

MINE ACTION PROGRAMME OF AFGHANISTAN NEWSLETTER: AUGUST 2011



MINE RISK EDUCATION REACHES SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

Going through villages, small and big towns, mosques and gatherings, Mine Risk Education (MRE) lessons are on desks in the classrooms of Afghanistan.

MACCA in partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE) prints MRE lessons and has included life saving messages in the MoE curriculum, so that more children and students are aware of the risks of mine and other Explosive Remnants of War (ERW).

Tahmeenah, 13, is studying in 9th grade in Maryam High School, Kabul. She is one of many benefiting from MRE lessons. "It is great to have lessons regarding risks of mines in our curriculum. I know many students who have faced difficulties due to landmines and other explosives and some of them have lost parts of their body and even their lives due to this hidden enemy of humans", said Tahmeenah.

Tahmeenah added: "I remember my mother's cousin, who used to work as a policeman and lost both his eyes in a mine explosion during the Soviet occupation."

According to the national database, administered and managed by MACCA 59% of all accidents affect children. Considering this fact, teachers also believe including MRE messages in the curriculum is the best step towards informing children of the risks of mines and ERW.



Suraya a school teacher in the picture

Suraya is a teacher in Maryam High School and had just delivered an MRE lesson. She said: "It was one of my deep – seated ambitions to have such important and lifesaving messages about mine risks in our curriculum I really didn't expect children would learn these lessons with so much enthusiasm, but you can see how interested they are in these lessons. I really appreciate this very important initiative by MACCA and MoE, they have done a really good job." said Suraya.

Naseer Ahmad MRE general manager in MoE said, "The aim behind this initiative is for children to get as much benefit as they can from MRE lessons, so that they can save their own lives and those of the people around them."

MAPA is supported by the following donors to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action:

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MINE ACTION SUPPORTS ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Clearance of landmine and other explosives has many transformative effects in communities. One of the facilities which has been brought a light to the lives of Afghans, specially children and youth is the educational facilities. One example of this is how it has enabled access to education in Afghanistan.

Where there were once minefields, now stand modern buildings for basic, secondary and higher education.

The village of Gul Ghundi-Parwan was contaminated with landmines and explosives. Because of the minefields, all girls and boys used to go to a school which was very far from them.

"My brothers and me had to walk long distances to school: "I was in 2nd grade at the time, I remember that once my father said 'don't go to school anymore, because you are a child and I don't want you to walk this long distance and go to school'"said Masood 12 year old Masood.

In 1387, MAPA implementing partner HALO TRUST cleared the area from mines and other explosive remnants of war.

As soon as the clearance was finished, the Estiqlal High School was built there and now for almost 3 years the children of Gul Ghundi-Parwan don't need to walk the long distances to school: a relief to them and their families.

Anisa Ahadi, Principle of Esteqlal High School in Parch e Shash area of Parwan province said: "This area was a huge desert full of mines. No one could use this area and families were worried about their children and men who would sometimes walk cross this area."

"Due to the hard work of deminers, the area was cleared of mines and other explosives and the government was able to build this school three years ago." Anisa added.

1,014 male and female students attend this school and parents are not worried about their children being injured or killed by landmines or other explosives.

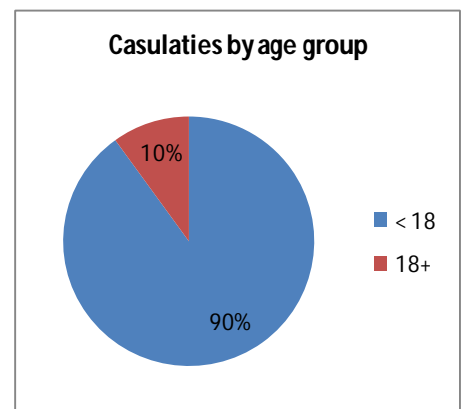
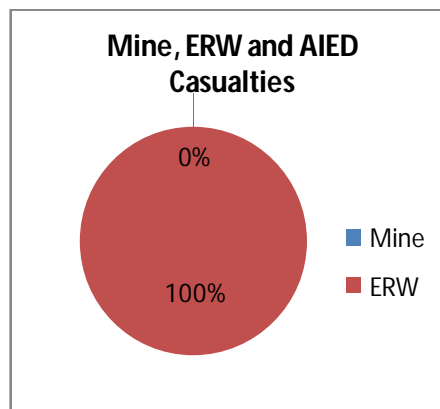
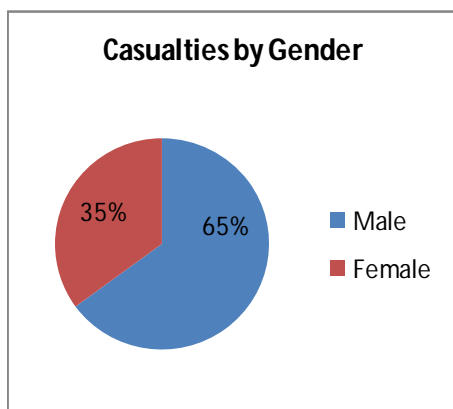
Qari Abdul Samad, head of Maidan Wardak Teacher Training Faculty said: "When we were trying to start the building here, we noticed there were some mines and explosives in the area. We were sure that would create a big problem for us, therefore contacted mine action to clear the area."

The area was cleared by Mine Action within one and a half months and was handed over to the government for their use.

Now a building for Teacher Training Faculty which will have the capacity of 600 students in one time along with the hostel for both male and female students of Wardak province is being built. The plan is for the faculty to open in 1392.

CASUALTIES IN AUGUST 2011

As of September 9, 2011 there were 20 casualties recorded in July due to landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW). Please be aware that casualty reports take time to come in from the field and so the monthly total may increase for some weeks after this newsletter is published. The below charts show a breakdown of these casualties:



MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS IN AFGHANISTAN

Ottawa Treaty:

Clear all emplaced anti-personnel mines by 2013; destroy all known anti-personnel mine stockpiles by 2007; and Provide mine risk education to Afghans and assist mine survivors.

Between 2006 and March 2011 the MACCA was reporting progress towards the Afghan Compact target of a 70% reduction in all mine hazard. Post the Compact that was not met (albeit 69% of the 70 target was) the MACCA has adjusted the table to reflect the achievement towards Ottawa whilst also recording progress of removal of AT + ERW Hazards.

It is important to note that the Ottawa treaty is about the removal of AP mines not of AT or ERW. However it is equally important to ensure that the other hazards are not forgotten whilst a focus is on meeting the Ottawa treaty obligations

2013 is the year that the Afghan State may seek an extension of their time to complete the clearance of all known AP sites.

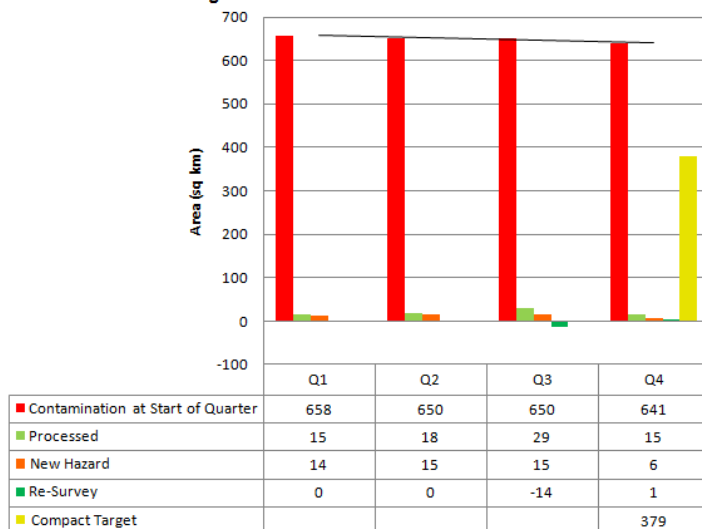
AFGHANISTAN'S PROGRESS TOWARD MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS (APRIL 2011)

70% reduction of mine/ERW contaminated areas by 2011 and clearance of all known anti-personnel landmines by 2013:

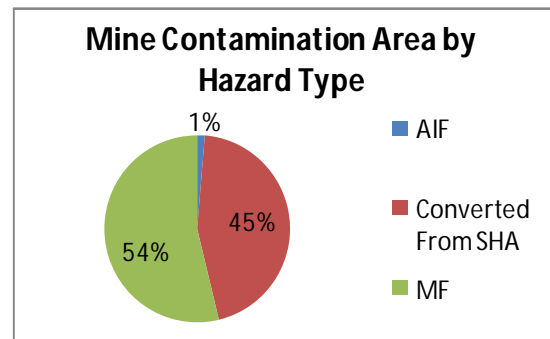
	Baseline		New Hazard		Hazard Processed		Progress		Remaining Hazard	
	Hazards	Area	Hazards	Area	Hazards	Area	% of Hazards	% of Area	Hazards	Area
AP (+ AP,AT,ERW mixed)	8,303	693.1	40	3.1	3,477	346.0	42%	50%	4,786	344.0
AT + ERW	4,703	593.1	28	2.1	3,130	326.3	67%	55%	1,545	264.7
Overall Contamination	13,006	1,286.2	68	5.2	6,607	672.3	51%	52%	6,331	608.7

The graph and pie chart below show progress against all hazards.

Changes in the Mine Contamination Area



Mine Contamination Area by Hazard Type



AIF: Abandoned IED Fields
 MF: Mine Field
 SHA: Suspected Hazardous Area

MINE ACTION ACHIEVEMENTS SUMMARY IN 1390 SO FAR (August 2011)

- * 12,363 Anti-Personnel mines, 459 Anti-Tank mines, and 364,556 Explosive Remnants of War destroyed.
- * 88 communities cleared of mines and other explosive remnants of war.
- * 183,451 women and girls and 243,994 men and boys received Mine Risk Education throughout the country.

