

## RISK EDUCATION ON EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR



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### **Guiding Principle 10:**

2- Attacks or other acts of violence against internally displaced persons who do not or no longer participate in hostilities are prohibited in all circumstances. Internally displaced persons shall be protected, in particular against: (e) the use of anti-personnel landmines.

## Introduction

The concept of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) covers unexploded ordnance and abandoned explosive ordnance. Unexploded ordnance refers to any ammunition that has been used but which has failed to detonate as intended while abandoned explosive ordnance refers to ammunition stockpiles that have been left behind by a party to an armed conflict.

The explosive remnants of war continue to have a detrimental effect on communities long after the wars have ended causing injuries or deaths even at a distance from the explosion as the danger area can vary from a few meters to several hundred meters depending on the ordnance involved. Moreover, ERW are generally found on the surface and are therefore visible, which can result in an interaction of people with them. They are unpredictable and can be detonated at any time by pressure, by hit or kick or by simple touch.

**Children account for more than one third of all victims in many ERW affected countries. An estimated 85% of child victims die before reaching the hospital.**



Due to a steep increase in the number of people injured as a result of the crisis, including due to injuries from explosive remnants particularly in the past six months, approximately 575,000 people in Syria, as of end of September 2013, were estimated to have been injured directly or indirectly and are in need of urgent healthcare<sup>1</sup>. Generally, the percentage of child casualties remains high as children tend, out of curiosity, to play with these items especially as they are often colorful and can be seen by them as potential toys.



## The international Context

The Convention on the Rights of the Child protects the rights of children as States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child<sup>2</sup>.

The Convention also protects the children in armed conflicts as States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict in accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect the civilian population in armed conflicts<sup>3</sup>.

Moreover, States Parties are urged to take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child<sup>4</sup>. This covers psycho-social recovery and social reintegration of child survivors of ERW incidents.

Furthermore, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities urges States Parties to collect appropriate information, including statistical and research data, to enable them to formulate and implement policies to give effect to the present Convention<sup>5</sup>. It enhances and supports the development of a comprehensive system for the collection of casualty data through standardized victim surveillance systems.

1. SHARP 2014
2. Article 19, The Conventions on the Rights of the Child
3. Article 38, The Conventions on the Rights of the Child
4. Article 39, The Conventions on the Rights of the Child
5. Article 31, The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

## The Syrian context

Since 2011, the situation in Syria has been escalating in intensity and complexity, with the conflict characterized by the wide-spread use of explosive weapons in populated areas, which results in both immediate and long-term risks of indiscriminate killing and injury of civilians.

**Risk Education on ERW can reduce the risk; however, efforts should be exerted to eliminate its source**



Although there are no clear figures on the number of children killed or injured as a result of ERWs, anecdotal evidence suggests that the number is significantly high. In a remote assessment of child protection trends and patterns inside Syria conducted by the Global Child Protection Working Group, 42% of respondents identified explosive remnants of war as the main violent threat in Syria to children's safety in the areas in which they were living<sup>6</sup>.

Moreover, Syria has also ratified both the Conventions on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

**Support is needed in terms of receiving international expertise and adequate funding to foster ERW Risk Education in Syria**

6. Remote methodologies have been used for the assessment to interview newly arriving refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. The data have been triangulated with a desk review and interviews with humanitarian workers. To access the report of the assessment, please visit <http://cpwg.net/resource-topics/assessment-3/>

## Protection Sector response

Within the broader framework of Mine Action, the sector is focusing primarily on ERW Risk Education which helps reduce the danger and protect people living in and traveling to areas contaminated by ERW.

The Protection Sector in Syria has been working on this issue since 2013 and has included ERW Risk Education and awareness in its activities which are being launched across the country.

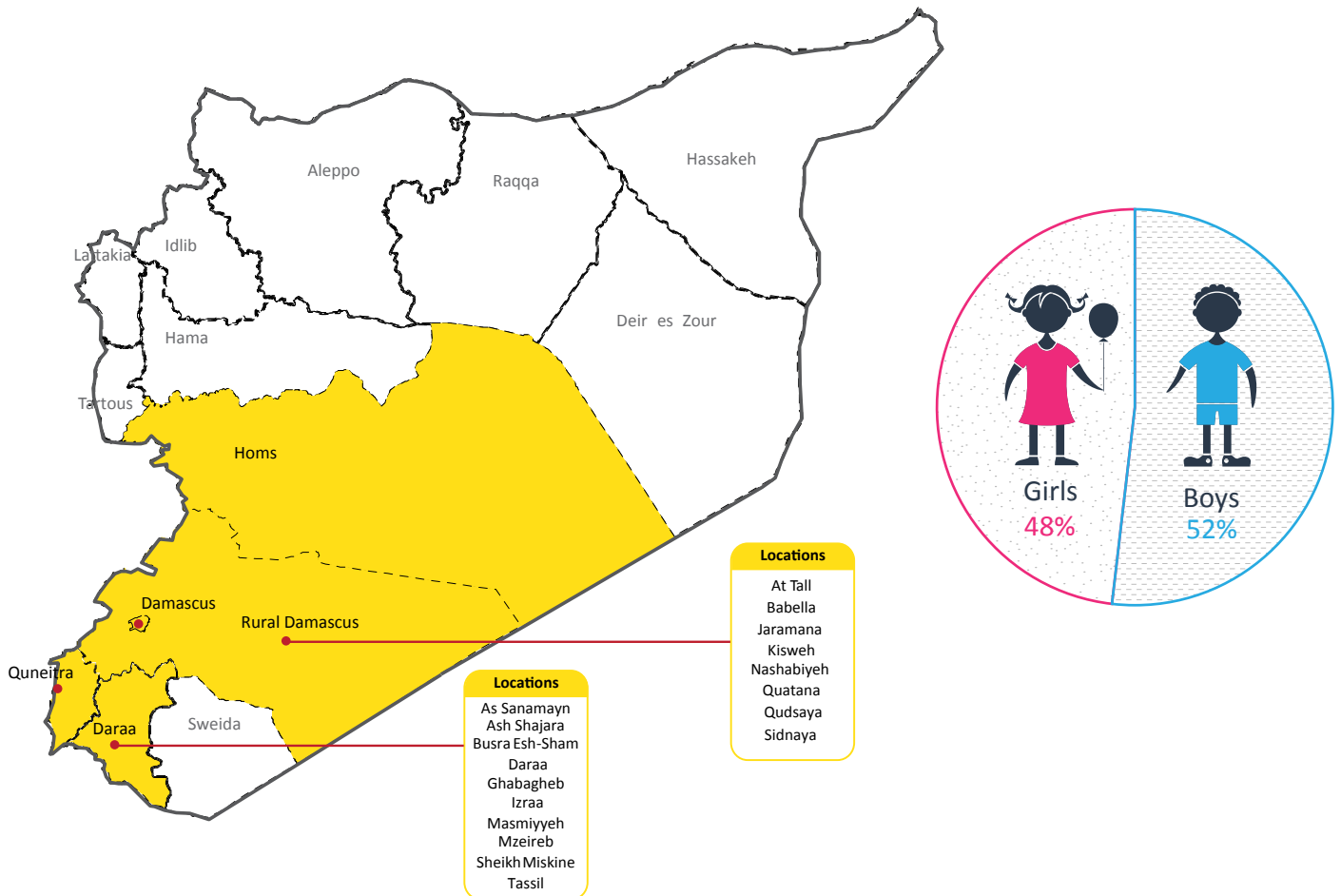
Incorporating the risk education in the Education Extra Curriculum is a major step in institutionalizing risk education in the education system ensuring the sustainability of the activity. At the moment, the ERW risk education involves two major components; the training of school teachers on the Risk Education kit and how to conduct awareness raising sessions with pupils as well as school based awareness raising sessions.

**As Risk Education should reach every single person at risk, the Protection sector is working on it in different locations in Syria**

ERW Risk Education's primary strategy is to instill safe behavior in people by raising awareness and educating both those at risk and those around them who can influence their behavior. Recognizing that schools provide opportunities to discuss and share self-protection information with a large number of children, the strategy has been operationalized in collaboration with Ministry of Education through:

- **The development of Risk Education curriculum:** In partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE), Child Protection actors and the local private sector in 2013, a set of Risk Education training materials were developed, reviewed and officially adopted by ministerial decree as part of the School Extra Curriculum.
- **Capacity building efforts:** 45 Master Trainers from the MoE were trained on Risk Education by an international expert. Subsequently, as of August 2014, 684 teachers in 367 schools in Daraa, Quneitra, Damascus and Rural Damascus have been trained and provided with the needed material.
- **Risk Education sessions:** 207,666 children have been reached through structured Risk Education sessions. In the high priority areas such as Old Homs, local non-governmental organizations have been provided with Risk Education kits to reach the residents and children who are returning or visiting the devastated areas.

## Protection Sector Response 01.01.2014 - 31.08.2014



Governorates	Awareness Sessions	Teachers Training	Materials Distribution
<b>Damascus</b>	98,383	213	213
<b>Daraa</b>	30,138	180	180
<b>Quneitra</b>	18,703	142	142
<b>Rural Damascus</b>	60,397	152	152
<b>Homs</b>	45	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>207,666</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>687</b>
	Children	Teachers	Supplies

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