

Partnership and Community Development

Despite rapid economic development over recent years, Cambodia remains one of the 59 countries listed within the Least Developed Countries Report (UN, 2010).

Landmines and UXO contribute to keeping people poor by stopping them from using land. In turn this prevents them from growing extra food they could sell, or building infrastructure that would benefit them. In such a setting it is therefore vital that landmine and UXO clearance is linked with wider development efforts. MAG Cambodia integrates clearance with development activities and works closely with in-country partners involved in rural development. In Cambodia, notably Life With Dignity, World Vision, CARE, Finnish Church Aid and Church World Service work closely with MAG, as do other Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and local organisations.

Cleared land is used for Resettlement (29%), Agriculture (43%), Road Building (16%) with the remaining 12% being used for other community activities.

Our strong partnerships with these organisations ensure that clearance of land is integrated with development projects such as the building of roads, health centres, wells and schools, agricultural programmes and the resettlement of internally displaced and landless people.

MAG's work is vital to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly the first: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. The link between poverty and landmine/UXO contamination is recognised by the Royal Government of Cambodia as a cross cutting issue and a major impediment to poverty alleviation. The Government added an additional 9th country-specific MDG in 2003 for Demining, UXO and Victim Assistance.

MAG works very closely with the Cambodian Mine Action Authority (CMAA) and with the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC). At the commune, district and provincial levels, MAG coordinates with relevant local authorities, the Mine Action Planning Unit (MAPU) and Provincial Mine Action Committee (PMAC) to support the prioritisation of clearance tasks and the development of annual clearance plans.



Operational overview

Community Liaison

MAG's Community Liaison (CL) approach ensures that the voices of men, women and children are considered when defining tasks within the mine action process that will have the greatest impact on the most affected communities. CL teams help set clearance priorities, evaluate the impact of MAG's work, ensure strong community participation and ownership.

Mine Action Team

The Mine Action Team (MAT) is MAG's standard unit of clearance, comprising 15 staff that are mobile and skilled in all aspects of manual demining and leadership. In Cambodia all of MAG's MATs are mixed teams, employing both men and women.

Locality Demining

Following a pilot in 2004, MAG developed the locality model of manual clearance, which recruits and trains local people to MAG's high standards, giving them the skills to clear landmines and UXO, under the supervision of experienced MAG staff, within their local areas. The locality model means that MAG offers opportunities of employment to those who aren't able to join more mobile teams, notably women with children. Women are therefore making an increasingly important contribution to clearance in rural areas.

Mine Detection Dog (MDD) teams

MDD teams provide an additional clearance and survey capacity and can achieve faster and more cost-effective clearance than manual demining

alone in certain circumstances and when deployed correctly. Dogs can detect mines with a low metal content and mines buried in areas of high metal contamination, because they're able to sniff out the explosive vapour. MDD teams are supported by ground preparation mechanical assets and teams that are able to cut and remove the vegetation from contaminated land enabling access.

Research and Development

Research and Development is an important part of the programme's activities, trialling and evaluating new and different mechanical means of supporting clearance operations and new detector technologies.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)

EOD teams clear remnants of armed conflict through reactive (community requests) and proactive (searching) responses. MAG has further strengthened the reporting system by introducing 'EOD calling cards', so that community leaders can contact teams at any time of the day to request assistance.

Baseline Survey

MAG Cambodia played an important role in the development of the national Baseline Survey methodology and remains committed to supporting the Baseline Survey of the landmine impacted districts of Cambodia. The results will provide updated information of the level and scope of remaining contamination, helping to better inform planning and prioritisation and enable more accurate long term planning and forecasting.



Lucky escapes a thing of the past

Duk Nan, a 60-year-old father of five daughters, has had his fair share of lucky escapes. A former Khmer Rouge soldier, he lost one eye to the war against Vietnam. Since then he has also suffered several mine accidents whilst clearing his land to grow crops, but each time managed to survive. "Once in 1996 or 1997 when I was burning bush, a UXO underground exploded. Fortunately, it hit only a tree right in front of me. If there hadn't been that tree, I would have been killed."

Duk Nan lives in the commune of Ou Chamlong, Kamrieng District, where MAG completed clearance in 2008 of a total area of 37 hectares (ha) of contaminated land (the size of 69 football fields). They found and destroyed 2,972 Anti-Personnel mines, four Anti-Tank mines, and 82 items of UXO. Today, Duk Nan owns more than 11 ha on which he grows corn, beans, and rice and also leases plots of land to other villagers. Before MAG conducted clearance on his land he was only able to work on 2 ha of land. "At that time, most of the land was left unused due to heavy mine contamination." Duk Nan says he can now achieve an annual income of around 6,000,000 Cambodian Riel (around \$1435).

Ou Chamlong's village chief, Kim Chin, says that "The development here has doubled. People's living conditions are now a lot better. They now

have a lot more belongings and property. Before, there was only one iron buffalo and now there are around sixteen of them. There used to be only four motorbikes and now more than seventy or eighty per cent of villagers have motorbikes."

New houses and fields of corn, tapioca and beans have replaced the mines that once covered the fields of Ou Chamlong. The village chief says the villagers' increased income has resulted from selling the crops they grow on the land cleared by MAG. As the villagers harvest their crops, large vehicles from Thailand come to the area to buy their products, stimulating economic development in the area.

As a result of more safe land and economic opportunity, more families are moving into the village. Population numbers have risen from around 80 families before the clearance activities took place, to 225 in July 2009, nearly 220 of which depend solely on growing crops.

A rising population and stronger livelihoods for the population of Ou Chamlong are signs that minefield clearance has had an impact above and beyond saving lives. For people like Duk Nan, however, the new feeling of safety as they go about their daily lives after so many years of fear will also be highly valued.



