

# **UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND**

## **Enhancing the role of UNICEF in LandMine Awareness Education in Afghanistan**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### Background information

Afghanistan is one of the countries most affected by landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) in the World. After more than two decades of war, the abundant and indiscriminate use of mines has been one of the most violent expressions of the conflict in Afghanistan. Of the estimated 100 million mines spread throughout 64 countries, 10% of these were laid during a decade of fighting in Afghanistan.

Today, despite the efforts of the international community to mitigate the impact of landmines and UXO on the Afghan population, the number of mine victims is still on the order of 150 to 500 per month<sup>1</sup>. Of all reported accidents involving landmines and UXO, 40% result in amputations and 31% in death.

The number of landmine/UXO related deaths is difficult to estimate, as most go unreported unless they occur after the victim reaches hospital. Given the types of mine and UXO present, the topographic configuration of Afghan provinces, and the lack of transport and medical facilities, a conservative estimate of 50% of deaths are likely to be caused by mines and UXO<sup>2</sup>.

Today in Afghanistan, one out of ten adult males in every ten has been involved in a mine experience. Consequently, it is estimated that there are to be around 30,000 amputees in Afghanistan, of which about 24,000 (80%) result from mine injuries.

According to the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA), the area contaminated by landmines to date is over 700 km<sup>2</sup> affecting over 1,600 Afghan villages<sup>3</sup> and 337 km<sup>2</sup> of this affected land has been classified as high priority. 28 of the 29 provinces that constitute Afghanistan seem to be affected by Landmines and UXO. Among the most affected provinces of Afghanistan that constitute the priorities set by MAPA<sup>4</sup> are Eastern provinces, Southern provinces and Western provinces<sup>5</sup> (See map p.7). Of the affected lands 61% consist of grazing land, 26% agricultural land, 7% roads, 4% residential areas, and 1% irrigation systems.

As a result, Afghanistan records a loss of about 51,000 metric tonnes of cereal products per year, with a local value of over US\$13.7 million.

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<sup>1</sup> MAPA, Study of the Socio-Economic Impacts of Mine Action in Afghanistan (SIMAA), February 2001.

<sup>2</sup> ICRC indicates a maximum of 200 victims per month (only 5 to 10% of the victims never reach the first health facilities), whereas MAPA confirms the SIMAA figures (and estimates a minimum of 50% of those victims dying en route or on the spot)

<sup>3</sup> MAPA, Socio-Economic Impact Study of Landmines and Mine Action Operations in Afghanistan, MCPA December 1999, p.1

<sup>4</sup> MAPA, Annual Work Plan for Year 2000, p. 41

<sup>5</sup> Priorities are set on the known level of contamination and anticipated impact on local populations

In addition, the annual medical bill for mine victims is estimated to be more than US\$ 20 million and the economic cost to the country over the past 10 years is assessed at US\$ 666 million<sup>6</sup>.

### **Impact of landmines and UXO on children**

Children constitute one third of Afghanistan's victims<sup>7</sup> particularly due to the presence of UXO as their destructive power poses a greater danger to children than mines themselves. Children are hardly likely to survive after accidentally detonating a mine as their small bodies are closer to the mine and thus more damage is caused to them than to adults.

Although information and statistics regarding the mine-UXO threat in Afghanistan and its impact on the civilian population are incomplete, the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) estimates that children represent 70% of the total UXO victims<sup>8</sup>. Everyday, landmines and UXO kill everyday 4 children under the age of 16 and another 4 are seriously injured.

During the period of January to June 1997, Save the Children USA collected data from Kabul's 10 major hospitals and some health clinics to measure the gender and age disparities in UXO and landmine cases. The survey showed that:

1. 71.5% percent of all UXO victims and 52.6% percent of all mine victims were males under 18 years;
2. 10.2% percent of all UXO victims and 5.3% percent of all mine victims were females under 18 years.

Those children who survive the trauma of a mine incident are a burden on their families and require extensive medical care, rehabilitation and most importantly, economic support throughout their lives. Over 350,000 Afghan children are amputees and over one million Afghan children are suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome.

Mines deprive children of the chance to enjoy many of their basic rights. Providing physical psycho-social rehabilitation to child landmine victims can help them survive and develop in accordance with their inalienable rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### **Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA)**

In the absence of an indigenous national coordinating body, MAPA plans, manages and oversees all mine action in Afghanistan, as well as providing technical support and ensuring the proper integration of mine action into a wider humanitarian assistance programme for the country.

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<sup>6</sup> MAPA, Annual Workplan for 2000, p. 16

<sup>7</sup> The vast majority of civilian mine/UXO casualties are male (96%) (Socio-Economic Impact Study on Mine Action Programmes in Afghanistan, MCPA, December 1999.)

<sup>8</sup> According to MAPA, half of the total casualties are due to landmines and other half to UXO

The UNOCHA Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) is co-ordinated by the UN Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (MACA). Tasks are given to the 15 mine action partner agencies by means of a co-ordinated plan of action by MAPA, who either acts in accordance with a regular work plan or on an ad hoc basis if communities or organisations request emergency assistance.

MAPA operates through its Regional Mine Action Centres (RMAC) located in 5 regions, which are responsible for the field-level management:

- the Central region covering Kabul, Parvan, Kapisa, Bamian, Vardak, Lowgar, and Ghazni provinces;
- the Northern region covering Baghlan, Samangan, Balkh, Jowzjan, Faryab, Konduz, Takhar, and Badakhshan provinces;
- the Southern region covering Oruzgan, Zabol, Kandahar, Helmand, and Nimruz provinces;
- the Western region covering Badghis, Ghowr, Herat and Farah provinces; and
- the Eastern region covering Nangarhar, Konar, Laghman, Paktia, Paktika provinces.

In addition, MAPA maintains the MAPA Mine Action Management Information System, a database containing a wide range of information including records of mined areas, cleared areas and data on landmine incidents and injuries. MAPA prioritises both the areas that need clearance and those that need marking into high and low priority categories.

### **Terms of reference and methodology of the mission**

This is within this existing context that UNICEF early realised that the landmine issue in Afghanistan was very serious as it affects the lives of children and their families detrimentally over a long time period.

This recognition subsequently conducted UNICEF to occasionally support existing Mine Awareness Education initiatives such as:

1. the elaboration by Save the Children-USA of some educational materials used within SCF Landmine Education Projects in Kabul until 1996;
2. the financial support to the BBC-AEP project "New Home New Life".

In addition to these supportive activities, UNICEF has already attempted to integrate Mine Awareness Education elements in its community-based social mobilisation project in Kabul<sup>9</sup>.

However, these limited provisions (with regard to the magnitude of the problem) have never been part of a strategic plan aimed at setting its role as a lead agency in Mine Awareness Education nor as a full operator in this area.

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<sup>9</sup> In 1999, SCF-US provided mine awareness training sessions to 27 males and 24 females MOPH community volunteers promoting mine awareness within a range of other public health and protecting issues.

However, in view of UNICEF's clear mandate, as well as MAPA's expressed willingness for UNICEF Afghanistan to enhance its role in landmine awareness issues, UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office (ACO) contracted a consultant in June 2001 to undertake a study on the role of UNICEF in Landmine and unexploded ordnance (UXO) awareness education in Afghanistan and make short, medium and long-term recommendations for a UNICEF action-plan on enhancing its role in landmine awareness issues in Afghanistan.

In-country research took place on 1-29 June 2001. Throughout his mission, the consultant received excellent transparent support from UNICEF's Afghanistan Country Office, as well as from the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA).

The mission involved the following:

1. in addition to the review of literature and ongoing initiatives, the consultant conducted interviews with UNICEF's Afghanistan Country Office and MAPA personnel, as well as representatives from agencies involved in Mine Awareness Education projects within and outside MAPA (see **Appendix 1 for "List of interviews"**);
2. the consultant visited the Kabul and Kandahar UNICEF and MAPA regional offices as well as ongoing OMAR, SCF-US and Handicap International Mine Awareness Education activities in these regions (10-20 June); and
3. the consultant reported to UNICEF / ACO and presented his findings and recommendations to the UNICEF Mid-Term Review Team on 27 June 2001

The presence of Landmines and UXO in Afghanistan for more than two decades poses a real threat. Their effects have indiscriminate consequences on the population, especially children, and a disastrous impact on social and economical life.

Since 1989, a mature and well-implemented Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) brings a comprehensive and complementary response to the magnitude of the crisis and integrates Mine Awareness Education within its plan of action.

Responding to the wish expressed by MAPA to see UNICEF play a more important role in Afghanistan as the UN focal point for Mine Awareness Education, UNICEF now wishes to study the conditions to durably integrate the existing Mine Action process, develop its own Mine Awareness Education capacity and play a more consistent role in Afghanistan.



### III. REVIEW OF THE CURRENT SITUATION OF LANDMINE AWARENESS EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN

It is commonly accepted that Mine Awareness Education is a collective set of activities designed to educate local populations about the dangers posed by landmines and UXO and what they can do to avoid being killed or maimed.

It is expected that through Mine Awareness Education programmes, affected individuals will modify their behaviour and engage, to a lesser degree, in high-risk activities.

The ultimate goal of Mine Awareness Education is to mitigate the affects of landmines on the community and reduce the number of civilian accidents to a minimum.

Mine Awareness Education is usually split into the following two main strategies:

1. **Mass Media campaigns**, intended to reach a maximum amount of population in a minimum amount of time through radio broadcasting, large dissemination of messages and the various supports available (posters, tee-shirts, brochures etc.).
2. In a more penetrating approach and taking advantage of local existing networks and community-based programmes, **Community Mine Awareness Education** campaigns tend to involve populations in initiatives to overcome the presence of landmines and UXO.

In addition to this initial division, on-going Mine Awareness Education activities in Afghanistan also consider additional variations through **Mobile Training Teams**, which provide classes to adults and children on specific occasions or in particular places and also **Landmine Education Projects**, which involve play activities to specifically address the needs of children.

Together with Advocacy, Mine Clearance and Victims Assistance, Mine Awareness Education is a full and complementary component of the Mine action concept. In Afghanistan, since its inception in 1989, Mine Awareness Education has been an integral operational part of MAPA<sup>10</sup>.

#### **Background information on Mine Awareness Education in Afghanistan**

The Mine Awareness Education component has been an integral part of Mine Action since 1989. At that time the objective was to disseminate information to 4 million Afghan refugees in a minimum amount of time before they returned to Afghanistan.

In **1989**, the first agency to implement Mine Awareness Education projects was the **Organisation for Mine Clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation (OMAR)**. OMAR was born out of a United Nations sponsored program known as "Operation Salam".

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<sup>10</sup> MAPA contains no component related to advocacy and assistance to mine victims

In October **1990**, OMAR commenced Mine Awareness Education training with 22 training teams funded by UNOCHA. These teams initially focused on providing essential mine awareness and education training to Afghan refugees in Pakistan who were being repatriated to their homeland. As Afghan areas become more accessible, OMAR moved further afield and expanded their mine awareness and education program to Afghanistan. In **1994**, the **Ansar Relief Institute (ARI)** joined MAPA and started their operations on the Iranian side of the border targeting Afghan returnees. The same year, the **BBC Afghan Education Project (BBC AEP)** was established and began broadcasting an education radio drama series titled "New Home, New Life" embracing Mine Awareness Education messages within other health and education messages. In **1995**, the **Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS)**, supported by UNOCHA began to deliver mine awareness messages in the Kabul province. **Save the Children-USA (SCF-US)**, responding to an increasing number of mine/UXO accidents, initiated its Landmine Education Project (LEP) in Kabul in April **1996**, targeting schoolchildren with a specifically designed methodology. **Handicap International (HI)** also started their Mine Awareness Education operations in 1996 to complement their orthotic and prosthetic activities. The Community Based Mine Action Programme (CBMAP) was undertaken in southern Afghanistan to help prevent the occurrence of mine injuries and deaths. A three-month survey was conducted in Kandahar at the beginning of 1996, which established a sound basis for the HI Mine Awareness Education programme in the most densely mine affected district of Kandahar, Dand. **The Afghan Mine Awareness Agency (AMAA)** was established in **1998**. They began to train women and children obtaining permission from local authorities for female trainers' activities in the community.

## **Current Mine Awareness Education activities**

The Mine Awareness Education activities in Afghanistan are historically covered by MAPA which, through its Mine Awareness Education programme, provides its NGO partners with operational and technical support, orientations and funding opportunities<sup>11</sup>. In turn, the NGOs share their information with MAPA and provide timely training expertise to other NGOs whenever required by MAPA. All in all, NGO Mine awareness activities merge with the MAPA Mine Awareness Education programme.

The MAPA Mine Awareness Education partners are among seven NGOs which include five Afghan and two international organisations (see chart in **Appendix 4 "Mine Awareness Implementing Agencies in Afghanistan"** for detailed comparison):

### **1. Organisation for Mine Clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation (OMAR)**

Over the past 11 years, OMAR has been implementing their Mine Awareness Education activities in two directions:

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<sup>11</sup> Although MAPA operates as a functional co-ordinating body for Mine Action operations in Afghanistan, the co-ordinating function of MAPA in the field of Mine awareness probably characterises less its role as the nature and the magnitude of the projects do not necessarily require the same need for regulation and subsequently the same level of co-ordination as for military/mine clearance operations.

- An education through schools, market places, mosques, health facilities, encashment centres, bus stops, and other public places using signboards, silk-screens, printed notebooks and brochures;
- An intervention through community volunteers (2 men and 2 women working separately) disseminating information in their respective communities through schools, mosques and other public places but also through a "house-to-house" approach<sup>12</sup>. As in education through schools, the materials used have been UXO/mine models, silk-screens, printed notebooks, leaflets or brochures.

OMAR has no systematic approach or curriculum to address each of the specific target groups, but recommends that they adapt their materials and methodology to a specific audience.

The OMAR training comprises 16 teams with 1 supervisor and 3 trainers in each team. 5 teams are composed of female trainers working in health facilities.

For 2001, OMAR has prepared a six-month pilot project funded by UNOCHA, which will consist in organising 24 of their 50 master trainers within 6 Emergency Responses Teams with the objective to target Nomad and IDP populations, as well as returnees at the UNHCR encashment centres. Following the national geographical priorities defined by MAPA, OMAR will concentrate their global activities in the Kabul, Herat, Balkh, Nangarhar, Paktia, Helmand, Nimruz and Kandahar provinces.

## **2. Save the Children Fund (SCF-US)**

SCF-US commenced its Landmine Education Project (LEP) in Kabul, following fierce fighting that left Kabul heavily contaminated with both mines and UXO<sup>13</sup>. Originally, the programme was set-up in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and a participatory child-focused approach was used to better meet the needs of the school children. In 1996, after the edict promulgated by the Taleban authority preventing girls from accessing schools, SCF moved to a non-formal community-based approach.

Today, SCF-US has a Mine Awareness Education staff composed of 8 Master trainers (6 men and 2 women). Children between 6 to 17 years participate in the sensitisation sessions<sup>14</sup> and the use of materials depends on the age group considered. In addition, they are promoting a safe playgrounds scheme in the residential areas of Kabul. These playgrounds are demined to provide children with a safe place to play.

Today, SCF is developing its interventions in two areas:

1. promoting supervision of and follow-up to their existing network of community volunteers, and

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<sup>12</sup> Each team of volunteers receives support from OMAR for 6 months then operate on a voluntary basis.

<sup>13</sup> In 1995, MAPA was registering from 50 to 55 accidents per week in Kabul.

<sup>14</sup> Girls are present at the sessions until they reach the age of puberty.

2. re-organising Master Trainer teams within an Emergency Response programme Capacity, aimed at training a series of NGO and governmental bodies<sup>15</sup> using the same child-focusing methodology and handing over a kit of training materials upon completion of the training session.

In addition to their fieldwork, SCF-US recently proposed to provide MAPA with a consultant, with the following aims:

- to develop Mine Awareness Education core curricula and materials for trainers;
- to train META staff in Mine Awareness Education;
- to develop MAPA internal Quality Assurance and Evaluation systems; and
- develop META external Monitoring and Evaluation procedures;

This mission will also help SCF-US to possibly redefine their own Mine Awareness Education strategy.

### **3. Afghan Mine Awareness Agency (AMAA)**

Since 1998, AMAA, has been establishing Mine Awareness Education programs at the community level in the Herat province. They send their Master Trainers to live in a village for one month and train a selected couple (wife and husband). The husband conducts mine awareness sessions in mosques and houses, whereas his wife goes exclusively from house to house. It is worth mentioning that AMAA succeeded in getting local authority permission for their programme.

In 2001, AMAA together with Handicap International and supported by the Regional Mine Action Centre (RMAC) for the Western Region, will conduct Mine awareness activities in Internally Displaced Persons camps in the Herat province through support to IDP community volunteers.

### **4. Handicap International (HI)**

The HI guiding principle was to develop a Community-Based Mine awareness Project (CBMAP), aimed at the empowerment of Afghan communities and ensuring sustainability. Starting in the Kandahar province in 1996, the project was further expanded to the Zabul province in 1997, the Helmand province in 1998, the Farah province in 2000 and the Ghazni province in 2001. To date, Handicap International CBMAP cover 42 districts in 5 provinces.

CBMAP Masters trainers ("Nomaindas") are recruited from the community in which they live and trained at a three-week session. Together with a field supervisor, they

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<sup>15</sup> To date, SCF Master trainers have trained teachers from the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA), Halo Trust demining staff, UNCDP social workers, ARI staff and health educators (in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health),

are then entitled to recruit, equip and supervise volunteer trainers which and create Mine Committees to sensitise the surrounding populations.

Mine Committees, which are identified and set up by volunteers, include local personalities (1-5 persons mainly "Malik" – Village elders). They sensitise local villagers and collect data on mine location.

To date, Handicap International has created more than 1000 committees and trained about 50 "Nomaindas".

In addition, Handicap International distributes radio sets to Mine Committees and organises specific sensitisation sessions through "Radio Forums" as a follow up of BBC-AEP programme<sup>16</sup>.

## **5. Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS)**

Since 2001, the ARCS training capacity is made-up of 6 Quick Response Teams (QRT), with one Team Leader and one Trainer. The trainers were originally trained by OMAR then by ICRC. The QRTs intervene in mosques, schools and villages. ARCS targets children as well as adults, but following the Taleban edicts does not provide training for women.

Following the UNOCHA working plan, ARCS gives priority to the Loghar province, Central region. However, given their logistical constraints (1car for 6 teams and 12 persons), ARCS has to concentrate their operations in the same areas at a given time.

ARCS uses the OMAR methodology but hopes to develop a Child-to-Mother curriculum that has not yet been finalised. Meanwhile, ARCS is applying the guidelines established by MAPA. The materials displayed are made of mine models, silk-screens and posters. ARCS also promotes a quarterly magazine, which includes mine awareness messages.

Originally funded by UNOCHA, ARCS Mine Awareness Education activities are now supported by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

## **6. Ansar Relief Institute (ARI)**

In Iran, 23 instructors provide Mine Awareness Education training to Afghans at refugee centres and also at 3 crossing points on the Afghanistan border. Compulsory Mine Awareness Education training through lectures is given to returning Afghan refugees during the UNHCR encashment process (returnees hand in their refugee registration booklets in return for money and other items).

The training sessions are supported by the distribution of materials such as mine awareness silk screens, posters, mine models, video and notebooks.

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<sup>16</sup> Handicap International mentions that Radio Fora increased the female attendance to 16% in 2000.

## **7. British Broadcasting Corporation, Afghan Education Projects (BBC/AEP)**

This popular radio programme "New Home, New Life" promotes the safe return home of displaced persons and refugees through soap operas, and the resumption of essential economic activities. A special focus is given to the reduction of the civilian casualties caused by imprudence or lack of knowledge. In addition to mine awareness messages, AEP includes a range of messages on health, education, agriculture, income generation, environment, gender equity, conflict resolution and security.

The primary themes are to disseminate awareness and avoidance messages and improve community relationships with the mine action agencies. There is extensive consultation with MAPA through the consultation of Consultative Committees to ensure that the message and materials are culturally appropriate and technically correct.

The messages are reinforced through a comic book introduced by this project. The AEP programme also includes interviews with people inside Afghanistan, mine victims and demining and Mine Awareness Education experts.

The BBC broadcasts the programme from Peshawar-Pakistan in Pashto and Dari, three times a week, and which lasts 15 minutes. The 1997 National Mine Awareness Evaluation<sup>17</sup> estimates that BBC AEP covers about 75% of the households.

## **8. Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA)**

Although they are not recorded as a MAPA partner, SCA among others, includes Mine Awareness activities within its existing educational projects.

To date, SCA has a training capacity of 70 trainers<sup>18</sup> supporting regular schoolteachers in 6 provinces of the Central and Eastern regions. 10 females and 60 males operate throughout the formal primary schools<sup>19</sup> (including girls schools) from grade 1 to 6. The teachers promote mine awareness education within the existing regular curriculum that already deals with health and agriculture education.

Although no specific mine awareness curriculum has been designed or adapted for the purpose of integrating child-focused Mine Awareness Education, the materials and methodology used are those developed and provided freely by SCF (cards, board games, posters etc.). However, sensitisation sessions are provided regardless the age group concerned. Moreover, SCF-US does not provide any kind of monitoring or training refreshment to the SCA trainers.

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<sup>17</sup> CIET November 1998, Map 6

<sup>18</sup> By July 2001, 40 new trainers will have received a four-day mine awareness training from SCF-US bringing the total number of teachers to 110.

<sup>19</sup> It is to be mentioned that SCA teachers operate exclusively in rural areas

Since 1990, a considerable amount of mine awareness work has been carried out in Afghanistan, mainly by Afghan NGOs. Addressing the needs of refugees returning to Afghanistan, Mine Awareness Education has primarily adopted a mass media campaign approach, disseminating messages focusing in priority on mine recognition.

Over the years, after the massive return of refugees to Afghanistan, Mine Awareness Education in Afghanistan has turned to more small-scaled projects, community orientated, mainly under the impulsion of International stakeholders bringing experience and expertise from other world-wide projects. Besides this new approach, the use of radio as a mass media vector has been pursued.

Over the past few years, these two strategies have been cohabiting in an attempt to alternatively respond to the recurrent humanitarian crisis and meet the needs of the settled Afghan communities. Recently, facing the difficulty to cope with new social restrictions and humanitarian constraints in a harsh economical and political environment, a tendency has developed to also respond to the needs of various categories of populations threatened by landmines through the setting up of Quick/Emergency Response Mine Awareness Teams. Today, in Afghanistan, all NGOs are trying to adapt their original respective capacities to alternatively respond to both community needs and emergency situations.

As a consequence, mine awareness education takes place at various border stations, in IDP camps, mosques, schools, encashment centres, market places, bus stops, nomad camps, hospitals and in communities.

As over the years the methodology employed has primarily been mass media with relatively late isolated community-based initiatives promoting innovative, participatory approaches, large numbers of individuals are likely to have been reached with a basic message and the overall quality and impact of the dissemination of these messages are yet to be identified.

After 11 years of mine awareness, some seven million people have received mine awareness education. While these numbers are impressive, MAPA estimates that half of them may have received mine awareness education more than once, which may reduce the figure to 3,5 million.

Still, Mine Awareness Education has undoubtedly been a contributing factor to the reduction of accident rates over the past few years. The Mine Clearance Planning Agency (MCPA) reported that only 0.64% of the mine victims it surveyed had received mine awareness education prior to their injury.<sup>20</sup> Although this figure looks encouraging, it also brings to light the evidence that there is still a wide gap between recognising the danger and avoiding.

There is still a continued need for mine awareness education programs. Some challenges include the very low literacy rate, the location of the majority of the

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<sup>20</sup> MAPA, Socio-economic Impact Study of Landmines and Mine Action Operations in Afghanistan, December 1999, p. 25.

population in remote and sometimes isolated areas and inadequate education facilities.

#### IV. FINDINGS AND IDENTIFICATION OF OPPORTUNITIES

To date, Mine Awareness Education in Afghanistan is a compilation of various initiatives, which have led to a collection of projects using a range of methodologies, curricula, messages and materials in a challenging attempt to meet the needs of the diverse socio-economical status and living conditions of the populations affected by landmines.

Though laudable, MAPA's considerable efforts to systematise and homogenise this patchwork often collide with the necessity to rapidly respond to the urgent needs of the most endangered populations, such as nomadic populations, Internally Displaced Persons and refugees returning home.

Designing a response to such challenging programmatic circumstances requires great flexibility and at the same time a methodological approach when dealing with assessment, data collection, training, production of materials, monitoring and evaluation.

##### **Strengthening Mine Victim Data Collection**

In order to properly assess the needs and elaborate an adequate plan of action, Mine Awareness Education necessitates the on-time availability of basic information in particular related to victims.

Despite 11 years of Mine Action in Afghanistan, **the collection of reliable data is still in a very poor state** and just does not respond to the magnitude of the mine problem. As the MAPA estimates the number of monthly mine victims between 150 and 500, the sole praiseworthy efforts of the ICRC to collect relevant information from 305 Afghan health facilities within their Mine Data Collection Programme is likely insufficient to give a complete picture of the number of mine victims<sup>21</sup>.

Moreover, the procedure developed by the ICRC based on victim interviews does not generally include people who die or sustain light injuries.

Other NGOs and institutions are not likely aware enough of the considerable power of victim data as a planning tool to direct humanitarian action. As a result, a small number of stakeholders are involved in gathering data related to mine victims<sup>22</sup>.

A relevant and systematic routine would offer a better image of the socio-economic mine victim status including, date of accident, location, cause of accident and risk taking behaviour, type of injuries, treatment received etc. In the long run, it would help to locate unknown mine fields, understand the behaviour leading to accidents,

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<sup>21</sup> The data collected by the ICRC represents 70% of the total mine victim information data received by MAPA

<sup>22</sup> Among them are the ARCS, AMI, HealthNet, Ibn Sina, NAC and SCA.

assess how socio-economic factors encourage risk taking, set strategic priorities for mine action and Mine Awareness Education, survey and mark minefields, improve Mine Awareness curriculum and targeting and secure better Quality Control and Quality assurance.

**Certainly, there is an urgent need to durably strengthen the Afghan Mine Victim Information System (AMVIS) involving a wider range of partners.**

### **Adjusting messages**

Historically, much mine awareness training was delivered upon the assumption that mine and UXO incidents occurred because people had no knowledge of the dangers of mines. The messages were therefore delivered focusing on mine recognition and mine effects rather than avoidance.

Today, with hindsight, experience shows that other socio-economic factors affect behaviours and that people (especially children) may be aware of mines but still persist in taking risk<sup>23</sup>.

Despite this major observation, the change of environment and a likely better knowledge among the population, **no major changes have been brought to curricula and today NGOs, with some exceptions, are generally still focusing on the same types of messages.**

Also, the same messages may indifferently try to raise awareness regardless the population concerned. Families, including males, children and sometimes women, are assembled in one place, receiving the same messages regardless of sex, age group and way of life. In most cases, there is little likelihood of using different messages, whether the populations are IDPs, nomadic populations or refugees.

**There is consequently a need to reinforce mine avoidance messages and risk behaviour change over strict mine recognition and to categorise messages with regard to the populations and groups concerned.**

In addition, mainly due to the existence of a mine clearance capacity in Afghanistan (and because the first agency to develop Mine Awareness Education in Afghanistan was also involved in mine clearance), mine awareness education has been seen more as a transitional step leading to final mine clearance. This characteristic may sometimes create high expectations from the communities receiving mine awareness messages and consequently generate high frustration when mine clearance teams are not able to quickly neutralise mines or UXO.

Although creating a link between communities and Mine Clearance teams and facilitating demining work in reporting mine locations, Mine Awareness Education must however be considered within a long-term perspective, promoting in priority

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<sup>23</sup> In Afghanistan, it is common to see children collecting and selling scrap metal from UXO in order to sustain their family

mine avoidance and stating that mines and UXO are here for a long time and that **people must learn to live with landmines.**

### **Developing materials**

Over the years, a great deal of educational materials has been designed as a support to the messages. These materials have been largely distributed among the population. Although no clear distinction is being made between materials devoted to training (mine models, mine boards, silk-screens, games etc.) and public materials (posters, leaflets, brochures etc.), it seems that priority has been given to the second category.

Each agency has developed its own materials as the funding opportunities occurred. Today, with the exception of SCF-US for children and to some extent HI, there is no standardised material addressing a specific group. In addition, there is certainly a lack of teaching materials including a proper teacher's guide aimed at steering the trainers along their progression.

**An opportunity may consist of emphasising the production of teaching materials and normalised public materials, primarily taking into account the literacy constraints between rural and urban areas.**

### **Improving training capacity**

Existing curricula may reflect the uncertainty of the overall mission of Mine Awareness Education and the lack of messages related to each target group considered.

Despite the extension of the population groups given priority by MAPA, **a small number of changes seem to have affected the existing curricula and working methods.** Generally, the same traditional expert-delivery classroom lectures are being used whether the training is delivered to nomadic populations, IDPs, refugees, children or adults, and in some cases, training sessions often come more in more simple information sittings than thorough education process.

**There is therefore a need for a more comprehensive interactive process based on the experience of participants, encouraging exchange and participation in solution findings.**

In addition, no set curriculum has been properly designed to address the specific needs of one group within one targeted population in a specific environment. At best, existing curricula are more adapted to the audience as a category rather than to its actual way of life.

Enhancing upstream Training of Teachers (ToT) curricula through training sessions may be a response to update the existing community curricula and methodologies and a unique occasion to refresh the training community on some Mine Awareness

Education principles, as outlined in the UNICEF International Guidelines for Mine Awareness Education.

Yet, to date no agency has the capacity to conduct ToT sessions in order to respond in a systematic way to the new challenge constituted by the necessity to address the mine awareness needs of nomadic populations, IDPs and refugees and also to access women and children within the existing population groups.

**There is subsequently a need to reinforce the existing training capacity within the existing mine awareness agencies in order to propose new structured alternatives, using appropriate messages, materials and curricula.**

### **Enhancing Quality Control**

In the absence of a proper data collection system, Mine Awareness operators may encounter difficulties in adequately settling their priorities with regard to the needs. Elaborating appropriate project Logical Frameworks therefore remains uncertain. In this context, monitoring objectives and outputs looks like a challenging task.

In addition, facing the uncertainty of the relevance of some curricula in the absence of standardised operating procedures, following-up on methods and messages becomes a demanding duty.

**Consequently, the few monitoring initiatives are more directed to gathering the number of people trained over a certain period of time, rather than to making sure that the messages were properly delivered.**

Consequently, to date, despite MAPA's efforts to examine the effectiveness of various mine awareness education approaches, there is a lack of internal Quality Control capacity among Mine Awareness operators.

**Elaborate proper operating procedures and strengthening monitoring capacities among operators, as well as to facilitating experience sharing among MAPA partners, remain key elements to secure proper Quality Control over existing Mine Awareness Education projects.**

Today, in Afghanistan, Mine Awareness Education is the concern of some experienced and specialised organisations, adapting their know-how in an attempt to cope with changing priorities and new social and political conditions.

In the absence of proper common operating procedures, and despite MAPA's efforts to regulate Mine Awareness Education, it is seen as a collection of initiatives, using different approaches, techniques and materials with little capacity to monitor and adjust. This situation can also be explained by the absence of a reliable data collection system.

Additional initiatives in this field, should therefore contribute to taking advantage of the actual national technical expertise and the deep-rooted project implementation with the objective to strengthen and improve the existing capacities.

The development of new capacities must then consider integrating them into the various current programme configurations and create new operational partnerships aimed at consolidating further initiatives.

In Afghanistan today, given the existing social constraints, one of the most motivating challenges probably remains the identification of the most suitable channels to better address the needs of the most vulnerable groups, women and children included.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The series of recommendations outlined below is based on the findings and opportunities identified. It also takes into consideration a number of existing activities and capacities inside and outside UNICEF.

It endeavours to show consideration for the following elements:

- UNICEF's willingness, as the UN focal point on Mine Awareness Education, to fulfil its mandate and play a greater role in Afghanistan;
- existence of a comprehensive Mine Action Programme in Afghanistan;
- UNICEF's existing activities and programmatic constraints;
- need for a sustainable, integrated and local-based approach; and
- necessity to reach women and children and address their specific needs.

Showing consideration for UNICEF's programmatic timeframe, the recommendations are set at short-term (from July 2001 to December 2001), mid-term (from January 2002 to the end of the current programmatic period in Dec 2002) and long-term (after January 2003). **Appendix 5 "Implementation Timetable"** offers a detailed schedule of the recommendations listed below<sup>24</sup>.

### **Integrating Mine Awareness Education within UNICEF activities**

Over the past few years, responding to the near-absence of a relevant operational Government in Afghanistan, UNICEF has developed a range of alternative activities, especially in areas of education, health and child protection, mainly aimed at supporting the Afghan civil society in its attempt to cope with the recurrent humanitarian crisis. In addition, the current cultural and social restrictions imposed on the population by the ruling Afghan regime since 1996, have conducted UNICEF to operate with a more non-formal approach.

This strategy represents a strong operational basis to promote mine awareness messages and extend Mine Awareness Education activities in Afghanistan.

With the aim to progressively build its own capacity in the field of Mine Awareness Education, it is first advisable that UNICEF integrate certain mine awareness elements within its current activities, beginning with health and education community-based projects.

In this perspective, and considering the **Social Mobilisation Project in Kabul as a pilot project**, UNICEF should:

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<sup>24</sup> Long-term orientations may be optional, as they will mainly depend upon the development of preceding phases.

*In the short-term:*

- ® Solicit MAPA to revise the Kabul social mobilisation project curriculum to incorporate some mine awareness elements adapted to the audience;
- ® Request SCF-US to empower the CRC Master Trainers with Mine Awareness training sessions;
- ® Request SCF-US to update the education materials currently used and add Mine Awareness materials to CRC training kit;
- ® Entitle the CRC Master Trainers and the UNICEF Kabul sub-office education and protection staff to monitor social workers (males and females) at targeting non formal schools and health facilities, to improve teaching methods and to report to UNICEF and MAPA;

*In the middle-term:*

- ® Request MAPA to evaluate the pilot project; and

*In the long-term:*

- ® Possibly extend the experience to the 40 CRC Master Trainers in other regions with emphasis on Herat, Kandahar, and Mazar-e-Sharif;
- ® Recruit and train specific Mine Awareness Education Master Trainers with monitoring capacity in addition to CRC Master Trainers;

Considering **other UNICEF community-based activities**, UNICEF should:

*In the middle-term:*

- ® In Jelalabad, develop Mine Awareness Education within the six weeks Bicycle Training Programme, appointing disabled children as ambassadors in a "Ride and Raise " programme;
- ® Promote the creation of Mine-Free Playgrounds on the model of playgrounds in Mazar-e-Sharif and in the Balk province;

*In the long-term:*

- ® Study the opportunity to develop mine awareness curriculum for Traditional Birth Attendance (TBA) programmes;
- ® Encourage Mine Awareness Education within Water and Environmental Sanitation programmes promoting mine awareness messages at wells, on the occasion of chlorination campaigns, during inauguration and hygiene education sessions through specific materials and with specific curriculum;
- ® As a way to set Mine Awareness Education as preventive to disability, consider to systematically integrate a Mine Awareness component in all disability and mine victim assistance projects in Afghanistan.

Considering the exceptional coverage of the National Immunisation Days (NIDs) co-organised by UNICEF, and taking into account the limited amount of time devoted to this activity, UNICEF **promoting a pilot mass media campaign** should:

*In the short-term:*

- ® Solicit MAPA to design a specific basic comic strip, possibly linked to a BBC AEP screenplay and adapted to rural populations;

*In the middle-term:*

- ® Taking advantage of "Weeks of Tranquillity" in conflict areas, distribute the comic strip to each household visited (focusing on the Faryab, Balkh, Samangan, Baghlan, Takhar, Badakhan, Parwan, Kapisa, Kabul, Bamyan, Badghis, Herat and Kandahar provinces) and with a simple and direct message suggesting, "There is no immunisation against landmines. Be alert!");
- ® Consider the feedback of the pilot initiative and;

*In the long-term:*

- ® Possibly extend to other mine affected provinces.

With the purpose **to relay these initiatives and support the sub-offices** the UNICEF/ACO Islamabad Office should:

*In the short-term:*

- ® Recruit a Mine Awareness Officer (national) with long-term responsibility as under the Child Protection project to:
  - Work with MAPA on the elaboration of material and curricula;
  - Capitalise on existing Mine Awareness Education programmes;
  - Promote integration of Mine Awareness Education activities into regular projects;
  - Identify relevant partners for project implementation;
  - Encourage lateral cross cutting initiatives involving Development, Survival and Monitoring & Evaluation sections;
  - Facilitate information sharing with external partners;
  - Secure UNICEF monitoring Mine Awareness Education capacity and activities

*In the middle-term:*

- ® Create a Mine Awareness Education sub-project under the Protection project;
- ® Produce a regular internal newsletter on Mine Awareness Education and promote inclusion of mine awareness messages within existing supports;

### **Supporting field operations towards most vulnerable groups**

In addition to the integration of Mine Awareness segments within existing UNICEF initiatives, it is advisable that UNICEF also capitalises on other existing activities and build-up its Mine Awareness Education capacity within its contribution to a wider range of operational partners.

On a long run, it will be important that, through new partnerships, UNICEF contributes to build a specific Quick Response Capacity aimed at addressing the

needs of the most vulnerable populations, including IDPs, nomadic populations and refugees.

Considering the poor state of the Mine Victim Data Collection System and **the urgent need to establish a national baseline data**, UNICEF should:

*In the short-term:*

- ® Incorporate the Mine Victim data working Group comprised of MACA, ICRC, WHO, HI and MCPA and study HI/MAPA project proposal;
- ® Pledge annual financial support to develop AMVIS;

*In the Middle and long-terms:*

- ® Involve UNICEF sub-offices in mine data collection through multidisciplinary project activities in order to play a greater role in this field;

Considering the necessity **to reinforce the existing projects addressing the needs of the most vulnerable groups**, UNICEF through its Afghan sub-offices should:

*In the short-term:*

- ® Propose to field test the MAPA public materials through its own project activities, report to MAPA and suggest any improvements;

*In the middle-term:*

- ® Recruit a Protection Officer in Kandahar sub-office;
- ® In mine affected areas (with priority given to Kandahar, Herat, Kabul and Farah provinces) identify operational partners sharing common principles and objectives with UNICEF;
- ® Support the production and diffusion of materials aimed at reaching the most vulnerable populations (IDPs, nomadic populations and refugees) within the building of a Quick Response Capacity;
- ® Support the diffusion of audio and written materials that encourage a linkage between the BBC AEP radio programmes and work at the community level (e.g. BBC AEP Trainer's guide);
- ® Secure monitoring of production and diffusion of materials through the regional Protection Officers;
- ® Facilitate information sharing on Mine Awareness Education among aid agencies;

*In the long-term:*

- ® Provide extensive support and monitoring to implementing partners in Quick Response Capacity operations;
- ® Bring extensive support and monitoring to thorough community-based Mine Awareness Education projects;
- ® Solicit MAPA to give technical ability to the Protection Officers on Mine Awareness/Mine Action;
- ® Entitle Protection Officers to be the focal points for Mine Awareness Education in sub-offices;

- ® Encourage UNICEF representatives in full collaboration with MAPA/RMAC to take regional responsibility in Mine Awareness Education;

Considering the necessity to **reinforce the UNICEF in-house capacity**, UNICEF/ACO Islamabad Office should:

*In the short-term:*

- ® Strengthen its financial support to the BBC AEP "New Home New Life" radio programme when dealing with mine awareness issues within other public health questions;
- ® Integrate BBC AEP Consultative Committees in order to better advise and guide the messages broadcast;

*In the long-term:*

- ® Create a Mine Awareness Education project under UNICEF/ACO Protection & Promotion section;
- ® Encourage experience-sharing within world-wide UNICEF Mine Awareness Education programmes, especially with those promoting non-formal education (Angola, Mozambique), Child-to-Child approach (Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Columbia, Kosovo), IDPs, refugees oriented projects (Angola, Kosovo, Sudan) and support to Mine Action Centres (Cambodia).

### **Strengthening operational institutional partnerships**

In order to consolidate its field involvement, UNICEF will create new links or reinforce operational partnerships with those who have developed a range of expertise on humanitarian action and with institutions, which integrate Mine Awareness Education with a wider humanitarian approach.

Considering the need for **entering into formal operational partnerships** with a wider range of institutions dealing with Mine Action and humanitarian issues, UNICEF/ACO Islamabad Office should:

*In the short-term:*

- ® Pledge financial backing to SCF-US for a MAPA Mine Awareness consultant to work on curriculum development, ToT and Quality Control procedures;
- ® Revise consultant ToR in order to include the development of a specific Child-to-Child curriculum (see **appendix 7 "The Child-to-Child Approach"**);
- ® Advertise job description through UNICEF channels in order to secure best applicant profiles;
- ® Attend quarterly Mine Awareness Education Working Groups;

*In the middle-term:*

- ® Sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with MAPA outlining respective responsibilities and mutual support;
- ® Co-sponsor and organise with MAPA a workshop intended to develop Mine Awareness Education material packages for Health workers, Social workers and Community workers; and
- ® Encourage the development and production of normalised material packages;
- ® Co-sponsor and organise with MAPA a workshop intended to update ToT curricula; and
- ® Encourage the development and production of MAPA Teachers' Guidelines;

*In the long-term:*

- ® Study the opportunity to provide MACA with a Mine Awareness Education expert (international) to validate the role of UNICEF as the UN focal point for Mine Awareness Education;
- ® Study with MAPA the opportunity to integrate First-Aid techniques into ToT core curricula to respond to the estimated great number of "on-the-spot" deaths;
- ® Edit a regular Mine Awareness Education Newsletter/Magazine raising Mine Awareness and Advocacy issues and promoting Mine Awareness Education activities among aid agencies and UN bodies;
- ® Increase regular contacts with the UNHCR and WFP to anticipate on IDP and refugee movements and better prepare interventions;

## **VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Tentatively taking into account the existing intervention capacities and limitations in the area of Mine Awareness Education, the recommendations drawn tend to gradually bring UNICEF into the field of Mine Awareness Education as a relevant interlocutor.

Integrating Mine Awareness Education within its own regular projects would allow UNICEF to create its own intervention capacity and extend the population coverage. Supporting other Mine Awareness initiatives may allow UNICEF to gain experience from other expertise and actively participate in relevant comprehensive programmes. Developing partnerships with other institutions and organisations would ensure that the UNICEF involvement would be adequately shared with those who are already involved in mine-related issues and education.

In the long run, the two steps strategy (elaborating appropriate tools to further implement mine awareness activities) should contribute to create an in-house capacity, which in turn should benefit to the most affected groups in the most affected regions.

Daily UNICEF activities show their relevance when addressing the needs of the most deprived and marginalized persons. Mine Awareness Education, as a new project component, should be seen as an occasion to reinforce UNICEF's overall approach and give more visibility to it.

The added value that UNICEF could bring to Mine Awareness Education in Afghanistan would mainly consist of its capacity to integrate the existing Mine Action process and contribute to improving it. A smart supportive attitude and a recognised technical capability will certainly contribute to position UNICEF as a full implementing partner rather than a pure funding agency.

## Appendix 1 List of Interviews

Ord.	Name	Organisation	Position	Date
1	Niloufar Pourzand	UNICEF-ACO	Child Protection Officer	01-06-01
2	Ezzat Ullah Majeed	UNICEF-FAIZABAD	Assistant Project Officer-Survival	02-06-01
3	Ellen Van Kalmthout	UNICEF-ACO	Project Officer-Child-Development	04-06-01
4	Aung Chein	UNICEF-ACO	Project Officer-WES	04-06-01
5	Ahmad Masoud	UNICEF-ACO	Assistant Information Officer	04-06-01
6	Neck Mohammed Attae	UNICEF-BAMIAN	Representative	04-06-01
7	Richard Daniel Kelly	MACA/MAPA	Program Manager	06-06-01
8	Sharif Baaser	MACA/MAPA	Mine Awareness Education Officer	06-06-01
9	K.M. Sharif	MACA/MAPA	Operations Officer	07-06-01
10	Andrew R. Wilder	SCF-US	Field Office Director	08-06-01
11	Lisa Laumann	SCF-US	Deputy Director / Afghan Programs	08-06-01
12	Lucienne Mass	SCF-US	Field Coordinator	08-06-01
13	Anoja Wijeyesekera	UNICEF-KABUL	Resident Project Officer	10-06-01
14	Abdul Latif Matin	MAPA-KABUL	Regional Manager	10-06-01
15	Sha-Wallie	OMAR-Kabul	Field Coordinator	10-06-01
16	Said-Alam	OMAR-Kabul	Administrative Officer	10-06-01
17	Abdul Sami Hashmi	SCF-US-Kabul	Children in crisis / Project Officer	11-06-01
18	Ishaq Nizamand	ARCS-Kabul	Head of Int'l Relation Department	11-06-01
19	Akhtar M.Dawar	ICRC-Kabul	Programme Manager/Mine data Collect	12-06-01
20	Abdul Zahir	SCA-Kabul	Education Manager	12-06-01
21	Afisa Rasuli	UNICEF-Kabul	Project Manager	13-06-01
22	Noor M. Spoon	ARSC-Kabul	Programme Manager Mine Awareness	13-06-01
23	Baba Danbappa	UNICEF-ACO	Head of Survival Section	15-06-01
24	Yasuchi Katsuma	UNICEF-ACO	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	15-06-01
25	Alejo Benjemino	UNICEF-Kandahar	Officer in Charge	18-06-01
26	Mohammad Sediq	MAPA-Kandahar	Operation Officer	18-06-01
27	Abdul Samy	HI-Kandahar	Mine Awareness Coordinator	19-06-01
28	Abdul Rahman	OMAR-Kandahar	Officer in Charge	19-06-01

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### Appendix 3

### Glossary of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AABRAR	Afghan Amputee Bicyclists for Rehabilitation and Recreation
ACO	Afghanistan Country Office
AP	Anti-personnel
AMAA	Afghan Mine Awareness Agency
AMI	Aide Médicale Internationale
AMVIS	Afghan Mine Victims Information System
ARCS	Afghan Red Crescent Society
ARI	Ansar Relief Institute
AT	Anti-tank
ATC	Afghan Technical Consultants
BBC AEP	British Broadcasting Corporation Afghan Education Programme
CBMAP	Community-Based Mine Awareness Projects
CCTF	Child-to-Child Trust Fund
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DAFA	Demining Agency for Afghanistan
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
HI	Handicap International
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internal Displaced Person
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
MACA	Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan
MAPA	Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan
MCPA	Mine Clearance Planning Agency
MDC	Mine Detection Dog Centre
META	Monitoring Evaluation and Training Agency
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAC	Norwegian Afghanistan Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NID	National Immunisation Day
NOVIB	Netherlands Organisation for International Development and Cooperation
OMAR	Organisation for Mine Clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation
QRT	Quick Response Capacity
RMAC	Regional Mine Action Centre
SCA	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan
SCF-US	Save the Children Fund USA
SEIS	Socio-economic Impact Survey
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SIMAA	Study of Socio-economic Impacts of Mine Action in Afghanistan
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Teachers
UNCDP	United Nations Comprehensive Disability Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
WES	Water and Environmental Sanitation
WHO	World Health Organization