MAKING THE POPULATIONS AWARE OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

All authorities, «official» or traditional, teachers, health personnel, clergy, associations delegates..., in short, all the people, networks or training structures for the groups of populations of interest, should be mobilised. Education sessions, organized with the community «leaders», will take place in schools, in districts, in front of the church, at the health centre on the day when the children get their vaccines, in companies, in transit centres for the repatriates, in co-operatives, at some point during meetings unrelated to this problem, on the market place...

Within each village, or identified geographical zone, the «**mine committees**» permit the continuation of the job undertaken by the leaders of the MAP. It is their responsibility to warn each newcomer (repatriated) about dangerous areas, about the places where it is unsafe to build one's house, to clear the soil or to dig for water.
Any individual finding a suspicious item must inform the committee who will then notify the local authorities and the agents. On the other hand, the committees pursue the education and awareness-raising activities. They may be charged of controlling that the traditional and / or official signs posted in mined zones and the posted educational material (posters) are given consideration and remain in place.

The wide range of educational material used should be inspired by the means utilized in national campaigns about other issues. Posters, flyers, comics, stickers, plastic grocery bags, T-shirts, inserts in newspapers, school stationery... are the most widely-used supports. Their realization should be given to local designers and artists with a similar experience. The main messages of the MAP will be adapted according to the social and cultural background of the beneficiaries. Drawings will be favoured over text Translation into local dialects, if applicable, will be systematically performed. The material will be tested on sample groups before being circulated on a large scale.
Simple supports, as they are allocated a great part of the budget of the program, will be widely diffused. As for gadgets (card games, pens...), they will be given away only to a lucky few. T-shirts also will only be printed in a limited number and reserved for leaders and members of the «mine committees» They then serve as a recognition sign for the leaders and reference persons towards the populations.
Leaders will have a specific kit for use in conducting the education sessions. This kit should be easy to carry and resistant, It comprises drawings on fabric and paper panels and educational material prepared in advance. The use of life-sized reproductions of wood mines raises a controversy among experts. Although a very visual support of information to make people realize what a mine is, their handling by the animator (in total opposition with the main message given by the MAP which says «Do not touch») could bring confusion into the audience, especially children. Their use should be restricted and take into account the capacity of «abstraction» of the audience

2 - IDENTIFICATION AND LOCATION OF MINED ZONES

The question is first of all to determine the degree of risk and to locate the areas to which access is to be closed and where, in a second step, mine-clearance operations are to be carried out. Minefield surveys are thus both an accident-prevention measure and a first stage in depollution. It is essential that the local population be closely involved in them. This stage of the campaign

should come as soon as possible after the warning stage.

GATHERING AND ANALYSIS OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION

THE RISK-EVALUATION TEAMS

They are to comprise a number of persons who are.
- specialists of the peace-keeping forces,
- foreign civilian experts under contract,
- N.G.O. members specialized in anti-mine techniques or else having very good knowledge of the territory and its inhabitants,
- specially trained local personnel.

These teams on the ground are to gather all the information needed to **draw up a map.**

The first stage is to gather as much information as possible from **the local population:**
The testimony of local people who have come through the conflict is the most reliable of all sources of information. Some will have observed the mines being laid, others will know the rates and places of accidents.

ORGANIZING MEETINGS

of villagers, police, local authorities and soldiers is often very fruitful The «**mine committee**» can be in charge of leading and co-ordinating these meetings. The networks of leaders and committees constituted allow to gather fairly detailed information about the mined zones and other stores of unexploded ammunitions. In each village or community they go through, using the information gathered from the local administrations, from the people who attend the education sessions and from the committees, the leaders are enabled to make an inventory of a number of locations where the presence of mines was either confirmed (an accident happened there, or there are conspicuous mines), or suspected («nobody goes there because rumor has it.. »). The same thing happens with abandoned ammunition stores, shells, mortars, grenades, rockets and unexploded bullets. Discussion centres on areas which may have had strategic significance (roads, bridges, transmission lines and so forth) and on the places essential to everyday life such as water supplies and access paths to the woods and fields.
It will be the responsibility of the «mine committee» to conduct the enquiry and complete specific forms for his region. These forms should be created in co-operation with the structures in charge of mine-clearance. Indeed, although usable by non-specialists, they should provide data that the organizations in charge of mine-clearance can exploit. Therefore it is necessary to rely thoroughly on the location drawings. Two drawings are usually made . a general location drawing of the zones which makes it possible to locate them on a map (usually to the 250,000 th scale), then a minute localization drawing of the mined spot including drawings of the surrounding elements (trees, paths, huts, wells...). Obviously, this drawing is made from a distance.
This collection of data, if properly realized and utilized, is a choice source of information for the leaders of the MAP themselves (adaptation of the program to the reality of the ground), for all the structures which will intervene in the area and for the mine-clearance organisms which, thanks to the inventory of information, can adapt their priorities of intervention.

THE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED

Should be determined by common sense.
- Where were the troops quartered ?
- How did they move ?
- Where did the accidents happen ?
- Was the village previously protected, or, on the contrary, threatened by a mine belt?
- Are there paths or roads having exposed lengths or strategic crossroads?
- Are there any bridges or fords, etc.?
- Are there any suspicious objects?
- How were the mines set up?
- Are they buried or hidden?
- ...

It is essential to **compare and integrate such information** with that gained by the first-aid personnel, the hospitals and the NGO's specialized in the care and rehabilitation of the disabled and, if possible, of the formerly warring factions. The latter themselves are sometimes in a position to provide maps. The Soviet forces' knowledge of the minefields they had sown in Afghanistan turned out to be satisfactory- which was more than could be said of the mujahidin, whose already uncertain indications did not take account of movement due to rains and floods.

Usually there will be no mine-laying maps, and, if there are any, they tend to be inexact. Moreover, it is not always possible to count on the good faith of the belligerents, who will keep the secret of their minefields as a bargaining counter for as long as the peace process is not yet final. When such exist, documents provided by the warring factions need to be read with the greatest of care, as, in conflicts with no exact front-line, minefields may have been moved and/or replaced by others without any indication. The ideal would be to be able to be guided by someone who had been actively involved in the mine-laying operations, but it is often difficult to find such, and in any case his memory is liable to be defective.

In fact, the one and only way of getting to know the

extent of the danger is to set up **on-the-ground evaluation missions.**

SIGN-POSTING AND MAP-MAKING METHODS

Minefield surveys and sign-posting should render **precise conclusions** enabling the formulation of a **national mine-action program**. The first step consists in the **study of clues**.

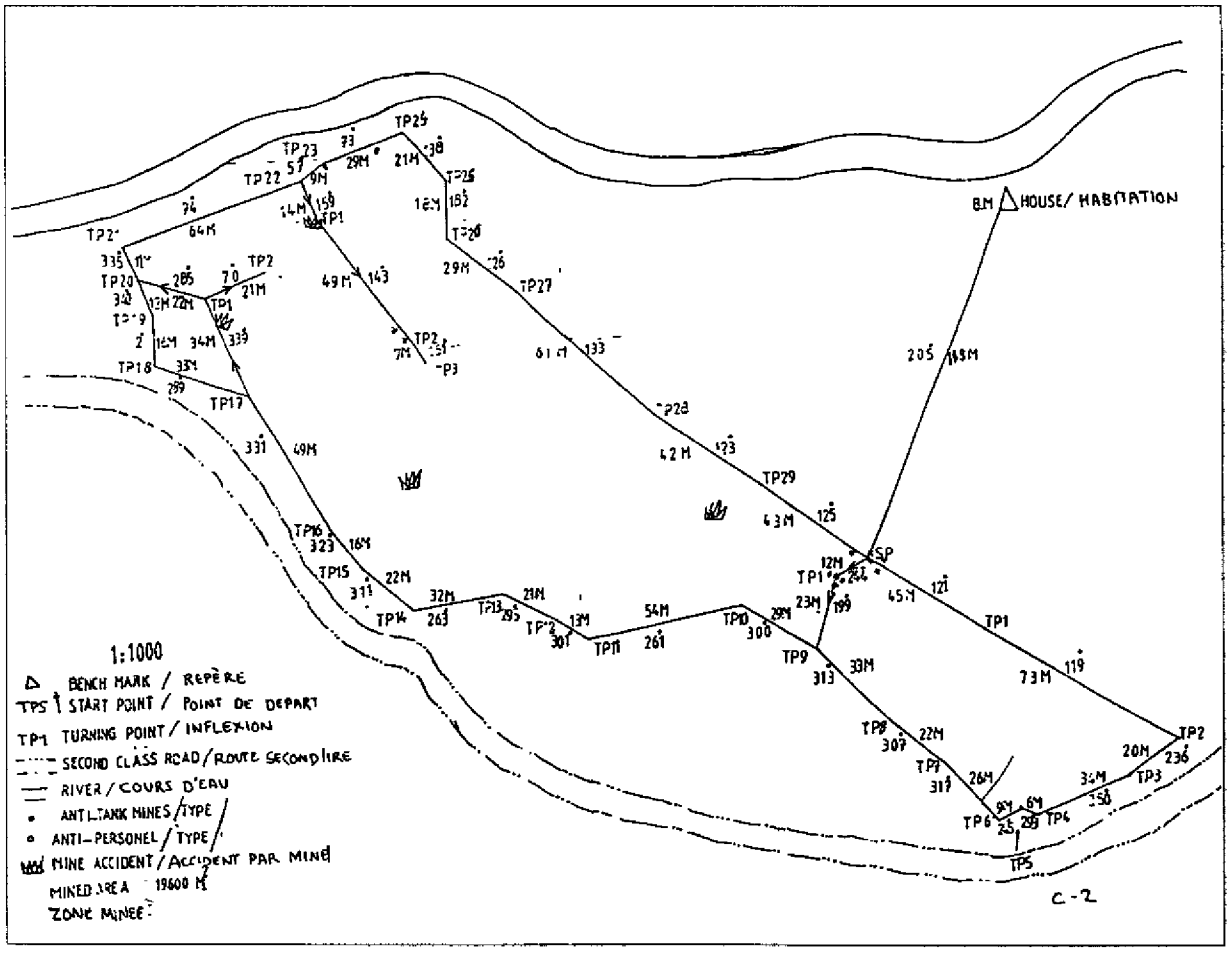
This involves inspecting suspect territory, paying particular attention to anything that might indicate the presence of a mine: traces of explosion, corpses whether human or animal, packaging and containers of air-scattered munitions, etc.. Special attention is to be paid to the ground around isolated trees, the banks of waterways, etc.. It is discovering the first mine which is the key-event.

Taking into account the above-mentioned difficulties, maps of the danger areas may be rough and ready. There may be gaps, and experience shows that more often the extent of the minefields tends to be exaggerated. It is therefore vital to have large scale records, area by area, so as to give the mine-clearance teams a reliable map to work with.

On the ground, the contours of the minefields should as far as possible be staked out or traced with painted stones. The site of each mine or UXO* should be marked with a wooden stake painted in some code-colour determined by the chief technician of the worksite:

For example: green stake top for an antitank mine, red stake top for an antipersonnel blast mine, etc... These stakes are not to be removed until the site-work is concluded They serve to give an image of the distribution of the mines and the extent of the pollution. This information should be recorded as scrupulously as possible on the map. Minefield surveys will sometimes mean opening up a pathway inside the minefield itself, so as to be able to specify its configuration and to identify the mines used. Each evening, such probe corridors are to be closed off.

Example of topographie plan from Bosnia



This indispensable preliminary mission requires highly qualified mine-clearance operators, making a real «police investigation» on the ground. This can tend to become over-painstaking: vast territories have sometimes to be gone over, with very little to show for it; the clearance operators may then lower their guard- and this is when accidents can happen.

Once a detailed survey has been completed, it is essential to move on as quickly as possible to the corresponding mine-clearance programme and to draw up a list of priority zones where clearance will have a maximum impact on the accident rates. In these areas, clearance work should be started as soon as possible, before man and nature have had time to alter the terrain and make all previous maps of it obsolete. Mine-clearance preparations in Angola involve a priority-scale, proposed by the Central Mine Action Office (C.M.A.O.), to apply to identification and mapping of danger areas:

Degree of Necessity	Degree of Urgency	Relief Personnel Exposure	Operation Impact
vital	immediate	maximum	maximum
5	5	5	5
relative		average	moderate
3		4	4
necessary	postponed	slight	slight
3	2	3	2
desirable	unimportant	nil	nil
1	1	0	0

Top score is 20, the lowest possible score 2. Sites will be dealt with in the priority order thus established by the specialist committee appointed by the C.M.A.O., with no account being taken of the difficulty or duration of the job

It is quite likely that in the future detecting and identifying danger areas will come to be considered as a means in itself in the fight against antipersonnel mines.

Such surveys will be ever more well-codified and have priority access to new mine-detection techniques. Associated with warning the local population, identifying danger areas is, in the present state of the art, the best way of avoiding accidents and of saving as many lives as possible.

Given the cost-effectiveness of mine-clearance operations as such, it will in fact be necessary to develop a **strategy «for the better»**, consisting in sign-posting as meticulously as possible the danger areas, without actually treating all of them.

Mine-clearance operations will be limited to zones vital for the return to normal life and to development operations.

This is the policy adopted in Afghanistan, the most mine-infested country on earth. Top-priority zones, requiring immediate mine-clearance, represent 25% of the total polluted area.

If we take it that the programme will be completed in 1997, then it will have lasted 10 years, yet there will remain 75% of the infested area still representing danger zones.

It is vital to identify these areas precisely, both on the ground and on the map, until the Afghanistan government undertakes the continuation of mine-clearance- which, in the present state of the art, will extend over several decades.