



GICHD



KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

INCLUSIVE DATA MANAGEMENT
IN THE MINE ACTION SECTOR

GLOSSARY

Data Collection: The process carried out by mine action operators, including the participation of beneficiaries in data collection processes, cooperation between organisations that provide data, and the identification and documentation of relevant data sources. It involves the development of data collection tools, the collection of disaggregated data by age, gender, and other appropriate diversity dimensions, and the establishment of defined standards for key terms and measurements¹.

Data Reporting: This term refers to the timely submission of reports to mine action authorities according to national standards and requirements. It includes the format and medium of reporting processes, performance metrics or Key Performance Indicators, ensuring the relevancy and accuracy of data, and regular data checks performed by information management and operational units. It also involves data quality control for the input and output of processes².

Data Storing: The process of determining what information is stored and how it shall be protected, which includes managing data to ensure its protection from unauthorised access and is shared only with authorised parties. It also includes implementing a system to manage data and ensure data security, adhering to security policies, and regularly checking the database for accuracy, completeness, and consistency³.

Data Sharing: This refers to disseminating information to stakeholders, both within and outside the mine action Programme. It includes managing personal information to maintain the privacy of beneficiaries and other stakeholders. This process also involves deciding on the format in which information can be shared, ensuring ethical rules and considerations for data sharing are followed, defining communication methods, identifying stakeholders for information distribution, and determining information content and frequency for each stakeholder⁴.

Diversity: Diversity encompasses the full range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and other ideologies. It also includes diverse ways of doing and being, thinking, working, and communicating⁵.

Feminist principles and approaches: These tenets challenge systemic gender inequalities and highlight diverse experiences and intersecting identities. They advocate for women's rights, gender equity, and social justice. Critiques of patriarchal structures and an emphasis on lived experiences form their core. These principles address broader issues of power, privilege, and oppression in societal contexts.

Gender: *"Gender refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women"*. It involves a range of identities, roles, expectations, and norms that society ascribes to individuals based on their perceived sex. It is a fluid and dynamic concept that can change over time and across cultures. Gender disparities in the humanitarian and international development sectors must be recognised and addressed to ensure equitable access to resources, opportunities, and outcomes for all individuals, regardless of gender identity⁶.

Intersectionality: For this research, intersectionality is defined as *"A metaphor for understanding the ways that multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage sometimes compound themselves and create obstacles that often are not understood among conventional ways of thinking"*.

Do no harm: For this research, do no harm references *"an approach which helps to identify unintended negative or positive impacts of humanitarian and development interventions in settings where there is a conflict or a risk of conflict"*⁸.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research was commissioned by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and aimed to critically evaluate and contribute to developing more equitable and effective data management practices in the mine action sector. The key focus was the inclusion of gender, diversity, and intersectionality while adhering to the do no harm principle.

The objectives ranged from mapping gender and diversity-sensitive data collection, storing, sharing, and reporting practices to assessing their feasibility and effectiveness in mine action. The aim was also to understand how the do no harm principle is currently applied and to suggest good practices for its integration. Additionally, the project sought to provide recommendations for including people of different genders and intersecting social identities in data processes to represent better and address the needs of mine-affected communities.

Key variables of data collection, data reporting, data storing, and data sharing were all explored through the lens of gender and diversity. The intersection of identities and feminist principles, specifically power dynamics and participation, were also central to the research, emphasising the need for equitable and inclusive approaches. The study underscored the significance of adopting a feminist lens to enhance transparency, accountability, and ethical considerations in information management.

The research involved case studies in Cambodia, Colombia, and Iraq, each presenting unique cultural, socioeconomic, and political dynamics that influence mine action data practices. In an effort to provide globally relevant recommendations, data collection tools and plans were customised to each country's specific context. This research contributes to developing more effective mine action data practices that better serve the diverse needs of affected communities.

In conducting this research, the GICHD embraced a feminist and rights-based approach. This involved acknowledging power dynamics and positionality, promoting active participation and utilisation-focused research, foregrounding social justice, and incorporating reflexive practices.

Research methods spanned an extensive desk review of relevant internal and external documentation, key informant interviews with internal and external stakeholders, and peer-learning sessions in each country. The desk review utilised computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software for comprehensive data analysis, while the semi-structured interviews allowed for in-depth investigation into specific areas of inquiry. Peer-learning sessions enabled mine action stakeholders to validate findings, exchange knowledge, and collaborate on recommendations for improving gender and diversity-sensitive data collection.

Thirty-five interviews were conducted across four stakeholder groups, including national authorities, national and international mine action organisations, and external subject matter experts on gender, diversity, and inclusion. The interviewees were selected based on their diverse experiences and expertise in information management, monitoring, evaluation, data collection, and gender, ensuring that the research incorporated a wide array of informed and relevant perspectives.

KEY FINDINGS

| Section | Findings |
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| Interpretations of gender, diversity and do no harm | Interpretation of 'gender' varies significantly across organisations within the same country and across different countries, often deviating from established guidelines by international bodies such as the United Nations Women and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. This is especially apparent where organisations reported sex and gender interchangeably. |
| | 'Gender' is often equated with 'women'. This oversimplified interpretation overlooks minority genders and misconstrues the comprehensive definition of gender beyond the binary of men and women. |
| | The understanding of 'diversity' often leans more towards ethnicity rather than encompassing a broader spectrum of identities, including gender, age, disability, race, religion, etc. |
| | The principle of 'intersectionality' to understand the interplay of multiple social identities needs to be more represented in the sector's discourse and practices. |
| | Interpretation and implementation of the do no harm principle vary across countries and organisations. While the principle is recognised, the application is inconsistent and sometimes narrowly focused. |
| Data collection | Data on beneficiary names, age, and gender is consistently collected across all three case study countries (Colombia, Cambodia, Iraq) and from land release, explosive ordnance risk education and victim assistance activities. |
| | Data is not often collected about religion and ethnicity, which could lead to a potential inadequacy in addressing the diverse requirements and preferences of various religious and ethnic groups. In certain scenarios, recording information about religion and ethnicity might pose more risks than benefits. The danger is whether cataloguing such personal details can inadvertently lead to misuse or discriminatory practices. It is worth noting that the need for recorded data on religion and ethnicity does not necessarily equate to ignorance on the subject. Decisions might still be made based on tacit knowledge of a person's religious or ethnic background, even if such information is not formally documented. |
| | Data collection roles vary across countries and are adapted to local contexts. Roles like Enumerators, Community Liaison Officers, and Non-Technical Survey Members are deployed based on the specific tasks and beneficiary groups. Furthermore, community norms and security risks influence which role is predominant. This versatility ensures that data collection is sensitive to regional distinctions and challenges. |
| | Different organisations show varied and sometimes unclear criteria for selecting community interviewees. This inconsistency potentially affects the breadth and inclusiveness of participation in data collection processes. |
| Data collection challenges | Security concerns, fear of stigmatisation and misuse of personal data significantly hamper data collection in Colombia and Iraq. |
| | In all three countries, cultural diversity and gender issues present challenges, often due to different social norms and rigid data collection formats. |
| | Constant reassessment due to fluctuating conflict situations and population displacement is a considerable challenge, mainly in Colombia and Iraq. |
| Data collection and standards | A mix of standards influences data collection in mine action across the studied countries: International Mine Action Standards set global good practice, while national standards detail specific local requirements. Moreover, organisational Standard Operating Procedures and donor requirements detail the criteria for individual stakeholder needs. These standards, though distinct, are intended to align, aiming for a comprehensive set of data collection requirements. |

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| Data collection and standards | Power dynamics appear to significantly impact the determination of standards, with international standards, national policies, and donor requirements set by those with financial and structural power dominating the process and no evidence of beneficiary or community involvement in standard data management setting. |
| | Do no harm is practiced through assessment of community needs and vulnerabilities, consultation and engagement with local communities, emphasis on consent and voluntariness, avoidance of sensitive topics, adequate training of data collectors, and only collecting necessary data. |
| | Mixed practices for gaining consent in data collection were evidenced. While some organisations prefer written consent, others rely on verbal consent; these are often contextually appropriate. |
| | Intersectionality and power analysis are not comprehensively addressed within mine action data collection practices. This can lead to an oversimplified understanding of affected communities and hinder the sector’s ability to cater to diverse needs and vulnerabilities, potentially exacerbating inequalities and hampering effectiveness. |
| Data storage | Different practices for data storage exist, such as digital tools and secure databases, with a few organisations still relying on paper forms due to technical constraints. |
| | Organisations exhibit a shared commitment to protecting personally identifiable information, implementing specific measures to prevent unauthorised access or data theft. |
| | Using tablets for data collection is common, allowing for instant, secure data saving on servers. |
| | In some cases, highly sensitive data is kept under a single individual’s custody, which could create a single point of failure risk. |
| | Data confidentiality is emphasised across organisations, albeit varying in practice due to local laws and cultural norms around privacy. |
| Data Sharing | Organisations typically share data selectively, prioritising the community’s benefit. They are mandated to share specific information with national authorities as defined by the national mine action standards or national reporting requirements. It is not at the organisation’s discretion to decide the data shared; compliance with national authorities is essential for continued accreditation and operation within the country. Additionally, data might be shared upon explicit requests from other organisations. |
| | Data-sharing practices involve multiple levels of approval to ensure that data reported fulfils quality requirements and only necessary information is shared, aligning with the International Mine Action Standards guidelines for data security and confidentiality. |
| | In some countries, like Colombia, organisations upload data directly to the national authority’s platform, creating a potential single point of failure risk if the national authority system encounters issues. |
| | In many cases, beneficiaries are not recognised as the primary rights-holders in the data-sharing decision-making process, indicating a potential gap in ethical practices. |
| Data reporting and use | Beneficiary data is primarily used in reporting, planning, designing interventions, evaluating activities, and coordinating new interventions. Still, data usage and beneficiary involvement vary significantly across organisations and countries. |
| | In Cambodia, data regarding gender and disability status is primarily used to tailor interventions, develop case studies, and inform target area selection. |
| | Some organisations do not seek new consent for reusing or resharing data, assuming the consent obtained during initial data collection covers it. This could lead to ethical concerns. |
| | In Iraq, data plays a critical role in strategic planning, service provision, and demonstrating project completion to stakeholders, serving as a tool for transparency and accountability. |
| | In Colombia, when needs or risks are identified within populations, the data collected can influence government awareness of specific population vulnerabilities, enhancing its potential for socio-political impact. |

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations detail a path towards more responsible and inclusive data practices in the sector:

Conscious and critical approach to data usage:

Adopt a more mindful and strategic approach to handling data across the sector. This would help in mitigating the extractive nature of data collection. Extractive data collection refers to the practice of gathering data from individuals or communities without offering them meaningful benefits or understanding, often done without informed consent or clear communication about its use. Proactive engagement with coordination mechanisms in other sectors could support in sharing data and lessons that reduce extractive data collection. Clear communication with beneficiaries about data collection purpose, process, and their rights is vital. Regularly updating and engaging beneficiaries about their data is recommended.

Recentring beneficiaries as key stakeholders:

Reframe the narrative around beneficiaries as 'Rights-Holders' and central stakeholders in decision-making processes. This requires re-evaluating terms like 'beneficiary' and considering more inclusive terms such as participant-affected persons or Rights-Holder. Regular feedback from beneficiaries and inclusion in data management processes are encouraged.

Expanding gender categories in data collection:

A more inclusive data collection approach should include non-binary and transgender individuals where contextually safe and appropriate. Updating data collection tools and providing sensitivity training to data collectors are suggested actions.

Diversity: Diversity must be equally prioritised in data collection practices, treating it as a dimension as significant as gender. Actions include adapting data collection tools to capture diversity where safe and appropriate.

Implementing a trauma-informed approach:

Data management processes should be adjusted to incorporate a trauma-informed approach. Training data collectors on principles of trauma-informed care, redesigning data collection tools, and regularly assessing the effectiveness of these approaches are recommended.

Sharing back with beneficiaries and increasing transparency:

Enhancing transparency through improved data-sharing practices is recommended. Beneficiaries should be notified about changes to how their data is shared and should have access to these changes in a comprehensible format.

Advancing the consent process: A clear and comprehensive consent process should be established, providing multiple options for consent and ensuring beneficiaries understand what they are consenting to.

Enhancing beneficiary engagement: Increased beneficiary engagement is suggested, especially during the data interpretation stage. This can be facilitated through inclusive and participatory methods, regular feedback sessions, and training staff on participatory engagement methods.

Improving data utilisation: Organisations should better understand and utilise beneficiary demographic data to enhance mine action activities planning and execution. Developing contextually specific guidelines promoting the usage of demographic data and encouraging cross-departmental collaborations are recommended.

Providing data analysis training: Further training and capacity-building in data analysis, particularly related to gender, disability, and other demographic factors, are necessary to make interventions more responsive to beneficiaries' needs.

Implementing a do no harm approach: A checklist is recommended for data management teams. The list should emphasise the potential impact of data collection, use, storage, analysis, and sharing on beneficiaries' safety, dignity, and well-being.

Conflict sensitivity: Prioritise a conflict-sensitive strategy in data management practices. This involves recognising the potential for data processes to unintentionally impact conflict dynamics in mine-affected areas and commitment to continuous adaptation in response to changing conflict scenarios. This should involve regular contextual analysis to guide data processes, ensuring they do not inadvertently exacerbate conflict or harm the community.

Incorporate intersectionality: The principle of intersectionality should be considered across all stages of project identification, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. This will help capture the complex interplay of multiple social identities and better serve diverse communities.

Flexibility in frameworks: Standardisation should include complex realities and allow participant agency. Frameworks should be designed to accommodate diverse lived experiences, promote participatory approaches, and be responsive to local contexts and knowledge systems. Adaptive data management and scenario-based contingency planning are recommended for flexible data management frameworks.



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ENDNOTES

1 International Mine Action Standard 5.10 – Information Management

International Mine Action Standard 7.40 – Monitoring of Mine Action organisations

International Mine Action Standard 12.10 – Explosive Ordnance Risk Education

International Mine Action Standard 14.10 – Guide for the evaluation of mine action interventions

2 International Mine Action Standard 5.10, – Information Management

International Mine Action Standard 7.40 – Monitoring of Mine Action organisations

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3 International Mine Action Standard 5.10 - Information Management

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5 Crenshaw, Kimberle (1989) “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8. Available at: <http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>

6 UN Women. (n.d.). Gender Equality Glossary. [Online] Available at: <https://wrd.unwomen.org/practice/resources/gender-equality-glossary>

7 Crenshaw, Kimberle (1989) “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8. Available at: <http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>

8 INEE. (n.d.). Do no harm. [Online] Available at: <https://inee.org/eie-glossary/do-no-harm>



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