

The Status of Mine Risk Education
Update to the Meetings of the Standing Committees
June 2008



unicef 

**Why discuss MRE in the context of
the MBT?**

**Because while this term is not explicitly
mentioned, it is a recognized obligation
for States Parties.**

Article 6, paragraph 3:

“Each State Party in a position to do so shall provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration of mine victims and for mine awareness programs.”

Article 6, paragraph 7d:

States Parties may request “mine awareness activities to reduce the incidence of mine related injuries or deaths” of the UN, NGOs and other organizations or bodies.

Article 5, paragraph 2:

Includes the obligation “to ensure the effective exclusion of civilians” from mined areas, which activities can include fencing and marking and MRE.

Article 7, paragraph 1.i:

States Parties should report on “measures taken to provide an immediate and effective warning to the population in relation to all (mined) areas”

MRE in 2006



- At least 63 countries with MRE – 44 States Parties
- 7.3 million people received MRE
- 5 countries accounted for ~ 4 million (Afghanistan, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Vietnam)
- 41% of recorded casualties in 3 countries (Afghanistan, Cambodia, Colombia)

Eternal question: Is MRE effective and worthwhile?

Overall, yes

- At least 15 comprehensive country-level evaluations undertaken since 1999 in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Kosovo, Sri Lanka, the Child- to-Child methodology (in Kosovo) and other countries
- Most showed positive findings in terms of acquisition of knowledge but not necessarily in behaviour change.

Sri Lanka – 2004

- ✓ Clear link between MRE and risk awareness
- ✓ Higher tendency for safe behaviour among people with MRE
- ✗ Despite MRE, unauthorized de-mining and UXO tampering are still reported primarily due to economic reasons

Ethiopia – 2005

- ✓ Good community-based network
- ✓ Increased awareness and marked reduction in incidents
- ✓ Clearance linked to needs of communities through CL
- ✗ MRE needs further assessment and incident data collection should be strengthened

IMAS Definition of MRE

“... activities which seek to reduce the risk of injury from mines/unexploded ordnance by raising awareness and promoting behavioural change, including public information dissemination, education and training, and community mine action liaison.”

Functions of MRE

4 key functions to achieve objectives:

- 1. Public information dissemination**
- 2. Education and training**
- 3. Community Liaison**
- 4. Data and information gathering and reporting**



1. Public information dissemination

- Useful during emergency situations but not always appropriate in longer-term development - used successfully in Lebanon in 2006
- Some projects have failed to evolve, continuing simplistic awareness-raising efforts instead of more sustainable and integrated programming for what the actual situation requires



2. Education and training

- MRE delivered directly by MRE teams to the target audience
- Integration of MRE into education – making it a part of the primary and secondary curriculum for ongoing education in mine-affected areas – Cambodia, Laos, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Albania
- Interpersonal communication and child-to-child methodology, using formal training methodology -- Angola

3. Community Liaison

- Continuous exchange between affected or at-risk communities and national authorities, MA organisations and relief and development actors
- Considered a “strategic principle of mine action”, not only for MRE but equally importantly, for survey, clearance, marking and fencing
- CL not only responsibility of MRE teams but MRE plays role in establishing links between communities and MA operators



4. Data and Information Gathering and Reporting

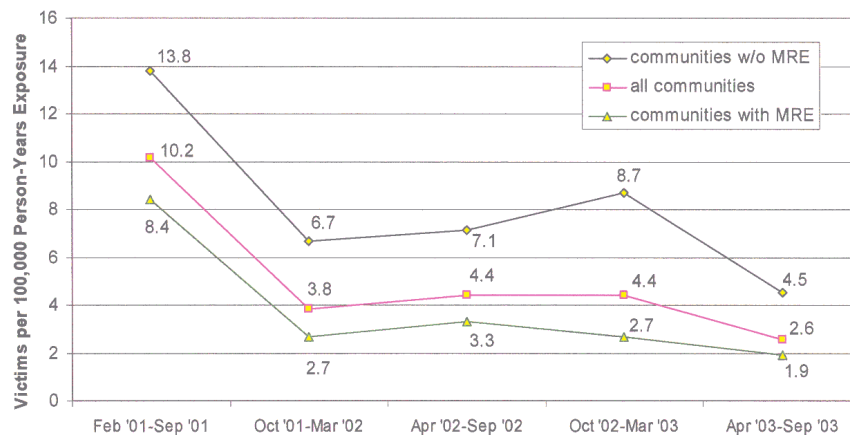
- MRE teams, trainers and Community Liaisons can collect data and info on regular basis including:
 - Dangerous area reporting
 - Incident/casualty reporting
 - Other info on risk-taking at community level

Achievements

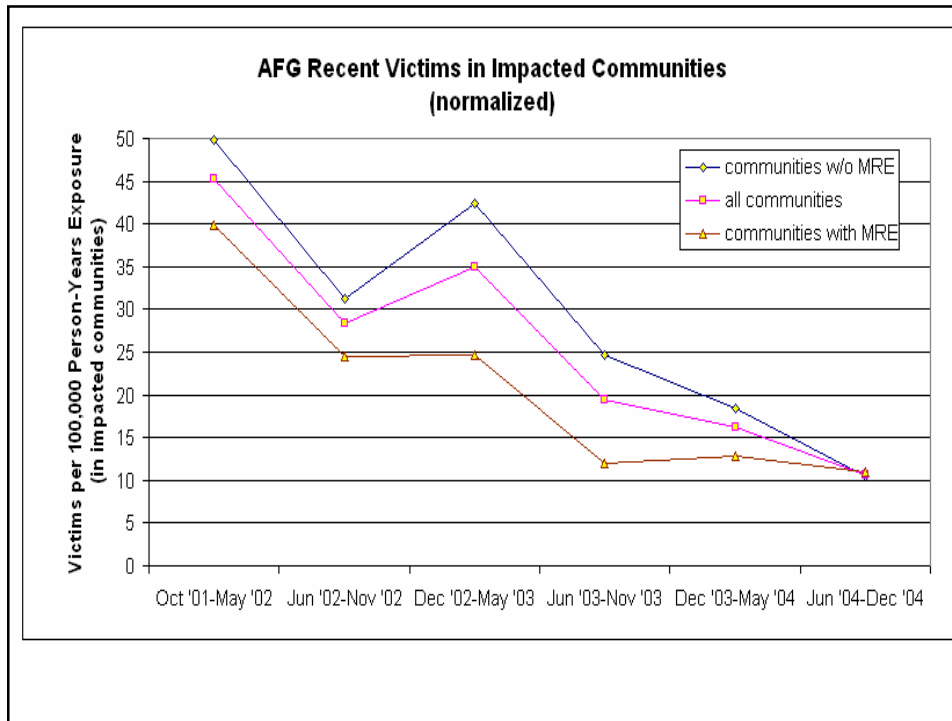
- Accepted as integral part of mine action
- Some (mostly anecdotal) evidence that MRE has contributed to safer behaviour among at-risk populations and prevented mine/ERW casualties
- Supports other mine action pillars including advocacy, survey and clearance, victim assistance and overall development activities
- Expanded in scope and more professionalized
- Approaches and methodologies more adapted to different contexts and needs of affected communities



Bosnia and Herzegovina Victim Rates over Time



Source: Landmine Impact Survey (2003)



Challenges

- Some practitioners maintain simplistic attitude towards MRE, considering it awareness-raising activity only
- MRE sometimes seen as a marginal activity to other mine action operations
- Need for further adaptation of MRE to specific situations as they evolve from emergency to development
- Absence of hard data demonstrating its effectiveness
- Need for more, and standardized, evaluations

Future Plans

- International MRE Steering Committee
- Emergency MRE Toolkit(s)
- MRE Best Practices Training Modules – 2008
- More detailed reporting by *Landmine Monitor*, with better data (EPI-Info, IMSMA)
- Review of MRE-IMAS - 2009
- MRE impact evaluation – 2009

MRE and States Parties' Obligations

- As States Parties begin to require extension of period to fulfil Article 5 obligations, does this imply an ongoing need for MRE?
- Would this mean MRE should be integrated into school curriculum and civic education, moving away from “project” orientation?

**What would be the cost of NOT
doing MRE?**

Thank You.