Incorporating Peacebuilding
into Mine Action Programmes

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The Ottawa Treaty, which bans landmines, requires signatories to "destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas" (Article 5) and, if they are able, "to provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration, of mine victims and for mine awareness programs" (Article 6).[1] These clauses recognise the need to address the legacy of landmines in addition to banning their use. Addressing their legacy includes clearing mines, developing landmine awareness programmes, providing support for victims of landmines, and assisting in development designed to mitigate the economic impact of mines.

In order to satisfactorily do this work, some form of peace is necessary. Peace provides the stability needed, and some guarantee that cleared areas will not be re-mined. Landmine work can be done in the midst of conflict, but when peace is stable and integrated there is a better chance for success.

Landmine programmes need not passively wait for peace. Instead they can take an active role in building peace through incorporating peacebuilding tools into their work. Several practitioners have recognised the importance of integrating peacebuilding into mine action. For example, Kristian Berg Harpviken writes, "[m]ine action cannot operate in a vacuum of its own. To be effective it needs to form a part of the larger efforts at peace-building, reconstruction and development."[2] This incorporation will have the potential to make the impact of the programme more lasting and to increase the chances for lasting peace.

The purpose of this essay is twofold: first, to explore the potential for landmine programmes to have both positive and negative effects on peacebuilding and, second, to provide operating questions and practical suggestions for mine action practitioners trying to incorporate peacebuilding into mines action. The essay will begin by examining the concept of peacebuilding and describing the work of practitioners who have attempted to incorporate peacebuilding into humanitarian aid programmes. The writings of these practitioners provide guidelines for aid programmes that can be transferred to landmine programmes. These authors also caution that aid programmes can reinforce the structures that support war. I think that this danger can extend to landmine programmes as well. This possibility, and its prevention, will be further explored. The final part of this section will explore of the dynamics of peacebuilding and how it can be incorporated into landmine work.

Having set the context of the potentials and dangers of landmine programmes in contributing to war or peace, the essay will then propose a five-stage process which landmine programmes can go through.

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[1] *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction*, Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 1997.

[2] Harpviken, Kristian Berg, *Mine Action Indicators as a Topic for Research, Presentation at the Roundtable: 'Towards New Indicators of Success in Humanitarian Mine Action*, Oslo: Peace Research Institute, Oslo, 1999.

Each stage will provide suggestions and caveats to assist practitioners in maximising their potential positive impact. These stages are:

Stage 1 – placing the landmine problem into the broader context of the conflict,

Stage 2 – community level assessment of needs and priorities,

Stage 3 – programme planning,

Stage 4 – programme implementation, and

Stage 5 – final evaluation.

All these stages will be discussed, but primary emphasis will be placed on the first three stages.

Peacebuilding

Prior to beginning a landmines programme, those designing the programme should be aware of it's potential impact on the conflict. As Mary Anderson writes,

> When international assistance is given in the context of a violent conflict, it becomes a part of that context and thus also the conflict. Although aid agencies often seek to be neutral or nonpartisan toward the winners and losers of a war, the impact of aid is not neutral regarding whether conflict worsens or abates. When given in conflict settings, aid can reinforce, exacerbate, and prolong the conflict; it can also help to reduce tensions and strengthen people's capacities to disengage from fighting and find peaceful options for solving problems.[3]

Landmine programmes, like other aid or development projects in the midst of armed conflict, have the potential to contribute to peacebuilding or to aggravate conflict. I will examine each of these potential impacts in turn.

Peacebuilding can include a wide variety of projects including: capacity building, community leadership training, conflict resolution training, psychosocial healing, and reconciliation. Other development work, such as economic reconstruction, can be incorporated into peacebuilding and is also necessary in assisting regions in working towards building a stable peace.

The objectives of peacebuilding initiatives are to "strengthen the prospects for peaceful coexistence and decrease the likelihood of the outbreak, reoccurrence, or continuation of violent conflict."[4] Local people,

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[3]Anderson, Mary B., *Do no Harm: How Aid can Support Peace or War*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999, p. 1.

[4]Bush, Kenneth, *A Measure of Peace: Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) of Development Projects in Conflict Zones*, Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1999, p. 33.

on all levels of society from governments to communities, must be the ones to lead the peacebuilding process. As such, "it is not the imposition of 'solutions,' it is about the creation of opportunities, and about the creation of political, economic and social spaces, which indigenous actors can identify, develop, and employ the resources necessary to build a peaceful, prosperous and just society."[5]

Landmine work has, in fact, often been considered peacebuilding work. This relationship should hold true. Landmines are woven into the broader context of war, therefore, landmine programmes must consider their role within the context of the conflict. Without this consideration, problems will almost certainly result. A better approach, which will ultimately be more sustainable, is to consciously incorporate the lessons from various peacebuilding initiatives into mine action.

In order to understand how mine work can be incorporated into peacebuilding, I will explore the work and research of three humanitarian aidworkers, Mary Anderson, John Prendergast, and Kimberly Maynard, and its implications for landmine work.

Mary Anderson

In her well known book, *Do No Harm*, Mary Anderson claims that where there is violence and armed conflict, there are also local people or groups who are working for peace. These are the people and groups, she states, that should be empowered and strengthened. Through the strengthening of local capacities for peace, peace becomes more probable. She does, however, caution that,

> [e]ven if aid workers applied the lessons of past experience and carried out perfect programs, wars would still happen. People and societies fight wars for their own reasons; outsiders cannot prevent wars. People and societies must achieve their own peace; outsiders cannot make or guarantee peace for anyone else. To arrogate too much power to aid, to operate as if aid can make war or bring peace would be to disrespect recipient societies' right and responsibility to choose.[6]

Having given this caution, Anderson goes on to note that aid workers should be aware of two realities. First, while those with power in a given society may choose to engage in war, there will always be many others who want peace. "Aid has a responsibility to respond to and join with these people,"[7] she tells us.

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[5]Bush, p. 33.

[6]Anderson, p. 67-68.

[7]Anderson, p. 68.

Secondly, "even small amounts of aid have power."[8] This power is derived from the injection of resources and outside actors into a politically and economically unstable arena.

Anderson defines five categories in which local capacities for peace can be encouraged: systems and institutions, attitudes and actions, shared values and interests, common experiences, and symbols and occasions.[9] The local capacities for peace in each of these categories can be strengthened through mine action programmes.

The first category, "systems and institutions," acknowledges that across lines of conflict there are shared systems and institutions necessary for all groups. These include schools, water systems, health structures, markets, and roadways, and are often made inaccessible because of landmines. This shared difficulty can serve as a catalyst for groups from all sides of a conflict to work together. Since these systems are essential to survival, the idea of working together to alleviate the burden of landmines may become easier for people to conceive.

Anderson explains the second category, titled attitudes and actions, as follows,

> [i]n the midst of war, some individuals and groups continue to express tolerance, acceptance and even love or appreciation for people on the other side… They join people from the other side in associations… Sometimes people form new associations or institutions to provide a connection when conflict has caused divisions... Sometimes these groups are focussed explicitly on peacemaking, sometimes they bring people together for activities not directly related to the conflict. [10]

These structures for peace should be sought out when attempting to do landmines work. Associations created to build peace may have ideas or resources that can assist the efforts of mine projects. In addition to associations, those who are opposed to prevailing stereotypes of a particular group could be helpful when creating neutral literature that does not reinforce the conflict.

"Shared values and interests," the third category, are the needs and values people hold in common across conflict lines. People from all sides of a conflict suffer the consequences of landmines. Values and interests such as: care for children, access to medical care in emergencies, and a desire for a safe place to work, can further reinforce commonality across conflict lines.

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[8]Ibid.

[9]Anderson, p. 24-25.

[10]Anderson, p. 26-28.

The fourth category that Anderson identifies, "common experience," is a strong connector in warzones or post-conflict regions. Mine projects should attempt to reinforce common experiences. Practitioners should work to change negative attitudes and actions, as people on the 'other side' may also be suffering the terror of landmines.

Finally, Anderson identifies "shared symbols" as a connector for people on opposite sides of a conflict. Because of their indiscriminate violence, their tremendous capacity to terrorise, and their tendency injure or kill the innocent, landmines have the capacity to unify people. This unity can be against landmines, indiscriminate violence, or even war. To date, a large majority of the global community has condemned the use of landmines. The condemnation of landmines is a cry for the rights of non-combatants, especially those most vulnerable such as children. It has catalysed a new understanding of a need for ethical practices in war. Landmines can be a symbol of the worst aspects of war in local communities, which can join people together in voicing their anger about landmines in order to curb their use by armed groups.

In addition to cultivating landmines as a shared negative symbol of war, practitioners should exercise caution when creating literature about landmines. They should strive to use shared, connecting symbols as opposed to symbols that are resonant for one side or the other.

John Prendergast

John Prendergast attempts to provide a number of tangible rules that, if followed, will create aid with a positive, peacebuilding impact. In attempting to define ways in which aid can be given without sustaining conflicts, John Prendergast proposes ten "commandments." While I will not discuss every point separately, I will list them for reference:

1. Deepen analysis in planning and diversify information sources
2. Assess needs properly and independently
3. Study options for modalities of access
4. Be astute and flexible in the types of aid provided
5. Study impacts of targeting and distribution methods
6. Standardize costs and minimize extortion and hyperinflation
7. Commit to independent monitoring and evaluation
8. Integrate human rights monitoring, advocacy and capacity-building objectives
9. Co-ordinate at all levels
10. Prioritize engagement and capacity building with authorities and civil institutions.[11]

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[11]Prendergast, John, *Frontline Diplomacy: Humanitarian Aid and Conflict in Africa*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1996, p. 53-105.

These commandments are directed towards the food aid community. However, there are significant lessons that can be garnered from these guidelines for landmine programmes.

First, research is essential to over half of these commandments. Understanding the situational dynamics before beginning, monitoring the impact and effectiveness of programming, and performing a final evaluation are vital to the success of a project. Many practitioners will acknowledge that the best resources are the people within the community or region where work is to be done. Research can assist practitioners in gaining knowledge about the extent of the landmines problem in a community, and about the community itself and the resources which can be mobilised there. It can also serve to help practitioners identify the layers of needs manifested in the landmine problem and find appropriate means of empowering the community to address them.

One research methodology, participatory action-research (PAR), has been identified by the Wartorn Societies project as being particularly useful in post-conflict research.

> The basic principle of PAR is that researchers and social actors join forces in collective research and analysis. The social actors contribute their knowledge of the issues at stake and the researchers help to systematize this knowledge, carry out targeted investigations to complete it, and lead the collective analysis exercise. Social actors, who traditionally are the objects of research, become at the same time the active subjects of research. The potential importance and value of PAR as a research methodology is contained in the main assumptions on which it is based. [12]

PAR, in the context of this four country project, became a means for building peace itself.

The importance of flexibility (commandment 4) is great where there is armed conflict. An example of this is given in a report on landmine work in Afghanistan: "[g]iven the unpredictable political environment and extreme restrictions placed on humanitarian agencies and the local population, it has been critical that the project remain flexible and open to different ways of solving problems in each of the three branches."[13] At times the problems presented by landmines or ongoing conflict will appear unchangeable. However, creativity and the will of people to work for peace can be allies in this struggle. Flexibility is also necessary if a project is to include the viewpoints and input of local people. This input is necessary for a project to succeed, but can also result in drastic changes from an original plan.

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[12]Stiefel, Matthias, "What we Discovered, Research as a Tool for Peacebuilding," in *Rebuilding after War: Lessons from WSP*, Geneva: Wartorn Societies Project, 1999, p. 1.

[13]Knudsen, Christine, "The Challenges of Mine Awareness Education for Children in Afghanistan," *Journal of Mine Action,* 4.3 (2000).

Another commandment warranting discussion is the sixth: "standardize costs and minimize extortion and hyperinflation." Landmine programmes will probably not inject enough resources into a region to result in hyperinflation, but when mine clearing teams and other types of mine projects enter a community they will bring capital with them. Practitioners should consider the impact that extra capital will have on a community and try to find ways to ensure its even distribution throughout the community.

Commandment 8, "integrate human rights monitoring, advocacy and capacity-building objectives," relates directly to landmine work. Advocacy, on both the local and international levels, is an integral aspect of this work. It includes working for the rights and inclusion of landmines' victims, funding to de-mine, and elimination landmines altogether. It also includes raising the profile of the landmines issue in a given region and working to convince warring parties not to lay mines.

Finally, commandment 9, "co-ordinate at all levels," is also relevant. There are many organisations currently contracted to do various types of landmines work. In the International Campaign to Ban Landmines these organisations were effective in working together to bring the Ottawa Treaty into being. It is equally important to coordinate programmes on the ground, so that work is not duplicated or neglected. For example, in Kosovo, "one problem encountered was the lack of co-ordination between different agencies conducting mine awareness… It was found that up to four organizations were targeting the same community(ies) with different mine awareness messages."[14] While this problem was remedied, resources and energy had been wasted. Landmine efforts should make every effort to coordinate their activities before beginning their work.

Kimberly Maynard

Anderson and Prendergast's primary focus is on reducing the commitment to war and building commitment to peace. Kimberly Maynard focuses on the post-violence, rebuilding stage of a conflict. She defines a process for communities once a conflict has ended. This process helps to reestablish safety, trust, and healthy functioning. The importance of this emphasis on rebuilding community and relationships has been emphasised by the War-Torn Societies Project.

> Societies emerging from war face a range of problems on all fronts, all connected and all urgent. But one overshadows and affects all the others: the destruction of relationships and the loss of trust, confidence, dignity and faith. More than the physical, institutional or systemic destruction that war brings, it is this invisible legacy, grounded in individual

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[14]Dyck, Lionel, "Overview of Mine Awareness Programs in Kosovo & Somaliland," *Journal of Mine Action*, 4.3 (2000).

and collective trauma, that is most potent and destructive. It has the potential to undermine the solutions to all other problems.[15]

Maynard identifies five phases of community healing, "establishing safety, communalization and bereavement, rebuilding trust and the capacity to trust, reestablishing personal and social morality and reintegration and restoration of democratic discourse."[16] She describes this process as time consuming, and requiring broad participation. It is also sequential — one stage cannot precede another.

The first stage, "establishing safety," is the most readily tangible contribution to peacebuilding that landmines can make. Safety is directly addressed through landmine work. Removing landmines, marking landmines, and providing education programmes about landmines help to increase community feelings of safety.

The second stage, "communalisation and bereavement," involves providing a space for people to tell their stories and to grieve. Landmine programmes tend to be very pragmatic, focussing on clearing mines or teaching skills. It may seem to practitioners that communalisation is not their area of expertise and that they should not enter into this work. While it is true that practitioners should have some training in trauma recovery and healing, it is also true that this aspect of peacebuilding should not be neglected. Maynard stresses the importance of this stage for healing and for post-conflict rebuilding:

> [s]ociology, psychology, and conflict studies literature are replete with the idea that processing traumatic experiences and violations is essential to healing. Psychologists have found, for example, that retelling stories of loss and injury is critical to the recovery of combat veterans, as well as victims of domestic violence…. Communalization and mourning help restore… 'self-consciousness' in the wounded group self which has been destroyed by rage, disrespect and insult.[17]

At a minimum, landmine projects should strive to provide space for victims of landmines to tell their stories and to feel and express their anger and sadness. This type of space recognises that trauma caused by landmines is not merely physical or economic, but also psychological and emotional.

Practitioners should be aware that opening this door could reveal wider stories about the war and its implications, but this is a healing process and it should be supported. Providing this space for people is

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[15]Stiefel, Matthias, "What we Learned about the Challenges of Rebuilding afterWar," in *Rebuilding after War: Lessons from WSP*, Geneva: Wartorn Societies Project, 1999, p. 2.

[16]Maynard, Kimberly, *Healing Communities in Conflict*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, p. 131.

[17]Maynard, p. 134-135.

something that a mine project can encourage and support by providing a political space for the discussion. Ultimately community healers and local people must lead the process in a culturally appropriate way.

"Rebuilding trust and the capacity to trust," Maynard's third category, involves, "reestablishing mutual confidence among individuals across identity lines and redeveloping reliance on one another. After identity conflict so mercilessly tears the fabric of society, faith in others is fundamentally shaken and suspicion prevails."[18] Landmine projects can play a role in rebuilding trust through considering ethnicity and lines of conflict when hiring staff. Projects should hire people willing to work across conflict lines and build trust among staff through training in conflict resolution, leadership, and facilitation and through intensive group-building work. When people are visited by cross-conflict groups they should be provided with a model of different identity groups working together. This will especially be the case if a team is in a community for an extended time.

> Research on psychological reaction to encounters with antagonistic individuals suggests that short-term or one-time exposures often reinforce negative stereotypes, while consistent interaction over time provides multiple opportunities for new experiences and therefore reversal of previous perceptions.[19]

"Reestablishing personal and social morality," is a stage in which landmine work can again provide a model. In advocating a ban on landmines, mine action workers are establishing a standard for what is morally acceptable and refuting the idea that "all's fair in war." Gaining the support of leaders such as chiefs, traditional healers, professionals, women's leaders, elders, and religious leaders can strengthen this moral stance. In opening the dialogue about the moral obligations of warring parties, a venue may be opened for discussing other aspects of morality that need to be reestablished.

Maynard's final category is the reintegration and restoration of democratic discourse.

> The last phase in rebuilding social cohesion is the process of systematizing a diverse contribution to community affairs, which restores community spirit and helps ensure its sustainability. A healthy society accepts and integrates its diverse elements. Though not without contention, such a community has the skills and structure with which to handle disputes peacefully. This inclusiveness supports participatory discussion that allows the

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[18]Maynard, p. 136.

[19]Maynard, p. 137.

community to make comprehensive decisions, plan for the future, and implement development strategies.[20]

Landmine projects can provide a model by providing space for democratic discourse. Projects which allow a high degree of community decision making — such as, deciding which land to clear first, where the mine action staff should stay, and how money should be spent in the community — will provide an empowering experience. If communities have been significantly disempowered through the course of the conflict — through being punished for forming collectives, exhibiting leadership, or fighting for human rights — mine action staff may provide some training in leadership skills and participatory decision making.

This section has considered the means in which landmine programmes can contribute to the peacebuilding process. It has done so by examining the work of three authors with considerable experience in working in conflict situations. Unfortunately, it is also possible for landmine programmes to do harm by reinforcing structures that support the conflict.

The Potential to Increase War Capacities

In order to illustrate the points to be made in this section, I will summarise a report about mine clearance in Bandua, Mozambique by Ananda S. Millard. Bandua did not have a serious landmine problem. Only one field existed in the community at the time of Millard's writing and it had been mined for about twenty years. Everyone in the community knew about the minefield and only one person in the community had been injured by a mine. Community members did not have sufficient awareness of mine safety. They avoided mine injuries through completely avoiding the field and because the field had been out of use for so long, no one remembered to whom the land belonged. Locals trusted the chief to distribute the soon to be cleared land fairly, but there did not seem to be any plan for how that would be done.

The de-miners provided the community with very little information. Local people did not know how long the clearance process was going to take. The de-miners were from outside the region and spent enough money in Bandua to create a boom. The community then did not want the de-miners to leave, so they withheld information about mines from the experts..[21]

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[20]Maynard, p. 140.

[21]Ananda S. Millard, <u>A Community Living with Mines and Demining: The Case of Bandua, Mozambique</u>, Mines Paper #6, (Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO), February 2000.)

While clearing the minefield will undoubtedly benefit some members of the Bandua community, the project seems to have had some potentially serious, negative implications. Aid can have a negative impact on armed conflict in a number of ways that can be divided into two general categories: direct and indirect impact. The example of Bandua provides examples from both.

In the first category, aid creates circumstances which cause people to become more committed to conflict, either by creating economic dependence on war structures or by directly providing resources to fighting parties. In Bandua, the money injected into the community by the demining effort became far more important to the community than mine removal. Both Anderson and Prendergast emphasise aid projects' potential to create economic dependence and reinforce the economy of war. Anderson writes,

> [w]henever local individuals of groups gain economically from the presence of aid... the influx of massive aid can reinforce their interest in perpetuating the war economy. When an economy is so thoroughly disrupted by war that few nonwar economic opportunities exist, the people whose economic survival is linked to war-related enterprises (including, alas, aid) develop a stake in the continuation of the conflict.[22]

In the case of Bandua, the conflict has ended, but people's interest in keeping some landmines in the ground has risen. Their capacity to earn income has not been increased and they will return to their economically depressed state after the de-miners leave. Thus while this work will not likely cause an outbreak of violence, neither has it strengthened the capacity for peace.

The second aspect of direct impact is the possibility of aid resources being used to sustain fighting groups. Food and medicine can be used by warring factions to assist their side in the armed struggle. Food can be stolen and fed to troops and aid can create a surplus of resources, decreasing local dissatisfaction with fighting. Further, population movements can be restricted by the location of the aid.

There are significant differences between landmine programmes and food aid programmes. Fewer resources are usually brought into a region through landmine programmes. However, those resources, (such as expensive equipment) may be of greater long-term value to warring parties if stolen. External agencies may also alleviate the unpopularity of a war by removing some of its dangers, freeing the groups to continue fighting. Further, by refusing or allowing groups to de-mine certain areas, warring parties can control the movement of displaced persons and other populations.

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[22]Anderson, p. 43.

Aid can also undermine peace indirectly. Mary Anderson identifies ways in which messages, which reinforce war morality, are sent implicitly through aid. In Bandua, project workers did not provide the community with information about their work or discuss the distribution of the land before beginning demining. This conduct may have sent the message that those in power do not need to communicate to those without power, which undermines the community's capacity to develop democratically.

Anderson describes other ways in which an aid programme can send implicit ethical messages. She describes the privileged status of ex-patriot workers, the use of arms to guard aid, and the disrespect and competition among agencies. The privileged status of ex-patriot aid workers, and the value placed on their lives above those of local staff, is apparent in landmine work. It is rare for de-miners to be ex-patriots because of the danger of the work. This fact may be interpreted by some local people as meaning that it is acceptable to place more value on some lives than on others, and that it is acceptable for fighting groups to do the same.

At times it is also deemed necessary to use armed guards to protect landmine equipment. However, Anderson would point out that this indicates that it is acceptable to use force to accomplish a task. Warring parties likely believe in their causes to the same extent that agencies believe in the moral supremacy of their work. They may feel justified in using arms to protect their causes. Anderson suggests a variety of creative means to avoid the use of force whenever possible. For example, destroying extracted landmines or dismantling their components at the end of every day in order to render it useless if stolen, would help to keep people safe.

There is evidence that competition among humanitarian agencies is growing. This competition can grow because of philosophical differences or because of scarce donor resources. Prendergast has documented direct competition among agencies for funding, media attention, or prominence. This competition reduces the effectiveness of their work.[23] Many of these humanitarian aid agencies also do mine action work. Thus, the philosophical differences between aid agencies and competition for resources may become a factor in landmine work. Anderson describes the negative effect of competition and disrespect, "[t]he message conveyed to people in a recipient community is that it is unnecessary to co-operate with people they do not like; our work has no space for tolerance of differences and we do not and need not respect people with whom we disagree." Therefore, aid agencies need to find ways to avoid competition and work together.

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[23]Prendergast, p. 12-13.

Through programme literature, aid programmes can also send messages that inadvertently favour one group. In the above section on peacebuilding, for example, the potential for landmines to become a potent symbol against war is described. In addition to the positive benefits which can come from building this type of association, this work may have the opposite effect if not used carefully. People from one group may blame the "others" for the landmine problem making landmines a symbol of blame and anger.

The above two sections have illustrated ways in which landmine programmes can contribute to peace or war. With this knowledge in mind, it is possible to consider the implications of mine programmes in all their stages. The following sections will provide suggestions and cautions for practitioners planning a landmine project.

Stage 1 - Placing Landmines into the Context of War

A landmine problem must be placed in the broader context of the conflict in the region. In order to carry out a needs assessment it is useful, first, to recognise the general characteristics of modern warfare and of heavily mined regions and, second, to ask a series of questions about the specific context of the conflict where the project will take place.

The following definition of modern warfare is useful for this purpose:

> [modern warfare] challenges the very distinction between war and peace. It takes place typically not between armies, or even between the army of a state and its armed opposition in some easily-defined guerilla movement. The forces of both government and opposition, from Cambodia to Colombia, blend into illicit business and organized crime. And the blurring of the definition of what is a fighting force makes it more difficult to end a war...
> Today, in armed conflict around the world:
> Violence is directed overwhelmingly against civilians;
> Violence against civilians is a deliberate strategy, not an accidental side-effect...Yet most people in countries where war is taking place have no part in these atrocities; some even dare to speak out against the brutality within their society, and take active steps to reduce violence, relieve suffering, and seek reconciliation. [24]

This definition incorporates several of the ways modern warfare is related to the problem of landmines.

First, because of the complexity of fighting groups, it is difficult for fighters to know who is a combatant and who is not. If combatants believe they cannot trust anyone, laying landmines to protect an

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[24]Edmund Cairns, A Safer Future: Reducing the Human Cost of War, (London: Oxfam, 1997) p. 5-6.

encampment is more tempting. Secondly, there is an economic component to warfare — continuing war is in the economic interest of some combatants. Third, civilians are often considered legitimate targets and, as such, are terrorised in order to gain loyalty or prevent them from assisting the other side. Landmines are a potent weapon for terrorising civilians, they are unpredictable, they generate fear for people undertaking the most basic of tasks, and they are indiscriminate. Finally, there are always local people who are working or will work for peace. It is these local capacities for peace that should be empowered through landmine programmes.

In addition to these general characteristics of modern warfare, there are some common characteristics of regions heavily impacted by landmines:

> Landmines represent an enormous burden particularly for the poor in war-devastated societies in developing countries.... Those who suffer the most and are least able to cope are the poor; landless peasants, subsistence farmers, nomadic herders, internally displaced, refugees, and female-headed households are the most vulnerable and most adversely affected. Studies show that it is poverty, and the absence of alternative means of income, which push people into known mined areas in search of food, fish or water, to cut wood, or to gather thatch....

> Just as the poor are hardest hit by landmines, countries with weak or barely existing social and economic infrastructure have some of the toughest and most extensive landmine problems. The mining of roads not only blocks transportation but cuts communication networks and disrupts the flow of goods and services. This affects employment opportunities and marketing systems. The presence of mines can seriously disrupt the return and reintegration of people up-rooted by war. The inability to return home and regain a sustainable means of survival may undermine demobilization and reintegration processes and threaten political stability. [25]

Thus in countries at war or where peace is new and fragile, landmines worsen the impact of the conflict and can destabilise peace or prevent peace from becoming a reality.

These characteristics noted, it is possible to consider the given conflict. As was noted above, "assessing the importance of dividers, tensions and capacities for war," and the "connectors, and local capacities for peace,"[26] is important prior to beginning a project. That is, practitioners should consider the history of the region and what elements of society function to breed separation, mistrust, and violence as well as what elements serve to bring people together.

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[25]Yasushi Akashi, <u>The Development of Indigenous Mine Action Capacities</u>, United Nations Mine Action Service, online.

[26]Anderson, p. 71.

Kenneth Bush provides practitioners with several specific considerations that can be used in assessing a war-torn region and the potential for programme impact. He first identifies the location of the project. When considering the implications of a location, practitioners should examine security conditions, the geographical extent of the project, whether or not the territory is politically or legally ambiguous or contested, the regional legacies of conflict, and the relations which people in the chosen location have with regional or national authorities. Secondly, he recommends reflection on the timing of a project. Timing considerations include assessing the point that the conflict has reached (i.e. "pre"-conflict, "in"-conflict-early, middle or late-or "post"-conflict), its intensity, other projects in the region, and outside developments such as political, economic, or security developments which may affect the conflict. The third area of consideration is the political context. Political context encompasses local support for the project, the nature of political structures, and whether or not the project involves politically sensitive issues. Finally he identifies several other salient factors. These include "institutional context; leadership; colonial legacy; cultural factors; national and international political economic factors... impact of conflict on type and availability of resources (especially natural and human resources)." [27]

This section has illustrated the need for understanding the context of warfare and its relationship to landmines and landmine projects. Warfare needs to be understood at a broad level in terms of its general characteristics in a contemporary context. This understanding should include the context for landmine use and its impact. Projects must also examine the specific context of the conflict in order to facilitate the creation of a relevant and appropriate project which will meet the needs of the people and help them address the impact of landmines on their lives in the most effective way possible.

Stage 2 - Community Level Assessment of Needs and Priorities
Stage 2 of a mine action programme is the research and assessment phase. In this phase the needs of a given community are determined through research. At this point in the process, practitioners have not determined what type of work will be carried out in the community, although it will probably include some combination of clearance, awareness training, victim support, community development, and building community capacity to deal with accidents. This approach is not typical for landmine projects; they usually focus on only one of these needs.

Those who work in the landmines field recognise that the focus of the work has often been skewed towards clearance at the expense of other aspects. A shift towards an integrated approach combining clearance programmes with awareness training and victim support is being recommended. For example, Eric Filippino from the Center for Humanitarian Demining writes:

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[27]Bush, p. 13-14.

> The speed with which mine action has evolved over the past decade, combined with the natural human inclination toward seeking quantifiable results, has led some of us in the mine action community to hold mine awareness activities at the periphery of the discipline. Mine clearance, with its physicality, easily quantifiable progress and tangible, visible, product oriented results has lent itself to greater feelings of satisfaction and performance and has become the predominant min action activity…. [M]ine awareness programs have not been included in the overall planning of mine action. To date, few mine action organizations have recognized the need to integrate mine awareness into their operations…. Fortunately this trend has begun to reverse itself as mine awareness and the date it collects are increasingly being recognized as vital to ensuring and measuring the effectiveness of mine action.[28]

As was seen in the example of Bandua cited above, programmes that focus exclusively on clearance may not have the additional effects of empowerment nor the potential to cultivate peacebuilding. That said, programmes focussing on mine awareness and victim assistance are not a replacement for the clearance of landmines. As the floods in Mozambique illustrated, marking mines and being aware of them is not useful if dramatic weather causes mines to shift under the soil and the threat is renewed.[29]

The research stage attempts to identify a community's needs and determine how to proceed. Participatory action research tools can be useful in learning the extent of the landmine damage suffered by a community, and which of their needs can be addressed through mines action. For example, having people design a community map illustrating the ways in which the community is affected by landmines can give practitioners an idea of the nature of the problem.[30] Communities can also prioritise the needs they would like addressed through mine action by completing a prioritisation exercise.[31] Such an exercise would help practitioners understand what the community identifies as high priorities and determine how they can best work to make sure needs are met. A third example is participation in the creation of a community calendar, which can be used to identify when the majority of mine accidents occur and what seasonal activities parallel these injuries.[32] A calendar can assist practitioners in knowing what land

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[28]Filippino, Eric, "Implementing Landmine Awareness Programs," *Journal of Mine Action*, 4.3 (2000).

[29]Wareham, Mary, *Landmines in Mozambique: After the Floods*, Washington: Human Rights Watch, 2000.

[30]Instructions on community mapping can be found in, Mascarenhas, James, "Participatory Rural Appraisal and Participatory Learning Methods: Recent Experiences from MYRADA and South India," in *Forests, Trees and People Newsletter*, 15/16, p. 13-14; Gubbels, Peter and Koss, Catheryn, *From the Roots Up: Strengthening Organizational Capacity through Guided Self-Assessment*, Oklahoma City: World Neighbors, 2000, p. 122-133.

[31]Gubbels & Koss, p. 126-127.

[32]Slocum, Rachel et al., *Power, Process and Participation: Tools for Change*,. London: Intermediate Technology, 1995, p. 181-185.

should be a priority and what types of seasonal activities are of enough importance to community members to risk entering a minefield.

> Communities with landmines face serious challenges, but they also build their own capacities to cope with landmine problems, for example by developing informal information channels on risks related to landmines, through economic adaptation to the mined environment, or even in undertaking their own mine action. Such local capacities should by no means be seen as a justification for withholding external assistance, and in some instances the self-help activities are so risky that they should be discouraged. Nevertheless, it remains imperative for the design of interventions that community capacities are properly understood. We know from disaster research that the degree to which external interventions build on local capacities is decisive for their long-term success. The aim here is to document specifically how that works in mine-affected communities.[33]

Thus, in addition to measuring the needs of the community, capacities should also be assessed during the research phase. Capacities include any community resources, human or natural. Local capacities for peace can be identified in this phase. Further, through this research it will be possible to identify community structures that will be helpful in disseminating information. Capacity assessment will also serve to determine which aspects of the project communities can take on themselves. One example of a capacity assessment is a capacity tree which asks community members to define various capacities and challenges using the tree metaphor (i.e. roots = capacities, trunk = strengths, fruits = impacts on community of past programmes, etc.).[34]

When doing this research, practitioners should insure that those groups who are most affected by landmines (such as displaced persons, the poor, children, and farmers) are included in the discussions and exercises. At this stage in the programme a contact group with representatives from vulnerable groups as well as other important community organisations such as religious leaders, women's leaders, and political leaders, should be established. It is important to ensure that people who are committed to peace are part of the process. This contact group will prove valuable in future stages of the project as they can both provide input into its effectiveness, and communicate information about the project to their constituencies.

Stage 3 – Programme Planning
Once the initial assessment has taken place, organisations can determine how to contribute their capacities and work in a community. There are four broad areas that mine action programmes can fall

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[33]Harpviken, online.

[34]Gubbels and Koss, p. 128-129.

into: clearing landmines, preventing landmine accidents, victim support, and broader community development. The community will determine the proper blend of these programmes.

During this phase, organisations should continue to reflect on the impact that each aspect of the programme will have on peacebuilding or how it might increase tensions. Some questions that should be considered are discussed below.

Clearing Landmines

Mine clearance is of extreme importance in the building of peace in a former warzone. The presence of mines inhibits the physical, psychological, and economic well being of individuals and communities. However, without careful consideration of how mine clearance is done, it has the potential to increase tension in a post-conflict situation.

There are several factors that I believe mine clearance programme planners should consider when developing their de-mining plans. These can be broadly grouped under the categories of: who will de-mine, which land should be cleared first, and how should clearance workers interact with the community?

Who will de-mine?

In many countries local people trained in de-mining by ex-patriots or military personnel do almost all mine clearance. They are usually centrally trained and then sent out to the field to do their work. These jobs often carry some prestige and provide a good source of income in areas impoverished by war. As such, despite the danger, there may be many people vying for the positions. For example, in Cambodia,

> Mr. Neang makes $162 [a month, compared to $50/month which is generally considered a good salary]. He pays no rent, is issued uniforms and gets what is considered to be the best medical care in Cambodia…. [By] Cambodian standards, Mr. Neang is one of the privileged elite. Turnover among deminers is very low. [35]

Because of this prestige, it is important to carefully consider the hiring process for these positions. For example, there are strong implications with the ethnic make-up of a group of people working in a conflict or post-conflict setting, especially if they are employed by a foreign agency. In countries where conflict has been drawn on ethnic lines, it could be that people do not wish to work together or that the victors are considered to be the worthier job recipients. However, as was mentioned earlier, if proper attention is

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[35]Purves, Bill, *Living with Landmines: From International Treaty to Reality*, Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2001, p. 87.

given to the emotional impact of people working together across-conflict lines, the benefits to the post-conflict healing process can be great.

A second consideration is the degree to which a landmine clearance project is militarised. If an agency contracted by the Mines Action Centre (MAC) — most countries dealing with landmines develop a national MAC which coordinates mine programmes — deems it appropriate for the military clear mines, it must be aware of the connotations of the military in light of the recent conflict in the region. Were they considered oppressors or liberators? Would militarising mine clearance glorify the military in a period when people are moving towards a peaceful, civilian based life? Would military clearance of landmines heal rifts between civilian populations and the military? Is clearance of landmines seen to be the responsibility of the those who laid the mines? Would military clearance give money to a military organisation that has contributed to oppression? Would hiring the military serve to romanticise violence and war?

Which land should be cleared first?
This is another question which could easily become highly politicised. It may seem simple at first; roads and access to essential locations such as wells and wood lots should be cleared first. However, even these decisions may be difficult if the question of where to clear first becomes a matter of providing some people access to essential locations before others.

Clearing farmland may also be contentious. Landowners should be determined before the de-mining process begins. Cleared land and its use for farming or grazing will affect community dynamics. Further, de-miners should determine if there are absent refugees who might lose their claim to land if it is cleared before they return.

These issues can provide an opportunity for local capacities for peace to be developed. It is possible to model participatory democracy and conflict resolution skills by including the entire community in the decision making process. A consensus building process can be used by small groups to set priorities, which can be presented to the larger group in order to develop a summary of common conclusions and disagreements. The contested points are then discussed in small groups where people attempt to find resolutions to the disagreements to bring back to the larger group for discussion. This process continues until a list of top priorities is agreed upon by all.[36] The community can also use the mapping or

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[36]Coover, Virginia et al., *Resource Manual for a Living Revolution*, Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1977, p. 81.

prioritisation techniques described above in order to define which land is the most valuable to the community.

Practitioners should carefully observe community dynamics to ensure that all voices are heard. Are both men and women participating in the discussion? Are the considerations of everyone who uses the land being heard? Are people such as nomadic herders or elderly people who gather wood for extra income silent or absent? Questions of who should be involved in discussions are important in all aspects of mine work. Examples of groups which are often excluded are discussed in the following section.

How should clearance workers interact with the community?

Again, the example of Bandua provides some direction as to what should be considered before de-miners enter a community. How will their actions affect the local economy? Will their families accompany them? What are the guidelines about sexual conduct? How much say will the community have in the de-mining process? How will the community be informed about the de-mining process?

In this section, three questions were considered that fit into the broad categories of who, what, and how. While these questions were specific to clearance work, the broad categories they represent should be considered at all levels of a project. Consideration should always be given to the make-up of staff and what message the presence or absence of representatives of certain groups — such as women, victims of landmines, or specific ethnic groups — will send to a community. Setting priorities of work is also important; whenever possible this process should be community led. Finally how the presence of staff and the project itself will affect the local community should not be neglected, especially with regards to peace/war capacities and cultural and economic impact.

Prevention of Mine Injuries

There are numerous programmes that attempt to raise awareness about landmines and prevent mine injuries. If these programmes incorporate local people into their planning and implementation, they will be successful in reaching local people.

In trying to construct a programme that builds peace, there are several factors to reflect on. Mines awareness teams visiting communities have to walk a fine line between considering local people experts on their own situations, and knowing that people may have false and potentially deadly beliefs about landmines. In understanding people as the experts on their situations, de-miners must recognise competence and capabilities. Even when they lack specific knowledge, people should be respected as being able to contribute to the project.

It should be noted that mine awareness programmes cannot reach all people and that, in fact, not all people are equally at risk. Further, development projects often miss those people who are most vulnerable. Thus, it is important to make reaching those most vulnerable people the priority in mines awareness programming. A list of those groups especially vulnerable to landmines and the reasons for vulnerability will follow.

Displaced persons and refugees

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees are an important portion of the vulnerable people to consider when doing landmines programming. Moving populations are vulnerable to landmines because they often find themselves in new territories and are not aware of the location of landmines in that region.[37] Because of their vulnerability, they also do not have the ability to choose where to gather food, and may be terrorised by armed groups while travelling. Further to this problem, IDPs and refugees may not have access to health care if an incident occurs.

There are instances of people returning home to find that they have difficulty reintegrating into their home communities. This may be, for example, because their land or homes have been appropriated or because the ethnic structure of their community has been altered.[38] Whatever the reason, difficulty reintegrating puts displaced people further at risk, as de-miners may become impoverished. This difficulty is transferred to mine programmes as they must find and work with these people in order to ensure their safety.

Impoverished people

Poor people are also vulnerable to landmines. In some heavily mined regions, mine victims have often knowingly entered a dangerous area in order to gather food or firewood. For those who are economically worse off, the danger of landmines is considered secondary to the need for food, or the income from scavenging. For example, "[a] BBC sponsored study in Cambodia in 1993 found that 80% of victims knew they were in a minefield when they sustained their injuries. Other studies have also found that economic necessity propels people into known mined areas."[39]

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[37]Filippino, online.

[38]Maynard, p. 99-106.

[39]Akashi, Yasushi, *The Development of Indigenous Mine Action Capacities*, United Nations Mine Action Service. This problem is also documented in, UNICEF, International Guidelines for Landmine and Unexploded Ordinance Education, United Nations, 1999) p. 5.

Children

Children are often victims of landmines because of either their curiosity or their chores (such as following cattle into mined fields). Children may also equate taking landmine-related risks with bravery. This was the case in Cambodia where, "unessential 'adventurist' risk taking, especially among children, is prevalent… where the warrior is revered and martial ethos is predominant."[40] As a vulnerable population, children are often targeted in mines action programmes. For example, there are numerous school programmes that reach children. However, children who are unable to attend school must be considered and ways to reach them must be found, as they are likely to be from poorer families and as such, be more likely to knowingly enter a minefield for economic reasons.

Planning programmes with the most vulnerable in mind

In designing programmes with vulnerable people in mind, it will be necessary to consider more than education. Capacity building — the building of people's ability to earn income or find food in safe ways — must also be considered. This is also a peacebuilding activity as it helps people find economic stability in peace related activities, and thus become invested in peace.

When creating educational material for a mine awareness campaign it is essential to test the material before mass producing it. In Cambodia, for example, it has been found that images created by urban graphic designers are not accurate representations of rural villagers.[41] Cultural sensitivity must also be considered when designing materials. Christine Knudsen provides an instructive example of the effects of cultural differences on landmine education programmes:

> For instance, the original version of the board game was accompanied by a small bag containing dice and game pieces. A few months into the program, the dice were replaced by small cards, each containing a number from one to six.
>
> When developing the game, the expatriates working on the project had discussed the possibility that the use of dice might raise eyebrows, because they might be associated with gambling. However, in the end it was decided that, since the game in no way involved gambling, there should be no objections to the inclusion of dice. This turned out to be a false assumption. Because many Afghans do automatically associate dice with gambling, the intent behind their use was irrelevant. Sometimes children would exclaim, "Oh, we're going to learn to gamble today!" There were also rumblings coming from other agencies and indications that the issue might be raised with the Ministry of Education, so an alternative was quickly created. The

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[40]Davies, Paul, "Mines and Unexploded Ordnance in Cambodia and Laos: Understanding the Costs," in *Rebuilding Societies after Civil War*, Krishna Kumar (ed.), Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1996.

[41]Grant, Tim, *Mine Awareness in Cambodia*, Pittsburgh: Global Information Networks in Education.

number cards that replaced the dice have the same purpose but have removed all suspicion of impropriety surrounding the game.[42]

Educational material should also rely on written words as little as possible as vulnerable people may be illiterate.

This section considered the importance of recognising those people who are most vulnerable to landmines when planning an awareness programme. Including these people in the project will have the additional impact of being a model for peacebuilding, as it encourages participation from the people who are most vulnerable in society.

Victim Assistance

The programmes aiding victims of landmine injuries are many in number and are quite varied. Many programmes attempt to teach people new skills.

Cultural considerations should be thought through before beginning the project. For example, Tim Grant describes the different ways in which people in Cambodia respond to landmines victims versus those he observed in Angola.

> There seems to be a better acceptance into the community than there is in Asia where they view amputees as deserving of their fate because of being a bad person in their last life. Here they don't try to hide the fact they have a false leg, openly using crutches to walk with. They have their friends and can hold down jobs – it's quite refreshing.[43]

Landmines projects can help to address the cultural beliefs about the abilities of people with physical disabilities by having injured people on their staff, working on awareness raising, and victim rehabilitation.

Cultural beliefs are an aspect of mine work that specifically affects the way in which a community understands a landmine victim. However, cultural sensitivity should be incorporated into all levels of programmes. It can also be a significant factor in hiring staff and creating educational material (for example, in Afghanistan there are cultural implications in hiring women).

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[42]Knudson, online.

[43]Grant, Tim, *A Trip to Angola*, Pittsburgh: Global Information Networks in Education.

Development Projects

In addition to these specific projects, landmines also cause great economic and social hardship that should be addressed through community development projects. These types of initiatives develop peace and capacity building efforts.

Peacebuilding and economic capacity building can be directly combined. Local people can be trained in peacebuilding skills and then be hired as extension workers, spreading the training throughout the region. This type of peacebuilding training can include leadership building, conflict resolution, and can also work with the healing of psychosocial wounds.

Economic development projects can be used to empower local people to build peace. In many post-conflict situations people have expressed the need to return to work. If landmines make farming or other traditional means of earning income impossible, alternative economic activities must be found in order for people to feel useful and to return to a sense of normalcy.

Economic development projects should not be done in isolation of peacebuilding projects. In fact, they can be brought together in many ways such as through encouraging projects in which people are dependant upon each other across-conflict lines for example. A second example is projects which are cooperative in nature and require people to come together for work (such as community grinding mills or revolving credit projects). These provide safe spaces to talk and informally experience Maynard's "communalization and bereavement." The ways in which peacebuilding and economic development can be joined together are limited only by the imagination. Community brainstorming sessions will bring forth many ideas if the community is first taught the concept of peacebuilding.

Stage 4 – Implementation

A project that is well planned and researched will be well on its way to being effective in building community peacebuilding capacities and working to mitigate the damage done by landmines. However, many new factors may arise in reality that were not considered at the planning stage. For this reason it is essential to maintain ongoing contact with the contact group which was formed in the assessment stage. Evaluation workshops involving a broad cross section of the community will also be useful during the project to ensure that it is effective and positive.

Stage 5 – Evaluation

Once a project is concluded, it is important to do a final evaluation. This evaluation should use a similar method to that which was used in the initial assessment. It should determine if capacities have indeed been broadened, whether needs have been met, and whether those most vulnerable to landmines are more

secure. These evaluations should be available to the community and other organisations wanting to continue to work in the region. The evaluation will also be helpful in the ongoing learning process and the promotion of peace through landmines work.

Conclusion

The importance of landmine work for the building of a lasting and stable peace cannot be underestimated. The devastation caused by landmines will continue to mar people's lives for decades after a war has ended.

Despite this fact, these projects should not be undertaken with too much haste. Because of the unstable economic and political nature of regions affected by landmines, any incoming project can have the effect of either building local capacities for peace, or reinforcing tensions and structures of war and violence. In order to ensure that it is capacities for peace being reinforced, projects must carefully consider their potential impacts.

There were several themes that ran through the various sections of this essay. First, working in a mined region means working in a region where there is a violent conflict or a recently ended conflict. It is possible for landmine projects to have either a positive or negative impact upon peace in the region. For this reason it is imperative that organisations integrate peace analysis and peacebuilding components into their programmes.

Secondly, a programme that works to build peace must incorporate community participation throughout its stages. The use of participatory action research and other community development tools can assist people in having input into the planning of the project in the community.

Finally, the idea that a project must be flexible, responsive and self-aware is imperative for it to be able to contribute to peace.

There is, with careful planning and a commitment to participation, great potential for mine action projects to serve as tools for building peace. If agencies work to build peace, join their efforts with local capacities for peace, and if other outside needs are met, an environment will be created where landmines will not be laid again.

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