



# Gender-Sensitive Recruitment and Training in Mine Action

Guidelines

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## BACKGROUND

### WHY GENDER MATTERS IN MINE ACTION

Mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) pose a significant threat to the lives, wellbeing and socio-economic development of women, girls, boys and men in many countries worldwide. However, this is a threat that affects different people in different ways. Within a community, women, girls, boys and men often have distinct gendered roles and responsibilities and consequently their exposure to and knowledge of any possible mine/ERW risks will diverge. Because women's and men's daily tasks are often done in different locations, for example, men working in industry and women working around the household or in the fields, men and women are threatened by ERW in different ways and at different times.

The inclusion of a gender<sup>1</sup> perspective in mine action reduces the risk of exacerbating gender based injustices and inequalities. Mainstreaming gender within mine action policies, programmes and operations guarantees that the contributions, concerns and needs of all components of society are acknowledged and addressed without bias<sup>2</sup>. Gender balanced mine action teams (demining, surveying, community liaison and risk reduction education) mean easier access to the different groups in affected communities. Interacting and consulting with all gender groups with gender balanced teams leads to more inclusive and effective mine action activities. It benefits the community as a whole by ensuring a more coherent, holistic, multi-dimensional response to the different needs of mine-affected women, girls, boys and men. Gender mainstreaming in mine action is not only about equality, but also about the quality of interventions.

One important aspect of gender mainstreaming is to consider gender equality in terms of recruitment and training of mine action personnel. Gender balance is not only important at the community/operations level, but also in managerial and senior level positions within demining organisations. Incorporating women at higher levels means women's voices are heard in decision-making and priority-setting at national and international levels. These decisions often trickle down to lower levels and if women's voices are heard at the top, they are often heard at the bottom as well. Without a gender-balanced staff in top positions, the unique perspectives of an entire gender might be unaccounted for and gender discrimination could be perpetuated.

### PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THESE GUIDELINES

These guidelines have been developed to help National Mine Action Authorities (NMAAs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), UN agencies, national organisations, commercial companies and any other mine action organisation hiring people to conduct land release activities, including non-technical and technical survey, mapping, clearance, marking, community liaison and the handover of cleared land.<sup>3</sup> The scope of the guidelines is to provide a better understanding of the gender issues in the recruitment and training of staff at all levels and in all areas of demining organisations, as well as to present good practices and lessons learnt from the different countries studied. They aim to provide practical recommendations and examples on the incorporation of a gender dimension in recruitment and training practices.

### METHODOLOGY

These guidelines are the result of the compilation and analysis of information/testimonies provided by mine action organisations, as well as the Gender and Mine Action Programme<sup>4</sup> (GMAP)'s direct observations in the field<sup>5</sup>. They seek to address questions and issues relating to gender sensitive recruitment and training that were raised during GMAP trainings and other outreach work. GMAP reached an agreement with Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)<sup>6</sup> to acquire first hand data from the field through a survey of demining staff between December 2011 and April 2012. A total of 46 women and 102 men employed as deminers by NPA completed the GMAP recruitment and training survey in Jordan, Lebanon, Angola, Guinea Bissau, Thailand, Serbia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (see Annex 2).

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1. For terminology on gender see Annex 1
  2. The United Nations Inter-Agency Mine Action Strategy: 2006-2010 states explicitly that 'United Nations mine action work plans will address the impact of mine action on women, girls, boys and men and seek to involve them to the extent possible in the planning and implementation of mine action initiatives'
  3. IMAS 04.10
  4. The Gender and Mine Action Programme (GMAP) provides advocacy, awareness raising, research and technical assistance including training and capacity building to assist Mine Action practitioners and policy makers ensure that women, girls, boys and men affected by landmines/ERW benefit from and contribute to mine action activities on an equal basis. For more information [www.gmap.ch](http://www.gmap.ch)
  5. The following persons have contributed to this paper: Sonia Pezier, Gillian White, Arianna Calza Bini and Abigail Jones.
  6. GMAP thanks NPA for their collaboration with the surveys.

## INTRODUCTION

An increased number of mine action actors have clearly indicated that a more gender balanced staff composition is something they strive for, but they also expressed their need for advice, good practices and lessons learnt to achieve it. Even though publications such as the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) Guide to Contracting in Mine Action<sup>7</sup>, the UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes<sup>8</sup> and the Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines (SCBL) report “Gender and Landmines from Concept to Practice”<sup>9</sup> touch upon the topic of gender sensitive recruitment and training procedures, there is a need for more concrete recommendations and clear guidance.

Gender sensitive recruitment, training and codes of conduct are key to achieving and maintaining gender balance in all areas of demining, from survey and clearance teams to trainers and managers in top level positions. The benefits of having a gender balanced staff, apart from legal obligations embodied in several international agreements, involve the ability to access men, women, boys and girls in order to collect more accurate information for clearance, to include different perspectives in land release activities, as well as to meet donor requirements. Women’s employment brings income and status and the provision of role models for other women and girls. Gender sensitive employment and gender balanced organisations help to achieve longer-term goals of gender equality and female empowerment. Obtaining gender balance does come with obstacles, yet with good practices, these may be overcome.

## WHY STAFF SHOULD BE GENDER BALANCED

### “Business case” for gender balanced staff for more inclusive, accurate and effective mine action



### Legal and normative frameworks

In order to be compliant with UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000), the mine action sector must mainstream gender. The Nairobi and the Cartagena Action Plans of the APMB, as well as the CCM and the Vientiane Action Plan, have included several points to make sure that it is an obligation for all mine action actors to integrate a gender dimension in their activities. The employment of more gender balanced staff in the field of mine action, which in many areas means employing more women, can be directly linked to those requirements. It can also contribute to Millennium Development Goal 3 (MDG3), Promote gender equality and empower women, by offering employment in post-conflict situations, especially to women who need an income to support themselves and their families. Most landmine/ERW affected countries also have national legislation that prohibits discrimination in employment and in some cases promotes equal opportunities. Some donors have included gender mainstreaming and/or compliance with UNSCR 1325 as requirements for projects to be funded (for example, Norway, Switzerland, Australia, Netherlands, Canada, Denmark, UK, the UN).

7. GICHD, A Guide to Contracting in Mine Action, Fourth Edition, June 2010  
8. United Nations, Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programme, March 2010  
9. SCBL, Gender and Landmines from Concept to Practice, “ 2008

## The operational argument

While the mine risk education (MRE) and the victim assistance (VA) pillars generally have a more gender-balanced workforce, demining has typically been a male-dominated sector since its beginning, when militaries cleared mined areas for strategic and security purposes. As national and international humanitarian organisations took over demining activities, male domination has remained. Many arguments have been put forth as to why women should not participate in demining, from their physical or psychological weakness, to lack of interest in demining jobs, to not being as productive as men. These arguments, however, are often refuted by the increasing amounts of data-backed evidence available today. Various mine action actors that have hired both all-female and mixed teams expressed positive arguments in favour of employing women.

According to the evidence:

### WOMEN ARE PHYSICALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY FIT FOR THE JOB

In an article published by the Mine Action Information Center, Paul Collinson, NPA Programme Manager in Croatia, argued that “a female deminer is as physically capable as a male deminer due to the fact that all deminers must be physically fit and undergo annual health checks.” He states that, “If an applicant fails the health check, then he/she does not get the job, regardless of gender.” According to the GMAP-NPA survey, 8.8 per cent of the women encountered physical difficulties performing demining, compared to 9.9 per cent of the men. 9.9 per cent of the male deminers also stated that they faced psychological difficulties while only 2.9 per cent of the women faced this problem (See Annex 3).

### WOMEN ARE AS PRODUCTIVE AS MEN

Evidence on productivity is still anecdotal and even contradictory in some cases. According to Iris-Marie Norvor from the Mine Action Information Center in the U.S., experts recommend hiring women in mine clearance not only because of gender equality, “but also because female deminers excel at their jobs.”<sup>10</sup>

While the majority of mine action operators found that there is no difference in productivity between male and female deminers, according to a study conducted in Cambodia by the International Women’s Development Agency (IWDA) for Mines Advisory Group (MAG), all-female teams collect more items than male or mixed-teams, but all-male teams cleared more land per week than all-female teams.<sup>11</sup>

The Journal of Mine Action found that some studies have suggested that all-female teams were able to clear 10 per cent more land per working day.<sup>12</sup> Halo Trust also showed that female deminers in Somaliland appear to be more productive than men: “while the male deminers cleared 4.1 square meters (44.1 square feet) per day, the female deminers cleared 4.5 square meters (48.4 square feet) per day.”<sup>13</sup>

These examples, however, do not reflect the diversity of factors that affect each situation, such as weather conditions, location of the task, vegetation, type of terrain, metal contamination, etc. Each team, mixed or not, is different and works in different conditions, and productivity has little to do with gender.

*Note: It must be acknowledged that anecdotal observations on women’s and men’s behaviours at work are reflecting gender-based attributions and risk reinforcing stereotypes. Productivity should not be used as a discriminatory factor because “performance varies from individual to individual and not according to gender”, as stated Jennette Townsend in an article on women deminers in Croatia published in August 2003 through the Mine Action Information Center.<sup>14</sup>*

### BRINGING WOMEN INTO A MALE-DOMINATED SECTOR IMPROVES THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Many organisations are now recruiting women because they find that having women on their teams improves the working environment. Having women on the teams can change the balance of relationships and encourage behaviours conducive to a better working environment for both men and women. Moreover, employing women brings a female perspective and allows for a better understanding of women’s needs and capacities. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate that women are as capable as men.

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10. NORVOR Iris-Marie, Female and Integrated Demining Teams: Past, Present and Future, The Journal of Mine Action, Mine Action Information Center <http://maic.jmu.edu/journal/12.2/profiles/norvor/norvor.htm>

11. REEVES Jenny, Feasibility assessment for the greater inclusion of women in operations, MAG Lebanon, August 2011

12. NORVOR Iris-Marie, Female and Integrated Demining Teams: Past, Present and Future, The Journal of Mine Action, Mine Action Information Center <http://maic.jmu.edu/journal/12.2/profiles/norvor/norvor.htm>

13. Ibid.

14. TOWNSEND Jennette, Women Deminers in Croatia, Mine Action Information Center, August 2003 <http://maic.jmu.edu/journal/7.2/focus/townsend/townsend.htm>

## **WOMEN ARE JUST AS CAPABLE AS MEN IN HIGH LEVEL POSITIONS**

In many cases women remain disadvantaged when it comes to promotions and access to senior positions. Cultural perceptions of gender roles can be a serious challenge in trying to ensure gender equality. Again, this question has to be evaluated contextually. In some contexts, it is culturally acceptable that women hold higher positions than some men and in others, it is not. The most challenging issue is for men to accept that they can be subordinate to a woman. NPA's female managerial experience showed that in some cases, it can be hard for a woman to be respected when she has such a position. But it can also be a good way for a woman to demonstrate to both men and women her capacity to complete technical tasks and to handle as many responsibilities as men.

Mine action organisations have to do their best to give the same promotion opportunities to everyone, regardless of gender, race, origin, religion, etc. Even in a resistant context, there are still ways to give opportunities to women. For example, women can become managers or trainers for all-female or mixed teams.

## **WOMEN EMPLOYED IN DEMINING ARE EMPOWERED AS ROLE MODELS**

NPA's experience in South Sudan shows that having female demining teams brings different perspectives into a previously male-dominated world.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, it brings an opportunity to learn more about women's roles, capacities, knowledge, issues they are facing, etc.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, Lou McGrath from MAG notes, "employing more women as part of the [unexploded ordnance] UXO clearance process would benefit communities."<sup>17</sup> First, it increases the gender sensitivity of mine action programmes because it permits, for example, women and girls to share their views of the landmine problem more easily by talking to other women.



A mixed team of dog handlers, Cambodia © E. Tollefsen, GICHD

15. YOUNG Leah, NPA's all-female demining teams in Sudan, Mine Action Information Center, 2008  
<http://maic.jmu.edu/journal/12.2/focus/young/young.htm>
16. Ibid
17. MAG International, News, Ladies first, says chief executive,  
<http://www.maginternational.org/news/ladies-first-says-chief-executive-/?keywords=ladies+first>.

Taking gender into account in land release can entirely change the priorities of demining. In Laos for example, a United Nations Technical Adviser stated that, “whereas men may focus on fields, women might choose paths of water wells.”<sup>18</sup> Thus, hiring women empowers all women at the community level, by establishing community preferences for priority-setting that take into account women’s specific perspectives. According to NPA, this is also an opportunity to create female role models for other women in communities.<sup>19</sup> This point has been shared by female deminers in many countries working for NPA. Of the 46 women questioned in the survey, 90 per cent of them said that many women see them as role models. The results are a bit less positive for male deminers: of the 102 men interrogated, 64 per cent said they are seen as role models by community members. Because of their work, 92.9 per cent of the women have seen their status raised within their family and community, compared to 75 per cent of the men.

### **WOMEN WANT TO BE DEMINERS**

The data collected by NPA shows that most of the female deminers had a positive reaction when they first heard about their job. The words that came up were “happy”, “glad”, “good” and “curious”. Many saw the job announcement as a good opportunity. Furthermore, when asked why they decided to apply, 65.9 per cent of them declared that they wanted to help communities, 45.5 per cent said that needed income to support their family, 40.9 per cent wanted to learn new skills, 25 per cent found that the salary was good and 11.4 per cent because of the lack of other employment opportunities.

The difficulty in finding women to work as deminers can be explained by other factors, such as gender-blind recruitment procedures and social pressures - 76.4 per cent of NPA female staff that responded to the survey faced some kind of resistance from families (41 per cent), communities (18 per cent) and/or male colleagues (18 per cent) when they began to work as deminers.

## **GENDER BALANCE IN SURVEY AND CLEARANCE TEAMS**

Gender balance refers to the numbers of women and men in all positions throughout the organisation and the extent to which they have equal opportunities. More and more demining organisations are trying to hire women for survey and clearance activities. These initiatives are giving women and men equal rights in accessing jobs, economic outcomes, social retributions and voice.

### **HISTORY**

The first female deminers were recruited by the Mine Advisory Group (MAG) in Cambodia in 1995. In 2004, MAG deployed its first all-female demining team in Cambodia and then in Lao PDR in 2006. MAG further pushed for gender equality in demining by promoting women to team leaders. In 2008, two women successfully passed the training course in Lao PDR.

Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA) hired its first female deminers in Kosovo in 1999 and since then has hired female deminers in Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Jordan.

The HALO Trust and the Swedish Rescue Service Agency (SRSA) (currently MSB) started to employ women in 2007 when HALO hired its first female deminer in Somaliland and SRSA in Lebanon. In those two cases, the organisations started with all-female teams and then began to integrate them with men in mixed teams.

Presently, many organisations are employing or have employed women in land release activities, especially as deminers, in 20 countries and territories: Sri Lanka, Mozambique, Cambodia, Thailand, Jordan, Lebanon, Guinea Bissau, DRC, Serbia, Croatia, Kosovo, Sudan, South Sudan, Lao PDR, Somaliland, Senegal, Albania, Nepal, Western Sahara and Mauritania. Many countries have experimented with all female demining teams (i.e. in South Sudan, Jordan, Laos, Cambodia, Mozambique and Lebanon<sup>20</sup>), while others have used mixed and integrated teams successfully (Somaliland, Laos, Lebanon, Cambodia and Croatia).

The issue of gender-balanced teams is even more relevant for community liaison and survey activities, especially in countries where men cannot interview women and life-saving information could be missed if teams do not include women.

Women and men at all levels in demining organisations should have equal opportunities for employment, equal pay for equal work and equal chances for promotion and development. However, due to the fact that demining has been and still is a male dominated field, there are obstacles to overcome with regard to integrating a gender perspective in recruitment and employment policies.

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18. IRIN, Laos: Female deminers attract fans but little funding, 4 January 2011  
<http://www.irinnews.org/Report/91526/LAOS-Female-deminers-attract-fans-but-little-funding>

19. Ibid

20. MOORE Michael P., Landmines in Africa, 19 September 2011 <http://landminesinafrica.wordpress.com/tag/female-deminers/>



## **GENDER SENSITIVE RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES**

Gender sensitive recruitment means that demining organisations have to take measures to adapt their recruitment to targeted groups - in this case women and men - in order to give each equal access to employment. To do so, it is important to get an understanding of the roles, capacities and needs of each group, as well as the challenges they will have to face after obtaining the job. Recruitment procedures must be gender sensitive, as it is a major way to avoid gender-based discrimination which can happen at all stages of employment: recruitment, training, tasks, remunerations, promotions and lay offs.

### **VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Vacancy announcements are key in recruiting women into an organisation and must be gender sensitive to ensure that women feel as if the announcement is meant for them. In order to ensure this, announcements should state explicitly that both men and women are eligible to apply as well as specify provisions, such as separate facilities and parental leave, to further encourage women to apply.

In the surveys conducted by NPA, 61 per cent of the women heard about the announcement from friends, 19.5 per cent from family members, 12.2 per cent from local newspapers and 9.8 per cent from notice boards in public places. Male deminers accessed the vacancy announcement from friends (72.4 per cent), local newspapers (13.2 per cent), family members (10.5 per cent), notice boards in public places (9.2 per cent) and national newspapers (3.9 per cent). In order to ensure that both men and women are reached by vacancy announcements, organisations must consider different communication channels, locations and hours of transmission, choosing the ones which both men and women will have equal access to.

### **JOB DESCRIPTION AND CRITERIA**

When outlining job criteria, organisations must ensure that both women and men fit the criteria. Due to unequal access to education and employment opportunities, women and men may have different educational levels and experience. Thus, depending on context, job requirements must be accessible to women as well as men and should outline specific provisions such as parental leave and separate facilities to encourage women to apply.

### **INTERVIEWS**

When conducting interviews, both men and women must be included in interview panels to avoid gender bias in decision-making, but also to allow a more comfortable environment for the interviewee. Despite a gender balanced interview panel, selection criteria should be discussed or written out beforehand and used for every interviewee, regardless of gender.



Mixed team, Lebanon © J. Eklund

## CONTRACTS

Legally binding, written contracts are vital in ensuring that equal rights are respected and gender discrimination is prevented. These contracts must include the specific provisions necessary for women to work in mixed teams such as separate facilities, as well as provisions should a pregnancy occur. The use of he/she in contracts must be adapted to the sex of the employee. Though contracts should be adapted to include women's needs, contracts must stipulate that women and men are paid equally for equal work and have equal access to insurance. Contracts must also mention promotion and career evolution conditions and guidelines.

## CODES OF CONDUCT

The precondition for ensuring equal work to all is to provide a secure environment for both male and female workers. Women's entrance into a male dominated work environment may lead to inappropriate behaviour and harassment, especially during adjustment periods. Preventing, as well as responding to discrimination, gender-based violence (GBV), harassment and sexual abuse is essential for ensuring that women have access to work, as such behaviour usually targets women. Codes of Conduct are useful in laying out what is and what is not acceptable at work and must be disseminated to all members of staff.

Many demining organisations have already integrated such values in their codes of conduct, for example:

- NPA promotes behaviour based on mutual respect and condemns sexual exploitation.
- The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency details points on gender and on sexual exploitation and abuse.
- The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) promotes respect and dignity in professional and personal conduct. NRC also prohibits sexual exploitation and abuse.
- The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) enforces gender equality as a core value and guiding principle. DRC engages its staff to treat all persons of concern fairly and with respect and dignity. DRC lists some measures to prevent, oppose and combat all exploitation and abuse.
- MSB (Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency) code of conduct is an example of good practice in terms of gender mainstreaming, specific measures on harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse (see Annex 4).

## PREGNANCY, PARENTAL LEAVE AND CHILDCARE

One of the arguments put forward for not employing women is that they can become pregnant, which means additional costs for the employer. It has been argued that these costs can include paid or unpaid maternity leave, childcare, costs of training and hiring replacements, etc. Though pregnancies are not that frequent, (MAG programmes in Lebanon, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia had a few cases, DCA in Lebanon stated that they have about one per year, while in 2011, MAG in Sri Lanka and NPA in Lebanon had no pregnant deminers at the time of the study<sup>21</sup>, and NPA Lebanon has had two pregnant deminers since they started employing female deminers in 2008), this issue leads to much gender discrimination in demining. However GMAP has identified the following solutions to ensure that women and men have equal opportunities in demining activities.

## PREGNANCY

Pregnancy has been cited as an issue for mine action actors as pregnant women cannot handle the physically demanding tasks of demining work. MAG's demining programmes in Cambodia and Laos expressed their concern about this problem. However, the Cambodian programme said that "effective (Human Resources) policies were required, rather than seeing it as an actual disadvantage of employing women as deminers."<sup>22</sup> In Laos, MAG took the initiative to train guards as technicians in order to be replacements when they are on maternity leave. This programme also has medical staff "who spend their other time rotating through local hospitals to gain experience."<sup>23</sup>

In the NPA mine action programme in Lebanon, a decision is made on a case by case basis, after the woman decides to tell that she is pregnant, which usually is around the 4th month of pregnancy. Together with the deminer and the site supervisor, management then decide how to handle the pregnancy and when the woman should be removed from the field work. Then, usually NPA will assign her to lighter duties or office work according to her qualifications until she goes on maternity leave.

For the DCA team in Lebanon, the pregnant female deminer has to inform the organisation "as soon as she is aware of her pregnancy - usually within one month."<sup>24</sup> Then DCA also proceeds with a case by case approach after a meeting with the female medical coordinator<sup>25</sup> which determines when the pregnant deminer will have to be assigned to other tasks ("usually after two or three months"<sup>26</sup>).

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21. REEVES Jenny, Feasibility assessment for the greater inclusion of women in operations, MAG Lebanon, August 2011, p.25

22. Ibid

23. Ibid

24. Ibid

25. Ibid, p.27

26. Ibid

However, these procedures are possible only if the demining organisation has access to good medical facilities. Some organisations' policies admit that pregnant deminers can continue field work until a few months before childbirth, yet organisations need to have appropriate insurance coverage for such situations. Demining agencies often offer lighter duties towards the end of their pregnancy. For example, in the MAG's Vietnam programme, pregnant deminers can do two months of office work before taking maternity leave. And in Cambodia and Laos, women are moved to lighter duties after informing the organisation of their pregnancy. In the first month back after maternity leave, women perform lighter duties.<sup>27</sup> The Halo Trust assigns female deminers to lighter duties for the duration of their pregnancy.

Giving another assignment to a woman during the few months before and just after giving birth can also be an opportunity for her to be trained in new skills, such as computer, literacy or administrative skills, etc. NPA in South Sudan offers pregnant women a position in the operation centre or the radio room, as well as the possibility of receiving computer training.<sup>28</sup>

However, according to a feasibility study conducted by MAG, health standards in the UK would recommend the case by case approach for all clearance staff, "with individual risk assessments, as each individual is unique in how they will experience pregnancy."<sup>29</sup>

## **PARENTAL LEAVE AND CHILDCARE**

If women and men are entitled to equal rights, men should also benefit from parental leave. This means giving a man a certain amount of time off after his child is born. Giving parental leave to both women and men means that maternity leave is not a female only issue and thus cannot be used as an excuse to discriminate against women. Details of maternity and paternity leave should be clearly outlined in the staff handbook.

Some organisations have organised childcare in order to allow women to come back to work as soon as possible. NPA in South Sudan facilitates "in-camp sitters."<sup>30</sup> This solution, for example, allows women to continue breast-feeding or to stay close to their youngest children when they are far from home for long periods of time. But, bringing children to the field has several implications in terms of security for the baby and liability and insurance issues for the employer. That is why in South Sudan, NPA preferred, in some cases, to extend maternity leave.<sup>31</sup> In-camp childcare represents extra costs for the employing organisation, which has to hire baby-sitters and ensure transportation - which also means buying car seats, etc. Some organisations arrange childcare through women's associations and networks.

Paternity leave is not currently a prevalent practice in mine action and is often influenced by the employment laws in country specific contexts. MAG has stated that its most generous parental leave programme is in Laos, "with 15 days of leave, once the employee has worked for MAG for more than six months." In the Cambodian MAG demining teams, fathers can take five days of unpaid paternity leave a year.<sup>32</sup> Those practices are a step towards gender equality but they remain insufficient when compared to many programmes worldwide, where maternity leave is about three months.

## **SEPARATE FACILITIES**

A few demining organisations have raised the point that having female deminers implies additional costs in order to guarantee deminers comfort, safety and privacy in terms of logistics, equipment and facilities, etc. Yet many organisations have mentioned that the additional costs are negligible.

According to operators special equipment is not required for female deminers. However, when working in mixed teams, women need separate bathrooms, toilets, accommodations, cloakrooms and in some cases separate transport. Experiences from the field show that mixed teams can be more expensive to equip than all-female/all-male teams, which do not need separate facilities and separate accommodation. Additional costs may arise for all-female groups for paid maternity leave, the recruitment of additional employees for pregnancy replacement and, if the organisation provides it, childcare. There may also be extra costs for separate facilities on deployment and additional expenditures linked to a situation where male family members have to accompany women (chaperone system).

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27. Ibid

28. UNMAS, Gender Guidelines in Mine Action, DPKO, 2010, p.17

29. REEVES Jenny, Feasibility assessment for the greater inclusion of women in operations, MAG Lebanon, August 2011, p.8

30. WHEELER Skye, *Women Join Demining Charge in South Sudan*, Reuters, 23 March 2008.  
<http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSL274004320080323>.

31. Ibid

32. REEVES Jenny, Feasibility assessment for the greater inclusion of women in operations, MAG Lebanon, August 2011, p.27

It is preferable for mine action organisations to mainstream gender from the beginning and all along the project cycle process in order to budget for possible extra costs generated by having a more gender balanced staff. Since donors are more and more convinced that a gender approach improves humanitarian and development projects, they often give priority to organisations that have a clear and strong gender approach. According to NPA's experience, donors "have responded very well"<sup>33</sup> when asked for more funds to cover these expenditures.

### TEAM AND TRAINING COMPOSITION

Relations between women and men have to be considered when demining organisations determine team composition for clearance or for trainings. There is no universal answer to which composition is best, yet demining organisations should consider all options when compiling teams.

#### MIXED TEAMS AND ALL FEMALE/ALL MALE TEAMS

All female/male teams have the advantage of being less costly as the demining organisation does not have to provide separate facilities and accommodations for each sex. From a management point of view, same sex teams avoid issues of relationships between women and men in a small working environment. They are also more culturally acceptable and make it easier for families to allow women to work if they know they will work in a female only team. Yet as mentioned above, evidence from several organisations indicates that mixed teams improve the morale and the working atmosphere.

Research in the field of mine clearance has revealed that the differences between all-female, all-male and mixed teams can be significant.<sup>34</sup> While all-female teams seem to be more effective than all-male teams, mixed teams tend "to produce high success and fewer injuries."<sup>35</sup> Therefore, each situation must be evaluated on a case by case basis and evaluations must take into account cost effectiveness, local cultural and religious norms and safety of staff members, both male and female.



Non-technical Survey Training, The HALO Trust, Colombia © G. Salisbury

33. YOUNG Leah, NPA's all-female demining team in Sudan, *The Journal of Mine Action*  
<http://maic.jmu.edu/journal/12.2/focus/young/young.htm>
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## THE TRAINING DILEMMA

Separate training sessions should always be considered. All-female/all male training groups could be more appropriate when, for example, there are gaps in the two sexes' educational levels. Time, location and accessibility also need to be considered. If women must be at home during a specific time when men are available or vice versa, the training must either choose a time when both men and women are available or hold separate trainings. Having all female/all male training groups may create conditions where both men and women are more confident in participating and expressing their misunderstandings. From the GMAP-NPA survey results however, the sex of the trainer does not seem to matter much for either the men (60 per cent) or the women (75 per cent), with only a slight preference for same-sex classes (see Annex 5). As with team composition, training class composition is contextual and must be considered on a case by case basis.

Adapting the trainings, in terms of contents, methods and materials, to the level of education and previous experience of potentially interested men and women, might be an effective way to attract more female candidates and give them equal employment opportunities to men. Training materials should also include gender sensitive language (for ex. using both "he" and "she") and present examples and images that show both women and men participating in mine action activities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Vacancy Announcement Recommendations

- Announcements should mention explicitly that women can apply by stating for example, "Qualified women and men are encouraged to apply"<sup>36</sup>
- Specific provisions such as transport, paternity/maternity leave, childcare, separate facilities, separate female/male training/ teams, travel requirements, etc., should be mentioned in the vacancy announcement to encourage women to apply
- Announcements should be made available to women and men by choosing appropriate relay (local/ national newspapers, notice board in public places, radio and peers), location and hours of transmission

### Job Description and Criteria Recommendations

- Job requirements should take into account men's and women's access to education in the country by making sure that the requirements are accessible to women as well
- Ensure that women and men are selected according to the same criteria

### Interview Recommendations

- Include both women and men in interview panels<sup>37</sup>
- Ensure that the participants are evaluated according to the same criteria<sup>38</sup>
- Do not assume that some jobs are too difficult or dangerous for women<sup>39</sup> and women will not want to do them

### Contract Recommendations

- Specific provisions such as maternity/paternity leave allowance, childcare (if any), separate facilities (toilet, transport, camp, etc), travel requirements, if the person is going to be working in a mixed team or not, etc., must be clearly mentioned and detailed in the contract
- The vocabulary is adapted to the contractors (he/she) in order to prove that the organisation respects the gender singularities of the employee
- Ensure that women and men are equally paid for equal work
- Ensure appropriate insurance coverage
- Provide clear and equal conditions regarding promotion and career evolution within the organisation (trainer, team leader, etc.)

### Code of Conduct Recommendations

- Adopt an internal code of conduct, which specifies measures on sexual abuse and exploitation, GBV, harassment and discrimination. Ensure that all staff members are aware of these rules and of the consequences of their violation
- Set up clear and efficient policies and procedures for reporting on breaches of the code of conduct by personnel
- Ensure that local populations are also aware of and have access to these procedures

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36. IASC Gender handbook in humanitarian action, p.5

37. Ibid

38. Ibid

39. Ibid

- Prevent harassment and GBV by responding to gender specific needs (separate facilities, door locks, lights in the camps, etc.)
- Take measures to respond to harassment, GBV and discrimination
- Enhance understanding of diversity, gender, GBV and discrimination at work by providing training
- Motivate men to treat their female colleagues with respect and take steps to prevent GBV

#### **Pregnancy, Parental Leave, Childcare Recommendations**

- Offer pregnant women the possibility to continue paid work as long as possible, with specific adjustments based on a case by case approach according to their medical situation, for example by putting them on lighter duties for the final phase of their pregnancy
- If possible, offer equal maternity/paternity leave for staff in order to avoid discrimination of women in recruitment on the basis of potential maternity leave
- Permit women to continue nursing for the first few months by organising childcare if needed or by giving her office-based tasks and a flexible schedule, etc
- Make sure that both women and men know their rights and obligations before and during their contract

#### **Separate Facilities Recommendations**

- Consider women's and men's needs and capacities in their daily work
- Consult all staff in order to have a better picture of their requirements and of their level of satisfaction with facilities
- Provide the facilities and services necessary to make both female and male staff comfortable in their job

#### **Team Composition Recommendations**

- Consider the pros and cons of all-female/all-male or mixed survey and clearance teams
- Budget for extra costs that may arise from having mixed staff and, if necessary, remind donors of the legal and practical implication of gender sensitive mine action operations

#### **Training Recommendations**

- Evaluate the need for separate trainings, taking location, time and accessibility into account for all trainees
- Use gender sensitive language, images and examples
- Adapt training contents, methods and materials to the level of education and previous experience of potentially interested men and women

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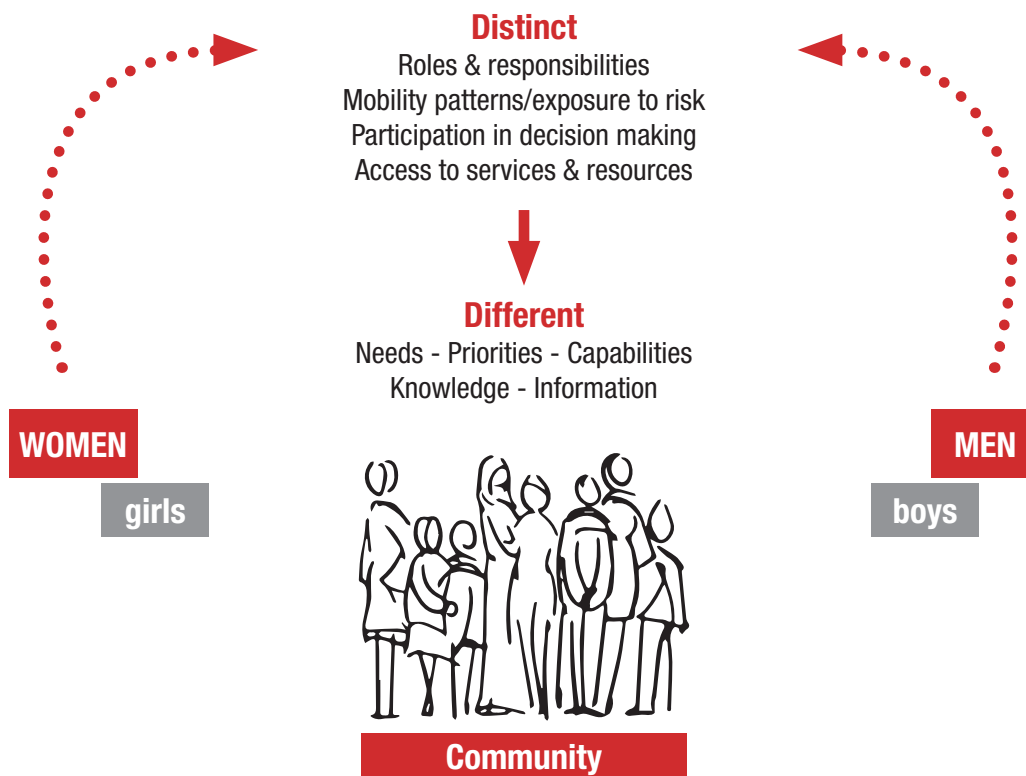
# ANNEXES

## ANNEX 1

“Gender” refers to the socially constructed roles and opportunities associated with women, men, girls and boys. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are learned through socialisation and the fixation of norms of what is expected, allowed and valued for and by women, girls, boys and men in a given situation. These multi-dimensional social constructs are context-/ time-specific and changeable<sup>40</sup>.

Gender mainstreaming is ‘the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action.’ It focuses attention on guaranteeing that the concerns and experiences of individuals of both sexes are taken into consideration in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes with the aim of achieving gender equality.<sup>41</sup>

According to UN Women, gender equality “refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.”<sup>42</sup>



40. United Nations Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes, New York, March 2010

41. ibid

42. UN Women. Concepts and Definitions.



## ANNEX 2

### GMAP-NPA SURVEY

Countries	Female Deminers	Male Deminers
Thailand	2	7
Guinea B	8	16
DRC	1	8
Angola	12	19
Lebanon	10	20
Jordan	12	12
Serbia	1	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>102</b>

## ANNEX 3

### GMAP-NPA SURVEY

About 56 per cent of the female deminers and 25 per cent of the male deminers interrogated stated that the job was hard at the beginning but that they got used to it. In addition, 37 per cent of the women and 52 per cent of the men think that they are well trained to do it. Most of the male deminers interrogated were former military, police officers, farmers or mechanics, while the majority of the women were studying, not working or doing domestic work before becoming deminers.

After beginning this work, 5 per cent of the women and 5 per cent of the men found the job less difficult than expected. Furthermore, 37 per cent of the women and 40 per cent of the men were not worried at all about the risks that the job entails. 51 per cent of the female deminers think that with proper trainings it is as safe as other jobs, compared to 30 per cent of the male deminers.

This survey reveals that the main challenge that female deminers had to face remains resistance from families, communities and male colleagues (76 per cent). But this is not only a female issue as it also affects 57 per cent of the men. Moreover, 12 per cent of the men are somewhat worried about the risk that this job entails, while only 10 per cent of the women shared this feeling.



## Code of conduct for International Humanitarian Operations

I am aware that I have a position of authority in relation to the target group for the MSB operation, and I do not take advantage of that position in an inappropriate manner. I do not use my position to benefit individuals that otherwise wouldn't have benefited; and I do not act in a way that could give the impression that I expect anything whatsoever in return. I understand that the target group for the MSB operation can be or feel that they are dependent upon me. I also understand that it is the people in question that have the right to that opinion and not me.

I do not use offensive language about anyone or any group of people I have come to the country in question to help or work with. I do not discriminate against anyone, regardless of gender, skin colour, ethnic origin, religion, age, political views, sexual preferences or disabilities.

I do not buy or mediate for any sexual services. I do not begin a relationship or have sexual relations with any member of the target group for the MSB operation or any other person dependent upon me. I understand that this could risk putting him/her in a situation that could have negative consequences during and after the relationship.

I am aware that organised crime can be present in many different types of activities. I avoid contact with it in all situations, for example, when exchanging currency, choosing a restaurant or place of accommodation. I understand that dealings with organised crime can lead to me indirectly supporting human trafficking.

I do not involve myself with the trade of goods or services for personal gain and I do not give or accept bribes.

I do not use computers or other technical equipment to look at, save or spread pornographic material.

I do not discriminate against or harass anybody on grounds of gender. I understand that this includes unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature as well as discrimination due to a person's gender.

I do not drink alcohol on duty. During the time that the team leader designates as "leisure time" I am very restrictive as regards the consumption of alcohol.

I never drink and drive.

I do not involve myself with classified narcotics, unless it is part of my job as a qualified doctor, nurse or paramedic.

I am aware of my personal responsibility when it comes to environmental influence during international operations. I actively contribute to minimize negative environmental influence during operations and work towards sustainable development.

I have read and understood the above and agree to observe the MSB's code of conduct. I am aware that any breach of the code can result in the cessation of my services and removal from the personnel roster. I will not knowingly conceal any other person's breaching of the code.

## ANNEX 5

### GMAP-NPA SURVEY

In the GMAP-NPA surveys, 65 per cent of the women and 78 per cent of the men asked had been trained by male instructors. When asked if they would have preferred a trainer of their same sex, 74 per cent of the women and 60 per cent of the men answered that it doesn't matter. 23 per cent of the men and 18.6 per cent of the women would prefer a same-sex trainer.

In Thailand, Angola and DRC, 29.4 per cent of the male deminers had been trained by both women and men, and 70.6 per cent of them were in a mixed team. 88.2 per cent of those male deminers who were asked the question "If it was a woman, would you have preferred a male trainer?" answered that it doesn't matter and 5.9 per cent said that they do not prefer male instructors.

The data seem to indicate that in the countries where men have little experience of female trainers, they prefer to have a male instructor. For instance, in Lebanon, 100 per cent of the trainings were given by men to all-male classes. 80 per cent of the deminers interrogated indicated that they prefer to have a male instructor and 40 per cent would prefer an all-male class, while only 23 per cent of all the men interrogated by NPA worldwide (Lebanon included) indicated that they would prefer a male instructor and 16 per cent would prefer to be in all-male groups.

In Guinea Bissau however, all male deminers had been trained by men and 100 per cent of them thought that having a male or a female trainer doesn't matter. This could be explained by the fact that 100 per cent of them were trained in mixed classes and did not think that it made any difference if the class was mixed or not.

NPA's female deminers were also interrogated on their feelings about trainings. In Thailand, DRC and Angola, 66.7 per cent of the women had been trained by both women and men. All of these women said that it doesn't matter if it is a male or a female trainer. It was not the case in Lebanon, where, after experiencing trainings provided by men, 70 per cent said they would have preferred a female instructor and 80 per cent would have preferred an all-female class if they had to choose. In Angola, Guinea Bissau, DRC and Thailand, female deminers experienced mixed classes and thought that it did not matter if it was a mixed class or an all-female class.

