

Methods: the MAE cross-design

No single method is adequate for the complex task of evaluating mine awareness in Afghanistan. The toolbox developed for the four-country mine survey was adapted for the Afghanistan MAE. It includes:

a. Analysis of existing data: A considerable amount of data on land mine events are already available. The completeness of this and the extent of repetitions is unknown. Each partner was asked to supply their data on coverage and impact for 1997. All were able to provide listings of the activities performed, and none had data on changing patterns of mine awareness.

b. Institutional Review: For each of the partners, curriculum materials and delivery strategies were reviewed and their coverage mapped across the sentinel communities. Each partner was asked to indicate which sites were covered by their programme, later to permit analysis of expected and actual coverage.

c. Baseline household assessment: In the panel of 86 sentinel communities, household quantitative data were collected on mine smartness in relation to coverage with mine awareness activities. The household survey was applied to 9,124 households, almost always to a male respondent (Annex 3).

d. Key opinions: Interviews with nine mine awareness trainers (three from OMAR and six from SC/US) helped to document the prevailing training culture, to identify potential factors in success or failure of the training. Specific questions were asked about the mine committees/councils (Annex 3 for questionnaire).

e. Focus group discussions with at-risk people: There were 86 male focus groups with 849 participants (one in each site) and seven focus groups with 42 women in Kabul. The schedule and reporting format from the focus groups is provided in Annex 3.

f. Schools-based monitoring: The review of children's knowledge of the risks and the source of their knowledge were explored through 86 children's group interviews, one per site, including 915 participants.

The sample

Based on data from the last census projections, four UN operational regions (all excluding the North) were stratified by district to provide a framework for second stage district level selection. In each UN operational area, a random sample of 48 districts were drawn from a list of all districts, stratified by population density. From each of these districts, a single site was selected from a stratified list (urban/rural). In addition, two other major constituencies were included in the sample of residential sites. Refugee camps visited in the 1994 survey were revisited in 1997 to permit follow-up over time. Also included in the sample, though analysed separately, were several of the residential communities included from the 1994 survey. The main 1997 survey was conducted in November of that year, by which time the nomads had not yet returned to their winter quarters. Repetition of this component of follow-up from 1994 was therefore impossible. The MAE framework took into account the scope of mine action in Afghanistan:

- X A total of 35 clusters from northern Afghanistan were excluded from the CIET-UNICEF national sample because no UNOCHA-associated organisation was involved in the area,
- X The 30 clusters visited during the 1994 study¹ were included;
- X Five clusters were added intentionally in the Kandahar Region to give a weighted representation of the area currently served by Handicap International.

¹ Andersson N, Palha C, Paredes S. Social costs of land mines in four countries. *British Medical Journal* 1995,311;718-721.

The MAE thus had a total of 102 clusters distributed as follows:

- Western Region: 21 clusters of which seven were sites from 1994.
- Eastern Region: 37 clusters of which 23 sites are added from the 1994. The 1994 sites in this region gave representation to refugee camps (Eastern went from 1 to 6 clusters).
- Southern Region: Five clusters were added purposively to this region, mainly districts of the Kandahar province. The total number of clusters in this panel is 25.
- Kabul or Central Region: No clusters were added to the 19 in this panel.

Several of the sites could not be reached:

- In the Western region, the team was advised by UNOCHA to avoid Site 21 for security reasons.
- In the Eastern region, fighting took place in site 44 during the pilot testing, and the team was turned back by villagers; the same occurred in sites 47, 49, 50, 56 and 57.
- Central region sites 67, 68, 70-73, 75 and 77 are on the front line with the north; the teams could not get into these villages even with help from relatives of the Sayyed.
- In Kandahar, the team was stopped by the local government administrator from entering site 102.

Process: the evaluation activities and deliverables

a. The process began with clarification of the services to be evaluated, through liaison with the UNOCHA focal point and the collaborating NGOs. This led to summaries of collaborating programmes, linked to sites where the partner programmes are implemented (see Annex 1).

b. Development of instruments for data collection by household survey, key opinion interviews, group techniques or institutional reviews in English, Dari and Pushtu. These were field tested, during which time 36 field workers were recruited and trained. At the end of the training, two supervisors were selected as field coordinators. Requirements for interviewers included: a good level of education, ability to understand and to speak both Dari and Pushtu; they required previous interviewing experience. The first stage of training focussed on the household interview. The focus group discussion was part of the second stage. All moderators and monitors were trained on how to conduct and register events in a focus group discussion.

c. Fact finding started at the end of October 1997. Data gathering through household survey, key opinions and institutional reviews were conducted in 86 communities. The household questionnaire was administered to the head of each household.

d. Two focussed discussion groups (one of men and one of schoolboys) were organized in each cluster. The children's discussions was started by a circle game, using the SC/US design, to get the children talking about the issues. The facilitator formed a circle with the children, standing outside of it. The rapporteur sat to the side of the facilitator to take note of the children's responses. The facilitator threw a ball to a child in the circle. The child who caught the ball was asked one of a list of questions (Annex 3) by the facilitator. If a child answered the question correctly, s/he threw the ball to another child. If the child answered incorrectly, the facilitator asked other children in the circle if they could give the answer. This was followed by the group questionnaire (Annex 3).

e. Data collection was completed by mid-December 1997. Double data entry and preliminary analysis led to the draft report (5 May 1998, revised version 6 July, 1998).

f. Discussions with partners. In October 1998, UNOCHA arranged tripartite meetings with each of the implementing partners to discuss the findings.

g. Definitive analysis, including comments of the implementing partners and the recommendations were included in the final report.