offering support to survivors. Save the Children, an international nongovernmental organization, noted that these existing forms of local support should not be overlooked when seeking to implement new forms of support, such as the introduction of professional aid providers.18 In their book Globalization, Social Justice and the Helping Professions, William Roth and Katharine Briar-Lawson write that “the chief tenet for working with victims and the Helping Professions is to, first and foremost, remove the threat.”

Children who have suffered physically and psychologically will progress more quickly in the rehabilitation process when staying with family; similarly, children who have been separated from family members tend to fare better when placed with a foster family.18 While the threat of bodily harm involved in accidentally detonating a mine, unexploded submunition or some other ERW is evident, the psychological and socioeconomic impacts on a child’s life are less obvious. Children are physically scarred and mentally traumatized, and when families are unable to cope with a disability, the family becomes more vulnerable to the socioeconomic after-effects of the incident. Children require specialized rehabilitative care and additional ongoing support. By understanding the various effects these weapons can have on a child’s life, more appropriate, sustainable care can be provided to those in need.19

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Blake Williamson, CISR Staff

The World dataBank, http://data.worldbank.org, is an informational database launched 20 April 2010 by the World Bank as a part of its Open Data Initiative.20 Within the databank are 27 separate databases containing information on topics ranging from finances and debt to the conditions of African railways. These databases are free and open to the public as a part of the World Bank’s mission to disseminate facts for journalists, academicians and other concerned parties. Most of the datasets are updated annually, although some economic and social datasets are available on a monthly or quarterly basis.21 According to its website, the World Bank hopes that this sharing and publicizing of information will lead to greater transparency and accountability because the World Bank acknowledges these attributes as “essential to the development process and central to achieving the Bank’s mission to alleviate poverty.”

Launched in July 2011, the World Bank’s Landmine Contamination, Casualties and Clearance database is a valuable resource for those working in mine action. The database allows users to create spreadsheets, reports and graphics based on a wealth of landmine-contamination data from around the world.
Notes from the Field

Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (also known as the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention or APBMC). Series variables include casualty statistics, clearance and landmine destruction statistics and information on national and international mine-action funding.

Many individual statistical measures cover a vast body of information in the database, but the World dataBank system is easy to navigate. Breaking down each group of data into specific subgroups dramatically reduces the difficulty of sifting through large reports for a specific statistic. However, the most beneficial aspect of the dataBank is its Format Report feature, which allows users to create single-variable spreadsheets on its website.

The reports can be downloaded to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, but the online report generator gives the spreadsheets an interactive quality. For instance, the online report format allows the user to easily switch between different variables and different sources using the pull-down tab at the top of the screen. This feature enables users to create customized reports and compare data across many variables.

The database also allows users to create graphics and charts from selected data. This feature facilitates easy visual comparison, allowing users to compile helpful graphic data representations. Map view displays data on a world map, an innovative addition to an already quite comprehensive graphics feature. One aspect of the database, however, is less helpful. In some cases, the two sources provide very different data for the same variable. For example, UNMUN data for Civilians killed, total shows much lower numbers for Afghanistan than the Landmine Monitor data displays. This discrepancy does not reflect a failure on the part of the World dataBank, but instead highlights the issues of using varied, non-standardized data-gathering and reporting techniques.

Conclusion

The World dataBank’s Landmine Contamination, Casualties and Clearance database is a useful and innovative resource for anyone interested in mine action or cluster munitions. The site’s navigation is intuitive and easy to learn. As the site develops and information becomes more comprehensive, the database will become an important resource for the mine-action community.

~Jeremiah Smith, CISR Staff

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by Eric Sawyer (iMMAP)

Since the late 1990s, attacks on humanitarian relief- and development workers have steadily grown. Factors contributing to this rising threat include increasingly unstable environments, an expansion in the number of deployed relief-and-development workers, and the erosion of humanitarian neutrality and independence. This increase has been difficult to quantify due to the lack of coherent data concerning security incidents, as well as other contextual information such as disaster events and explosive remnants of war-related data.

The safety-and-security information gap hampers relief- and development efforts by the United Nations and other national and international nongovernmental organizations. Without this information, personnel lack a sound basis upon which to make safe operational and policy decisions. The Information Management & Mine Action Programs strive to decrease the dangers of these operations by compiling critical data in an efficient manner to facilitate better decision-making by project managers, logistics officers, security managers, field workers and other nontechnical personnel who make daily decisions affecting the safety of personnel and agency field operations.

Tools

In 2006, iMMAP developed a supplement to fill the security information gap—the Operations Activity Security Information System. This technology was introduced in Iraq and is used by numerous U.N., nongovernmental and response organizations in Afghanistan, Colombia, Georgia and Pakistan. Building on a common operating picture by compiling disparate event and operations data in one place, OASIS allows users to achieve a comprehensive situational awareness. Along with OASIS, iMMAP employs the Information Management System for Mine Action to manage the vast amount of humanitarian mine-action geospatial information collected in the field. The two systems work together to assist the Iraqi government and humanitarian organizations by creating the humanitarian mine-action common operating picture, allowing for humanitarian and response organizations to combine efforts in planning for overall security and general operations with a clearer understanding of contamination and security hazards. This provides a safer and more effective way to confront the challenges facing Iraq as a heavily contaminated country.

OASIS allows authorized users to enter and share data related to humanitarian mine action through custom interfaces.