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

Why discuss MRE in the context of the MBT?

Because while this term is not explicitly mentioned, it is a recognized obligation for States Parties.
Article 6, paragraph 3:
“Each State Party in a position to do so shall provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration of mine victims and for mine awareness programs.”

Article 6, paragraph 7d:
States Parties may request “mine awareness activities to reduce the incidence of mine related injuries or deaths” of the UN, NGOs and other organizations or bodies.

Article 5, paragraph 2:
Includes the obligation “to ensure the effective exclusion of civilians” from mined areas, which activities can include fencing and marking and MRE.

Article 7, paragraph 1.i:
States Parties should report on “measures taken to provide an immediate and effective warning to the population in relation to all (mined) areas”

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MRE in 2006

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

Eternal question: Is MRE effective and worthwhile?
Overall, yes

- At least 15 comprehensive country-level evaluations undertaken since 1999 in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Kosovo, Sri Lanka, the Child-to-Child methodology (in Kosovo) and other countries

- Most showed positive findings in terms of acquisition of knowledge but not necessarily in behaviour change.

Sri Lanka – 2004

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

Ethiopia – 2005

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

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

Functions of MRE

4 key functions to achieve objectives:
1. Public information dissemination
2. Education and training
3. Community Liaison
4. Data and information gathering and reporting
1. Public information dissemination

- Useful during emergency situations but not always appropriate in longer-term development - used successfully in Lebanon in 2006

- Some projects have failed to evolve, continuing simplistic awareness-raising efforts instead of more sustainable and integrated programming for what the actual situation requires

2. Education and training

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

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

4. Data and Information Gathering and Reporting

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

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

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

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

MRE and States Parties’ Obligations

- As States Parties begin to require extension of period to fulfil Article 5 obligations, does this imply an ongoing need for MRE?
- Would this mean MRE should be integrated into school curriculum and civic education, moving away from “project” orientation?
What would be the cost of NOT doing MRE?

Thank You.