

MINE ACTION PROGRAMME OF AFGHANISTAN

MAY 2012 NEWSLETTER



INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PAVES THE WAY FOR EQUALITY

Inclusive Education one of the most important initiatives of the Ministry of Education, aiming at enrolment of all children into public schools. A key activity of this initiative is providing awareness training on IE for school teachers, head masters, children with disabilities and their parents.

During the last four years, the IE programme, run by the Ministry of Education with financial and technical support from MACCA, has trained more than 1,400 teachers and headmasters; and more than 1,150 children with disabilities and their parents in Kabul city and four surrounding districts (Charasayab, Bagrami, Deh Sabz and Khak e Jabar), on a result more than 400 disabled children were admitted to public schools. The children and their parents were told how to enroll in schools, and how to ensure an environment conducive to their learning.

Before the training, many parents had few hopes for their children with disabilities, fearing they would not be able to complete their studies or meaningfully contribute to society.

Karima, a teacher in Abdul Ghafor Nadim High School in Kabul city, said: "five years ago, I received Inclusive Education training by Ministry of Education with support from UNESCO and MACCA. Before that, I didn't believe that inclusive education was important – I even thought that children with disabilities didn't have the right to go to school; but after the trainings, I understood that everyone should have access to education. That is why I am now a volunteer trainer myself on Inclusive Education for children with disabilities and their parents."



On the picture Tofan a student of IE Programme in Kabul

One of the challenges for people with disabilities is the pervasive lack of understanding about their abilities in the community, especially within families, who may not expect much from the child.

"At the beginning, it was very difficult for us to gather children with disabilities and their parents for weekly or monthly meetings and trainings, because they didn't believe in inclusive education," said Karima. "But now the parents arrange the meetings and don't let us miss a single meeting. This shows us that this work is having an impact and people are interested to know and apply inclusive education in their lives. Let me thank MACCA for supporting this programme and encouraging an inclusive society."

Tofan is a student at Abdul Ahad Rafeem High School in Mazar e Sharif and has a hearing impairment. In a class of 40, he is ranked second academically. There are three other children with disabilities in this class, and all are in the top ten, clearly showing that, in the right environment, children with disabilities can participate effectively and thrive.

"I am very happy that I am able to study with other children in a general school. I have made a lot of friends here. My teachers and classmates are very kind and I don't have any problems with them," Tofan said.

Two of his friends have learned sign language and help him with his lessons. His classmates have been very friendly and supportive, Tofan says,

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

Canada, European Commission, Australia, Japan, Netherlands, Finland, Spain, Denmark, Austria, Luxembourg, Oman and Lithuania.

MAPA is also supported by the following bilateral donors:

UAE, USA, Germany, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Japan, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Government of Afghanistan, Ireland, Finland, Belgium, Czech Republic

Alan Macdonald, Former Head of MACCA, leaves Afghanistan

After five successful years with the MACCA, Alan Macdonald has left Afghanistan to head the mine action programme in Jerusalem.

Mr. Macdonald began working in mine clearance in Afghanistan in 1995 and subsequently worked in Angola, Somalia, Mozambique, and Eritrea before returning to Kabul in 2007 to take up the post of Chief of Staff of the MACCA, which coordinates the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA). In 2011, he became the organization's Director.

During his tenure with the MACCA, Mr. Macdonald witnessed several important milestones within the MAPA, such as the overhaul of data management, planning and monitoring.

"The most important asset that the MACCA has is the [mine action] data base. Without an accurate database, donors, government, implementing partners, or the communities in Afghanistan don't know what is going on. We have also built, in last five years, a very competent planning process and a monitoring and evaluation process, so we can plan, monitor, evaluate and properly on behalf of the MAPA," he added.



On the Picture Alan Macdonald, Former Director of MACCA

In cooperation with MACCA and Afghan Government colleagues, Mr. Macdonald spearheaded the nationalization of the MACCA that saw the removal of all internationals from the coordination body in April 2012 and the formation of a new UNMAS project office, of which he became the head in April 2012. The UNMAS office is staffed by just six international technical experts, which will decrease to four by the end of 2012.

"All parts of the MACCA are functioning extremely well with really competent Afghan staff, and removing the international staff from the micro management coordination processes was a big achievement for the programme," said Mr. Macdonald.

He added, "The Afghan programme is a big mine action programme. This country is enormously fortunate in the last decade to have received the majority of international aid, both bilaterally and through the Voluntary Trust Fund."

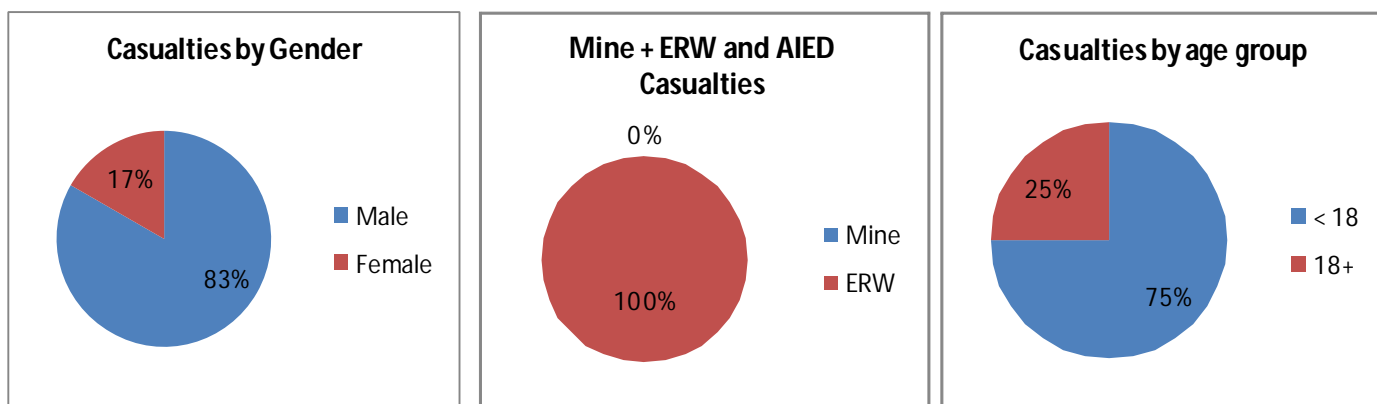
Through the grueling work of over 14,000 deminers, the MAPA has managed to clear vast swaths of land around Afghanistan. During Mr. Macdonald's tenure, MAPA's implementing partners cleared some 530 square kilometers of contaminated land, and released almost 200 square kilometers of land that were suspected to be contaminated. Over 1,500 Afghan communities were cleared.

Mr. Macdonald has been replaced by Abigail Hartley. Ms. Hartley has been with MACCA since 2008, when she started as a Senior Programme Officer, and was promoted to Chief of Staff in 2011. Prior to coming to Afghanistan, Ms. Hartley worked in mine action for almost a decade, including in such field postings as Sudan and Sri Lanka.

CASUALTIES IN MAY 2012

In **May 2012**, there were 12 casualties due to mines and ERW recorded in Afghanistan.

NB: Casualty reports take time to come in from the field and so the monthly total may increase some weeks after this newsletter is published.



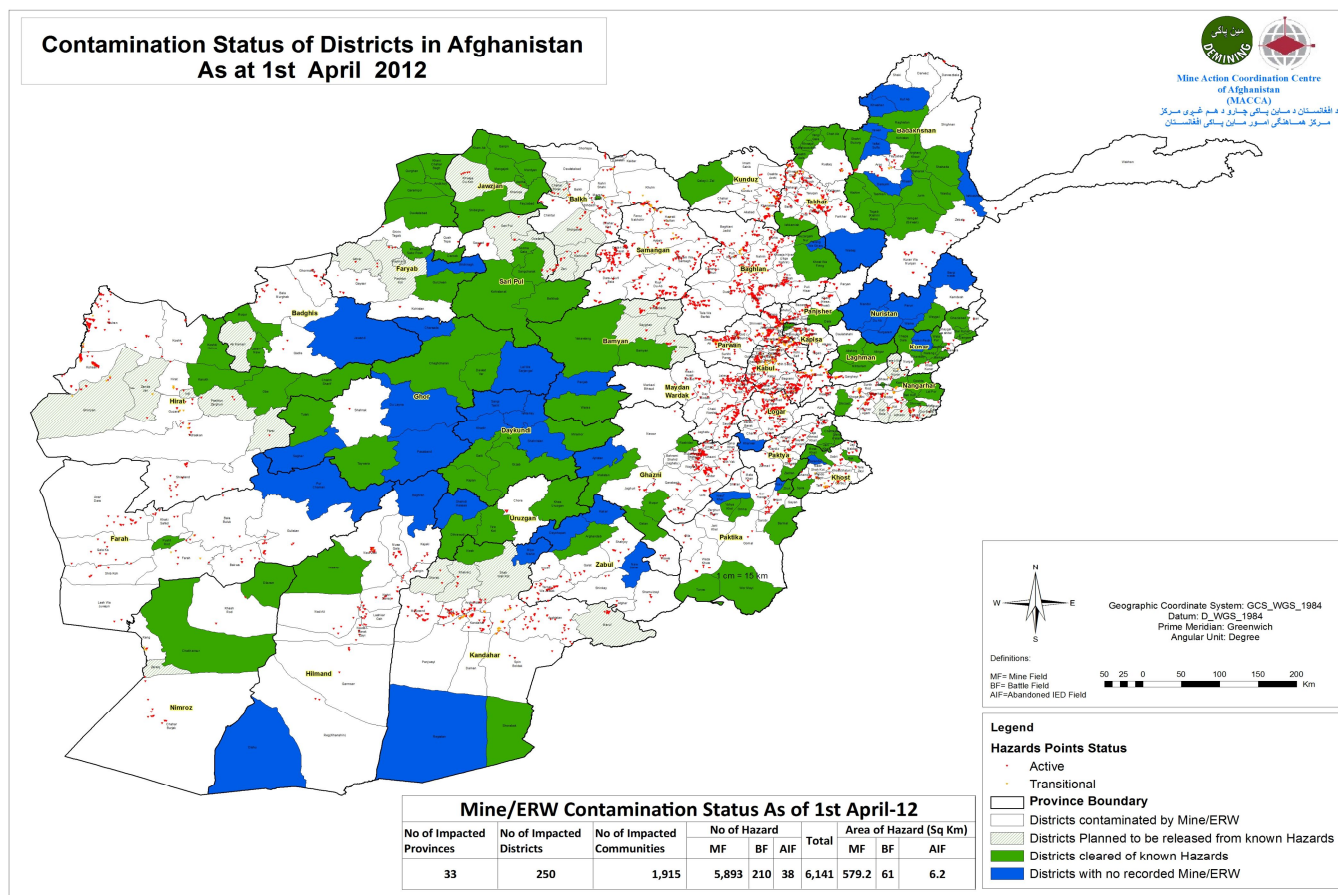
MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS IN AFGHANISTAN

Ottawa Convention:

As part of its obligations under the Ottawa Convention, Afghanistan aimed to clear all emplaced anti-personnel (AP) mines by 2013; destroy all known AP mine stockpiles by 2007; provide mine risk education and assist mine survivors. To note, the Ottawa Convention is about the removal of AP mines, and not of anti-tank (AT) mines or ERW. However it is equally important to ensure that the other hazards are not forgotten whilst the focus is on meeting the Ottawa Convention obligations. In March 2012, the Government of Afghanistan applied for 10-year extension of its deadline to clear all AP mines. All AP mine stockpiles have already been destroyed.

BENCHMARK TABLE- May 2012

	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)	8,925	713,999,948	11	2,124,160	4,752	409,810,210	53.24	57.40	4,173	304,189,739
AT + ERW	4,886	615,413,397	7	224,281	3,509	354,841,042	71.82	57.66	1,377	260,572,355
Total	13,811	1,329,413,345	18	2,348,441	8,261	764,651,252	59.81	57.52	5,550	564,762,094



MINE ACTION ACHIEVEMENTS IN YEAR 1391 SO FAR (May 2012)

- * 5,024 AP mines, 273 AT mines, and 83,911 ERW destroyed.
- * 62 communities cleared of mines and ERW.
- * 29,323 women and girls and 29,559 men and boys received MRE throughout the country.

