



Australian Government
AusAID



Australia's Mine Action Activities 2008-09



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ISBN 978-1-921285-62-2

Published by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), Canberra, November 2008.

This document is online at:
www.ausaid.gov.au/publications

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Designed by GRI.D Canberra

Printed by Blue Star Print

Cover: Sri Suvendran, 22, uses his metal detector to detect any underground land mines in Vavuniya, Sri Lanka. FSD Swiss Federation for Mine Action, Future Operations Project. Photo: Will Salter/AusAID



These icons symbolise the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) — eight goals representing an agreement by world leaders to reduce poverty and enhance human development by 2015. More information about the MDGs is available online at www.ausaid.gov.au/keyaid/mdg.cfm

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Mr. Ta suffered damage to eyes and limbs from a UXO accident.
Photo: Jim Holmes /AusAID

“Life has been very difficult since the accident when I lost my arms. A simple example, sometimes I cannot eat and if the kids or the family are not home I have to help myself... It is very difficult. I can’t do any work.”

Living in a village in Laos, Ta is a survivor of a cluster bomb explosion. He lost both lower arms and his sight in one eye.

With help from a rehabilitation centre in Vientiane, he has re-gained his independence. The centre, funded by the Australian aid program, has fitted him with prosthetic arms and provided a comprehensive rehabilitation program.

He has also dedicated his life to educating others about the dangers of unexploded ordnance. Ta regularly lectures at the rehabilitation centre and also visits schools in cities and villages in Laos to warn children about the threat of these weapons.

Introduction

Landmines and other explosive remnants of war, have a devastating impact on development in the world's poorest countries. Helping people build new lives and escape poverty is one way that Australia's aid makes a difference in countries plagued by this tragic legacy of war.

Australia continues its deep commitment to and experience in delivering a broad range of practical, effective mine action programs—from international advocacy at the highest levels to helping remote villages at the grassroots level. Australia's aid is used to clear landmines, provide support to victims and their affected families and communities, rebuild livelihoods, restore the environment and promote economic development. Australia has a strong voice globally—we are an active player internationally, pursuing a mine-free world.

Australia works with both local communities, affected every day as they work the fields, search for food or walk to school, and the international community, including other governments, non-government organisations and UN organisations. In the 2008-09 financial year, Australia continued to meet its international commitment to advocate for the universalisation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (the “Mine Ban Convention”) and the Convention on the Prohibitions or Restrictions on the use of Certain Conventional Weapons.

In December 2008, Australia further demonstrated its support for international measures to reduce the threat of explosive remnants of war, as one of the original signatories to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The Convention prohibits the use of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians. It contains provisions on victim assistance to support survivors, their families and communities.

Australia ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in July 2008, which aims to ensure that people with disability play an active and central role in development processes, holding particular relevance for victims of landmines and other explosive remnants of war. In November 2008, the Australian Government also announced a new disability-inclusive development strategy for the Australian aid program, *Development for All Towards a disability-inclusive Australian aid program 2009–2014*, to ensure that people with disability are comprehensively included and supported in improving their quality of life through all aspects of the aid program.

Australia provided \$21.2 million for mine action in 2008-09, placing our country well on track to meet the five-year \$75 million pledge to mine action from 2005 to 2010. This funding supported activities in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Iraq, Laos, Lebanon, Mozambique, Nepal and Sri Lanka. It included \$1.4 million to fund global advocacy, research and universalisation activities of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, Geneva Call, United Nations Mine Action Service Voluntary Trust Fund and Handicap International Belgium.

In 2008-09, Australia also increased its support for integrated mine action initiatives, incorporating activities aligned to one or more of the mine action pillars into broader development programs. The integrated approach makes us more effective at reducing the direct and indirect impacts of landmines while contributing to sustainable economic and social development outcomes.

This publication is a summary of mine action activities which Australia supported in 2008-09. It details Australia's mine action activities administered in partnership with other governments, non-government organisations, multilateral organisations and more broadly, civil society.

Global activities

Advocacy/Universalisation

International Campaign to Ban Landmines—Global Network (ICBL)

Landmine Monitor Report 2009

Funding: \$300,000

Australia supported ICBL to produce the 2009 edition of the *Landmine Monitor Report*. This major report documents the various dimensions of the global landmine problem, including the use, production, transfer, and stockpiling of landmines. It tracks the number of landmine casualties, and records progress in mine clearance, mine risk education and victim assistance. In 2009 the *Landmine Monitor Report* will expand its reporting to monitor the universalisation and implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and achievements across the mine action sector over the past five years.

Universalisation in the Asia-Pacific

Funding: \$60,000

In 2009, through ICBL, Australia continued to support mine action advocacy in the Asia-Pacific region. The Universalisation Project encourages governments of the Asia-Pacific region to accede to the Mine Ban Convention. Through regular contact with non-party governments, ICBL promoted universalisation of the Convention and raised government and public awareness of landmine and unexploded ordnance issues.

Geneva Call

Geneva Call Asia Program

Funding: \$200,000

Australia funded Geneva Call, an international humanitarian organisation focused on increasing adherence of non-state actors to the prohibitions in the Mine Ban Convention regarding use, manufacture and stockpiling of landmines. Geneva Call's advocacy work is important in eliminating landmine stockpiling and use, and reducing the risk to civilians in conflict-affected areas.

Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining

Mine Ban Convention Sponsorship Program

Funding: \$25,000

Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons Sponsorship Program

Funding: \$20,000

Both of these sponsorship programs supported States Parties in the process of fulfilling core obligations of the Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. This support enabled mine-affected developing countries to attend and participate in key international meetings relating to the conventions in 2008. These meetings, such as the annual Meeting of the States Parties, play an important role in strengthening the implementation of both conventions.

Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit

Funding: \$80,000

The Implementation Support Unit is an independent organisation which provides information, advice and assistance on all aspects of the implementation of the Mine Ban Convention. During 2008-09, the Unit provided secretariat support to the Mine Ban Convention, maintained the Convention's documentation centres, distributed information on the Convention's operations and provided advice to individual States Parties regarding fulfilling their convention obligations.

Landmine Victim Assistance Expert Position**Funding: \$105,000**

Australia continued to support the Landmine Victim Assistance Specialist Position, which provides advisory services to mine-affected countries. The position helps raise awareness of the rights and needs of landmine victims and the need for adequate and appropriate assistance for the physical rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration of landmine victims, including those with a disability.

Operational Support Asia-Pacific**Funding: \$270,000**

In 2008-09, Australia supported a number of Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining operational activities in Asia. This support included the Linking Mine Action to Development Project, which provided specific support to strengthen the development effectiveness of mine action programs in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. Australia also supported the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining Land Release and Risk Management Project. The purpose of this project was to clearly define the process of land release in mine action and examine the applicability of risk management to that process.

United Nations Mine Action Service

Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action

Funding: \$300,000

The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) is the United Nations (UN) focal point for mine action collaborating with 13 other UN departments, agencies, programmes and funds to ensure a coordinated response to the problem of landmines and explosive remnants of war. UNMAS plays a coordinating role within the UN system and in the field of UN-managed mine action programmes and emergency response situations. Through this work, UNMAS aims to ensure an effective, proactive and coordinated response to the problems of landmines and other explosive remnants of war. Australia's support through the UNMAS Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action allows UNMAS greater flexibility to respond to emergencies and country-specific mine action needs.

Handicap International Belgium

Ban Advocates

Funding: \$40,000

This project supported the 2009 advocacy and awareness-raising activities of Ban Advocates, a coalition of cluster munitions victims. Through data collection and small grants provisions this project will support national activities to promote ratification, implementation and universalisation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. In addition to identifying new members, with a particular focus on women, Handicap International undertook a variety of activities centred on training, advocacy, research, outreach and evaluation.

Country-specific activities

Afghanistan



Mine Clearance/Mine Risk Education

United Nations Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan

Community Clearpath Program

Funding: \$5,000,000

Afghanistan is one of the most heavily mined and explosive remnants of war contaminated countries in the world. Australia supported the United Nations Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (UNMACA) through a large-scale, community-based initiative to tackle mines and other explosive remnants of war in Oruzgan and border provinces. The initiative builds on existing mine action programs assisting the Afghan Government to provide mine risk education, and rehabilitation and support for landmine victims. The program engages local communities in the scoping and implementation of plans to reduce the threat of mines and explosive remnants of war, including the creation of demining teams comprised of villagers from impacted communities.

A key outcome of Australian support has been the establishment of a new Community Based Demining Project in Oruzgan province, in the south of Afghanistan. To date, around 71,000 square metres of land has been cleared through the removal of 18 anti-personnel mines and 6,968 explosive remnants of war, allowing affected communities to move freely again and to cultivate their lands. Australia's assistance has also contributed to the clearing of 16 square kilometres along the border with Pakistan, freeing 549 communities from the threat of mines.

UNMACA, one of the largest global mine action programs in the world, is now called the Mine Action Coordination Centre for Afghanistan (MACCA).

Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining

Information Management support for the Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan Funding: \$200,000

This funding supported the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining to work with UNMACA to update their information management tool, the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA). IMSMA is the United Nations preferred information management system for mine action. It was developed to help make mine action safer, faster, more effective and efficient and is currently in use in more than eighty per cent of mine action programs around the world. Australia's support increased the capacity of the centre to better analyse and report on the Afghanistan mine action program. As information is a valuable and strategic resource that requires adequate management, this support plays an important part in ensuring the UNMACA goals and objectives are achieved.

Cambodia



Integrated Mine Action/Victim Assistance

ActionAid

Integrated Mine Action and Development in Banteay Meanchey Province
Funding: \$671,365 (\$3.1 million from 2006–2010)

This project seeks to improve the livelihoods of people living in mine-affected villages in Banteay Meanchey Province. The project has improved socio-economic conditions for these communities through an integrated approach of clearing mines, providing water and community infrastructure, and agricultural and vocational skills training for vulnerable groups, particularly landmine victims. To date, 170.5 hectares has been cleared for resettlement, mostly for agriculture. Based on the success of the program, a one year extension has been approved to June 2010.

CARE Australia

Integrated Mine Action and Development in Pailin Province
Funding: \$757,304 (\$3 million from 2006–2010)

This project aims to reduce landmine casualties and support local communities to help themselves through community development activities. Its three key areas of focus are land clearance, land access and sustainable land use for poor communities. To date, 80.6 hectares has been cleared for resettlement, agriculture, demonstration plots, schools, roads and canals. The project continues to work with local government to improve the delivery of services for mine-affected communities. The project also aims to address unexploded ordnance-tampering issues and reduce the rate of casualties from explosive remnants of war, through community mine risk education. Based on the success of the program, a one year extension has been approved to June 2010.

World Vision Australia/International Women's Development Agency

Community Strengthening and Gender Mainstreaming in Integrated Mine Action Funding: \$763,100 (\$3.1 million from 2006–2010)

This project is addressing the immediate needs of mine-affected communities in Battambang and Preah Vihear Provinces, while identifying effective strategies to better incorporate gender in mine action. To date, 120.4 hectares has been cleared for agriculture, water supply, roads, resettlement and schools. The project is working with the Cambodian Mine Action Authority to mainstream gender in its National Mine Action Strategy (2010–2020). It has also provided training to village chiefs on promoting the participation of men and women in village meetings and is piloting approaches to better target mine risk education to male youth who experience the highest rate of mine and unexploded ordnance accidents. Strategies for gender mainstreaming are shared with partner organisations involved in integrated mine action. Based on the success of the program, a one year extension has been approved to June 2010.

Australian Red Cross

Landmine Survivor Assistance Program Funding: \$1,254,351.45 (\$3.9 million from 2007–2010)

The program incorporates survivor assistance activities under a single umbrella program. It includes management and coordination of the Landmine Survivor Assistance Fund which provides small grants to NGOs to provide rehabilitation services. Since 2007, the fund has supported more than 10,000 beneficiaries to receive prosthetics, wheelchairs, physiotherapy and livelihood training and support, as well as access to adequate health care, clean water and latrines. The program also strengthens the Cambodian Red Cross's capacity to manage emergency assistance, collect data on landmine and unexploded ordnance casualties and provide mine risk education and reduction programs in rural areas. In 2008–09 the program successfully supported The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Cambodian Disability Action Council to develop and adopt a National Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities Including Landmine/Explosive Remnants of War Survivors.

Mine Clearance

United Nations Development Programme

Clearing for Results

Funding: \$3,740,000 (\$14 million from 2006–2010)

Australia continued its multi-year funding for the Clearing for Results program in Cambodia. Clearing for Results is a multi-donor mine clearance fund supporting Cambodia's mine clearance efforts. Managed by the United Nations Development Programme, funding is directed to priority mine clearance tasks in accordance with Cambodia's national and provincial development plans. During 2008, 6.8 million square metres of land was cleared of mines, exceeding the annual clearance target of 5.9 million square metres. Approximately sixty per cent of land was cleared for agriculture or resettlement, twenty per cent for community roads and twenty per cent for schools, irrigation channels, pagodas and other uses. The program has also been effective in improving mine clearance standards through its quality assurance components. Clearing for Results supports improved donor coordination and strengthening of Cambodian Government systems and processes.

Australian Volunteers International

Strengthening Capacity of Mine Action Planning Units Program

Funding: \$66,849

Through this project, the Mines Advisory Group coordinated small technical survey teams skilled in mapping to reassess cultivated land previously suspected of contamination by landmines. This project was successfully completed in September 2008 and assisted the Cambodian Mine Action Planning Units to make priority decisions regarding clearance and allocation of land in the five most mine affected provinces of Cambodia.

Iraq



Mine Clearance

United Nations Development Programme

Clearance of Explosive Remnants of War in Southern Iraq
Funding: \$1,000,000

Australia supported this United Nations Development Programme activity which is implemented by the Danish Demining Group with the Rafidain Demining Organisation. The program seeks to sustain humanitarian mine action capacity and improve the socio-economic situation in southern Iraq, through increased employment, organisational capacity and agricultural production. More than 8.7 million square metres of land was cleared from July to December 2008 and 20 students were trained in mine clearance. Throughout 2008, this activity destroyed 63,256 explosive remnants of war, including abandoned artillery shells, mortars, grenades and ammunition. Clearing unexploded ordnance from schools allowed 2,400 pupils to return to their studies, while clearing unexploded ordnance from agricultural land allowed 1,500 farmers to open new vegetable and date farms.

Victim Assistance

United Nations Development Programme

Conflict Victim Assistance in the Northern Region of Iraq
Funding: \$2,400,000 (April 2009–June 2010)

Australia provided support to extend the successful Conflict Victim Assistance Project, and through it supported victim assistance centres in the Erbil, Dahuk and Sulaymaniyah Governorates. The program includes the physical and socio-economic rehabilitation of people with disability and their re-integration into society. Australia's funding builds on previous support from the Government of Japan. Since October 2007, the victim assistance centres have improved the quality of life for victims by providing 8,563 physiotherapy sessions, 3,341 mobility aids and 3,509 ortho-prosthetic devices. They have provided income generating projects for 96 people with disabilities, vocational training in carpentry and blacksmith skills for 34 people, and adapted 34 homes for landmine victims.

To ensure the sustainability of service provisions beyond 2010, the project will build the capacity of its implementing partners in terms of strategic planning and resource mobilization, while also supporting their advocacy activities. So far, the United Nations Development Programme has held three victim assistance coordination meetings and provided training to allow the victim assistance centres to raise their own funds.

Laos



Advocacy/Universalisation

Lao National Regulatory Authority

South East Asia Regional Conference on the Convention on Cluster Munitions
Funding: \$40,360

Australia supported the Laos Regulatory Authority in hosting the “Safe Path: The South East Asia Regional Conference on the Convention on Cluster Munitions”. The conference was held in October 2008 to promote the Convention on Cluster Munitions in the region. It brought together representatives from 13 governments along with civil society organisations and the United Nations, totalling more than 170 participants. It was one of three regional conferences held around the world in the lead-up to the Oslo Signing Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in December 2008. The three-day meeting gave participants the chance to discuss the landmark convention and the opportunities and challenges it presents to the South East Asian region. Building on the success of the regional conference and the leadership role it has established, Laos is now preparing to host the first Meeting of the States Parties of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Integrated Mine Action/Victim Assistance

CARE Australia

Reducing UXO Risk and Improving Livelihoods of Ethnic Communities in Sekong Province

Funding: \$926,315 (\$3.07 million over five years, 2007–2012)

Australia's support for the Reducing UXO (unexploded ordnance) Risk and Improving Livelihoods of Ethnic Communities project has helped to reduce the vulnerability of poor ethnic communities affected by unexploded ordnance contamination in two districts of Sekong Province. The project incorporates unexploded ordnance clearance, community-based planning and land use allocation, mine risk education and small scale rural development initiatives to improve livelihood security. CARE Australia is implementing the activity in partnership with the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action. As of June 2009, the project had completed a comprehensive baseline survey and village profiles, which integrated unexploded ordnance clearance needs with community development priorities. Unexploded ordnance clearance and livelihood development activities have begun, with accomplishments including the release of a land area of 64,927 square metres to land owners following the clearance of 59 unexploded ordnance. A further 210 unexploded ordnance were cleared through roving tasks across other areas. The released land will be used for rice paddy, tree plantations, fish ponds and construction.

Improving Socio-economic Integration Services for People with Disabilities in Sekong Province

Funding: \$176,289

This program provided the Lao Disabled People's Association with greater capacity to work with its members in Sekong Province. People with disability are among the poorest and most vulnerable and experience many barriers preventing them from full participation in society. They are the most likely to face an increased risk of social exclusion including: the inability to access education, health services, earn a living or participate in decision making like others in their communities. Social exclusion is a major contributor to the levels of poverty faced by people with disability, particularly those living in developing countries. The emphasis of this program is to ensure that people with disability, including victims of landmine and unexploded ordnance incidents, understand their rights and exercise them to achieve greater inclusion in social and economic activities.

Lebanon



Mine Clearance

United Nations Mine Action Service

Humanitarian Mine Action Response
Funding: \$500,000

Australia provided assistance to the United Nations Mine Action Service to address challenges facing southern Lebanon following conflict in 2006, which resulted in widespread contamination from unexploded ordnance, in particular cluster munitions. The unexploded ordnance contamination threatens the safety of civilians, presents a significant obstacle to humanitarian efforts, and impedes economic recovery. This activity reduced such threats through mine and unexploded ordnance awareness and safety training, explosive ordnance disposal, battle area clearance and technical survey operations.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency

Recovery and Reconstruction of Nahr el-Bared camp
Funding: \$500,000

In 2009, Australia continued assistance to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for recovery and reconstruction of the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp in northern Lebanon. This project removed rubble and unexploded ordnance from the camp and adjacent areas to enable the safe return and reintegration of refugees displaced by recent conflict.

Mozambique



Mine Clearance

United Nations Development Programme

Mozambique Mine Action Programme

Funding: \$500,000

In 2009, Australia supported the provision of capacity building and high-level technical support to the National Demining Institute in Mozambique for coordination and quality management of all mine action activities. Through this contribution, Australia supported the maintenance of the Information Management System for Mine Action and the mainstreaming of mine action into the Government of Mozambique's major planning instruments at central and provincial levels. Under this project, direct mine clearance operations were also supported in accordance with the National Mine Action Strategic Plan and National Mine Action Standards.

Nepal



Mine Clearance

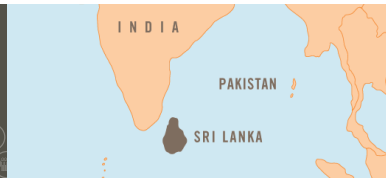
United Nations Mine Action Team

In-kind donation of 10 mine detectors

Funding: \$37,261

In 2009, Australia provided 10 Australian-made landmine detectors to the United Nations in Nepal to assist with the clearance of 45 minefields across the country. These landmine detectors will continue to assist the United Nations in their efforts to reduce the risk of death and disability from landmine-related incidents in Nepal. The detectors were made by Minelab Electronics, an Australian company and leading international provider of mine detectors.

Sri Lanka



Mine Clearance/Mine Action Coordination

International Organisation for Migration and Swiss Foundation for Mine Action

Mine clearance for the Return and Resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons Funding: \$300,000

Since the end of hostilities in May 2009, Australian assistance through the partnership of the International Organisation for Migration and the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action has contributed to the training of 25 deminers and team leaders and the training of one Explosive Ordnance Disposal team made of three specialists. The project has cleared more than 1,000 square metres of mine-contaminated land after the completion of the training in two villages in the Rice Bowl area, Mannar district. It has removed 78 anti-personnel mines and two unexploded ordnance. It is envisaged that 96 families will be resettled in these areas soon after full clearance is completed. There are also plans to start and continue clearance in 10 more villages in the same area to enable another 774 families to resettle and restart their lives. The team will undertake further work in Manthai West Division with a survey of the area.

Mines Advisory Group

Emergency Mine Action Survey and Clearance

Funding: \$1,000,000

This project contributed towards national peace-building efforts in Sri Lanka, assisting population to recover from intense conflict and return to an environment in which long-term sustainable development can take place. The removal of mines and the facilitation of the return of internally displaced people are key aspects of building sustainable peace in Sri Lanka. In addition to clearance activities, the project focused on sustainable livelihood activities and facilitating reconstruction and regeneration by providing safe access to communities in the Mannar, Vavuniya, and Mullaittivu districts.

Mine Action fast facts

- > No use, production or transfer of antipersonnel mines was recorded by any State Party to the Mine Ban Treaty.
- > Three States Parties completed stockpile destruction: Afghanistan, Burundi and Sudan.
- > Recorded casualty rates from mines, explosive remnants of war (ERW), and victim-activated improvised explosive devices continued to decrease, from 6,022 in 2006 to 5,426 in 2007. Of the 2007 casualties, 1,401 people were killed, 3,939 injured, and the remaining 86 were unknown.
- > More than 8.4 million people received mine risk education in 2007, the highest level ever recorded by Landmine Monitor. An increasing number of mine risk education programs in highly mine/ERW-affected countries directly targeted those most at risk due to their economic activities to encourage behaviour changes.
- > Several countries such as Afghanistan and Uganda integrated victim assistance into national disability plans guaranteeing future sustainability. Others, such as Albania and Sudan, built national capacity for victim assistance services.
- > For 2007, donors provided more than US\$430 million of international funding to mine action, the second highest total ever. Mine-affected states generated a further \$117 million in national funding, an increase of \$33 million compared to 2006.
- > In May 2008, 107 states adopted the new Convention on Cluster Munitions which comprehensively bans the use, production, stockpiling, and transfer of cluster munitions.

Source: *Landmine Monitor Report 2008: Toward a Mine Free World*

