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# Community-Based Mine Action: Lessons Learned



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# Purpose

- To provide a global overview of MAG
- To explain MAG's move to stronger community involvement in the 1990's
- To give examples from MAG programmes
- To provide lessons learned



# What do we mean by “Community Based”

- Actions are focused on the needs of the community
- The community plays a key part in the response
- Maybe one, ideally both

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**MAG's vision:** A world where people can build peaceful and prosperous futures free from the impact of the Remnants of Conflict.

**MAG's mission:** To build futures of people affected by the remnants of conflict through responsive, quality-driven and progressive action. We remove the physical threat of injury and death and alleviate economic devastation. We provide clearance and education enabling an escape from the poverty and suffering caused by conflict.

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# MAG Overview

- Founded in 1989 in Afghanistan; have worked in over in 35 countries
- Co-laureate of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize
- MAG & MAG America work together to educate, promote, and fundraise in the US
- Today MAG employs 3,059 national staff and 133 expatriates in the field covering 17 countries, with 51 in the UK and 7 roving.

<i>National Staff</i>	<b>3,059</b>	<i>Amputee Staff</i>	<b>38</b>
<i>International Staff</i>	<b>133</b>	<i>Female Staff</i>	<b>360</b>
<i>Operational Staff</i>	<b>1893</b>	<i>Machines</i>	<b>42</b>
<i>Support Staff</i>	<b>630</b>	<i>Vehicles</i>	<b>587</b>

# MAG Operational Approach

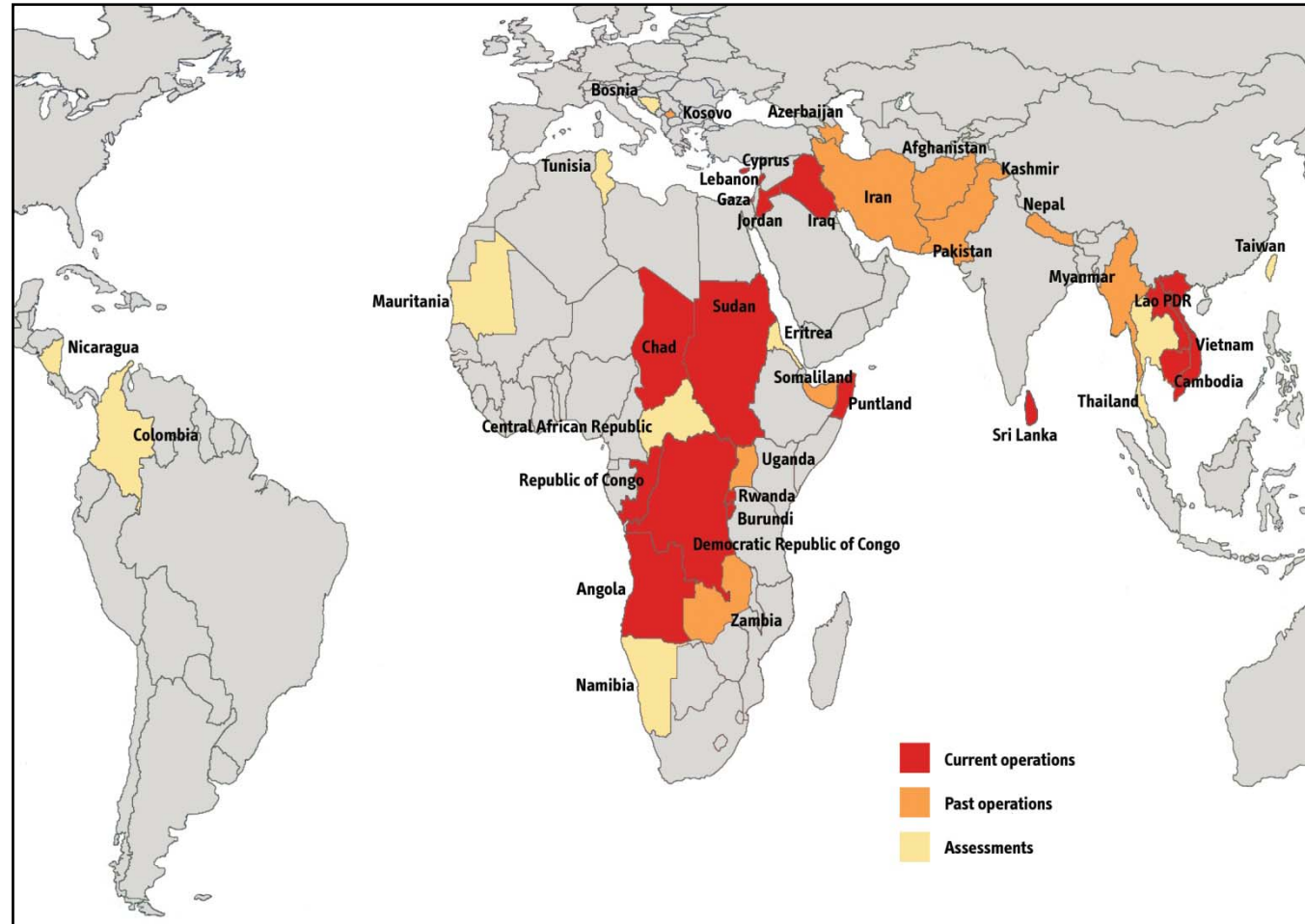
- Focus on impact and development (quality and quantity)
- High Technical standards – track record on safety
- Effective use of new technology – making best use of it
- Work in flexible, mobile multi-skilled teams
- Developing national capacity and national ownership
- Consultation with the local community/ government and NGOs
- Genuine partnership working
- Business like approach (ISO Accredited)

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# MAG Funding

- 98% funding sourced from governments
- Approximately 90% funding is used to implement action
- MAG in the following countries:
  - *Angola*
  - *Burundi (SALW)*
  - *Cambodia*
  - *Chad*
  - *Cyprus*
  - *Congo, Brazzaville (SALW)*
  - *DRC (SALW and HMA)*
  - *Gaza*
  - *Iraq (SALW and HMA)*
  - *Jordan*
  - *Laos*
  - *Lebanon*
  - *Rwanda (SALW)*
  - *Somalia (SALW)*
  - *Sudan (SALW and HMA)*
  - *Sri Lanka*
  - *Vietnam*

# MAG Across the Globe



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# The Move to stronger Community Involvement

- Previously clear operational split: Clearance and MRE
- This was evidently not the best solution
- Was impact being maximised?



# Main Drivers

- The need for improved quality of information to gain better detail of contamination, accidents, socio-economic impact, blockages, etc
- Communities were clearly “risk aware” but still conducted hazardous activities, why?
- The need to “negotiate” and explain partial clearance

# Community Liaison

- “Two way” communication
- “Community” in its widest sense
- An integral element of the operations toolbox, just like a machine or MDD
- Need to be proactive in outreaching to other agencies, local and national governments etc

Mine-action programmes are not only about mines. Rather, they are about **people and their interactions** with a mine-contaminated environment. The aim of mine-action programmes, therefore, is not only technical - to survey, mark and eradicate mines - but also humanitarian and developmental - to create an environment in which people can live more safely and in which economic and social development can occur free from the constraints imposed by landmine contamination. These are the goals of the United Nations mine-action activities.

Para 112, Pg 28, Conclusions, ASSISTANCE IN MINE CLEARANCE , Report of the Secretary-General, December 1997, A/52/679

# Locality demining in Cambodia

- Developed in 2003
- Deminers recruited from affected communities
- Recruited for 2-3 years
- Trained as deminers (4 weeks)
- Often linked to developmental projects

# Benefits

- Cost effective
- Spreads income amongst affected communities
- Minimises “social problems”
- Deminers are highly motivated “clearing their own back yard”

# Constraints

- Works best in high density, high priority areas with multiple tasks
- Takes teams 5-6 months to reach full productivity
- Very popular with donors, sometimes at the expense of being able to fund a comprehensive capacity (MDD, machines etc)

# Village Assisted Clearance

- In 2006 the community based concept was introduced in Laos
- UXO environment
- How do we involve local communities?



# Methodology

- Villagers used for vegetation cutting initially
- Villagers trained to conduct deep search
- Technicians follow-up and excavate signals
- Villagers used in non technical support functions

# Benefits

- Cost effective
- Distribution of income
- Highly motivated

# Lessons Learned

- “One way” MRE of limited use
- Community needs have to be understood
- There is frequently a need for “negotiation”
- To provide impact data donors require Community Liaison is essential

# Lessons Learned

- Community involvement is cost effective
- Community involvement leads to more motivated staff
- Community involvement distributes income and can be targeted at marginalised groups
- Donors welcome community involvement

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# Lessons Learned

- Quality of clearance is not compromised and impact is maximised
- Can be an effective response to volatile security situations (Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq)
- All situations (and solutions) are different

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# Questions?

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