW. When someone finds a mine or ERW, they inform us (deminers). And those who are going to the risky areas, they don't have any other option. They must work and earn money, so they are going to work on their land, graze their animals or collect firewood. – Deminer working in Panjshir

They continue their risky behaviours because they want to work on their land to earn money from it, and when they are going to work on their lands they are killed or injured by mines or ERW. They do this because they have a bad economic situation. – Landmine Survivor, 27, Gardiz, Paktia

Being economically stable appears to be a key condition for individuals being *capable* of adopting risk-averse behaviours. In a country like Afghanistan, where poverty is pervasive, there is always someone desperate enough to adopt risk-seeking behaviour for economic gain. In one area, focus group participants admitted that while they themselves refused to farm contaminated land, they had found others who were willing to assume the risk.

We can't work on our agricultural lands safely, so we give them to others to grow crops on. They tell us, "We keep the profit for four years then we work for you on your land." We accept because we don't have any other choice. – Religious teacher, 48, Sayed Karam, Paktia

Economic/livelihood factors were also the driving force behind children's decisions to enter mined areas. More than half of survey respondents reported grazing livestock – the most commonly given answer – as a reason why children enter contaminated areas (Figure 4.6). Firewood and metal collection were also common answers with 45% and 36% of respondents respectively citing these two reasons as common motivations for children (Box 4.4). Metal collection was more commonly given for children than for adults, indicating that children may be used more frequently for this activity. Also mentioning these motivations, focus group participants touched on three levels of awareness of risk – ignorant, suspicious and certain of risk – illustrated below.

One of my friends was killed and one of them became blind. They didn't know they were going into the mined area. They went there to bring stones and mud for building their house. A mine injured them. – Boy, 9, 7th district, Kabul

Children and adults go into or cross through the mined areas. Children graze animals there because the areas are not marked by the deminers. Most of the people in the village don't know whether or not there are mines in an area, and we have not had an MRE programme in our village. So, people cross and say maybe there aren't mines. – Man, 43, Deh Sabz, Kabul

I know someone who was injured. [...] He lost his hand. He knew that area was dangerous, but he went there because he was grazing his cows. – Boy, 13, Charikar, Parwan

BOX 4.4. SCRAP METAL COLLECTORS: AN AT-RISK GROUP

The factors that motivate scrap metal collectors to take risks are different from those of farmers and shepherds. Their industry is not hampered but rather fuelled by the presence of mines and ERW. Informally referred to as *chara chine* or “scrappies”, the metal collectors actively seek mines and ERW to strip them of valuable metals such as copper and brass.

I know some people that were injured by mines. They had gone there (a contaminated area) to collect metal and ERW. Some of them knew that the area is dangerous, but they went there to earn money. – Boy, 13, 7th district, Kabul

Key informants and demining agencies described how they would see the “scrappies” going through a field, tapping on the ground with a stick to test the resonance and find buried mines. Others explained that the collectors would sometimes gather before a controlled detonation to neutralise ERW or mines. They would then run into the field as soon as the explosion detonated to collect the remnants.

At least one demining agency attempted to recruit the metal collectors as deminers. With their pre-existing comfort with mines and difficult economic situation, the recruitment seemed a perfect way to hire new deminers and cut down on accidents amongst metal collectors. However, the key informant explained that after several months, the metal collectors returned to their previous work. It remains unclear why the metal collectors did not prefer the steady income provided to deminers; however, one could speculate that they perceived the scrap metal industry to be more lucrative⁵⁵ or perhaps more flexible than the work of deminers.

As many children actively participate in this high-risk activity, it represents a key area for intervention for decreasing the number of injuries and deaths from mines and ERW. More than one-third of interviewees mentioned metal collection as a reason why children enter hazardous areas, while only 13% mentioned the same reason for adults. Interventions will need to find creative means of changing behaviour and providing alternative activities, as individuals that work in this field are often well aware of the risk they face.

4.2.3 Socio-cultural factors driving reckless risk-taking

After economic factors, socio-cultural factors influence the risk culture for males. In a country where heroes are lauded for their bravery in battle, it is little wonder that men and boys feel pressure to exhibit courage or even reckless behaviour. Out of 82 incidents with mines and ERW in the third quarter of 1390,⁵⁶ Boys were by far the most affected group, followed by men (Table 4.1).

While extreme gender segregation, which obliges many women to stay in or nearby the home, certainly accounts for a large part of this discrepancy, the different appetites for risk plays a role as well. Pre-pubescent girls are often performing chores along with their brothers, yet the number of injured girls in quarter three is one-tenth that of boys. Moreover, playing, recreation and tampering represented 27% of the activities conducted at the time of incident for the third quarter of 1390,⁵⁷ indicating that risk-taking was not only taken for subsistence needs. Amusement and curiosity were also reported by survey respondents as motivations for children entering mined areas (Figure 4.6).

⁵⁵ In Afghanistan, deminers typically make between 200-250 USD per month, receive insurance and have paid vacations. (Based on interviews with demining agencies)

⁵⁶ 1390 of the Afghan calendar corresponds with 20 March 2011 to 19 March 2012.

⁵⁷ MACCA/DMC (2012), *Landmine and Explosive Remnant of War Victims Report*, 3rd Quarter 1390 Report.

This motivation was cited much more frequently by residents of Kabul province where 33% of respondents reported leisure or amusement as a motivation for risk-taking behaviour, compared with 15% and 4% in Parwan and Paktia respectively.

TABLE 4.1. MINE AND ERW CASUALTIES – OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2011⁵⁸

	Men	Women	Boys	Girls
Injuries	15	0	40	4
Deaths	1	1	18	3

A cavalier attitude toward mine risk was exhibited by a number of men in focus group discussions. As mentioned in earlier (Section 4.1.3), when asked what they would do if someone was injured in a minefield, several men claimed they would run into the minefield to save the person, even though they had been warned that it was dangerous. Several men also boasted about being able to defuse mines and ERW because of their experience with the military or Mujahidin.

If I found a mine, I would try to neutralise it because I was a military man in the past and I know how. I did it in the past. If I couldn't manage to do it, I would inform the police. – Man, 37, 6th District, Kabul

I found out information about mines when I was a Mujahidin. I have complete information because we also planted mines to kill the Soviet soldiers. I also know how to defuse mines. I have defused many mines during the Mujahidin period. Sometimes I put mines under the bridge and hit them with a big stone to explode the mine. One time when we were walking on a mountain with mines, I was very careful to put my feet on stones because I know that under the stones there could be mines. – Electrician, 42, Bagram, Parwan

Self-perceived vulnerability is a good indicator of this socio-cultural pressure on men to exhibit bravery when faced with risky decisions. Amongst survey participants, Male teens and adults were more likely than their female counterparts to feel impervious to the threat of mine or ERW in an area known to have hazards. When asked about the probability of getting hurt in a contaminated area, a larger percentage of men thought an accident was only somewhat likely (18%) or not likely at all (9%) (Figure 4.9). In comparison only 1% of women thought an accident would not be likely in the same circumstances. This attitude is reinforced by the belief that one's fate is in the hands of God or destiny.

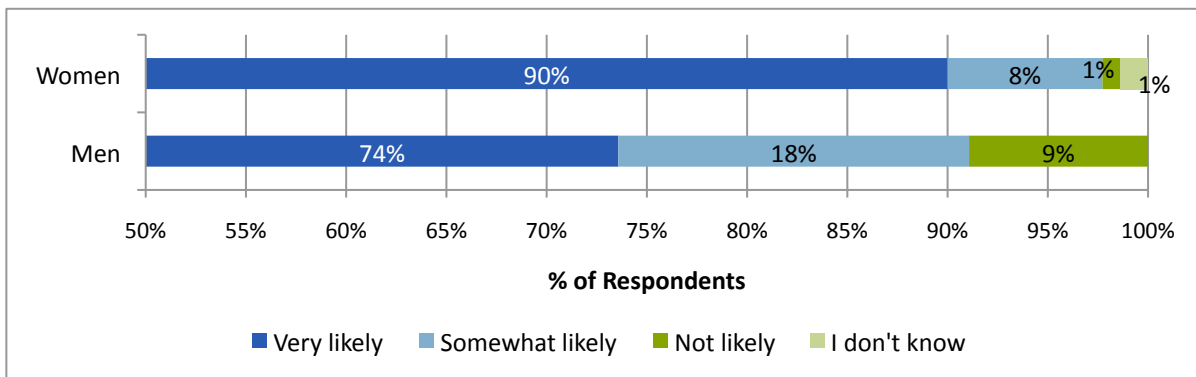
I think some of the adults cross through those areas because they say, "Let's go, man. God keeps us. We will be taken care of." Even though they know about the mines and their risks, they say God is kind, and go because there is no other way. They are going because they go to see a patient in the hospital or to participate in a holy ceremony. Some of the adults don't go, even they have to go. They don't because they don't want to be disabled or killed for the sake of their family, and they say there is no one to help me if I am disabled. – Woman, 40, Bagram, Parwan

The people have information about mines and ERW in their areas. They go into dangerous areas for agriculture and some of them go there to rebuild their old houses. They don't think they will be injured until one of them gets injured. Then they accept that this area really has mines. – Deminer, 23, Kabul

⁵⁸ MACCA/DMC (2012), *Landmine and Explosive Remnant of War Victims Report*, 3rd Quarter 1390 Report (Oct to Dec 2011).

FIGURE 4.9. PERCEIVED VULNERABILITY AMONGST MEN AND WOMEN

Q19. If you are walking through an area known to have mines or ERW, what do you think is the likelihood that you could get hurt?



4.2.4 Impact of accidents on behaviour

Decisions about risk-taking are adjusted over time with events or information either confirming or challenging previous decisions. While MRE provides information, the most powerful events that promote behaviour change are often personal. Qualitative and quantitative data from the surveyed provinces showed that experience with mine or ERW-related accidents in the community had a profound impact on risk-taking behaviours.

Most surveyed individuals knew of a relative or community member that had been killed or injured by a mine or ERW (Figure 4.10); those that knew of an incident also reported that community members became much more risk-averse as a direct result (Figure 4.11). Focus groups with both children and adults confirmed that accidents in the community were a powerful motivator for behaviour change, at least in the short- to medium-term.

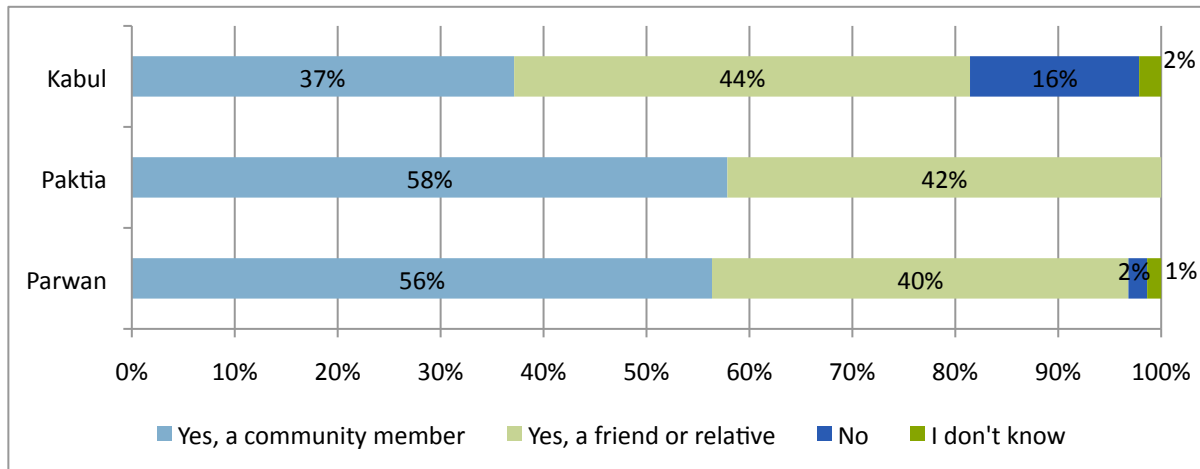
Before the land was cleared, people could not cultivate their land. Someone brought a tractor to cultivate the land. The tractor hit a mine and exploded. The person was injured, and after that people didn't want to go to the fields. – Farmer, 31, Bagram, Parwan

My father told me about a child that was injured, and he said to me: "Don't go to the mountain." When I heard this, I got sad and I would never go into the risky area. It was his (the victim's) father's fault because he told his son to graze the animals. – Boy, 9, Gardiz, Paktia

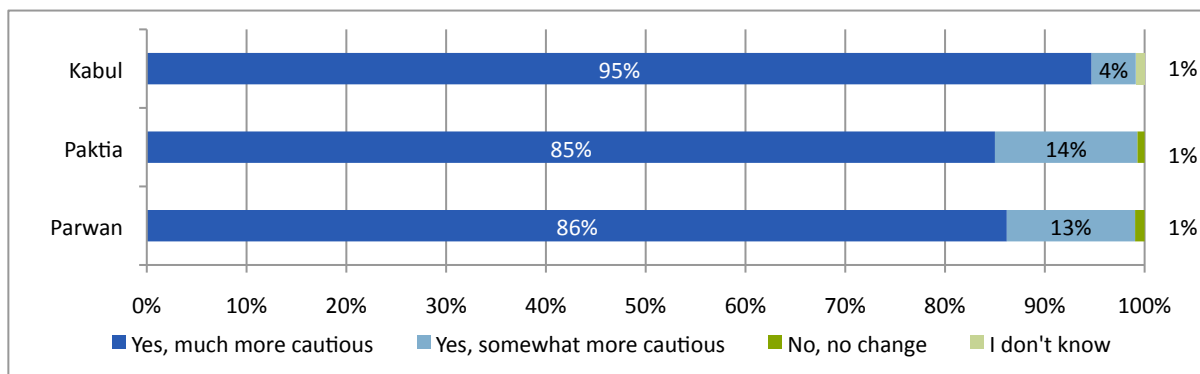
The people were so sad when someone was injured or killed, and then the people did not go to that area again. When someone became injured in the area, the others informed the Wakill (community leader) in the community and the Wakill informed all the villagers that the area was mined. – Women, 32 & 40, 6th District, Kabul

FIGURE 4.10. EXPERIENCE WITH ACCIDENTS IN COMMUNITY

Q16. Do you know of anyone in your community that was injured or killed by a mine or ERW?

**FIGURE 4.11. IMPACT OF ACCIDENTS ON BEHAVIOUR CHANGE**

Q17. After the accident, did community members change their behaviour to avoid areas they knew to have mines or ERW?⁵⁹



Key Points:

- Despite awareness of MRE, some individuals feel they must take risks due to their economic situations. These intentional risk takers often depend on agriculture or livestock for their livelihood.
- Scrap metal collection is another high-risk activity motivated by economic necessity.
- Reckless risk-takers are not as common as intentional risk-takers, but socio-cultural pressure to exhibit bravery does encourage some male adults and teens to disregard warnings
- Knowledge of local mine and ERW-related accidents were found to be the most dissuasive forces for behaviour change

⁵⁹ Based on responses from 463 individuals that answered “yes” to the previous question (Q16) about knowing of someone in the community that had been injured or killed in a mine or ERW-related accident.

4.3 ROLE OF MRE

The previous two sections on awareness and behaviour described the endogenous risk cultures of the surveyed communities. The role of formal MRE was only addressed when raised by the interviewees themselves, which provided a clearer picture as to how MRE fits into decision-making processes. The findings demonstrated that formal MRE is indeed an important source of information about mine risk, and that currently intentional risk-takers adopt risk behaviours *despite* knowledge of the risks, and not due to a lack of information. This section addresses MRE directly, presenting information gathered from the field about how communities regard MRE and its role in casualty reduction.

4.3.1 Community suggestions for casualty reduction

When asked about casualty reduction, focus group discussions yielded interesting suggestions that addressed the core issues of risk-taking. Participants highlighted the need to address the issue of jobs in areas where intentional risk-takers feel they have no choice but to enter contaminated land. They also explained that clearance should be a priority, as some people act against their better interest, even if well-informed.

I have told the people not to go into the mined areas as a community leader, but the children don't pay attention and they still go there to play. It is very necessary to clear these areas, otherwise the incidents won't decrease. They should mark those areas and prepare MRE programmes for the children, men and women, and they would be convinced not to go to those areas for their own sake, but it would be better for the areas to be cleared. – Community leader, 86, Deh Sabz, Kabul

Many people did not changed their behaviour because they have to go into mined areas to collect wood or they go there to graze their animals because of economic problems and unemployment. So, I suggest that they should provide some jobs for the people so that they do not enter into mined areas because of economic problems. – Community leader, 47, Sayed Karam, Paktia

Focus group participants also emphasised the role the community should play in disseminating MRE messages. While the responsibility for clearance was placed on deminers or the government, participants felt MRE was a shared responsibility that should be shared by families, community leaders, and teachers.

First of all the remaining mined areas should be clear, and the parents should warn their children not to go into mined areas because they could lose their foot, hands or their eyes. After that they would be disabled. As a leader of the community, I can explain to the villagers about mines and their risks, and also, I can tell them not to touch the unknown things when they find anything suspicious in the deserts or somewhere else. – Community leader, 50, Sayed Karam, Paktia

First of all they should survey the areas that may have mines and mark them, and they should give information through the media, newspapers, schools and mosque about mines and their risks. In some places there is no electricity, so they should tell them in the mosque and it would be better, because the elders of the community will tell the families. – Man, 31, 6th district, Kabul

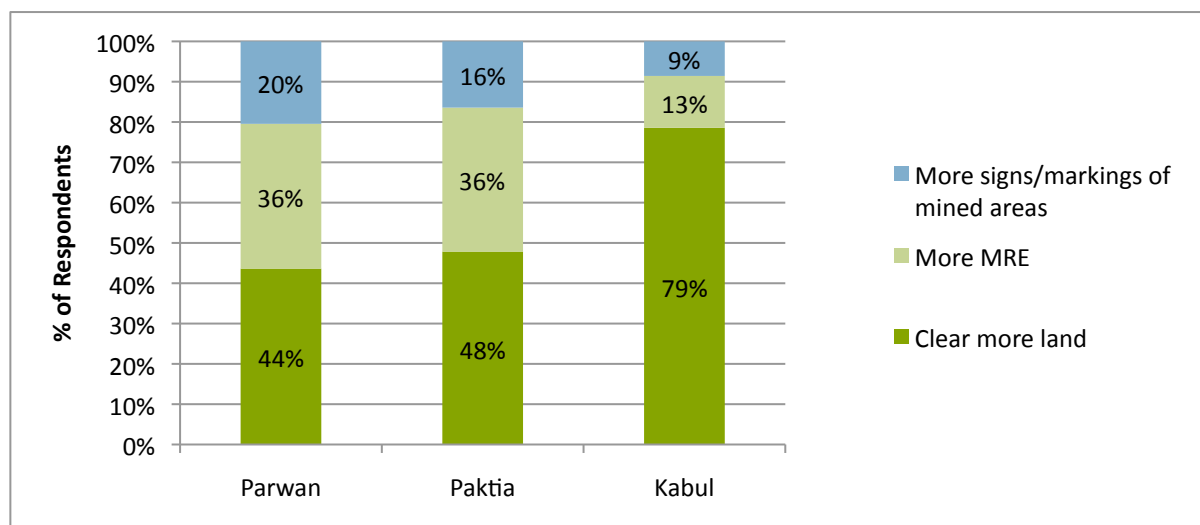
While it was not raised by other focus group participants, one man raised an interesting point about casualties being linked to on-going conflict. He felt the problem with current casualty levels was not that of insufficient mine action but rather the planting of mines in cleared areas by Armed

Opposition Groups. This opinion was not representative, but is a good reminder of why casualty rates in Afghanistan should not be the only measure of MRE success.

In order to decrease casualties, nobody should plant any mines in places that have been cleared. Now people are re-planting mines in cleared areas, around security points etc. whether Taliban or AOGs. If we do not plant any more, mines casualties will decrease. – Employee of private company, 25, Bagram, Parwan

Quantitative surveys yielded more standard suggestions of interventions for reducing casualties. Clearance of more land was the main suggestion proffered survey respondents when asked what they thought should be done to reduce accidents with mines and ERW (Figure 4.12). Additional MRE and markings of contaminated land were the other two answers provided.

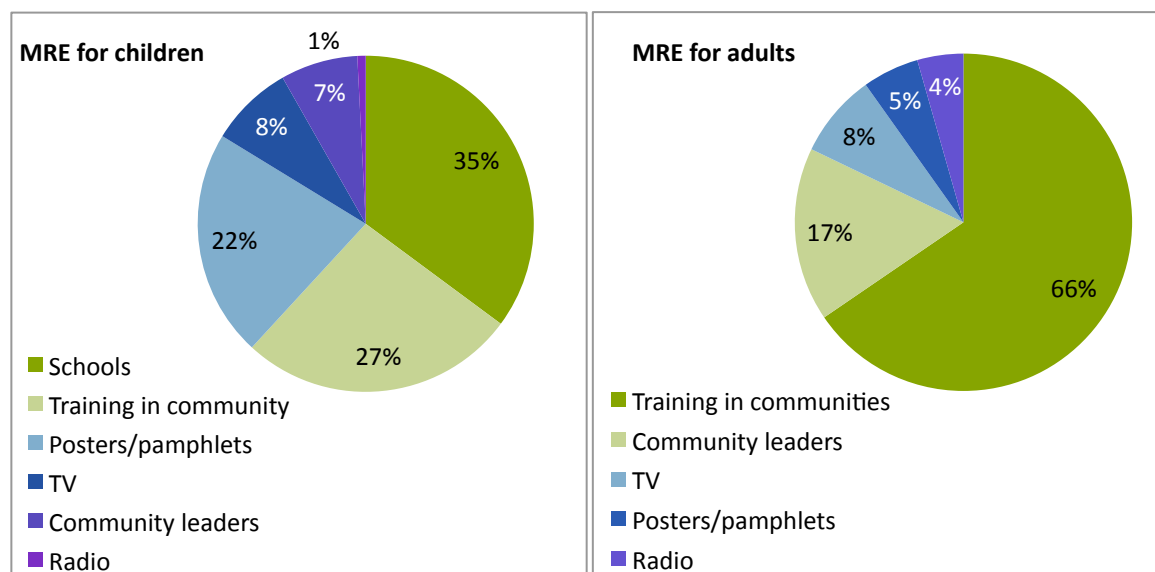
FIGURE 4.12. REDUCING MINE AND ERW-RELATED ACCIDENTS
Q27. What do you think should be done to reduce accidents with mines or ERW?



4.3.2 Community perceptions of MRE

Survey respondents demonstrated clear preferences for modes of MRE delivery (4.13). For children, respondents felt MRE training in schools (35%) and communities (27%) were the best ways to communicate mine risk, followed by posters/pamphlets (22%). For adults, a majority of respondents preferred MRE training in communities (66%), followed by MRE delivered through community leaders (17%). A minority of respondents for each question selected TV and radio.

FIGURE 4.13. COMMUNITY RECOMMENDED MODES OF MRE DELIVERY
Q28 & Q29. What do you think is the best way to teach MRE to children/adults? (one answer)



Focus groups placed greater emphasis on delivering MRE through multiple sources using interpersonal communication supported by small media. Many participants thought MRE delivered in mosques and schools had been quite successful. They also felt parents should be responsible for passing on information about mine risk to their children.

In my opinion, many courses about the dangers of mines have been held in the village and most people understand the dangers of mines. The information in mosques and schools for children is effective. It is very important that men have complete information about mines and ERW; they can then tell the households about the dangers of mines. As the head of the community, I have given a lot of information to the people of the village about the dangers of mines. Also, when someone is injured or hurt from mines I tell the relevant security people. – Community leader, 40, Bagram, Parwan

The best way to decrease casualties by mines is to spread information about the dangers of mines at the mosque for adults, at schools for children and in clinics. Also, the head of the household should take some posters of ERW and mines and show all family members. People who provide MRE training should distribute more posters, and this would be effective. – Electrician, 40, Bagram, Parwan

Key Points:

- More Mine/ERW clearance was seen as the only sustainable solution to minimising casualties, as communities recognised that some people will continue to enter dangerous areas out of necessity
 - Communities feel implicated in MRE delivery; they believe community leaders and families hold considerable responsibility for communicating MRE messages
 - Communities also recognise the importance of multiple, reinforcing messages about mine safety
 - MRE in schools and communities were the preferred modes of MRE delivery targeting children
 - MRE in communities and transmitted through community leaders were the preferred modes of MRE delivery targeting adults.
-

5 EVALUATION OF CURRENT MRE APPROACH

This chapter provides an evaluation of the MAPA's current approach to Mine Risk Education (MRE). It is not intended to serve as an evaluation of implementing partners' activities, but rather to assess the general approaches used. The assessment will draw from the needs and priorities of the endogenous risk culture of Afghan communities detailed in Chapter 4. It will also take into account international developments in the theoretical conceptualisation and practical implementation of MRE addressed in Chapter 3.

The MAPA's current MRE approach is analysed through the prism of the three key elements of MRE: *i)* community mine action liaison; *ii)* education and training; and *iii)* public information dissemination.⁶⁰ Each of the three categories is assessed based on coherence with community needs, cost-efficiency, and sustainability.

5.1 COMMUNITY MINE ACTION LIAISON

Processes that facilitate the exchange of information between stakeholders (communities, mine action organisations, and government entities) and that prioritise community needs and locally developed risk reduction strategies.

Current approach: Two types of community liaison are currently being implemented. Integration of the two areas is usually done at the prerogative of the implementing partner in question and is not promoted as part of the MAPA's approach to MRE.

- The first is Community-Based MRE (CBMRE), which is designed to “create a network of Community Volunteers spread throughout the country to act as community focal points for mine/UXO related issues.”⁶¹ The Danish Demining Group (DDG) and the Organisation for Mine Clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation (OMAR) are currently using this approach. The volunteers are charged with the mission of mobilising their communities to take responsibility for mine safety, educate individuals on mine/ERW risk, and liaise with mine action teams. CBMRE is generally implemented by NGOs that provide MRE and not demining agencies.
- The second form of community liaison is conducted by demining agencies in the communities in which they operate to ensure information is shared between the agencies and the communities regarding local needs, clearance prioritisation, clearance progress, etc. MRE – whether formal or informal – is sometimes transmitted to community stakeholders through this process, but it is not done systematically.

The use of community liaison and volunteer networks demonstrates a shift toward a more participatory approach in which information is exchanged with targeted communities, as opposed to previous approaches, which focused on disseminating messages through one-way communication. Both direct delivery of MRE and CBMRE are currently in use by MAPA IPs (Figure 5.1).

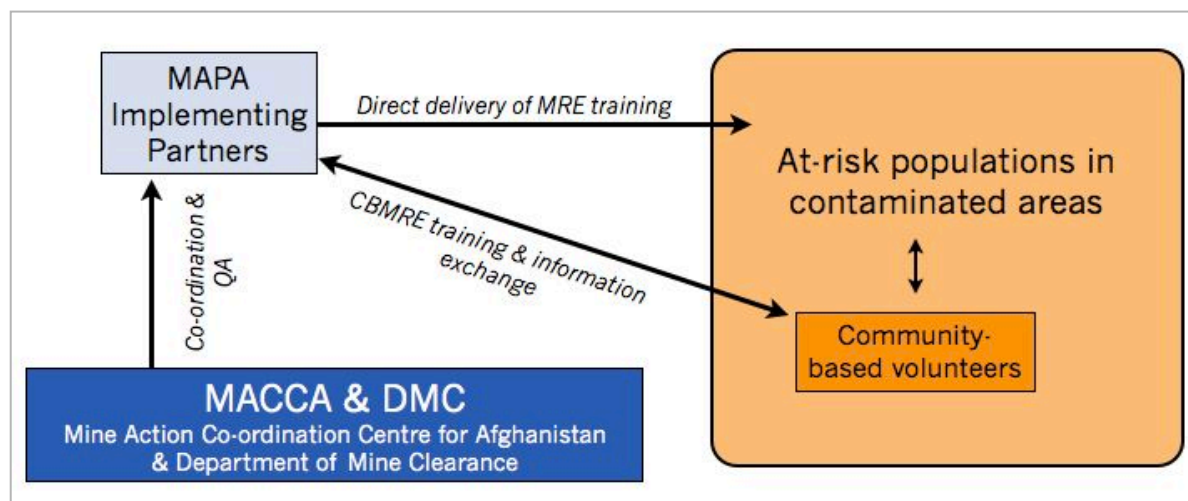
⁶⁰ GICHD, 2004.

⁶¹ MACCA (2007), *MRE Facilitator's Manual*, MACCA, Kabul.

TABLE 5.1. SWOT ANALYSIS: COMMUNITY MINE ACTION LIAISON

	Positive	Negative
Internal	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes local ownership • Cost-efficient in long-run • Sustainable presence & impact • Enables MRE in insecure areas 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently conducted in silos (clearance vs. MRE-focused) • Network underutilised for data collection • Time-consuming in beginning stages • Difficult to monitor • May exclude most vulnerable (those already excluded from society)
External	Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of community liaison efforts for clearance and MRE for a more holistic approach 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers may quit or leave • Lack of funding

FIGURE 5.1. DIRECT MRE DELIVERY AND CBMRE



5.1.1 Coherence with community needs

Community mine action liaison fits very well with the needs and preferences of at-risk populations in Afghanistan. As demonstrated in the Chapter 4, communities already feel implicated in mine action, and prefer MRE tools that directly involve communities (*e.g.* trainings held in the mosques, dissemination of MRE through community leaders). They also feel a responsibility to share MRE; this is especially true for community leaders sharing with local families and head of household sharing information with their families. Community liaison builds on this sense of agency and ownership, placing the responsibility on communities for their own safety, while empowering them to build mine smartness and change behaviours.

It should be kept in mind, however, that some of the at-risk populations are not always included in tight-knit community networks (*e.g.* returnees, IDPs, *Kuchi* nomads). When establishing community liaison networks in contaminated areas, the most at-risk people need to be identified as a first priority. Community liaison processes should target mobile communities in addition to permanent communities (*e.g.* training CBMRE volunteers in *Kuchi* communities).

5.1.2 Cost-efficiency

Community mine action liaison is time consuming in the early stages, but more cost-efficient in the long-run. Volunteers are trained to continue promoting MRE in their communities long after the initial training. Its emphasis on local ownership also fuels informal information sharing networks that might not otherwise be activated through less participatory approaches.

The cost-efficiency of this approach could be improved if there was greater cross over between community liaison for clearance and MRE. From a community perspective, all mine action representatives are “deminers”; they do not often differentiate between the different roles and responsibilities. It makes sense that both volunteers and professional representatives trained to liaise with communities on MRE also be aware of when, where and how demining agencies are clearing land in the area, and vice versa. It would save costs and present a more consistent, unified message to communities.

Community liaison could also enable other elements of mine action to save money as it provides a currently underutilised network for data collection on victim assistance and victim data collection (Box 5.1).

5.1.3 Sustainability

Community mine action liaison is the most sustainable element of MRE efforts in Afghanistan. It works *with* the local mechanisms for coping with risk, rather than creating a parallel system. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, communication through the community aligns with local preferences and practices. While it does not provide a tangible, output that can be easily counted or shown to donors, the outcome is clearly more effective and long-lasting than flashy campaigns. It also promotes behaviour change without creating dependence on outside intervention. This is key as future funding for MRE initiatives is uncertain.

Its sustainability could be improved if liaison efforts for MRE and the rest of mine action were better integrated. The MAPA should do more MRE delivery through community liaison and volunteer training and less through one-shot interventions.

BOX 5.1. VICTIM DATA COLLECTION

Landmine and ERW victim data collection is an area that could potentially be improved if greater emphasis was placed on the gathering of information through community mine action liaison processes. It has been conducted by the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) until now, but due to the reduced budget of the Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF), the MACCA is exploring options to merge victim data collection into government data collection processes or secure additional funding.

Victim data collection is currently incomplete and underfunded

The current approach utilised by the MACCA is rather labour intensive; 413 clinics are visited by a pair of MRE trainers from each of ARCS' seven field offices every month. Local doctors and nurses have been trained to fill out standardised forms for the victim data collection process; if the forms have not been filled out correctly, the trainers visit the victims or their families at home to collect the missing information. The data is then submitted to the local AMAC office, which processes the data and sends it to the MACCA. It is also submitted to the ARCS headquarters where two staff input the information into the database. Final figures are cross-checked between MACCA and ARCS to ensure calculation accuracy.

The system has a number of gaps that render the final data incomplete. Despite the fact that ARCS' neutrality allows it to operate in some areas where other actors cannot, there are still some places that are too remote and/or insecure for its representatives to travel. The system is also limited to the clinics within its established network, and not all Afghan families would feel it is necessary to go to a clinic, especially if their relative was killed in the accident.

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has access to around 2,000 health facilities around the country connected by a Health Management Information System (HMIS), and already collects data on survivors, as the Ministry provides services for the disabled. The MoPH appears to be the logical place to house the victim data collection for the future. Training and capacity building would need to be done to ensure the quality of the data collection, which would require funding in the early stages. However, absorbing this task into the MoPH would be a much more sustainable solution in the long run.

Data collection utilise community liaison channels

The accuracy of the data could be improved and the cost of collection reduced if the collecting organisation – whether ARCS or the MoPH – if it tapped into community volunteer networks established through community mine action liaison. Community liaison is intended to facilitate the flow of information to *and* from communities. It is currently being used primarily to share information about clearance and MRE, and not enough emphasis is placed on data collection. Communities have an incentive in reporting data as accidents indicate the need for clearance.

One example of such a community based data collection system is the Livestock Information Network and Knowledge System (LMIS). The Global Livestock Collaborative Research Support Program in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL)⁶² has developed a livestock marketing information system based on information communication technology that has been adopted as the basis for developing a national livestock marketing information system.

How the system works is quite simple. Monitors collect live animal prices in livestock markets

⁶² <http://afghanpeace.org/>

around Afghanistan. The monitors record the average prices for different species, breeds and conditions of animals being sold in the markets. This data is entered into the LMIS server using several different methods:

- Entered with a computer over the internet (website interface entered directly into the server machine)
- SMS messages can be sent to the server from a mobile phone
- SMS messages can be sent to the server from a mobile phone once the data is entered the Statistics Department can produce graphics and reports from e data similar to what is displayed below.

The market information has been used as a strategic tool by MAIL for improving its ability to: 1) understand how the markets are operating in the country; 2) detect the key signs of a livestock crisis (*due to drought, diseases, etc.*); 3) play a co-ordinating and managing role between supply and demand in the medium and long term.

- Livestock Traders can determine which markets are paying better prices for animals they are trading.
- Producers and Butchers can check to see what the average market prices are for the species and breed they are interested in knowing about.

Community volunteers as well as health facilities could use such a system to quickly report the details of a landmine incident to the MAPA. The current database that the LMIS system is open source software and could easily be adapted for victim data collection. The system can be established to collect information on the location of the incident, the age and gender of the victim and the type of injury or any other variables important to the MAPA. All data entry volunteers require is SIM card and a very simple mobile phone. Numeric codes for data input are easy to use and understand even for illiterate community members. Once the database and system is established ongoing support is minimal; a server for the database needs to be maintained and operated in a safe place.

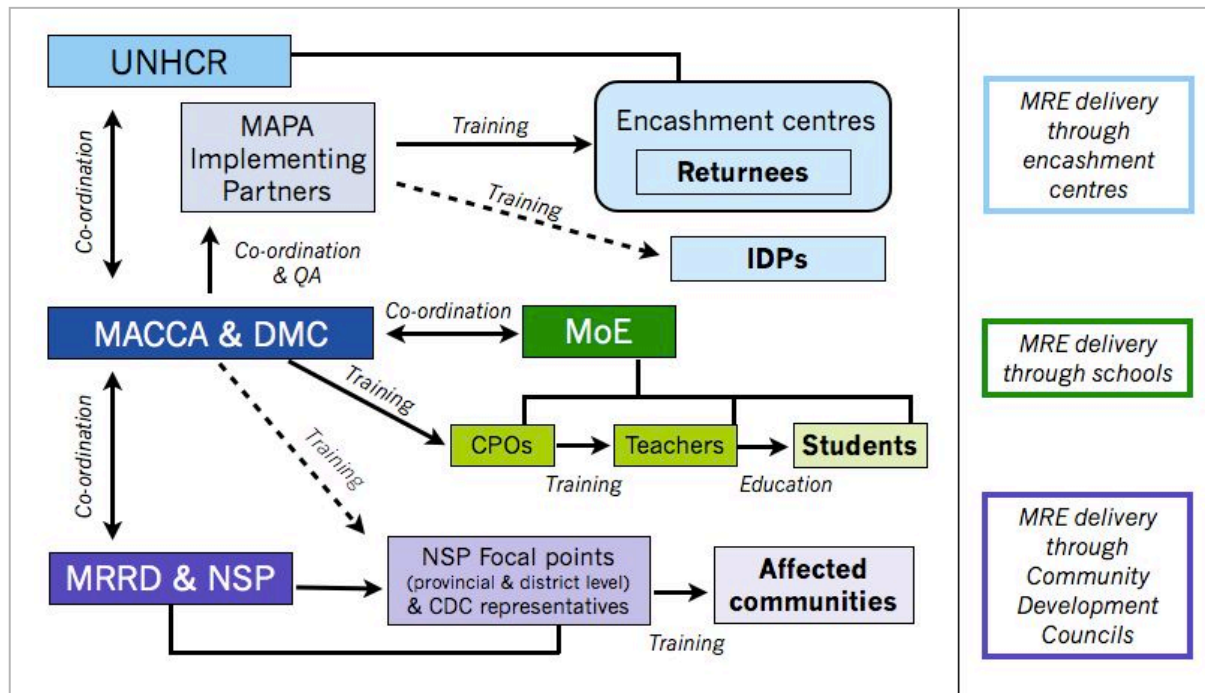
A faster collection method would help the MoPH and the MAPA identify pockets of accidents earlier so that MRE trainers and deminers could be sent more rapidly to prevent further casualties. The MoPH could then follow-up with the individuals and health facilities reporting the data to gather the details of the incidents. The information can also be instantly uploaded into GIS systems to create maps indicating where incidents took place to assist in the current MAPA process of prioritisation for clearance.

5.2 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Two-way communication focused on sharing and gathering information about knowledge, attitudes and practices.

Current approach: The MAPA's current approach to education and training is placing increasing emphasis on incorporating MRE into pre-existing mechanisms that target the same beneficiaries as the MAPA. This integration is a work in progress, with different initiatives demonstrating different levels of integration (Figure 5.2).

FIGURE 5.2. INTEGRATION OF MRE INTO PRE-EXISTING STRUCTURES



- **Targeting returnees & IDPs:** IPs deliver MRE in transit and encashment centres operated by **UNHCR**,⁶³ the UN Refugee Agency, in order to reach returnees as soon as they re-enter the country. The MACCA and UNHCR are also planning to strengthen co-ordination in order to better target Internally Displaced Persons; however, this co-ordination has yet to be tested in the field.
- **Students:** The MAPA has been collaborating with the **Ministry of Education (MoE)** since 2007 to incorporate MRE into school curriculum. More than 21,000 teachers have since been trained to deliver MRE in the classroom. Training and quality assurance is provided by 120 Child Protection Officers stationed in the provinces. The MoE has agreed to assume the cost of their salaries for 1391; however, as the former salaries were higher than government salaries in Afghanistan, it is unclear if the programme will retain the same, skilled Child Protection Officers that have been working with the teachers in the past.
- **Community Development Councils:** The MAPA is in the early stages of co-ordinating with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) to incorporate MRE into the National Solidarity Programme. The plan would be for the MAPA to arrange mine action training for the NSP's provincial and district focal points and Community Development Council

⁶³ The MACCA's partnership with UNHCR is discussed further in Box 4.2.

representatives, in order to reach impacted communities throughout the country. This plan is still in the early stages, but appears promising.

The more traditional side of the MAPA’s approach to education and training focuses on IPs providing training directly to beneficiaries through a variety of delivery methods including: MRE sessions in communities (often in mosques), mobile cinema, Mobile Mini Circus for Children, and MRE materials distribution. These methods use participatory methods to encourage audience participation.

They also rely on small media such as posters and activity cards to illustrate messages and facilitate conversation (Table 5.2). These items are designed with illiterate audiences in mind, and can be easily understood through their images.

TABLE 5.2. EXAMPLES OF SMALL MEDIA USED IN MRE TRAINING

	<p>MRE training kits are equipped with 10 activity cards, each of which presents a key message. Seven relate to mine safety and three focus on victim assistance and acceptance of landmine survivors.</p>
	<p>Posters feature life-size depictions of anti-personnel mines, anti-tank mines and ERW. Participants in MRE sessions are taught to recognise these hazards in order to avoid them.</p>

TABLE 5.3. SWOT ANALYSIS FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION

	Positive	Negative
Internal	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporation of MRE into pre-existing mechanisms is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ more sustainable, ○ cost-efficient ○ allows for better targeting ○ enables better access to remote/insecure areas • Participatory methods engage audiences • Current materials suitable for illiterate audiences 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporation of MRE into pre-existing mechanisms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ is time-consuming in early stages ○ can be difficult to monitor • Direct interventions have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ limited access to remote and/or insecure areas ○ limited long-term impact without follow-up ○ are costly and time consuming
External	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some MRE training programmes could be transitioned into CBMRE 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insecurity could reduce access to communities • Lack of funding

5.2.1 Coherence with community needs

The participatory nature of current MRE training and education initiatives correspond well with the endogenous risk culture. Interpersonal communication was the common theme of those modes of MRE delivery preferred by survey participants: MRE in schools, MRE in communities, MRE through community leaders, etc. (Figure 4.13). These methods also emphasise the importance of sharing information learned with others, which has been shown to work in surveyed communities (Section 4.1.1 and Section 4.1.2). Survey participants also expressed appreciation of the small media used in trainings, as they were easy to understand and helped illustrate lessons.

As mentioned in the previous section, the MAPA must keep in mind that certain at-risk groups are excluded from tight-knit communities. While MRE initiatives capture a broad audience by conducting MRE in schools and mosques, some of the most at-risk populations may not be reached through these methods.

The MAPA needs to target marginalised populations and communities (*e.g. Kuchis, IDPs*) when advising where IPs should go to deliver MRE training. Work with UNHCR may enable a more targeted approach for reaching IDPs. The MAPA should reach out to other marginalised, at-risk populations by establishing similar partnerships with the Afghan government, NGOs, and UN agencies.

5.2.2 Cost-efficiency

Direct delivery of one-shot MRE training in communities is effective in spreading awareness to at-risk communities. These initiatives also deliver a more rapid response than community liaison and volunteer training programmes. Yet, in terms of long-term impact, they are not as cost-efficient as community mine action liaison initiatives such as Community-Based MRE. Direct delivery should still be a part of the MAPA's approach to MRE; however, greater emphasis should be placed on training community volunteers to conduct the same types of training.

Partnerships with pre-existing structures (*e.g.* UNHCR, MoE, MRRD/NSP) are more cost-efficient. In the case of the education system or the planned integration of MRE into the NSP, MRE is incorporated into existing dissemination channels at minimal extra cost; the main cost is the training of teachers and focal points, who then deliver MRE to a much broader group of beneficiaries. The partnership with UNHCR facilitates the dissemination of MRE through encashment centres by IPs, which helps reduce cost as the facilities are provided and the returnees come to the IPs, rather than the other way around. If UNHCR representatives working with returnees and IDPs are trained in MRE as planned, this would further spread the reach of MRE to displaced populations at no additional cost after the initial training. It would also help incorporate MRE amongst key messages conveyed to returnees and IDPs, rather than being an anecdotal side note. This will require a more integrated approach by the MAPA, UNHCR and other actors working with at-risk populations.

5.2.3 Sustainability

As behaviour change is a process and not a one-time event, it is important that messages be delivered through multiple channels over time. One-shot initiatives delivering MRE to communities have an immediate impact, but require follow-up if risk-averse behaviours are to be maintained. They are most useful where a rapid response is needed to prevent casualties while clearance is conducted or while a more sustainable, community-based risk management mechanism is established. Therefore, they should be a part of the overall MRE strategy, but they should be accompanied by efforts to emphasise community responsibility in continuing risk reduction and mine risk awareness after the initial training is conducted.

Integration of MRE into other mechanisms, on the other hand, provides a sustainable way to ensure that multiple networks engaged in at-risk communities are armed with the knowledge to deliver MRE as necessary in the field. It is an important aspect of ensuring the sustainability of mine safety in Afghanistan.

BOX 5.2. MRE IN SCHOOLS – SIMPLE AND EFFECTIVE

The partnership between the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the MAPA has been successful at building awareness of mine and ERW risk amongst school children. It provides an excellent model of how MRE can be incorporated into a pre-existing structure in a systematised and timely manner. Part of the success of this initiative is due to the choice of small media tools and emphasis on participatory learning, which helps students feel engaged and better retain lessons.

More than 21,000 teachers have been trained to deliver MRE in the classroom. Along with training, each teacher receives a kit with guidelines for delivering MRE in both Dari and Pashto. Visual aids are provided in the kit to encourage classroom participation. The kit includes posters with actual size images of ERW, AT mines and AP mines. It also contains ten activity cards, seven of which focus on MRE and three of which demonstrate victim assistance messages. The MoE also uses MRE textbooks that target primary school children and high school students. This core set of materials has proven practical and reusable – key for maintaining a sustainable presence in the classroom.

Other items used have included banners, flipcharts, notebooks, printed bags and pens with MRE messages printed on them. With the exception of the flipcharts, which can be used to encourage interaction, these items have little impact and a short lifespan. Funding should focus on the more cost-effective items (*e.g.* posters, activity cards and textbooks) that can be reused from year to year.

5.3 PUBLIC INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

Communication (often one-way) transmitted through mass media and designed to raise awareness and promote behaviour change.

Current approach: Broad public information dissemination through mass media is no longer a central element of the MAPA's approach to MRE. One of its IPs continues producing and broadcasting some radio and television content, and the Ministry of Education has assumed responsibilities for producing a regular magazine with articles on mine risk that is primarily disseminated to students.

TABLE 5.4. SWOT ANALYSIS: PUBLIC INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

	Positive	Negative
Internal	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaches large numbers • Easy to control messages and monitor dissemination • Provides access to insecure areas 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not reach most vulnerable • Expensive to produce and disseminate • Limited lifespan of messages • Mainly one-way communication • Difficult to measure reactions/impact
External	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of free or reduced air-time on TV and Radio through select channels • Integration into pre-existing call-in and/or talk show programme formats enables engagement with hard-to-reach audiences 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audiences tune-out messages after overexposure to PSAs • Other PI campaigns overshadow MRE messages

5.3.1 Coherence with community needs

After years of public awareness raising and the integration of MRE messages into the school systems, a large proportion of the general population is aware of basic MRE principles. What is needed now is a more tailored approach for specific at-risk communities and populations that works with the endogenous risk prevention culture, which cannot be achieved through most forms of mass media.

Media consumer habits in Afghanistan have changed over the past decade. Consumers have more options both in terms of mass media channels with the expansion of television and internet access and multiplication of media content choices. People no longer tune into the same radio drama every week simply because it is one of the only options. After more than a decade of being inundated with Public Service Announcements, Afghans have learned to tune out these messages and have become much more selective of what they listen, watch or read.⁶⁴

While these new forms of media present exciting opportunities for communication campaigns in Afghanistan, they are not suitable for the needs of at-risk populations in mine and ERW-affected areas. The profiles of those who are most vulnerable to mines and ERW are quite specific and include farmers, shepherds, scrap metal collectors, *Kuchis*, and displaced persons (*i.e.* returnees and IDPs). These populations are largely illiterate and often do not have access television, internet, or even electricity.

⁶⁴ Based on interview with Fareed Payaam, Country Director of Sayara Media & Communication, 22 February 2012.

Radios are the most common mass media channel with these segments of the population, and could be useful to facilitate community liaison if used strategically. Call-in programmes and round table formats provide a forum for discussion and dialogue. Incorporating MRE – or mine action more generally – as a topic of discussion on pre-existing radio shows could provide an excellent tool for introducing mine action initiatives to community members, reinforcing messages delivered through interpersonal communication, and opening up the lines of communication to hear questions and comments from community members. Such initiatives would be best conducted on a local level, and programme discussions should include local stakeholders such as community leaders (*e.g. maliks, elders, religious leaders*); mine action representatives (*e.g. deminers, MRE trainers, surveyors*); and local government representatives.

5.3.2 Cost-efficiency

Mass media is generally a costly way of disseminating messages. While it does succeed in reaching a broad audience, or in some cases, audiences in insecure areas, it is not very suitable for the current needs of at-risk populations, rendering it even less cost-efficient as a communication tool. Where time slots are given for free or at a reduced cost, it may be useful to continue broadcasting MRE messages, but the MAPA should ensure that programmes are broadcast in targeted areas at strategic times, not just during peak hours on popular channels for the general public.

The strategy suggested above of facilitating round table discussions or call-in programmes on local radio channels would be more cost-efficient than a high profile, national campaign. Local stations have increased capacity exponentially in recent years, and could produce programming that is adapted to the tastes of local audiences. Appearing on pre-existing programmes could even be done at no cost at all, if the local host finds the topic interesting to his or her audience.

High budget TV and radio dramas may be more marketable to donors, but low-budget, participatory programming produced at the local level would be more effective and cost-efficient for reaching vulnerable populations living in areas contaminated by mines and ERW. As long as radio and TV air time is provided for free or at a much reduced, it does not hurt to use these channels as they help in terms of reinforcing messages delivered through other channels. Should these arrangements change, however, community-based approaches should be prioritised over mass media.

5.3.3 Sustainability

Public information dissemination is intended to raise visibility of an issue, but it does not create long-lasting behaviour change. It was important in the early years of raising general awareness, but as progress continues to be made to clear land of mines and ERW, a more targeted approach is needed to reach those most in need of risk reduction strategies.

Promoting MRE through local programming that involves local actors would improve the sustainability of any mass media campaign. Such an approach would build on local ownership and responsibility for casualty reduction, ensuring that local individuals feel motivated to continue spreading information about mine and ERW risk after externally driven initiatives have ended.

BOX 5.3. FOUR PRINCIPLES FOR A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Focused: *Messages should be tailored to specific, identified audiences*

Reinforcing: *Messages should be delivered through multiple communication channels to reach target audiences*

Attractive: *Materials should be well designed, easy to understand and engaging*

Simple and sustainable: *Initiatives and materials should be cost-efficient and designed for maximum long-term impact*

Source: UNICEF (2007), "Mine Risk Education Materials Development," Literature Review prepared for UNICEF by MAG and the National Regulatory Authority for the UXO Sector in Lao PDR, p. 3.

6 MRE RECOMMENDATIONS

Community Mine Action Liaison

Prioritise community mine action liaison within the MRE strategy to:

Ensure that communities have ownership of risk reduction efforts

Local communities have already demonstrated a desire and capacity to spread MRE through their communities. MRE efforts need to capitalise on this momentum and work with communities to develop local solutions to risk reduction that target at-risk populations.

Gain access to remote and insecure areas

By using community-based MRE, volunteers from the communities are trained to promote MRE in areas where mine action professionals do not have access. CBMRE, as well as community-based demining has already proven to be an effective, cost-efficient means of reaching previously inaccessible areas.

Collect information and data from communities

Community liaison is about information sharing in both directions, not just raising awareness. The network of community representatives and volunteers engaged in this process should be better utilised to collect data that informs mine action initiatives (*e.g.* victim data collection). SMS technology for reporting should be considered to facilitate this process.

Streamline delivery of MRE and other mine action messages

Community mine action liaison should focus on all aspects of mine action, not one aspect (*e.g.* clearance or MRE). Communities do not distinguish between MRE initiatives and demining initiatives, so all people involved in community liaison should be able to communicate with people on the different aspects of mine action. Some organisations already do this, but these measures should be standardised throughout all mine action organisations:

- **Train all deminers to share basic MRE messages** when interacting with communities.
- **Keep MRE trainers and local volunteers informed of local clearance initiatives** so that they can share information and answer questions from the community.

Education and training

Utilise direct delivery of MRE training for:

Emergency response

The advantage of direct delivery is that is faster and easier to implement than community liaison processes. It is ideal for responding quickly to areas where accidents are occurring or are anticipated, *e.g.* when IDPs are settling into a contaminated area or when neighbourhoods expand into mined areas due to rapid urban expansion.

... and targeting marginalised groups

The most at-risk populations are often excluded from local risk reduction mechanisms (*e.g.* information sharing about locations of prior accidents). More focus should be placed on identifying and targeting at-risk individuals, notably marginalised groups, to ensure they are not overlooked.

BUT decrease dependence on direct delivery a primary MRE tool for general audiences

Less emphasis should be placed on direct delivery as a standard MRE practice, as community liaison provides a more sustainable solution. Direct delivery should be reserved for emergency response or in the beginning of community liaison processes.

Continue efforts to incorporate MRE training into pre-existing structures and pursue additional partnerships to target specific at-risk populations

Incorporating MRE into existing initiatives is a cost-effective, sustainable way to spread MRE to hard-to-reach areas (*e.g.* through the nationwide network of the NSP) as well as to targeted populations (*e.g.* reaching students through the MoE and displaced populations through UNHCR).

Public Information Dissemination**Public information dissemination through mass media should not be a priority**

A more targeted approach that promotes local ownership of risk reduction is what is needed now to reduce mine and ERW casualties. Most forms of mass media are not suitable for this kind of approach. Local radio programmes, notably call-in shows or round table discussions, could be useful to facilitate discussions about mine action, but initiatives should be tailored to local communities and paired with community liaison processes.

PART II: COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF MINE ACTION AND DEMINERS

This section of the report sets out to examine community perceptions of deminers and their work in order to identify misconceptions that may compromise their ability to operate, and to provide strategic recommendations for decreasing the number of incidents targeting deminers through strategic communications and community engagement. It is important to note that this section draws conclusions from fieldwork based in Kabul, Paktia and Parwan and is not representative of the perceptions of deminers across all provinces in Afghanistan.

Chapter 7 will present a brief description of incidents against deminers to explore what demining agencies and communities believe are the motivations behind security events involving deminers in Afghanistan. It explores the motivations behind these incidents to see if these events are perpetrated by groups motivated by political or criminal ends and what communities believe these groups are trying to achieve. These questions are especially pertinent when considering the positive perception of deminers observed among surveyed communities and the recognition of the significant benefit of mine action activities.

Chapter 8 will examine the process of community engagement by mine action organisations. Analysing information gathered from the field, it describes the process of community liaison, prioritisation of areas for clearance and community-based demining. It aims to capture the actual role played by deminers in the field, their function and social role and evaluates their strengths and weaknesses. From this perspective it describes and analyses what communities suggest are the best methodologies for improving the current community engagement strategies.

Based on a clearer understanding of community perceptions of deminers, this report will provide recommendations on ways to improve relations between deminers and communities. Understanding leads to confidence in the work of the deminers and to better communications. With a better understanding of the motivations behind the threats on deminers, and community perceptions of the mine clearance process, this report will provide recommendations on ways to improve the already good relations between deminers and communities. This discussion is important as an appreciation of the way communities perceive and understand the mine action process will lead to the ultimate goal of reducing incidents against deminers.

7 DEMINER SAFETY

This chapter will examine recent incidents in which deminers were threatened, harassed or kidnapped. It will serve to analyse the who, where, how and why of these incidents based on data and insights from demining IPs, communities, MACCA/AMAC representatives, and deminers themselves in Kabul, Parwan and Paktia provinces.

Observations from the field stress the importance of establishing and maintaining good community relations. This relationship is even more important when working in remote and insecure areas, especially taking into consideration the role community elders play in resolving security incidents involving deminers. While generally the methods of community engagement adopted by demining implementing partners are satisfactory, improvements can be made. The following section will discuss recommendations for improvement based on field observations to provide the background for recommendations to improve community relations outlined later in this chapter.

7.1 OVERVIEW: SECURITY INCIDENTS INVOLVING DEMINERS

The MAPA employs more than 14,000 people, making it one of the largest staffs related to any of the UN Agency Funds and Programmes (AFPs) in Afghanistan.⁶⁵ “MAPA has shown great resilience and flexibility in an extremely challenging and ever-changing security environment”.⁶⁶ Security incidents involving NGOs (including demining organisations) in Afghanistan, as recorded by ANSO, rose by 20% in 2011.⁶⁷ In comparison, security incidents affecting MAPA have decreased by 26% compared to 2010. There was also a decrease of 10% in “serious” incidents⁶⁸ compared to 2010.⁶⁹

From 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2011, the MACCA and nine of its IPs encountered 43 security incidents, ranging from theft to abduction, to killings.

- **Theft** of demining equipment accounted for significant financial losses; the programme lost 14 vehicles, 83 mine detectors, 67 demining kits, 13 cameras and 89 VHF radios, amongst other equipment. A portion – up to 25% per type of stolen items - was recovered through mediation by tribal elders.
- **Abductions** accounted for 33% of all security incidents affecting the MAPA in 2011. From the 227 deminers abducted in 14 separate events, 222 were released and four deminers were killed in one incident in Farah province (Figure 7.1). The remaining incidents of mass abductions were resolved with the assistance of community elders.
- **Attacks** on deminers resulted in five deaths and four injuries. The attacks included four incidents of gunshots from various sources, including coalition forces and Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs) and one rocket attack, which killed two and injured one.
- **Incidents of IED** injured six and killed two deminers. These incidents occurred in the South and the North East of the country, and could be attributed to deminers operating in insecure areas, rather than direct attacks on the demining organisation.

⁶⁵ MACCA (1389), *MAPA Annual Report 1389*, accessed at www.macca.org.af/en/MAPA_Reports.html, p. 45.

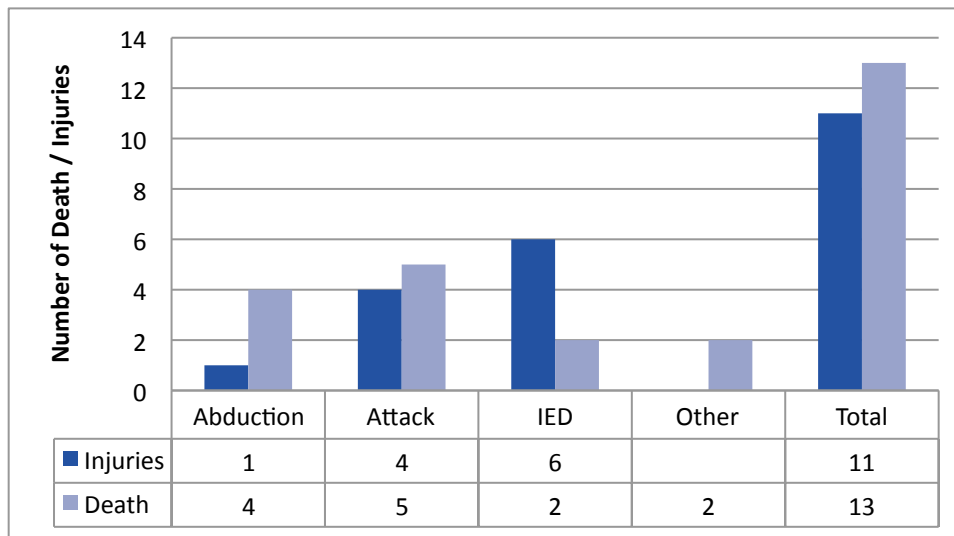
⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p 45

⁶⁷ The Afghan NGO Security Office (ANSO), Quarterly Data report, Q4. 2011, www.ngosaftey.org

⁶⁸ “Serious” in this case refers to incidents resulting in death or injury of deminers

⁶⁹ MACCA (1390), *Integrated Operational Framework (IOF) Mine Action Policy and Data Analysis*, Published December 2010 by the Mine Action co-ordination Centre of Afghanistan on behalf of the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan, p. 33.

- **Other** includes one deminer killed in a coalition airstrike while on leave and the death of a deminer as a result of a personal dispute.

FIGURE 7.1. INJURY AND DEATH OF DEMINERS, 2011⁷⁰

7.2 MOTIVATIONS BEHIND KIDNAPPING, THREATS AND INTIMIDATION

Deminers are intimidated and threatened for a variety of reasons; this section categorises the incidents and explores the motivations behind these events. The true motivations are not always discernable, but inferences can be made from the information gathered in the field to determine basic categories of motivations. According to this study's findings, communities perceive threats or attacks on deminers to be driven by financial reasons, political motivations, and a general opposition to "outsiders" or "unknowns". Discussions with communities and deminers also revealed that regardless of the motivation, the involvement of the community to facilitate the release of the deminers is of utmost importance.

7.2.1 Criminal motivations: Deminers intimidated for financial gain

Incidents involving equipment theft and deminer abductions are often motivated by criminal intentions for financial gain. Interviewed deminers felt they were targeted for kidnapping by groups that perceive the deminers to represent wealthy, foreign organisations or are themselves well paid. In these instances, perpetrators believe they would be able to collect a significant ransom for the release of the deminers or through the sale of stolen demining equipment. Regardless of actual salaries or the willingness of demining agencies to pay ransoms, the mere association with an NGO or international organisation can be motivation enough to abduct deminers for financial gain.

We are targeted because deminers work in foreign organisation and kidnapers think that deminers receive a high salary. It is difficult to understand the kidnapers' motivations. They try to kidnap the deminers because they want to get money from their families— Deminer, Kabul

Here no one opposes the deminers. We don't know who comes to the village, kidnaps the deminers, and takes money from them. But we do know that they do this because of money. They are not from our village, because the people in our village don't oppose the deminers. – Landmine survivor, Gardiz, Paktia

⁷⁰ Based on data provided by the MACCA of security incidents involving deminers for 2011.

When the deminers were working here, some people kidnapped a deminer because they thought he was an engineer from an international organisation that they could ransom. But when they found out he was a deminer they released him. – Community Leader, Charikar, Parwan

The final example above indicates the criminal motivations behind this particular abduction, the group wished to collect a ransom for someone working for an international organisation. Although this incident was unfortunate, it is encouraging that once the person kidnapped was identified as a deminer they were released, showing that in some areas of Afghanistan there exists respect or at the least an understanding of the need for deminers and their work warranting their quick release.

In addition to the possibility of collecting ransom, the significant value of demining equipment makes deminers a high value target for criminal groups motivated by economic gain. The MAPA's data indicates that 14 vehicles, 67 demining kits, 13 cameras and 89 VHF radios among other equipment were stolen from deminers during 2011.

The demining team's employees were kidnapped by thieves to earn money. Then they took their money, cars and other equipment and released them. I know they have been kidnapped by the Taliban, too, but they were released by the elders of the community. Now the deminers have promised to hire some people from the village in the demining team, but they haven't done it yet. – Community Leader, Sayed Karam, Paktia

It can be concluded from the examples above that the political neutral stance of deminers, their work benefiting communities, does not shield deminers from being targets of intimidation, theft and abduction when motivations are financial. However, we can say that in general these groups do not intend to harm the kidnapped deminers. The positive perception of deminers in communities may, however, mitigate the risk of violence when abductions do happen. Of the total 227 deminers in 14 separate incidents of abduction in 2011, only 4 deminers were killed in one incident, and one injured during the rescue in another. Furthermore, while not to take away from the seriousness of these incidents, when considering there are 14,000 MAPA staff operating in the field, it is encouraging that overall there are relatively few serious incidents involving deminers regardless of the motivations.

7.2.2 Political motivations behind acts of intimidation

In politically motivated incidents, deminers are targeted because their work is perceived as detrimental to the objectives of AOGs, or because they are mistaken for security targets. Demining agencies work hard to maintain their political neutrality, as it is imperative while working in insecure areas. For example, demining agencies do not diffuse operational IEDs, even though they have that capacity, as this activity would connect their organisations with the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) or international forces. However, some historical minefields are still viewed as strategic to AOGs; as a result, deminers are threatened or attacked to prevent mine clearance. A number of deminers and key informants recounted incidents in which they were threatened or pressured to stop working in a particular area because AOGs did not want mines or ERW to be cleared.

This phenomenon has also been observed by the Afghanistan NGO Safety Office (ANSO). "Most commonly it [insurgent opposition to demining activities] is simply to do with them clearing areas that the IEA [Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan] wants to leave untouched perhaps because they laid the field, or benefit from it not being usable by other forces [...] In some instances, attacks on

deminers were preceded by warnings, and sometimes high profile demining support vehicles" were mistaken for security targets and attacked."⁷¹

Last December [...], there was an incident where insurgents burned all of the team's equipment and kidnapped the deminers. After 24 hours, they returned the deminers. The insurgents had warned the deminers to stop working in the area because they had laid additional mines. After the incident, (the demining agency) [...] removed their deminers from that village. – Key informant

In Kapisa province (we) [...] wanted to clear an area. While working in the area some armed men approached us and wanted us to give them the ERW or mines we found, but we said no. When we started to work again, they approached us and accused us of being English and started to fire at us. Some of the deminers were injured. We told them we are not English, we are Mujahidin. They stopped firing and asked why we would not give them the mines and ERW. Finally, under pressure we said we would give them the ordinances. Soon after there was an explosion in the street of the nearby town, and two other people came to us and asked us what we were doing before and why we are now doing mine action. They said that clearing bombs and mines was like Jihad, but we said that our work is to help the people. They then asked whether we had mines and ERW. We told them we didn't have any. They tried to hold us but eventually when we said we did not have any mines they released us. – Deminer, Parwan

The motivations behind the theft of used mines and ERW can be assumed to be largely political as their reuse will be utilised against the ANSF or international military forces in the particular group's area of operations. While criminal groups are motivated to steal vehicles and radios for their own use or for sale, the desire to steal undetonated explosives is a different and more dangerous political motivation altogether.

The people who do this [kidnap and intimidate deminers] are enemies of Afghanistan. They are trying to persecute deminers; they are traitors of the government and the people. They don't want people to work and live safely without mines and ERW. They want deminers to leave their jobs and believe they shouldn't work in demining organisations and that people should live near minefields in danger. They also want to get money to impose their rules on the people of Afghanistan. – Deminer, Kabul

A third category of motivations are more related to power than politics. Some groups (both AOGs and criminal networks) simply oppose the presence of deminers as they are perceived as outsiders. Several deminers noted that they had been threatened purely for the fact that they were unknown in the area and certain groups were not happy with their presence.

They, the community, respect us because we are mostly working in the areas that the people want. They co-operate with us and behave well. But, unfortunately some of the young delinquents can create problems for us. This is mostly in areas where the government is not able to govern. It is in these parts of Afghanistan that there are some people who have weapons and who threaten us. – Deminers Parwan

Observations such as these indicate that the deminers are attacked for their perceived association with the government and the international community more generally. The political motivations in this sense are clear, that certain groups opposed to the government wish to interrupt the work of any agency engaged in the area. It was stressed during Key Informant Interviews the importance of

⁷¹ Integrated Regional Information Networks: *AFGHANISTAN: Deminers in the firing line*, KABUL, 18 January 2011 IRIN.

demining IPs to maintain their political neutrality. This perception on the part of both from communities and from AOGs that IPs are neutral is imperative while working in insecure areas.

Finally, the origins of AOGs are perceived by demining agencies and deminers to be a critical factor for gaining access to an insecure area. A number of demining organisations noted the dangers of working in areas controlled by foreign elements of the Taliban or AOGs, as opposed to those controlled by Afghans. The general perception is if that if the area is controlled by Pakistani Taliban, then the demining teams have less ability to work through the local community as conduits to understand exactly where they stand with these groups. In these instances, the community cannot often guarantee the safety of deminers, and they will generally not begin operations in that area. One IP also noted that the Pakistani Taliban take material and do not give it back. They are unwilling to negotiate, whereas elements of the Afghan Taliban, who understand that demining helps the local population, are more willing to negotiate.⁷²

These examples highlight the dynamic nature of the security environment in which deminers must operate. Community support, prior engagement with some networks or actors in an area cannot prevent intimidation from groups who may not be in touch with the local community or even have their support.

7.3 COMMUNITY INTERVENTION

Risk can be managed, but not always avoided. All actors operating in Afghanistan – regardless of their neutrality – are exposed to danger in this dynamic, unpredictable security environment. Considering risk can never be eradicated has an impact on how to evaluate the success of demining operations, or the occurrence of an incident. This is not only a quantitative question of victims (data collection), as many factors can influence the number of actual/recorded victims. As such, the evaluation of both MRE and demining activities should also rely on other tools (qualitative, social survey, perception, etc.) that create a more holistic picture of the situation on the ground.

Demining agencies understand that community engagement appears to be paramount into preventing security incidents and mitigating the consequences when an incident does occur. In the majority of incidents reported for 2011, community members became involved and it was through their support that the deminers were rescued or released. Communities generally understand that demining activities are neutral and non-political, which is key to their success and continued operations. By providing a platform to voice opinions and provide economic support through jobs and the procurement of local goods, demining agencies are able to better ensure the security of their deminers.⁷³

The deminers were kidnapped just for one day. The kidnappers took them in the morning and let them go in the evening, because the elders from the village became involved and after that no more incidents happened. – Deminer, Paktia

The deminers should clear the mountains and agricultural lands near the school, but unfortunately the Taliban are in there. When they want to start working in that areas, the Taleban come to kidnap them. Some days ago the Taleban took a deminer into a garden to cut off his head, but the community leader rescued him. – Woman, Sayed Karam District, Paktia

⁷² Key Informant Interviews with demining agencies.

⁷³ Community-based demining is discussed further in section 8.2.4.

At times, it is the community that is more important than the government in resolving issues; this is often the case in insecure areas where the government does not have full control. In these instances, the community can act as a conduit between the various groups operating in the area and work to ensure the safety of the deminers. In other cases, the government representatives have been essential to deminer safety.

In insecure places we ask the people and the elders of the community to help us. The people in the community are more important than government in these cases. In Shiber, Naala and Barfak districts of Baghlan Province the security was not good, and the people in the community helped us. They told those who did not like outsiders not to bother the demining teams because they are clearing the areas where the community are collecting firewood and grazing their animals. The community respects us because we are mostly working in the areas that the people want. They co-operate with us and behave well. – Deminers, Parwan

I was once in Kunduz [...] and a person came and threatened us. He said some bad things to me. I said to him, "I didn't come here by myself. The people wanted this, and if you have any problem, you can talk to the district governor." After this, we went and told a community representative and the provincial council, and they helped us. The district governor also came and saw us and we came to understand that the main problem was among the people of the area. Generally, most of the people in different areas of Afghanistan appreciate our work. – Deminer, Parwan

In some cases, deminer and IPs have noted that communities have gone to great lengths to ensure that clearance activity continues after the theft of equipment or security incident. For example, two years ago two vehicles were stolen from a group of deminers operating in Logar. The demining organisation went to the Logar community leaders, spoke to the *Shura*, and stated that they knew the theft involved someone in that community. The IP clearly said that if any more equipment was stolen they would leave the community and stop their demining work. After this message was made clear to the community, no more equipment or vehicles were stolen.⁷⁴

In another example, a demining team had some radios and other equipment stolen while operating in Paktia. The demining organisation approached the community elders and threatened to stop work if more equipment was stolen. As a result, members of the community travelled to the head office in Kabul with a signed petition stating that if there was any more theft of equipment, the community would pay the costs of the equipment, rather than seeing the deminers end their operation.⁷⁵

To conclude from observations in Kabul, Parwan and Paktia provinces, the political and criminal motivations behind an incident may vary. However, in almost every case, the intervention on the part of community elders was the most effective, and often the only way, in which deminers were released unharmed. The command structure and leadership of an AOG or the Taliban in a particular area may change overtime, indicating that the support of these groups to the work of deminers may change. The community remains, and it is in the long-term interest of communities to support deminers and resolve issues they may encounter to allow deminers to continue their work.

⁷⁴ Based on KII with a representative of a demining IP.

⁷⁵ Based on KII with representative of a demining IP.

8 COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF DEMINERS

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the motivations behind threats or attacks on deminers are not related to general community dissatisfaction. They are rather driven by a minority of individuals and groups that seek financial or political gain. The community perception is still important, however, as communities play a crucial role in preventing and resolving incidents involving deminers.

This chapter will analyse community perceptions of deminers based on feedback from communities as well as deminers themselves. It will first examine community understanding of the benefits of demining, followed by analysis of community perceptions of deminers and their work. The chapter will close with an examination of community suggestions for improving community-deminer relations.

8.1 COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING OF THE BENEFITS OF DEMINING

For communities to be satisfied with the work of deminers, they must first recognise the need for clearance. The benefits of demining and the recognition of those benefits on the part of communities have been widely documented.⁷⁶⁷⁷ In addition to preserving the life and limb of potential victims, demining provides many other benefits for the community.

- **Increased mobility:** Demining enables people to access basic necessities (*e.g.* water, firewood); public services (*e.g.* schools, clinics); croplands and pastures; and the homes of relatives and friends. It also allows displaced people to return to their homes.
- **Economic benefits:** With fields and pastures cleared of mines and ERW, farmers and shepherds can resume activities without fear of accidents. Clearance can also restore access to markets and encourages investment.
- **Psychological benefits:** Clearance lifts the psychological burden of living in fear for one's own or one's children's safety.

Focus group discussions conducted for this study revealed that at-risk communities are well aware of the benefits of demining, which is why they are eager to request that deminers come to their area. The most often-cited benefits noted in focus groups related to the economic opportunities and mobility provided by demining. The fact that much demining is done at the request of the communities themselves demonstrates that communities understand the need for demining and value its contribution to community safety, mobility, and economic opportunities.

Demining is very necessary for us. They should clear the area all around here, because we need to go to the mountain to bring wood for our stoves to cook something to eat, and also we need to take our animals to the pastures to graze. We need to work on our farms because we get all our money from our farms, but unfortunately we can't go because of mines. We face big challenges. – Woman, 25, Gardiz, Paktia

The positive point of deminers work is the clearing of the area, as people before could not go into certain areas. People were afraid to go, and could not work in their fields. Now people are happy

⁷⁶ MACCA (2010), *Mine Action Activities, KAPB+ survey 2009-2010, Mine Clearance & Mine Risk Education - Impact Monitoring in Afghanistan*, MACCA and Handicap International

⁷⁷ Pound, G, et al, (2011), *Livelihood analysis of Landmine/ERW affected communities in Afghanistan survey*, Herat Province, MACCA, GICHD, Gender and Mine Action, Kabul October 2011, unpublished.

and the deminers behaved well with the community while they were there, they did not bother anyone. – Community Leader, Bagram, Parwan

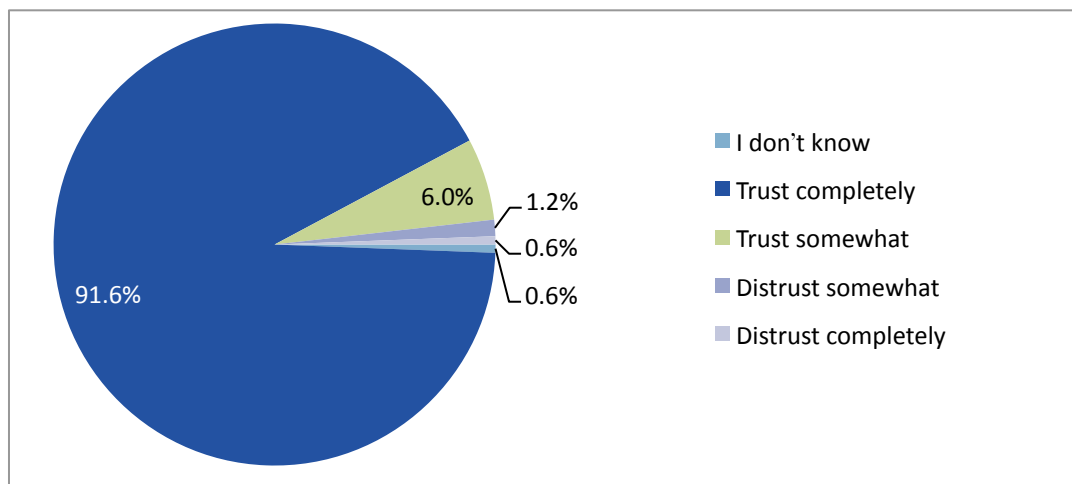
8.2 COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF DEMINERS AND THEIR WORK

8.2.1 Trust in Deminers

A majority of community members surveyed appear to trust deminers and believe in their work (Figure 8.1); 92% of those interviewed said they trust deminers completely. Only 6% of respondents noted that they only trusted deminers somewhat. A concentration of those who did not say they trusted the deminers completely were found in Parwan,⁷⁸ indicating that some members of the communities in this province may have had a bad experience with a group of deminers. However, the general perception of deminers appears to be very positive.

FIGURE 8.1. DO YOU TRUST THE WORK OF DEMINERS?

Q21: Do community members trust the deminers to do their job well and serve the community? (N=500)



Overall, the rate of approval for deminers at 97 % is a significantly higher rate of approval than that of the police. According to the 2011 Police perception survey conducted by the UNDP⁷⁹ 74 to 84 % of see the Afghan National Police (ANP) favourably, express confidence in its abilities, respect it personally and regard police work as prestigious. This indicates the general trust in the work of deminers among the communities in which they have worked, across all provinces and districts and age groups.⁸⁰

When analysing this data we recognise that there is an inherent bias while gauging the perspectives of beneficiary communities towards groups providing them assistance. In the Afghan context, there is often a strong acquiescence bias, as most respondents tend to provide interviewers with the “right answer”. This point is crucial as: 1) culturally, Afghan people – and especially the poor – are reluctant to directly criticise the support provided by governmental and international organisations, even if they are not fully satisfied with it; 2) politically, sensitive subjects (like corruption, taxes, and demining) cannot be understood with basic survey questions and methodologies (unilateral

⁷⁸ Of the 30 respondents who answered “Trust somewhat”, 18 were in Parwan province. Similarly, of the total of nine respondents who said they distrust somewhat or distrust deminers completely, seven were in Parwan province.

⁷⁹ UNDP-LOFTA, 2011, “Police Perception Survey 2011: The Afghan Perspective,” Afghan Centre for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR), Surveys, Kabul.

⁸⁰ We used this survey, which is the official survey of police perception commissioned by the UNDP as a reference, despite several methodological doubts including; despite several methodological doubts including: 1) gender, geographical, cognitive and acquiescence biases; 2) lack of critical analysis and triangulation; 3) lack of complementary qualitative input.

questions). Our mix of both quantitative and qualitative approaches precisely aimed to mitigate this double risk.

This bias was observed when discussing the incidents against deminers. While it was clear from the focus groups that community leaders knew that security incidents involving deminers had occurred, there was a clear reticence on their part to discuss these issues. This was perhaps due to the belief that if there was widespread knowledge of such incidents in their community, deminers would be less inclined to return and clear existing mined areas.

While the general observations of the work were positive, a few focus group participants were willing to voice their distrust or disapproval of the work of deminers.

The places they cleared before should be checked again because people don't trust them. (because they didn't see them clear the area). This area is near to Bagram airport. During the time of Soviet Union, there were lots of Russian security checkpoints in this village. They planted a lot of mines around their checkpoints. –Man, Bagram, Parwan

Even in cases where complaints were issued against deminers, the communities clearly wanted the deminers to continue their work. Furthermore, community satisfaction does not appear to have a causal link with deminer incidents. Indeed as observed in section 1 of this chapter, communities are vital in their support to resolve security incidents involving deminers. Despite a few cases of dissatisfaction among community members of the work of deminers, there is no evidence to suggest that this results in the abduction or intimidation of deminers by communities.

8.2.2 Blame for mine and ERW accidents

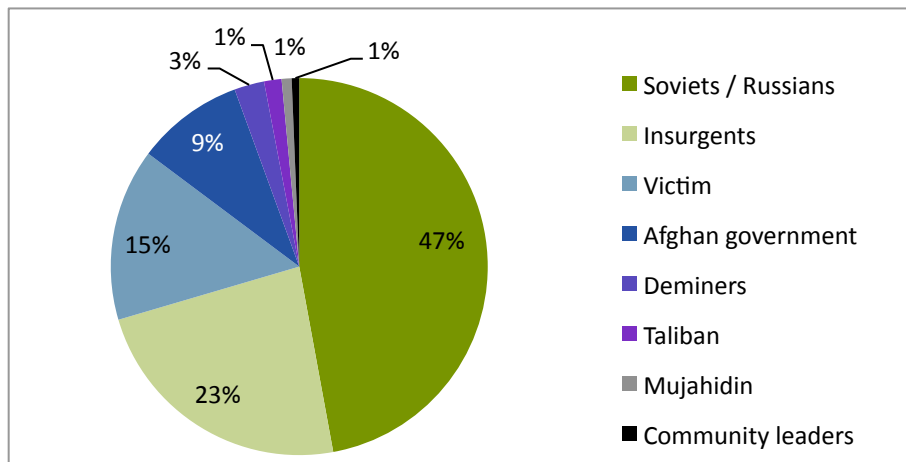
Most community members see deminers as the solution to, not the source of mine and ERW-related accidents. A majority of survey respondents blamed groups historically or currently involved in conflict, notably the Soviets and insurgents (Figure 8.2). Only a small percentage of respondents blamed deminers (3%) or the government (9%) for not clearing areas fast enough. A greater percentage blamed the victim for going into a mined area or tampering with unknown objects (15%).

Qualitative interviews demonstrated that youth and survivors were most likely to place blame on deminers, as they felt clearance should have been done faster.

I was very sad and felt very bad when my father told us about one accident. When a person doesn't have a hand or foot, he needs people to help him, and that is not good. When the deminers told us about mine risks, we heard about some accidents and we changed our behaviour. We blame the deminers for the accidents because they did not clear the area, if they had cleared the area no accidents would happen. – Boy, Sayed Karam, Paktia

I blame the deminers because they didn't do their jobs well. If they would work well and clear all the area completely this incident wouldn't have happened to me, and I would not be injured. – Landmine survivor, 16, Bagram, Parwan

FIGURE 8.2. BLAME FOR MINE AND ERW ACCIDENTS
 Q18. Who do community members blame for the accident? (N = 467)



While a child apportioning blame should be viewed differently to an adult, this perspective is interesting to note; despite receiving MRE training from deminers, some survivors still blame the deminers for an incident, as they perceive that deminers have not done their job adequately. This highlights the importance of victim assistance, follow-up and support that is already being carried out by the MAPA and its IPs. Psychological support and working with the victims can work to improve the image of deminers and demining agencies and help to confiscate the perception that deminers are either to blame for their injury or have not conducted their work adequately.

BOX 8.1. COMMUNITY LIAISON: INITIAL STAGES

While practices are not standardised from one demining agency to the next, there are some consistent features in the methods deminers use when approaching communities. They will first send a survey team or assessment team into the community to talk with community leaders and district and local government officials. The demining assessment team will then go to each village *shura*, introduce themselves, and ensure that the assessment team has the consent of the community. Then, in consultation with the community, the demining organisation will establish which areas are priorities for clearance. At this time, if they are planning to engage in community-based demining they will ask the community if they wish to be involved in the demining process.

While there is no current Standard Operating Procedures on methods of community engagement, it would improve in general the process of community engagement if guidelines were established. These guidelines should encompass the best practices of community engagement and be flexible enough to take into consideration the local context in which demining agencies are operating. The document should be developed in conjunction with demining agencies to take into consideration their lessons learned over years of community engagement all over Afghanistan.

8.2.3 Satisfaction with community liaison and land prioritisation

Initial community requests and approval of demining activities

Focus group discussions with community members and leaders indicated general satisfaction with the community liaison process of demining IPs. Demining agencies work with communities to ensure that deminers are welcome in the area and to identify areas for prioritisation. This process begins before deminers even arrive in a community. Communities often request that deminers come to their area to conduct clearance, and demining agencies always seek the approval of communities before entering an area to conduct work. By getting the approval of communities from the very start, community leaders and members feel implicated in the process and are more likely to be satisfied with the results. Community liaison also helps deminers, as people in the community are often willing to help them problem-solve.

When they (the deminers) came, they consulted the community leader and elders of the community, and then started to work. The people helped them to work better, and if they had any problems they told the people and we solved it. – Community Leader, Deh Sabz, Kabul

The deminers came here because the people asked. When we returned back to our homes (after being displaced due to conflict) there were a lot of mines here and we faced big problems. I consulted the villagers. Then we wrote a petition to the district governor, and he asked the demining groups to come here. The feeling of community members towards deminers was very good because the villagers invited the deminers to come. It is clear that they are happy. As a community leader, all of my villagers and I are so happy about the demining groups because they cleared the areas that people needed first. – Community Leader, Sayed Karam, Paktia

This example shows that the whole community, from the perspective of a community leader, were supportive of the prioritisation process. The community guided the deminers to the parcels of land they wished to be cleared first and it appears that were happy with this process.

BOX 8.2. LAND PRIORITISATION FOR CLEARANCE

The MAPA process for priority setting is based on a series of impact indicators related to the severity of mine impact. These indicators take into account factors including *i)* requests from local authorities or villagers for clearance, *ii)* areas that of resettlement or new development, *iii)* hazards that block basic necessities and services such as water, agriculture fields, schools or health clinics, *iv)* the number of families affected and their proximity to hazards, etc.

Community involvement in land prioritisation for clearance

After deminers have been accepted into the community, community involvement in land prioritisation (Box 8.2) is essential for maintaining community satisfaction. It is important that communities understand how and why land is prioritised, so that they do not blame deminers if they are dissatisfied with the selection of land for clearance.

This study found that focus group participants in most villages understood why certain areas were prioritised for clearance before others (*e.g.* factors of communal space and vulnerability). They noted how some community members wanted their destroyed homes to be cleared first, so that they could rebuild, but participants maintained that they understood why common space was given

priority and why the deminers did not allow this to happen. Despite some disagreement within the community in respect to the prioritisation process, transparency and community inclusion in the prioritisation process helped ensure continued satisfaction with deminers.

For the selection of the areas we told them which areas needed to be cleared first and the people were happy with it. The people of the village are united, and don't oppose anything. First the deminers consulted with the people and then started to work. It was our request for them to come and clear these areas, and when they came, we showed them the areas to be cleared. If they can clear some other areas in our village that have mines, it would be better and all the people would be very happy. – Community Leader, Deh Sabz, Kabul

The deminers first cleared the places that were used the most by the people, like the footpaths in the village and the places where people walked. Now, most of the people in the village asked that they try to clear their homes that were destroyed, so they can rebuild, but they did not accept this. The deminers first clear the communal areas. They gave priority to places that most of the village used and people were happy about this. – Community member, Bagram, Parwan

From the perspective of the demining implementing partner, this shows that despite some disagreement among the community in respect to the prioritisation process, they were able to discuss this process with the community leaders and come to a mutually agreeable resolution.

In one village, a community leader expressed dissatisfaction with the process of community engagement and prioritisation for clearance. He felt excluded from the prioritisation process and thought the deminers were not listening to the community when selecting areas for clearance.

About 20% of the village is cleared, but most of the people don't trust the deminers because they are not co-operating with the people. They clear the areas that are not necessary. And the government or other organisations didn't pay enough attention to the people who have been injured by mines. And the farms of the people have mines, and it is a big harm on the economy of the people because they can't cultivate anything on their land. – Community Leader, Gardiz, Paktia

This appears to be an isolated incident where either the demining agency did not engage the community through its normal consultation processes, or the community leader in question was not consulted in the process. In either case, it demonstrates the importance of including all relevant, local stakeholders in the prioritisation process and providing as much transparency to members of the community as possible.

BOX 8.3. LAND CONFLICT AND MINE ACTION

Kabul's urban population has undergone rapid expansion over the last decade. Between 1999 and 2004, the city's population grew at a rate of about 15% per annum and almost doubled from 1.78 million to 3 million.⁸¹ Current growth rates have reached a plateau at about 5 % per annum with the 2009 USAID census estimated the population to be approximately 3.5 million in 2009. This rapid urban growth is a result of a number of factors including: in-migration from rural areas since 2001; the return of Afghan refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and an influx of migrants searching for employment; public services and/or agency assistance by opportunities provided by the new government and the international community.⁸²

The major impact of this growth on the urban landscape of Kabul has been the development of large informal settlements. An estimated 2.5 million people now live in these informal settlements, which now cover an estimated 69% of the city's residential land.⁸³ The informal settlements and rapid urbanisation is causing an undue burden on the infrastructure and social services of Kabul and has become a significant urban planning issue. Moreover, this expansion has placed additional pressure on demining agencies operating in one of the most heavily mined regions of the country. Land that was once not a priority for clearance is now increasingly becoming so, as the urban sprawl spreads adjacent to mine contaminated land.

Land reform and securing land rights are a formidable challenge in Afghanistan due to the "devastation that long, widespread and bitter armed conflicts have caused; the return of millions of Afghan refugees coupled with land-shortage, and the lack of institutional capacity for managing land-related issues"⁸⁴ The already complex issues surround land tenure has, in many cases, been compounded by the clearance of land with disputed ownership. Whether a settlement is illegal or unplanned, this insecurity and inaccessibility of legal tenure, subsequent conflict arising from unclear property boundaries in combination with increasingly high land prices is of great concern to millions of Kabul residents.⁸⁵

The MAPA has in place mechanisms to prioritise land clearance involving local communities, and there exists a policy adhered to by most demining originations that demining cannot take place in disputed land until the dispute is resolved. This policy is however not reflected in current national mine action standards.⁸⁶ As a consequence, if mine action organisations ignore land-right related issues and work in disputed areas they risk the perception, amongst beneficiary communities that they are taking the side of our party over another. "This may pose a direct threat to the safety of mine action personnel and equipment and raises the risk of mines being re-planted on already cleared land."⁸⁷ This issue is recognised by the MAPA and is something that should be considered regarding its potential influence on communities' perceptions of deminers in the future.

⁸¹ World Bank (2006), Kabul Urban Policy Notes Series No.1, SASEI at the World Bank, 2006, at www.worldbank.org/SOUTHASIAEXT/.../PolicyNote2.pdf.

⁸² Ittig, Annette (2006), *Urban development in Kabul: An overview of challenges and Strategies*, Institute for Afghan Studies, 2006

⁸³ Gabremedhin, Yohannes (2006) *Legal Issues pertaining to Land Titling and Registration in Afghanistan: Land titling and economic restructuring in Afghanistan (LTERA) Project*, USAID, 2006.

⁸⁴ Foley, Conor (2005), *A Guide to Property Law in Afghanistan*, Norwegian Refugee Council, p. 30.

⁸⁵ Beal, Jo and Daniel Esser (2005), *Shaping Urban Futures: Challenges to Governing and Managing Afghan Cities*, Issues Paper Series, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU).

⁸⁶ Rashid M.S. et al (2010), *Landmines and Land Rights in Afghanistan*, GICHD November 2010, www.gichd.org, 14

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 18

Information from the MAPA KAPB survey supports the finding that overall communities are satisfied with the demining process. However, it also demonstrates that survey respondents may have biases in their answers, especially if they wish to see the services in question continued. In Herat and Kabul, 87% and 80% of respondents respectively reported that they were happy with the process of prioritisation, as opposed to only 59% of respondents in Paktia who believed that the current demining activities were set up according to the right priorities.⁸⁸ This great variation could be attributed to a number of factors, which would require further study. However, one could infer that prioritisation processes is not as transparent and inclusive across all provinces.

8.2.4 Community Based Demining

The development of Community-Based Demining (CBD) in Afghanistan arose from the need to conduct demining activities in insecure areas. It is based on the understanding “local deminers employed by the CBD programmes are less likely to be harassed and attacked by local groups that oppose the government, as they have the support and trust of the local community”.⁸⁹ The core concept of CBD is for IPs to establish links with the local leadership of a mine contaminated community and work with the local leadership to develop a project, recruiting and training local people to carry out the clearance in their own communities.⁹⁰ This provides additional security for the demining groups as community members are involved in working in insecure areas, and additional economic benefits for communities through the employment. Finally, through involvement in the demining process improves communities understanding and awareness of the mine action process more generally.

Community Perceptions and Experiences of Community Based Demining

The experience of community based demining among the communities surveyed was generally positive and communities happy to be involved in the demining process. Issues or conflicts observed during the process including some community members not being hired as community based deminers, other examples show that CBD activities have been implemented as a result of a security incident.

In Beland, the experience of community-based demining was perceived quite positively. Around 20 people from the village were employed in a variety of positions including as deminers, guards and cooks.

About 20 people were in the deminers team from the village, and they conducted good work in our community. They worked in three jobs: deminers, guards, and cooks, and the people from the community were selected when the deminer teams announced that they need some people. Then the people started working with them, and no one felt angry about it, and they served for the people and it was very good. - Community leader, Bagram, Parwan

While the process of community liaison and prioritisation of areas for mine clearance in Khair Khanjar village in Parwan was positive. They described that after a particularly bad experience members of the community are no longer hired directly to be deminers.

⁸⁸ MACCA, 2010.

⁸⁹ Qudos, Abdul [Mine Action co-ordination Centre of Afghanistan] (2011), “Mine action and Security Challenges” - *The Journal of ERW and Mine Action*, Issue 15.3, Fall 2011, p 14 - 15

⁹⁰ MACCA (1389), *MAPA Annual Report 1389*, accessed at www.macca.org.af/en/MAPA_Reports.html, p 22.

At first when the demining organisation came into the village it was 20 years ago, they had some expert staff come to the village they hire some people from the village and train them and then started demining. However, after some years they had some bad experiences, and the demining organisation did not hire people from the area, they just wanted the co-operation of the people in the village to locate the mines. In other villages, from the people don't have any specific part in demining, just they head of the village co-operate with the deminer to show them mines, to assist with security but nothing else. – Community Leader, Bagram, Parwan

The reason for this dispute between the community and the demining IP is unclear. However, it is important to note from this example the IP still engaged the community in the process of prioritisation despite the fact that CBD activities are no longer part of the mine clearance in that village.

During a Key Informant interview one IP⁹¹ noted that they use additional community mobilisers to facilitate the process of community engagement in insecure areas. However, even when you follow all of the procedures and when there is an effort to conduct community-based demining, there can still be conflicts – e.g. some people are upset if they are not hired or don't like who was hired. This was observed in a number of villages where fieldwork was conducted.

In Nawabad Jabarkhan eight to ten community members had been hired as part of the community-based demining process. They were selected by the community leader. This appeared to upset some members of the community who wanted to be employed as deminers as well. One participant said the deminers should have made the selection. However, it appears that the current method of selection is likely wiser as any discontent with selection is directed at the community leader and not the deminers.

About 8 people participated with the demining team, and the community leader selected them because they were eligible. If the employees of the demining team selected from people the community it would be good because the people from the community work well. – Community Leaders, 6th district, Kabul

In Tamadan village it appeared that community-based demining activities were a response to a security incident. According to the MAPA incident database, 40 deminers were abducted from the area in May 2011. In response, the demining IP hired about 70 villages for both administrative support and demining activities. The community did not have any ill feeling about the process of selection of deminers.

Ten percent of the contaminated land remained because the demining team employees were kidnapped by thieves to earn money. Then they took their money, cars and other equipment and then released them. [...] Now they promised to hire some of the people from the village in the demining team, but they haven't done it yet. –Community Leader, Gardiz, Paktia

Community-based Demining has seen to be an effective method of facilitating mine clearance work in insecure areas. However, despite the use of CBD, all IPs noted that they would not work in areas unless they had the guarantee for safety from the community.⁹² They emphasised the need to get approval from the community before commencing work and then ensuring that good relations. It was also observed by one IP that even utilising community-based deminers in insecure areas does

⁹¹ Key Information Interview with demining agency

⁹² Key Informant Interview with demining agency

not stop all incidents. Community-based deminers had been kidnapped on multiple occasions, however with the assistance of the community elders the deminers would be freed, but the equipment would be kept by the AOG

These brief observations on the process of community-based demining provide some insights into the methods by which CBD is implemented. It appears that there is scope for improving the process of CBD through a more standardised approach for the implementation of CBD. This is outlined in the recommendations section of the report below.

8.2.5 Satisfaction with deminer behaviour

In close-knit Afghan village, acceptance by the community is not only determined based on job performance but also behaviour while in the community. Focus group participants noted the importance of deminers behaving appropriately with the communities in which they work.

An issue that was raised several times was the presence of deminers walking around in areas where women worked outside. Community members in Parwan province described how they had become upset when the deminers working in the village started walking around in the afternoons after their day of work was finished. Community members were uncomfortable with the deminers watching or seeing the women of the village working in the fields or in their gardens. In this instance the community members discussed this issue with the team leader of the demining team and the issue was resolved.

The speed of clearance was another issue raised. Some focus group participants felt deminers were working slowly in order to extend their contract in a certain area.

If an area should be cleared in one week they will spend one month to conduct the work, and they themselves told us that they do this on purpose. But people in the village do not do anything wrong with the deminer. We told the head of (the demining agency) [...] about the group walking around the village and then they stopped doing it. – Community Leader, Bagram, Parwan

This issue highlights the need for Quality Assurance (QA) both internally (by the demining organisation), externally (by the MACCA), and by the community itself. In April 2012, the MACCA transitioned to a more effective QA system that balances internal and external monitoring in a more efficient way (Box 8.4). It also highlights again the importance of constant community engagement, as community members were able to discuss with the manager of the demining agency and resolve the issue.⁹³

With the exception of these minor issues, fieldwork revealed that communities were generally satisfied with the way deminers behaved in their communities.

The people invited the deminers in their homes because of good behaviour and also they consulted us to do their works. They did well; they cleared the area quickly. – Community Leader, Sayed Karam, Paktia

Focus groups with women revealed that informal MRE messages delivered by deminers increased local confidence and satisfaction in deminers. By delivering these messages, the deminers demonstrated to the community that they cared about their safety, notably the safety of children.

⁹³ This point is highlighted in the recommendations section at the end of the report.

We are happy and satisfied with the deminers' work. The deminers go to the mosques to pray, and they train the men and the children about mines and their risks. They are polite with us, they respect the women, and no one has complaints about them. – Women, Gardiz, Paktia

The people are happy with the deminers. When the deminers see our children beside the stream, they warn them about mine risks, and they tell the children not to touch the mines because they are dangerous. Also, they cleared our community from mines. – Woman, Sayed Karam, Paktia

Key Points:

- Communities report a high level of trust in deminers
 - Communities understand that deminers are part of the solution and not the source of mine and ERW accidents
 - Communities generally feel implicated and included in mine action through community liaison
 - CBD activities are in general welcomed by communities who benefit from inclusion in the mine action process
 - Communities were satisfied with the transparency and community inclusion in prioritisation processes; however, these methods may not be systematically used in other provinces
 - Deminer behaviour is essential for community acceptance
-

BOX 8.4. QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Since the inception of Mine Action (MA) as an industry in the late 1980s, the issues of quality of process and product have been paramount. In the early stages, the provision of a quality process and product was the responsibility of the implementer conducting the MA activity. As the industry matured in the early 1990s, International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) were written and external co-ordination structures were established, providing additional layer of quality inspection. Generally, this has been carried out through the training of individuals as Operations/Quality Assurance (QA) staff, who are employed either directly or indirectly by a MA co-ordination centre or authorities.

Thus, under IMAS as a co-ordination centre, the MACCA has a duty to ensure that demining and other services are conducted safely and that deminers and communities are not put at risk. Ultimately, the MACCA must look at total quality management systems to accomplish this. To that end, in the last eight years there has been emphasis on training MACCA Ops/QA staff, overhauling MACCA monitoring systems, and introducing evaluation processes. More recently MACCA/IP quality circle teams have been working with IPs to review their own internal QA processes and operational procedures.

The process of quality management reform has also included the establishment of the MACCA review teams to assist donors to the process of proposal review. The review tests proposals against the published Government end state goals, industry financial and output norms, and considers the anticipated outcomes. The MACCA writes a report for the donor or is empowered by the donor to directly work with implementers to debate and resolve any issues arising.

In 2012, the MACCA adjusted the structures of the Area Mine Action Centres (AMACs) – reducing them in size in order to facilitate a move into Government offices (scheduled for 2013) and in doing so reduced the number of external Ops/QA inspectors. This reduction has inevitably reduced the number of external QA visits made by AMACs to demining teams. However, this has not been done in isolation of establishing a different independent system.

The Samuel Hall team found that there was a general concern voiced by several interviewed implementing partners regarding the reduction in external QA. External QA is seen as an important part of the demining process as it provides a method of checks and balances that ensure IPs do their work in an effective manner. This raises concerns that it will affect operations of demining in Afghanistan. One particular IP believe that the MACCA needs to fund quality implementing partners, to check the system and use the balance score card more effectively to fund quality implementing partners.

At time of writing (May 2012) the MACCA is developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) that will seek a third party entity to conduct quality inspection and evaluation of IP field work. The independent inspection entity contracted will inspect process in IP field Offices, the work of demining teams on minefields, and will assess the views of communities where work is being conducted. Quarterly the entity contracted will write an inspection report. The MACCA will publish this on its website and will track trends. Like the existing MACCA balanced score card and project monitoring tools, donors may wish to use the results for funding decisions. This external QA system will be operational by October 2012.

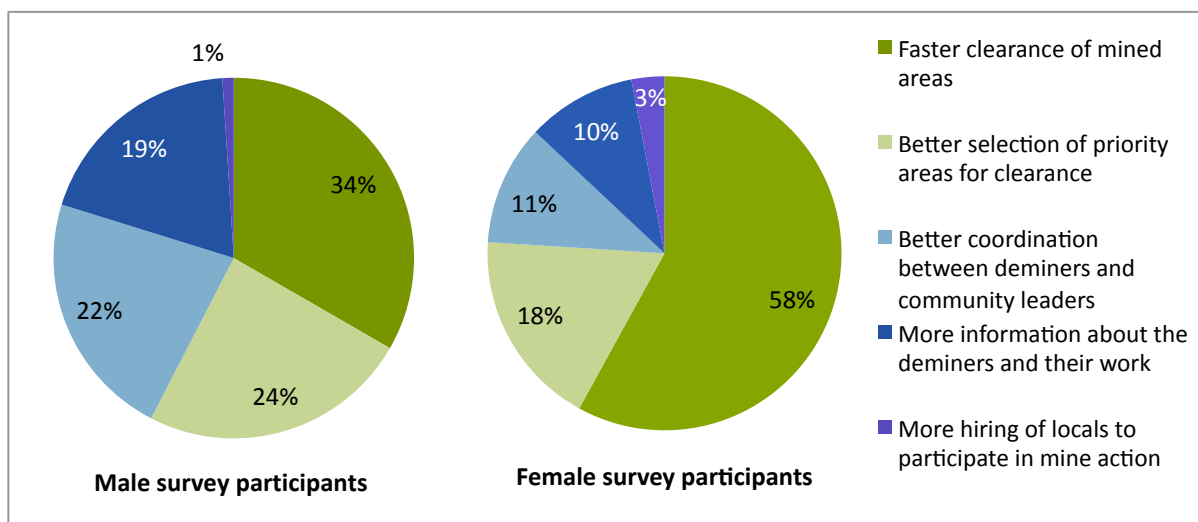
In 2012-2013 the MACCA/Department of Mine Clearance (DMC) partnership will begin to develop an enhanced quality inspection regime of AMACC Ops/QA staff partnering with regional government officials. These combined teams will conduct quarterly reviews of a percentage of operations.

8.3 IMPROVING DEMINER-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Survey findings revealed a number of different areas communities felt could be improved in order to improve their perceptions of deminers (Figure 8.3). Female survey respondents focused heavily on faster clearance of contaminated areas (58%), followed by improved prioritisation of areas for clearance, better co-ordination with community leaders, and increased information sharing about deminers and their work. Their focus on clearance may be due to the fact that women are not included in community liaison efforts for prioritisation or co-ordination. They may not be aware of how this is conducted in each of the villages surveyed.

Male survey respondents focused on the same four areas, but they were more evenly split between these four recommendations. Clearance was still the priority with 34%. Men placed greater importance on co-ordination with community leaders and information sharing about deminer plans. Very few respondents – both male and female – thought demining agencies should hire more locals as the main priority. The same issues and a few additional suggestions emerged in focus group discussions.

FIGURE 8.3. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF DEMINERS BY GENDER
Q26. What do you think should be done to improve perceptions of deminers in the community? (N=500)



8.3.1 Suggestions for clearance: simpler, faster, more comprehensive

Focus group discussions demonstrated variations on the theme of clearance. Some wanted more clearance or faster clearance, especially if mines and ERW were still blocking land used for agriculture.

We would be glad if they clear our gardens, pastures and farms too, because we earn money from our animals, gardens and farms but unfortunately they are useless now because of mines, and the leaders and the elders of the community should convince the deminers that they should clear all areas that they didn't before. – Woman, 40, Gardiz, Paktia

Others thought the approval process for clearance needed to be simplified to speed up the process, reflecting more on attitudes toward the AMAC offices than the deminers themselves.

Once we wanted to build a place for an electricity box, and there was a mine. We told the deminers to clear it. They said we can't do it, you should first tell the main office and when they give us permission we can start our work. We went to their main office and told them. Then they started their work, and it took many days. If it has a simple process it would be good, and if the mine action offices do what people want, it would be better and can improve their relations with the community. – Community elder, 55, 6th district, Kabul

Only a few individuals thought deminers were purposely working slowly on purpose or not putting in a full day's work. However, as shown in the example below, this complaint sometimes has more to do with community misunderstanding about how deminers conduct their work than an actual issue with deminer efficiency. Deminers typically work half-days, as the work involves a considerable amount of concentration in a high-stress environment.

The deminers should have exact working time and plan; I said this point because some of them leave their duty at 12:00, and the works should be supervised. – Woman, 30, Deh Sabz, Kabul

If an area should be cleared in one week they will spend one month to conduct the work, and they themselves told us that they do this on purpose. – Community Leader, Bagram, Parwan

8.3.2 Co-ordination with communities, information sharing, and MRE

Focus group participants often associated additional co-ordination with communities with information sharing, either about the demining process or MRE. Both male and female focus group participants expressed a desire to be kept informed of what was going on. They also mentioned that they wanted deminers to come to them so that they could help with their problems, again demonstrating their implication in the mine action process in their communities.

The deminers should sit with the elders of the community once a week or once every two weeks and discuss their problems with us, and the community leader can help them and tell the people to help the deminers to work better. – Community leader, 86, Deh Sabz, Kabul

They should prepare more MRE programmes for the people. The community leader could have meetings with the deminers, and be aware of their problems. It can increase their good relationship with the people. – Farmer, 60, Bagram, Parwan

8.3.3 Good behaviour

One topic that emerged in the focus groups but not in the survey was the issue of deminer behaviour. Deminers also appear to be aware of the importance their behaviour has on their relations with communities. Respect for local traditions and attendance of the local mosque for prayers were mentioned by both deminers and communities as a way for deminers to earn the respect and trust of communities.

When we are in the area, we pray with the people in the mosque and we buy our logistical materials from the village. This makes our relations with the community good. Also, we take note of the people's traditions and maintain good relations with them. If the security is not good, we keep in contact with community leaders and ask them to explain the security situation to us. – Deminer, Charikar, Parwan

The people want nothing from the deminers except clearing the mines from the villages, and they should have good behaviour. The deminers should be in contact with the community leaders and

we hope they can continue to serve the people. They should respect the elders of the community so that everyone should respect them. – Woman, 40, Bagram, Parwan

As mentioned earlier, deminers seeing local women was raised as an area for improvement. Locals felt uncomfortable with deminers walking around their village, as the women of the community worked outside in their fields or gardens. This was perceived to be bad behaviour on the part of the deminers.

. They [the deminers] should only walk in the places where they are working and not disturb people by walking everywhere in the village. The head of the village encouraged the people to have a good behaviour with the deminers and help them if they needed something. – Community leader, Bagram, Parwan

One implementing partner noted deminers behaving in a culturally inappropriate manner could be one factor contributing to the kidnapping or intimidation of deminers. He explained that it is of great importance that deminers take the relationship with the communities in which they work very seriously. These types of mistakes especially while operating in southern Afghanistan can provoke reactions of dire consequences for deminers. Contact with women, or avoidance thereof, requires special care, as “unknown men making any interaction or contact with women is very sensitive and the reaction to these type of mistakes can be very quick and harsh.”⁹⁴

8.3.4 Standardised procedures

In one village in Paktia, a focus group participant raised the issue of “fair” processes that employ the same methods from one village to the next. While it was an isolated comment, his remarks raise the issue of standardised practices and the need to communicate with communities why procedures are done differently, if it is the case.

There is just one thing they didn't do. They didn't employ the youths graduated from high school to work as deminers. They are jobless, and I say this, because they employed the youths from the other village. I know that they employed 80 persons from one village, but no one has been employed from our village. The government should do the same with all villages. If they employ the youth from other villages, they should employ them from this village, too, otherwise it would not be fair. – Community leader, 50, Paktia

Standardised procedures in other community liaison processes may need to be addressed as well to ensure that deminers are consistent in their approach. Interviewed deminers often understood the importance of the issues raised above. They seemed to take these concerns seriously and described strategies to try to establish good relations with communities.

When we are going to start our activities we first speak with the community leader, and then we start our work. When we are working we need to behave properly with the people, when we talk about what we need, we must respect all of their traditions. We also need do our duty as well to have a good relationship with the people. – Deminer, Paktia

Despite this understanding by deminers, some community members still see room for improvement. It could be that while some deminers systematically employ these strategies, others are not as rigorous in their application. Some community members may also not be aware of the efforts deminers are taking to accommodate their needs.

⁹⁴ World Bank, 2006.

In either case, several solutions could help resolve the issues raised by community members: *i)* more information sharing and transparency with community members; *ii)* a more systematic implementation of community liaison processes may be required; and *iii)* community-based monitoring should be implemented so that problems in the field can be reported directly and addressed promptly.

Key Points:

- Main suggestions for improved community relations related to clearance, co-ordination, information sharing/MRE and deminer behaviour
 - Communities feel implicated in mine action, and satisfaction is often tied to their involvement in decision-making processes and even problem-solving
 - Communication and information sharing is essential to avoiding miscommunication with communities
-

9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PERCEPTIONS OF DEMINERS

Communities are the solution, not the problem

Part II of the report was commissioned to achieve a clearer understanding of community perceptions towards deminers and based on these findings provide recommendations for a communications campaign targeting communities to better ensure deminer safety. The communications tools recommended are not intended to raise general awareness or support. They serve, rather, to suggest how these community bonds can be strengthened so that communities will continue to assist deminers and their work.

Create a framework for better communicate and liaison with communities.

Communities in general feel involved in the mine action process, and leaders and members alike are often eager to be included in decision-making processes (*e.g.* land prioritisation) and problem solving. Current processes of community liaison work very well; however, as they often focus on liaising with community leaders, awareness of these processes is communicated to others at the discretion of the leaders. A more systematic approach to communicating with the communities could help build greater support behind deminers.

This approach could include information on the mine action process to be communicated to community members by deminers themselves. This would include information on the process of demining, how the process of prioritisation works, how much the deminers work during the day, the expected time it takes to clear a piece of land etc. Materials could be created to explain “mine action” as a process, from prioritisation to actual clearance.

Secondly, a framework for community liaison should be created with the co-operation and approval of IPs. This framework should be flexible enough to take into consideration local cultural dynamics, but outline the major steps that demining IPs should follow during the community engagement process. This should also include guidelines for deminer behaviour and liaison with communities. Streamlining the process of community engagement across all IPs in Afghanistan will be important in order to ensure a consistent approach, reduce the likelihood of confusion regarding the demining process and can be the foundation to open communication channels for information sharing with the community.

General guidelines for the approach to community based demining (CBD) should be created by the MAPA. While observations from the field noted the general acceptance of CBD by communities, cases where communities were upset by the CBD activities appear to have been the result of miscommunication regarding the process of CBD i.e. the method by which community members were chosen. Considering the changing security dynamic within Afghanistan and the recognition that more CBD activities are likely to be required to access insecure areas, a more standardised approach for CBD across the demining IPs should be integrated into CBD activities by all IPs.

- **Local radio shows with call-in elements or roundtable discussions**

Participating in pre-existing programmes or creating low-cost radio programming on a local level would provide a venue for IPs and the MACCA to discuss the mine action process. Such programmes would provide an opportunity for local stakeholders and deminers taking part in community liaison to discuss their work and the benefits to the community. Call-in elements would allow locals in the community to ask questions and feel they are a part of the process.

Such radio programmes would be most effective in areas where little or no previous demining activity has taken place, or where deminers have encountered security incidents. This is a method to notify, on a local level, both community members and other actors that there are deminers operating in the area, to explain their neutral role and the benefits that the demining process will bring to their communities.

- **Discussions in mosques with community leaders and deminers**

Mosques have proven an excellent forum for disseminating MRE. They can also be useful for deminers and community leaders to share information and answer questions about demining with the general population. Demining agencies should hold open forum discussions about the work they are conducting in local mosques at the beginning of the mine action process and then as required during demining activities. As with MRE, participants should be encouraged to share the information learnt at these sessions with family and neighbours not in attendance. After an initial meeting, community leaders, especially mullahs, should also be encouraged to give updates on the demining progress and to collect any questions members of their congregation, which can then be relayed to the demining IP.

- **Greater cross-over with MRE**

The current community liaison processes do not always adequately incorporate MRE and information about demining. By systematically keeping MRE trainers informed of local demining initiatives, they can help answer questions and clarify misconceptions community members may have. This would be especially useful in cases of Community-Based MRE, where volunteers are permanently based in the communities they serve.

Deminers should be trained in MRE delivery and be encouraged to regularly share MRE informally with members of the community they encounter. While some demining IPs do already conduct MRE in conjunction with the demining process, this is not universal. As the fieldwork has highlighted communities have been extremely appreciative of deminers conducting MRE

Establish a community-based monitoring hotline

The MAPA could create a “hotline” for community members to voice any concerns they have about the mine action process directly to the AMAC or the MACCA. This hotline could be introduced to the community at the same time as explanation of the mine action process, and on materials explaining the demining process. The hotline would consist of a toll free number directed to MACCA where community members could call if they wanted to ask any questions about the mine action process they see happening in their community. This will make communities feel more involved in the mine action process, and at the very least an avenue to voice any concerns or complaints they may have. This can also be a way for communities to notify MAPA about the behaviour of deminers in the community.

If the complaints received are valid, the demining agency could be notified to take necessary action. If the complaints are based on misconceptions about demining and how it works, the operator could clarify the issue directly with the caller and notify the demining agency to be aware of the misunderstanding for future notice. Communities have a true incentive to ensure that the land around their community is cleared effectively and efficiently, this would give them another avenue for involvement and improve relations between deminers and communities.

10 CONCLUSION

A common thread throughout this report has been the importance of involving the community in mine action to ensure the success of the initiative and the safety of implementers.

Part I demonstrated that individuals obtain most of their information about mines and ERW through interpersonal communication, both formally through MRE and informally through family and community networks. Information sharing about safe behaviours has increased over the past decade, and communities feel implicated in mine action.

Despite increased awareness, intentional risk takers are often unable to change their behaviour due to economic factors that make the risk of not entering a hazardous area appear greater than that of doing so. A smaller proportion of intentional risk-takers are motivated by reckless, thrill-seeking behaviour. In both of these cases, the problem is not a lack of awareness, which is why MRE must look beyond basic awareness raising to developing community-based mechanisms for problem-solving and risk reduction.

With future funding for MRE uncertain, it is even more imperative for IPs to focus on working with communities to establish a more sustainable, local system for addressing the risks of mine and ERW. Strategies should include greater emphasis on community-based MRE and a more integrated approach to community mine action liaison that develops more cross-over between demining and MRE communication (*e.g.* deminers delivering informal MRE and MRE trainers and volunteers sharing up-to-date information about demining initiatives).

While the first half of the report focused on the safety of communities and how to promote behaviour change, Part II examined the safety of deminers, and the role of the community – specifically community perceptions – in promoting or inhibiting a safe working environment. Based on analysis of past incidents against deminers and findings from fieldwork conducted in Paktia, Parwan and Kabul, it became clear that communities are not the source of insecurity but rather the key to prevention and resolution of conflicts involving deminers, whether they involve theft, threats or abductions.

Including community members in mine action – whether through participatory decision-making, information sharing or transparent processes – is key to ensuring that communities are vigilant when it comes to the safety of deminers, intervening when necessary when deminers are threatened by perpetrators motivated by criminal or political motives.

Risk cannot be eradicated, especially in a context as complex, varied and volatile as Afghanistan. One-shot communications initiatives will have impact in the long-run. Efforts to promote the safety of deminers and populations living in areas contaminated by mines and ERW should therefore focus on working with local mechanisms for risk reduction for a more sustainable approach to promoting risk-averse behaviour and the safety of deminers.

Areas for further study:

- This study revealed that a number of at-risk groups may be underrepresented in casualty statistics and are certainly under-targeted through MRE. Focused studies should be conducted on the mine risk awareness and risk behaviours of marginalised populations such as the *Kuchis*, returnees, IDPs, and scrap metal collectors.
- A pilot test should be conducted to study the uses of SMS technology for community liaison and data collection. Victim data collection, quality assurance and community liaison are three areas that could potentially be facilitated through this cost-efficient technology.

11 ANNEXES

11.1 ADDITIONAL TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLE 11.1. HAZARD CLEARANCE PROGRESS

Indicator	Adjusted baseline	Clearance/ Processed	Remaining Contamination	Progress
Hazards	13,755	7,780	5,975	56.6%
Area	1,325 sq km	736 sq km	589 sq km	

Source: MACCA Newsletter, February 2012

TABLE 11.2. INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON OF CASUALTIES

Includes casualties from mines, victim-activated IEDs, cluster munition remnants, and other ERW

Country	2010 Casualties
Afghanistan	1,211
Colombia	512
Pakistan	394
Cambodia	286
Myanmar	274
Iran	158
Somalia	154
Lao PDR	117

Source: Landmine Monitor 2011

TABLE 11.3. CURRENT ACTIVE MINEFIELDS

Surveyed provinces highlighted in blue.

Region	Province	# of Minefields	Reported Area
Central	Kabul	741	44,408,056
North East	Baghlan	607	41,754,317
Central	Parwan	600	23,317,077
North	Samangan	439	14,634,643
Central	Logar	379	58,670,160
Northeast	Takhar	334	9,772,577
Central	Maydan Wardak	319	27,904,540
West	Hirat	304	31,349,123
South	Kandahar	265	68,520,232
East	Nangarhar	246	20,878,811
Southeast	Ghazni	218	37,758,485
Central	Panjsher	212	10,289,807
Central	Kapisa	165	11,431,662
North	Balkh	130	4,517,206
South East	Paktia	130	9,249,346
South	Hilmand	125	65,403,306
Northeast	Kunduz	120	2,749,953

Southeast	Khost	102	6,224,981
West	Farah	86	51,305,686
Northeast	Badakhshan	78	2,822,157
Southeast	Paktika	60	12,294,877
South	Zabul	52	10,568,541
East	Laghman	50	3,578,001
Central	Bamyan	48	2,863,562
North	Sari Pul	46	1,477,341
West	Badghis	35	3,480,019
East	Kunar	32	2,510,589
South	Nimroz	24	5,296,826
North	Faryab	18	1,383,262
North	Jawzjan	8	440,376
East	Nuristan	2	2,000,450
Total		5,975	588,855,969

Source: MACCA figures from 8 March 2012

TABLE 11.4. GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE OF QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

PROVINCE	DISTRICT	VILLAGES SURVEYED
Kabul	Deh Sabz	Qalai Afzal Khan
	Kabul City – PD #6	Nawabad Jabar Khan
	Kabul City – PD #7	Baldarra Chehilsetoon
	Paghman	Sangsal
Paktia	Gardiz	Tandaan
		Darra Mullah Qudrat
		Benozi
	Sayed Karam	Cheno
		Khan Khail
		Shahbaz Khail
Parwan	Charikar	Senjid Darra
		Sofian
		Mosa Khail
		Laghmani
	Bagram	Khanjar Khail
		Beland
		Qalai Hend
		Jafarkhail

TABLE 11.5. GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

	TYPE	VILLAGE	DISTRICT	PROVINCE
1	Community	Beland	Bagram	Parwan
2	Community	Khanjar Khail	Bagram	Parwan
3	Children	Khanjar Khail	Bagram	Parwan
4	Children	Mosa Khail	Charikar	Parwan
5	Women	Khanjar Khail	Bagram	Parwan
6	Women	Mosa Khail	Charikar	Parwan
7	Deminers	Estedium Charikar	Charikar	Parwan
8	Deminers	Markaz Charikar	Charikar	Parwan
9	Community	Nawabad Jabar Khan	Kabul city - PD #6	Kabul
10	Community	Qalai Afzal Khan	Deh Sabz	Kabul
11	Children	Baldarra Chehilsetoon	Kabul city – PD #7	Kabul
12	Children	Nawabad Jabar Khan	Kabul city - PD #6	Kabul
13	Women	Qalai Afzal Khan	Deh Sabz	Kabul
14	Women	Nawabad Jabar Khan	Kabul city - PD #6	Kabul
15	Deminers	Karezmir	Kabul city - PD #17	Kabul
16	Community	Tandaan	Gardiz	Paktia
17	Community	Khan Khail	Sayed Karam	Paktia
18	Children	Benози	Gardiz	Paktia
19	Children	Cheno	Sayed Karam	Paktia
20	Women	Cheno	Sayed Karam	Paktia
21	Women	Tandaan	Gardiz	Paktia
22	Deminers	Tandaan	Sayed Karam	Paktia
23	Survivors	Afghan Landmine Survivors’	Kabul city - PD #10	Kabul
24	Survivors	Organization	Kabul city - PD #10	Kabul

TABLE 11.6. GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE OF SURVIVOR CASE STUDIES AND FOCUS GROUPS

	TYPE	VILLAGE	DISTRICT	PROVINCE
1	Case Study	Beland	Bagram	Parwan
2	Case Study	Khanjar Khail	Bagram	Parwan
3	Case Study	Qalai Beland	Bagram	Parwan
4	Case Study	Khanjar Khail	Bagram	Parwan
5	Case Study	Baaldarra Chehilsetoon	Kabul city - PD #7	Kabul
6	Case Study	Baaldarra Chehilsetoon	Kabul city - PD #7	Kabul
7	Case Study	Darra Qudrat	Gardiz	Paktia
8	Case Study	Benози	Gardiz	Paktia
9	Case Study	Tandaan	Gardiz	Paktia
10	Case Study	Benози	Gardiz	Paktia

11.2 QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

Hello. My name is _____. I would be grateful if you could spend about fifteen minutes answering my questions for the UN-managed Mine Action Co-ordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA). This interview is anonymous and your name will not be mentioned in any report document. You are not obliged to answer any question, and you can stop at any moment you want. I thank you for accepting to help me. Do you want to ask me anything about the interview before you decide to participate?

Questionnaire Number					
No.	Question	Answers			
A	Interviewer code (01-08)	_____			
B	Date of interview	__ __ February 2012			
C	Province	1. Parwan 2. Paktia 3. Kunduz			
D	District	1. Bagram 2. JabalulSaraj 3. Charikar	4. Gardiz 5. Said Karam 6. Chamkari	7. Kunduz 8. Khan Abad 9. ChaharDara	10. Other [Specify] _____
E	Village no. (01-30)	_____			
F	Gender	1. Male		2. Female	
G	Is the interviewee a community leader? (<i>shura</i> member, community elder, mullah)			1. Yes 2. No	

1.	How old are you? Prompt: One answer	_____ Years
2.	What is your education background? Prompt: One answer; highest level achieved	1. Illiterate (no schooling) 2. Literate (no schooling) 3. Primary school 4. High school 5. Vocational school 6. University
3.	In your opinion, what is the main problem caused by the existence of mines or ERW? Do not prompt: One answer	1. Kills people 2. Maims/injures people 3. Can't take animals to graze 4. Can't farm/cultivate land 5. Can't travel/move to surrounding area 6. Affects economy 7. Restricts access to water sources 8. Restricts access to local products/incomes 9. Other [Specify] _____
4.	Have you always lived in an area with mines and ERW? Do not prompt: one possible	1. Yes 2. No
5.	Have you ever considered leaving an area because of the risk of mines or ERW? Prompt: one answer	1. No, never 2. Yes, I considered it but I didn't leave 3. Yes, I left an area because of the danger of mines or ERW 4. Other [Specify] _____
6.	How do you know if an area has mines or ERW? Are there signs? Do not prompt: multiple answers possible	1. Red stones /painted stones 2. Crossed sticks / branches 3. Skull and cross bones 4. Red signs

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Cans 6. Piles of stones 7. Other [Specify] _____ 8. There are no signs or markings
7.	<p>What should you do if a friend or relative is injured in a minefield?</p> <p>Do not prompt: one answer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get an expert / deminer 2. Inform the community leaders 3. Go to friend/relative to help 4. Run away 5. Inform the police 6. Other [Specify] _____ -3 I don't know
8.	<p>How did you learn about mines and ERW?</p> <p>Do not prompt: multiple answers possible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher / class 2. Parent 3. MRE training 4. Elders 5. Community leaders/<i>Maliks</i> 6. Mullahs 7. Radio program 8. TV program 9. Posters 10. Other [Specify] _____
9.	<p>Have you shared this information with anyone else? With whom?</p> <p>Do not prompt: multiple answers possible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My children 2. My parents 3. My brothers and/or sisters 4. My classmates / friends 5. Adults in the community 6. Other [Specify] _____ 7. Did not share information
10.	<p>For what reasons do <u>adults</u> in your community go into areas that are mined?</p> <p>Do not prompt: multiple answers possible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collect firewood 2. Graze livestock 3. Tend crops/cultivate land 4. Collect metal 5. Curiosity/visits 6. Pass through 7. They don't know it's a minefield 8. Other [Specify] _____
11.	<p>Do you think they understand the risk of going into these areas?</p> <p>Prompt: one answer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No (SKIP TO Q13) -3 I don't know (SKIP TO Q13)
12.	<p>If they understand the risk involved, why do they still go into these areas?</p> <p>Prompt: one answer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They need to earn money 2. They need to get food 3. They don't think they will be hurt 4. They want to show their bravery 5. Other [Specify] _____ -3 I don't know
13.	<p>For what reasons do <u>children</u> in your community go into areas that are mined?</p> <p>Do not prompt: multiple answers possible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collect firewood 2. Graze livestock 3. Tend crops/cultivate land 4. Collect metal 5. Curiosity/visits 6. Pass through 7. They don't know it's a minefield 8. Other [Specify] _____

14.	Do you think they understand the risk of going into these areas? Prompt: one answer	1. Yes 2. No (SKIP to Q16) -3 I don't know (SKIP to Q16)
15.	If they understand the risk involved, why do they still go into these areas? Prompt: one answer	1. They need to earn money 2. They need to get food 3. They don't think they will be hurt 4. They want to show their bravery 5. Other [Specify] _____ -3 I don't know
16.	Do you know of anyone in your community that was injured or killed by a mine or ERW? Prompt: one answer	1. Yes, a friend or relative 2. Yes, a community member 3. No (SKIP to Q19) -3 I don't know (SKIP to Q19)
17.	After this accident did people in the community change their behaviour to avoid areas that they knew had mines or ERW? Prompt: one answer	1. Yes, much more cautious 2. Yes, somewhat more cautious 3. No, no change 4. Other [Specify] _____ -3 I don't know
18.	Who do community members blame for the accident? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Victim 2. Community leaders 3. Insurgents 4. Soviets / Russians 5. Deminers 6. Afghan government 7. Other [Specify] _____ -3 I don't know
19.	If you are walking through an area known to have mines or ERW, what do you think is the likelihood that you could get hurt? Prompt: one answer	1. Very likely 2. Somewhat likely 3. Not likely -3 I don't know
20.	Are there deminers currently working in or around your community or have they worked here in the past? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Yes, currently working here 2. Yes, worked here in the past 3. No, never worked here -3 I don't know
21.	Do community members trust the deminers to do their job well and serve the community? Prompt: one answer	1. Trust completely 2. Trust somewhat 3. Distrust somewhat 4. Distrust completely -3 I don't know
22.	Do some people oppose or disapprove of the deminers? Prompt: one answer	1. Yes 2. No (SKIP to Q24) -3. I don't know
23.	What is the main reason why they oppose or disapprove of the deminers? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Perceived as corrupt 2. Do not behave well in community [Explain] _____ 3. They were not selected for Community-Based demining projects 4. Angry about choice of priority sites to clear 5. Angry about delays in clearing areas 6. Lack of communication with community leaders 7. Receive foreign funding/working for foreigners 8. Other [Specify] _____
24.	Have there been any incidents in which deminers were threatened, taken hostage, injured or killed in or around your community? Prompt: one answer	1. Yes 2. No (SKIP to Q26) -3 I don't know

25.	If there were problems, what do you think was the main reason for these incidents? Do not prompt: one answer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Criminal activity 2. Personal vendetta 3. Opposition to deminers 4. Mistaken identity (job) 5. Other [Specify] _____ -3 I don't know												
26.	What do you think should be done to improve the perception of deminers in the community? Do not prompt: one answer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Better co-ordination between deminers and community leaders 2. Faster clearance of mined areas 3. Better selection of priority areas for clearance 4. More information about the deminers and their work 5. More hiring of locals to participate in mine action 6. Other [Specify] _____ 												
27.	What do you think should be done to reduce accidents with mines or ERW? Do not prompt: one answer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More signs/markings of mined areas 2. More MRE 3. Clear more land 4. Other [Specify] _____ 												
28.	What do you think is the best way to teach MRE to children? Do not prompt: one answer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MRE training in communities 2. Posters/pamphlets 3. TV shows with MRE 4. Radio shows with MRE 5. Community leaders should inform people 6. MRE in schools 7. Other [Specify] _____ -3 I don't know												
29.	What do you think are two of the best way to teach MRE to adults? Do not prompt: maximum two answers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MRE training in communities 2. Posters/pamphlets 3. TV shows with MRE 4. Radio shows with MRE 5. Community leaders should inform people 6. Other [Specify] _____ -3 I don't know												
30.	What is your phone number?	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px;">0</td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table> -5. SKIP - Does not have phone number	0											
0														
31.	Would you permit us to contact you if we have any follow-up questions? Prompt: one answer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No 												

End of questionnaire

11.3 FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Each group should include 5 participants. The moderator should:

- Encourage participants to tell stories, providing real life accounts and examples.
- Assure participants that there are many answers possible and that there is no “right answer”
- Seek individual and collective voices and answers to these questions

11.3.1 Community leaders & members

Groups should include elders, shura members, mullahs, community leaders and community members that are familiar with MRE and deminer activities

A. Date _____ B. Village _____ C. District _____

	Name	Age	Position/job title	Highest level of education	Phone number
1					
2					
3					
4					
5.					

PART 1: MRE

1. Are mines and ERW a risk in your community?

- a. Are there many areas in your community where there are still mines and ERW?
- b. Are mined areas clearly marked? How do you know where they are?
- c. Have there been many people injured or killed by mines or ERW? Why or why not?

2. What is the impact of mines and ERW in your community?

- a. Impact on people
- b. Impact on mobility
- c. Impact on economy

3. What should you do if someone is injured in a minefield?

4. What would you do if you found an ERW?

- a. Who would you tell? What could be done?

5. How did you first learn about the risks of mines and ERW?

- a. Who told you about the risks?
- b. Did you receive training?
- c. Did you find out any information from any media sources (radio or TV)?

6. Do children and adults in your community go into areas that are mined?

- a. Do they understand the risks? If so, how did they learn about them?
- b. Why do children go into these areas?
- c. Why do adults go into these areas?

7. Do you think anything could or should be done to convince adults and children to change their behaviour and take fewer risks?

- a. Who should act? What should they do?

- b. Can children, specifically, be convinced to change their behaviour and take fewer risks?
If so, how?
- c. Is there anything you as community leaders can do or are doing to help prevent accidents with mines and ERW?

8. Are there any survivors of mines or ERW in your community?

- a. Can you tell us what they are doing now?
- b. How are they perceived by the community?

PART 2: PERCEPTIONS OF DEMINERS

1. Can you describe how the demining groups came to your village?

- a. Who asked them to come?
- b. Who did they consult with when they arrived?
- c. How did community members feel about their arrival?

2. How do the deminers decide which contaminated areas to clear first?

- a. How do you feel about their selection and process?
- b. Are community members happy about which areas are selected as priorities?

3. Are members of the community involved in the demining process?

- a. What is their role?
- b. How were they selected?
- c. Do any community members feel angry or excluded from the process?

4. What are positive comments you hear about deminers and their activities in the area?

- a. About their work?
- b. About their behaviour in the community?

5. What are negative comments you hear about deminers and their activities in the area?

- a. Why do you think people say these things?
- b. Do you agree with them?
- c. Do you think they pose a risk to the safety of the deminers?

6. What do you think could be done to improve the relationship between deminers and the community?

- a. What can the deminers do?
- b. What can community leaders do?
- c. What can MACCA, MAPA or the government do?

11.3.2 Women

A. Date _____ B. Village _____ C. District _____

	Name	Age	Marital Status	Number of children	Highest level of education	Phone #
1						
2						
3						
4						
5.						

- 1. Have you seen any of these materials? (show the materials from the kit) Which ones?**
 - a. Which ones have you seen before?
 - b. What messages do you think they are trying to send? What do you understand from them?
- 2. Why do you think deminers have come to your community?**
 - a. What kind of work are they doing?
 - b. Is there a need in the community for the work they do? Why or why not?
- 3. Do you know which areas are safe and which areas are mined in your community?**
 - a. How do you know where they are?
 - b. Are mined areas clearly marked?
- 4. How did you learn about mines and ERW?**
 - a. Who told you about mines and ERW?
 - b. Did you always live in an area with mines and ERW?
 - c. Did you receive any training? From whom?
 - d. Did you hear about mines and ERW on a radio or TV program?
- 5. What would you do if you found a ERW in the garden?**
 - a. Who would you tell?
 - b. What would you tell your children to do?
- 6. Do adults in the community go into or pass through mined areas?**
 - a. Why do they go or pass through there? Do they understand the risk?
- 7. Do children in the community go into or pass through mined areas?**
 - a. Why do they go or pass through there? Do they understand the risk?
- 8. For those of you with children or younger siblings, do you think the children understand the risk of mines and ERW?**
 - a. Who informs them of these issues?
 - b. Do you talk to your children about these issues? What do you tell them?
 - c. Do you think they can be convinced to change their behaviour and not take risks with mines and ERW? If so, how?
- 9. Have there been many people injured or killed by mines or ERW?**
 - a. Did they know they were in a dangerous area?
- 10. How did the community react to these accidents?**
 - a. Did people in the community change their behaviour after the accidents? How?
 - b. How are survivors treated by the community?

- c. Who do people blame when people are injured or killed by mines or ERW?

11. How does the community feel about the deminers?

- a. What are some positive things you hear about the deminers and their work?
- b. What are some negative things you hear about the deminers and their work?
- c. Why do you think people say these negative things? Do you agree with them?

12. What do you think should be done to improve deminers are viewed by the community?

- a. What can the deminers do?
- b. What can community leaders do?
- c. Is there anyone else that should do something?

11.3.3 Children

A. Date _____ B. Village _____ C. District _____

	Name	Age	Highest level of education	Phone number of relative
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

- 1. Why do you think deminers have come to your community?**
 - a. What kind of work are they doing?
 - b. Why do they need to do this kind of work?
 - c. Do you think they do a good job? Why or why not?
- 2. Do you know which areas are safe and which areas are mined in your community?**
 - a. How do you know where they are?
 - b. Are mined areas clearly marked? How are they marked?
- 3. How did you learn about mines and ERW?**
 - a. Who told you about them?
 - b. Did you receive any training? From whom?
 - c. Did you hear about mines and ERW on a radio or TV program?
- 4. Do you or other children you know go into mined areas?**
 - a. Why do you/they go there?
 - b. Do the other children know that it is dangerous in mined area?
 - c. If they understand, why do they still go?
- 5. Do you know of anyone in the community that was injured or killed by mines or ERW?**
 - a. Did they know they were in a dangerous area?
 - b. Why were they there?
- 6. How did you feel after you heard about the accident?**
 - a. Did you change your behaviour or stop going to dangerous areas?
 - b. Whose fault do you think it is that these people were hurt or killed?
- 7. Imagine you are with a friend that wants to go into a mined area. What would you do?**
 - a. Would you go along?
 - b. Would you tell your friend not to go?
 - c. What would you say to your friend?
- 8. What would you do if you found something that looked like a ERW?**
 - a. Would you tell someone? Who would you tell?
 - b. What could they do about it?

11.3.4 Deminers

A. Date _____ B. Village _____ C. District _____

	Name	Age	Marital Status	Province of origin	Years worked as deminer	Highest level of education	Phone number
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							

1. **Why did you decide to become deminers?**
 - a. What did your family think of your decision?
2. **Can you describe the best moment that you had while on the job?**
3. **Can you describe the worst moment you had on the job?**
 - a. Did you think about leaving your job after this experience?
 - b. What motivates you to continue your work as a deminer?
4. **Do you feel that people understand and appreciate the work you do? Why or why not?**
5. **There have been a number of deminers that have been kidnapped and in some cases killed. Why do you think this has happened?**
 - a. What kind of people kidnap or attack deminers?
 - b. What is their motivation?
6. **What steps do you take to try to stay safe when working in insecure areas?**
7. **What kinds of strategies do you use to maintain good relationships with communities?**
 - a. Who do you talk with?
 - b. What do you talk about?
 - c. How often do you meet with community leaders?
 - d. Is there anything you think your team could do differently to improve community relations?
8. **Do you think people in the communities you work understand the risks posed by mines or ERW?**
 - a. Why do people continue to go into dangerous areas that are mined?
 - b. Do you think they could be convinced to change their behaviour? If so, how?
9. **What should people do if they find a ERW?**
 - a. How should they report it?
 - b. Who should they report it to?

11.3.5 Survivors

A. Date _____ B. Village _____ C. District _____

	Name	Age	Marital Status	No. of Children	Highest level of education	Phone number
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

- 1. Can you describe what you were doing before you were injured from a mine or ERW?**
 - a. Where were you and what were you doing there?
 - b. Did you know that you were in an area with mines or ERW? Were there any markers?
 - c. Did you see the ERW or mine before the accident?
- 2. Did you know much about mines or ERW before your accident?**
 - a. How did you learn about them? From whom?
 - b. Did you receive any MRE training?
 - c. Did you worry about this kind of accident happening to you?
- 3. What kind of injuries did you suffer from the accident?**
 - a. How do these injuries affect your life and livelihood today?
 - b. How did your injuries affect your role in the community? Do people perceive you differently?
- 4. Do you blame anyone for your accident? Why or why not?**
 -
- 5. Do you think people in the community continue to take risks in areas with mines and ERW?**
 - a. Do you think they understand the risks?
 - b. Why do they continue to do these risky behaviours?
- 6. Do you think they can be convinced to change their behaviour and not take these risks?**
 - a. How could they be convinced? What do you think should be done?
- 7. What would you do if you learned there was a ERW in your garden?**
 - a. Who would you tell? What could they do?
- 8. Do you think deminers are appreciated in the community? Why are why not?**
- 9. Are there any people that oppose the deminers and their work?**
 - a. If yes, why do you think they feel this way?
 - b. Do you agree with them?
- 10. What do you think should be done to improve the relationship between deminers and the community?**