

THE OPERATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY MINE AWARENESS FOR DEVELOPMENT: PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES IN MOZAMBIQUE

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[Editor's note: The following paper was presented at the Conference on Integrated Humanitarian Development and Community Mine Awareness for Development at the Hanns-Seidel-Foundation, Brussels, on February 22-3, 1999. The plans and operations described here were conducted by Dr. Peter Merten and and Dr. Hildegard Scheu, in the provinces of Sofala and Manica in Mozambique in the Fall of 1998. Drs Merten and Scheu were consultants to the German Federal government under the auspices of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ).]

The Role of the German Agency for Technical Cooperation

The idea for the Community Mine Awareness for Development (CMAD) concept was especially designed by the GTZ/MineTech partnership to minimize the risks of mines and UXOs to the local population. In those areas, no complete mine clearance could be undertaken effectively in the short term. By integrating educational and specific sociological elements, CMAD aims to support the active participation of the villagers and their local communities in the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction. Hence, CMAD is a specific empowerment process designed for those communities which have to live with the mine and UXO threat for a long period before receiving mine clearance support - perhaps for generations - perhaps forever.

The first operational implementation of CMAD took place during the test phase, which has been completed. Two teams of four CMAD trainers each were deployed to the provinces of Manica and Sofala in Mozambique, with the intention of spending three weeks in each of the selected villages. They were to accomplish the following;

- to conduct mine awareness sessions.
- to establish a reporting system on mines and UXOs found.
- to train two villagers to act as CMAD community facilitators.

All three activities were to be combined into one process.

On the 19th of October 1998, the teams were dispatched from Harare in Zimbabwe, one to Sofala and one to Manica, Mozambique. The teams consisted of both Zimbabweans and Mozambicans. I accompanied them into the field until early December 1998. The CMAD trainers were, with only one exception, demobilized soldiers who have now become experts in demining. Their task within CMAD was to communicate with the local population. This is a civilian task and not a military one, and it demands numerous educational and social skills. My goal was to oversee these activities.

By the end of 1998, three villages in Manica: Dombe, Ntongwe Muthakati (Máquina), and Pindanganga; and four in Sofala: Dimba, Inhataka, Santa Fé, and Inhaminga were included in the plan. The five criteria for the selection of these villages were:

- There must be a mine threat in the area.
- There should be no plans for demining in the next two years.
- The partner and GTZ should have plans for development activities in the area.
- There must be a community.
- The partner, GTZ, the administration, police and local authorities must all agree on the need for local CMAD activities.

Presentation and Establishment of Community Mine Awareness for Development to the local *Régulo* and to the Community

A couple of days before the CMAD team takes up its work in a new target village, it introduces itself to the local *régulo*. The *régulo* is the traditional village headman. The Sena population dominates the project area in Sofala. In Manica, the Ndaou population dominates the project area. Both societies are traditionally organized hierarchically, with a considerable amount of social and political power in the hands of that official. He, or in some cases she, is elected from among the eldest members of the locally dominant tribal family.

The *régulo* is the highest local judge, and at the same time the highest local representative of the traditional religion. The belief in Mungu and in the power of the souls and the spirit of the dead (*mizimu*) is still very vivid among the local populations, even though there are numerous Christian missions in the area.

The CMAD must team introduce itself formerly to the local *régulo*, because it needs to work in his village for the next three weeks. To be successful, CMAD needs to be welcomed by him. To achieve this, the CMAD team spends as much time as necessary to get to know him, his village, the villagers and their problems; and to present all arguments which will help receive his support and convince him of the importance of CMAD in his village. So far, every single *régulo*, who has been contacted by CMAD, has agreed to welcome CMAD into his village, sometimes as quickly as the second day of meetings. After decades of war, confidence is not generated quickly in this part of Africa.

During the presentation of the approach and the concept of CMAD to the local *régulo*, the CMAD team will ask him to call for a village meeting in the near future. Only the *régulo* is entitled to call for such a meeting.

During that meeting, we will ask him to nominate two well respected villagers, one male and one female, to be trained by the CMAD team to act as future CMAD community facilitators. They must be volunteers, and they need to have the time to spend 2-weeks in a full time training course with the CMAD trainers.

Shortly after the presentation to the *régulo*, and possibly before the day of the village meeting, the CMAD team establishes its camp in the village, hopefully, near other local communication centres like the school, the shops, or the church. This rather exposed location of the CMAD camp helps to bring CMAD into all the villagers' minds.

The village meeting where CMAD is publicly presented to the whole community is usually conducted on a Sunday. The local population in the CMAD project area often is living decentralized and scattered. This means that many community members have to walk long distances before they reach the place of the village meeting, in many cases some 5 kilometers. A village meeting is traditionally a formal act. Participation of all adults (that is of everyone who is married or widowed) is compulsory. Therefore, a village meeting is traditionally only conducted when a very important decision concerning the community is negotiated. It is quite different in its character to any meeting where people gather together voluntarily for a village festivity. In its campaign to inform and to mobilize villagers, CMAD is using the instrument “village meeting” carefully and not too often, in order to avoid annoying them. The awareness sessions are often organized as *festivities* rather than village *meetings*.

However, at least *one* CMAD village meeting is necessary in order to present CMAD to the whole village, and to have an open discussion about the choice of the two villagers who are to be nominated as future community facilitators. They must be respected and accepted by the whole community.

Community Mine Awareness Sessions

Right from the beginning of their training, the future community facilitators take part in all the activities undertaken by the CMAD trainers to inform and to mobilize their community. The local population is quite aware of the fact that there is a mine and UXO threat. However, in too many cases, the local knowledge about the dangers and risks of mines and UXOs is insufficient:

- *All* mines and UXOs are dangerous, even “the very tiny ones” and even those, which are regarded as “harmless” by some villagers or the others!
- There are certain locations in or near the village, and certain situations, where mines and UXOs are more likely to occur and to be found. These locations and situations are most dangerous!
- There are dozens of different types of mines and UXOs. Whenever there is any doubt about an item which has been found, it must be regarded as a potential mine!
- Mines and UXO's which have been found must never be touched! Under no circumstances must villagers try to destroy them themselves!
- The location where a mine or a UXO has been found must be marked properly! Information to the neighbors of that location and to the local authorities helps to secure the location provisionally!
- The mines and UXOs, which have been found in the village or nearby, must be reported to the EOD team, with a sketch indicating the exact location, so that these explosives can be easily found and destroyed!

CMAD trainers use any available opportunity to create mine awareness for development among the local population. Awareness sessions take place whenever and wherever local people meet in numbers: at the health post or the hospital, at church, at the shopping centre, or at school. These awareness sessions usually take 30 to 60 minutes, depending on the mood of the local participants. Wherever they conduct the session, the CMAD trainers involve the respective hosts as intensively as possible (the doctors and nurses, the priest, the teachers etc.), so that these people can and will conduct future CMAD awareness sessions on their own and, if necessary, with assistance by the local CMAD community facilitators.

When conducting the awareness sessions, the CMAD team uses a wide spectrum of methods and of locally adapted training aids: *visual aids* such as posters and wooden models of mines and UXOs, the *traditional drum* (ngoma) and *songs, theatre and roll plays, participatory communal mapping* and more.

CMAD *posters* have been elaborated with the assistance of a local expert on visual aids and of the villagers themselves; they are presently being tested. They illustrate some of the most important rules of conduct concerning mines and UXOs. The *wooden models*, life-size and in original colors, make it clear what mines and UXOs look like, even to those among the villagers who are not accustomed to 2-dimensional pictures. The *traditional drum* calls the people together, and the *songs* are educative and entertaining at the same time. They are sung in the local languages, some of them are composed by the CMAD trainers, others are based on melodies, which are well-known.

The CMAD trainers and their local trainees perform *plays* or *sketches* for the villagers. They generate many ideas to engage the public, such as role-plays, where villagers themselves become the actors.

Participatory communal mapping is done on the ground, building a model of the village, or, drawing a sketch on paper to be hung on the wall. This helps in gathering locally available information about possible locations of mines and UXOs. This will help identify dangerous zones in the village and nearby. It also facilitates the understanding of the local situation, the village and the villager's problems.

There is a reluctance on the part of the local inhabitants to speak up about their knowledge of mines. Many people hesitate to report their knowledge to anyone. Not too long ago, such knowledge has been regarded as a military secret in Mozambique, and not every single villager is sure whether this has really changed. Some of them are afraid that if they report a mine to anyone, they might be asked to bring the mine along, or they might be asked how they came to know about it. Some of the villagers even ask for money to report mines. Others are afraid of bureaucracy. They have to be assured that it is the right thing to report any mine or UXO found to the CMAD community facilitators of their own village. Therefore we ask no sensitive questions, making it clear than no one will have to touch the mind and, of course, nobody will get money for reporting the mine.

The Community Mine Awareness Development Community Facilitators Training: a Work and Knowledge Program

The training of the future CMAD community facilitators combines modern knowledge about education and communication with the fundamental elements of local, traditional education and communication. The Tanzanian educationalist Ibrahim Athumani characterizes the five elements of traditional training in East Africa as follows:

- There are no professional teachers. Elder and more experienced people pass their knowledge and their skills to the others.
- There are no schools and no classes. The best classrooms are those places where the specific knowledge is usually being practiced.
- There is hardly any theory.
- Due to illiteracy, everything, which is important to be learned, has to be repeated again and again to stay in future memory.

- There are real work-and-knowledge programs.

Within the CMAD work-and-knowledge programme, the on-the-job training of the future community facilitators is combined with a more lesson-like training through the CMAD trainers in the camp. Here, trainers and trainees work on participatory approaches, the very specific possibilities of CMAD as a process in the community, and on possibilities of rehabilitation and reconstruction and empowerment of the local community. Along with this, the community facilitators learn to identify mines and UXOs. It is important to mark the locations where mines and UXOs were discovered, to further secure these locations through information to the neighbours and authorities, and to draw sketches which facilitate the work done by the EOD team to facilitate the destruction and responsible clearance of the mines and UXOs. Locally made mine/UXO markings will not last indefinitely. EOD action, as a result of information passed on from CMAD community facilitators, will encourage a continuation of reporting from the locals. Through their integration into the day-to-day awareness creation done by the CMAD trainers, the CMAD facilitators learn how to continue awareness sessions in the village again and again.

First Results of Community Mine Awareness Development

After the first phase of the program the people in villages where CMAD is established should:

- know the risks of mines and UXOs.
- know how to minimize these risks.
- know how to report the mines and UXOs, which they find to the local CMAD community facilitators.

The CMAD community facilitators will have:

- marked the locations of mines and UXOs which are reported to them.
- informed the neighbors and the local authorities about these locations.
- produced reports, with sketches indicating the exact locations of those mines and UXOs, and give these reports to the EOD team, so that the mines and UXOs can be destroyed easily.
- continued to conduct awareness sessions in their community.
- prepared to support local rehabilitation and reconstruction activities, basing on self-help and aiming at community development.

The local population's acceptance has been high. All régulos which have been contacted so far support CMAD in their village, propose suitable CMAD community facilitators, and call for CMAD village meetings. The villagers participate and support their local CMAD facilitators. In none of the villages has it been difficult to find suitable candidates for the training. It is evident that the knowledge about the mine and UXO threat and about the ways to minimize the risks is growing considerably among the local populations. Life is becoming safer for the villagers.

The following figures have been collated from the on-going CMAD activities in Sofala and Manica, Mozambique. They show that reports on mines and UXOs continue to come in, even weeks after the completion of CMAD, and after the CMAD trainer team has left the village. These are the average figures from the six villages where CMAD started in 1998: six reports are done when the CMAD teams arrives; three reports per week are submitted during the presence of the trainers in the village. After the trainers leave, the number of weekly reports rises to six per week then slowly decreases.

In the village of Dombe, in Manica Province, 27 locations of mines and UXOs have been reported after the introduction of CMAD (between October and December 1998) – in Dimba in Sofala there were 35 reported. At some of these locations there were more than just one incident– up to 14. With all these very detailed reports, mine clearance, and EOD, are becoming easier.

Specific Circumstances which Facilitate the Positive Results of Community Mine Awareness Development in Mozambique:

- the quality of the African staff engaged in CMAD, especially the trainers, and the positive image of GTZ and MineTech in the project area
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- the condition and co-operation with the national partner, the National Committee for Demining (CND), and the support of the administration
- the local population's high motivation for peace, rehabilitation and reconstruction, and the most favorable political and economic frame-conditions on the national level
- favorable political and economic frame-conditions on the national level.

The CMAD trainers which are employed by MineTech are highly qualified, well motivated, and specifically prepared for their job. They are well acquainted with life in rural areas and with the problems of common people. They know how to communicate with the local population, and they are flexible enough to respond to the specific situation in each and every village and in each and every training course.

The individual profiles of the local trainees differ from case to case. Half of the trainees are males, half are females. All of the females are unmarried; some are young and active, under "personal development pressure", open to communication and eager to attain independence. Some are elderly widows, often quite traditional, and conservative, with influence among their neighbours and families. So far all of the female trainees have been illiterate, whereas the average male trainee has attended school for about three years. The CMAD trainer teams provided by Mine-Tech know to adapt their CMAD introduction to every specific situation.

The partner CND is actively participating in the development of the CMAD concept and its implementation. Representatives of CND on the provincial levels (of Manica and Sofala) take part in all major planning sessions concerning the programme.

The cooperation between the CMAD team and the local communities is highly sensitive. The positive results of this cooperation create a confidence which provide a sound basis for an even more intensive future cooperation concerning the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the villages and rural areas. The CMAD community facilitators are trained and prepared to support local self-help and community development activities, and they have been eager to do this. They can also participate in rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes in their home region.

During its pilot phase, CMAD has concentrated its activities on Cheringoma District, especially its small capital, Inhaminga. Until now, some 20 villagers have been trained as CMAD community facilitators. They are well respected by their local communities, and they conduct CMAD with commitment and zeal.

In November 1998, 13 out of the 20 trainees organised themselves into a group called Partirde Chringoma. The phrase loosely translated means to start off, to share, and to participate. Their aim is to contribute to the reconstruction of Cheringoma, through self-help community projects. The members of Partir are well prepared for this job. It should not be a big problem for them to introduce CMAD to neighbouring villages, just as they have learned it with their own CMAD trainers. Seven of the members are males, seven are females. This is a higher percentage of female participation, which helps attain a high acceptance of the group by the entire local population.

After a fatal mine accident in their village, the population of Santove near Cheringoma asked its régulo to invite CMAD. He approached some members of Partir and urgently asked them to establish CMAD in Santove. CMAD was asked to react quickly and to assist the village and Partir.

The members of "Partir" are very optimistic, and they are developing on plans to turn the Casa Abandonada in Inhaminga into a Communication and Development Centre. This Casa Abandonada is the old palace of the Portuguese governor. The surrounding area is known, all over the country, as the "Place of the Massacres". It has been the site of several mass executions and violent deaths. "Partir" is now proposing that Casa Abandonada become focal point for reconstruction and development through self-help and community development.