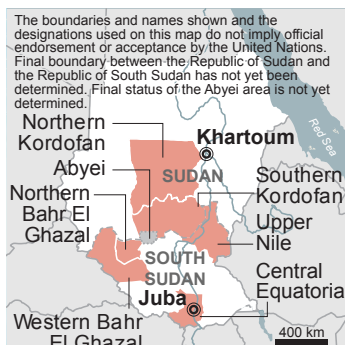


Crossing the Bridge of peace: Victim assistance and mine risk education for human security in Sudan



UN Trust Fund for Human Security



Fast Facts

Country: Sudan

Duration: August 2006 to January 2008

Implementing UN Agencies: UNMAS/UNOPS; UNICEF; UNDP

Other Implementing Partners: Government ministries; national mine action authorities; local NGOs/CSOs

Budget: \$1,726,824

Key Words: Demining; IDPs; post-conflict reintegration; livelihoods

BACKGROUND

After twenty years of civil war, the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army on 9 January 2005 ushered a new era of hope for the people of Sudan. At the same time, as a result of the civil war, the prevalence of landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) presented significant physical and psychological barriers to local communities. Landmines and ERWs inhibited agricultural production, hampered economic activity, threatened food security, and limited freedom of movement,

especially for the most vulnerable populations, including children, peoples with disabilities, mine/war affected victims and the returnees. Accordingly, the World Food Programme estimated that the food security of two million people was directly affected by mines/ERW, while restricted movement undermined economic activity and severely constrained emergency and development aid from reaching communities in need. At particularly high risk were internally displaced persons (IDPs) passing through or returning to mine/ERW affected areas with little or no knowledge of the dangers of mines/ERWs.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the project was to empower the Government and local authorities, NGOs and communities to develop country-wide strategies to address the needs of mine and ERW victims and other persons with disabilities. Meanwhile, the project also established community-based programmes to reduce exposure to the risks posed by landmines. This was achieved through: (i) strengthening national mechanisms to provide integrated and effective support to mine/ERW victims and promote sustainable reconciliation and peace-building in Sudan; (ii)

conducting a needs assessment and providing technical support for socio-economic reintegration of mine/ERW victims; (iii) raising awareness among the affected communities and returning IDPs about the threats of mines and ERW and strengthening their capacity to avoid associated risks; and (iv) enhancing understanding of the importance of victim assistance and mine risk education while raising awareness on how integrated mine action is essential to safeguard human security in the region.

BENEFICIARIES

The project's beneficiaries were communities affected by mines/ERW, IDPs passing through areas affected by mines/ERW, especially women and children, and

mines/ERW victims as well as other persons with disabilities.



NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

(i) The project successfully brought together Government ministries, national mine action authorities, UN agencies, and mine/ERW victims to develop the National Strategic Framework for Victim Assistance (SFVA). SFVA takes a comprehensive approach to providing high quality, culturally appropriate, victim-centered services, and was officially approved and endorsed by the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs/Mine Action Authority in July 2007.

(ii) To raise awareness of mines/ERWs among at risk communities, IDPs and returnees, the project conducted a series of trainings on mine risk education (MRE). A total of eight MRE teams were trained and deployed in the field to provide training to over 136,800 at-risk individuals. Moreover, 60 master MRE trainers were trained through a ‘training of trainers programme,’ while 2,037 school teachers were

educated on MRE and were provided with teaching materials on the topic.

(iii) Prior to the project, activities around mines/ERWs were generally limited to easily accessible areas and focused largely on physical rehabilitation of victims. Extending the impact of these initial interventions, the project embarked on a ‘victim-assistance needs assessment’ to more comprehensively identify the needs of mine/ERW survivors and the affected communities. Based on the results of the needs assessment, the project funded 11 participatory, community-based projects by local NGOs. These projects built the capacity of the NGOs to address the full spectrum of insecurities faced by individuals and communities affected by mines/ERWs and were able to meet the previously unmet needs of mine/ERW victims.

LESSONS LEARNED

By conducting the victim-assistance needs assessment, not only was the project able to comprehensively address the multiple needs of previously unreachable communities affected by mines/ERWs, but through regular updates of the assessment, new organizations were identified and integrated into the coordination forums, thereby significantly increasing the number of actors working together to provide victim assistance in Sudan. Moreover, by adopting the human security’s protection and empowerment framework, the impact and sustainability of the project was significantly

enhanced. Directly involving the Government in each phase of the project provided opportunities for capacity building and awareness among the relevant institutions on the needs of mine/ERW affected communities, and garnered support for the implementation of the SFVA. Meanwhile, through a community-based approach, the project supported long-term social reintegration and economic empowerment of mine/ERW victims and persons with disabilities through income generating activities and vocational training.