



SAFE PASSAGE



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Rice Mill for Landmine Survivors Opens in Cambodia

by Imbert Mathee with Contributions from Pat Roe [Clear Path International]

As they bring in the harvest from their fields near the still-deadly K5 Mine Belt on Cambodia's border with Thailand, the landmine amputees-turned-farmers here know exactly what to do with their rice this year. They are taking it to a brand new mill in Seam village's Bovel district where they get good prices, training in better farming methods, microloans and a chance to meet other members of their newly formed farming cooperatives. The mill, at the heart of Cambodia's most productive rice-growing region, is also a place where landmine survivors work and receive vocational training in mechanics.

The \$500,000 project became possible with grants from the U.S. Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA), Adopt-A-Minefield and the McKnight Foundation. Mines Advisory Group conducted the clearance of the land. The Cambodian Ministry of Agriculture provided assistance in the design of the project's community based agricultural extension training.

Two years after plans for this enterprise were made, the shiny new processing plant devoted to improving the lives of landmine survivors and their families became a reality. It was blessed by Buddhist monks and dedicated by government officials and the partners on December 3, 2007—just in time for the 2008 harvest. Yi Yion, Secretary of State for the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans & Youth Rehabilitation; Sun Heng, Vice Governor of Battambang province; Sir Vin Huot, Bovel District Governor; and nearly 100 landmine survivors and family members attended the dedication. All of them received a tour of the plant and a lunch prepared with rice from the new mill.

It began with a need to create self-sufficient survivor communities in Battambang province and to generate income to pay for survivor vocational training. Without the major players in the mine action community coming together this could not have happened.

A partnership between Clear Path International, based in Vermont, and the Phnom Penh-based non-governmental organization Cambodian Volunteers for Community Development, the rice mill project

Pat Roe



Arn Chorn Pond (left) addresses attendees at the opening of the CVCD/CPI rice mill before Buddhist monks bless the new factory.

ect has already benefited more than 900 people, including the disadvantaged urban families to whom the high-quality rice is sold in bulk and on accessible credit.

The mill employs nine people and has trained 30 survivors in mechanical skills. Eight core trainers have received specialized extension courses to begin community based training in rice growing, vegetable cultivation, fruit tree growing, fish farming and bee keeping. Seventy-five households representing 375 members have received microloans. About 500 vulnerable households in the Phnom Penh area have begun receiving better, more affordable rice from the mill project.

In the coming years, thousands more are expected to benefit from the project's activities as the network of amputee farmers' coops grows and the rice mill ramps up its processing capacity, says Doeur Sarath, CVCD's Executive Director. "The districts of Bovel, Phnom Pruk and Sampeuv have some of the country's highest per-capita populations of landmine accident survivors," he says, citing data gathered by MAG and the Cambodian Mine Action Centre. "We found most of them wanted help to be successful rice farmers."

Among these successful farmers are Sok Khek, 71, and his 17-year-old grandson, Khek Sam Ath. In 1990, the elder Khek settled in the area to farm and support his family, including the younger Khek who lost his left arm to an explosive-remnant-of-war accident at age seven. Two other family members, Khek's daughter and his older brother, are also disabled.

Pat Roe



The first rice from the mill fills a bag bearing the project logo.

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World Education Conducting Mine Risk Education

by Connie Woodberry [World Education]

From 1964 to 1973, the People's Democratic Republic of Lao suffered some of the heaviest aerial bombing in world history. A significant amount of ordnance did not explode on impact and still threatens the lives and livelihoods of villagers. Children are particularly at risk because of their natural curiosity and lack of knowledge about the dangers of unexploded ordnance. In addition, the unexploded cluster bomblets can be mistaken for balls and can explode with lethal force if moved, heated or struck.

Thirty years after the end of the Vietnam War, 15 of 18 provinces in Laos are still contaminated by UXO. Because of the devastating physical, social and financial impact on individuals injured by landmines and UXO, the prevention of these accidents and assistance to accident survivors are critical issues in Laos.

World Education, a nonprofit organization founded in 1951 and based in Boston, has worked in over 60 countries, and is dedicated to improving the lives of the poor through economic and social development programs. World Education has been working in Laos since 1991 assisting Lao refugees to successfully repatriate and improving the Lao health and agriculture systems. Since 2005, with funding from the Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement, World Education has been working in a variety of ways to increase the awareness of UXO and increase the local capacity to assist the injured survivors of UXO accidents.

UXO Education and Awareness

World Education has developed mine/UXO risk education curriculum, textbooks, and model lessons using a child-centered, activity-based teaching and learning approach. By March 2008, 4,500 primary school teachers were trained from the nine most heavily impacted provinces. These primary school teachers then teach more than 165,000 students. Children learn about the dangers of UXO,

ways to protect themselves and how to be active in their communities to promote this knowledge.

Students produce books and posters about the dangers of UXO based on stories from their own unique perspective. Parents and community members often read these books as well, and some have been developed into puppet shows. Currently, over 90 puppetry teams of five children each perform at a variety of schools and community gatherings, important ceremonies and Lao national festivities.

World Education also is implementing programs to develop Lao capacity to support survivors of UXO and mine accidents, as well as clear UXO in the Plain of Jars region to improve the agricultural land there and initiate silk production on that land. For more information about World Education, please visit www.worlded.org.



Paul Wager

Girl with puppet in UXO education course.

Hail and Farewell

Santo Polizzi joined the Interagency Man-Portable Air-Defense Systems Task Force housed in the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in January 2008 as the Department of Homeland Security/Transportation Security Administration Liaison. He has been with TSA since June 2002, and currently is the Deputy Special Agent in Charge of the Office of Security Assessments. Polizzi is also responsible for developing and coordinating domestic and international MANPADS Vulnerability Assessment Programs, as well as Joint Airport Vulnerability Assessments. Prior to joining TSA, Polizzi served as an officer in the United States Marine Corps for 20 years, retiring with the rank of Major.

Alexandra Lanouette has joined the policy section of PM/WRA for a six-month internship, working on a variety of conventional weapons destruction issues. She is finishing her last semester at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, where she is earning a Master of Arts in international policy studies with a specialization in international negotiation/conflict resolution. During her current graduate program she worked at the

Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security's Homeland Security Digital Library and interned last summer at the Small Arms Survey in Geneva.

We say a fond farewell to **Harry Murphey "Murf" McCloy**, who retired in November 2007 after 47 years of federal service—11 with PM/WRA and 36 with the U.S. Marine Corps, retiring at the rank of Colonel. He is considered a "founding father" of the first mine action office at the Department of State, the Office of Humanitarian Demining Programs, and has earned a reputation as an expert in humanitarian mine action. McCloy continues to serve after retirement as a consultant to PM/WRA.

McCloy's replacement as Senior Advisor for Conventional Weapons Destruction, which encompasses everything from humanitarian mine action to MANPADS destruction, is **Mark Adams**. Also a retired Marine Colonel, Adams served in PM/WRA and in two of its predecessor offices, PM/HDP and the Office of Plans, Policy and Analysis.

Spirit of Soccer Expands to Cambodia

by Stacy Bernard Davis

[Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement]

Soccer—alternately, football—has a way of bringing people together. In addition to having fun, getting exercise and learning new skills or improving current ones, soccer also is being used in post-conflict societies to teach valuable lessons about landmines and UXO.

History

Spirit of Soccer is a nongovernmental organization founded in 1996 by Scotty Lee, a former semi-pro player and “A-licensed” coach. His participation in a humanitarian relief mission to the former Yugoslavia in 1993–1994 motivated the creation of SOS to teach important health and safety messages to children through instruction and enjoyment of sports. Since its formation, tens of thousands of children have received soccer coaching and mine-risk education from Spirit of Soccer-trained coaches in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Cambodia and, most recently, Iraq.

Expansion

Funding from the Department of State’s Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs since 2005 allowed Spirit of Soccer to grow its program in the Balkans. Following that success, Spirit of Soccer formed new partnerships with the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation and FIFA, the international governing body of soccer, among others, and expanded its sports and MRE fundamentals to the children of Cambodia in 2006 with continued funding from PM/WRA. With headquarters in Battambang, Spirit of Soccer began to train coaches in soccer and mine-risk education fundamentals in June, and began field operations with six coaches—

including two women, the first-ever female licensed soccer coaches in Cambodia—at the start of August 2006.

In July 2007, international soccer star Sir Bobby Charlton and skateboard icon Tony Hawk visited Cambodia, observing and participating in a soccer-coaching clinic held by six locally trained coaches at a school in Otdar Mean Cheay, near the infamous K-5 Mine Belt, as part of Laureus’ support for Spirit of Soccer. Then, in September, Spirit of Soccer was chosen as one of the first projects to implement the Football for Hope initiative jointly sponsored by FIFA and *streetfootballworld*, with the goal of using the game to promote social change in the run-up to the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

In March 2008, over 240 Cambodian youth players participated in Spirit of Soccer’s first MRE/Soccer tournament. Players were brought in from mine-affected areas of Battambang province, and all the players and officials received MRE from the SOS coaches. To date, over 32,000 boys and girls at some 160 primary and secondary schools in Cambodia have received MRE from the dedicated team of Spirit of Soccer coaches. For more information, please visit www.spiritofsoccer.net.



Vedran Knezevic

Having women coaches has given girls the opportunity to enjoy and play soccer for the very first time.

Advancing Landmine Victim Assistance through Creative Partnerships

by Maggie Emery [Coffeelands Landmine Victims Trust]



Santiago Castellon

Pedro Duarte in his coffee farm in Nicaragua. Pedro lost one leg and the foot from the other to a landmine.

What do Dean’s Beans, Green Mountain, Starbucks, Royal Coffee, the Colombian Coffee Federation, Grapes for Humanity and the Department of State’s Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement have in common? They are all joining the effort to help landmine victims in coffee-growing communities through the Coffeelands Landmine Victims’ Trust.

The world’s third-largest exporter of coffee, Colombia, now also has one of the world’s highest rates of casualties from mines and other explosive devices. In order to bring services to survivors of landmine accidents in coffee-growing regions, the

CLVT has partnered with the Colombian Coffee Federation. This unique partnership gives the CLVT access to the CCF’s extensive resources and on-the-ground networks. By working together, the CCF and CLVT can achieve a comprehensive solution that would be

unattainable by either group on its own. From an office within the local CCF compound in Manizales, CLVT will work with the local coffee councils in the coming months to identify dozens of landmine survivors and coordinate rehabilitation services and economic reintegration strategies using existing local services such as CIREC and Tecnovo. Over the next six months, the CLVT will reach out to 45 landmine survivors in the Caldas region.

Founded in 2005, CLVT’s mission is to connect the international coffee industry to landmine survivors in coffee-growing regions. In the last three years the CLVT has made great strides thanks to its innovative and creative partnerships. For example, this past year, Dean’s Beans developed a special brew of coffee as part of the CLVT holiday “Cup of Hope” campaign. Royal Coffee has directly engaged its customer base by including information about CLVT in its regular Christmas mailing and inviting CLVT representatives to speak at an annual “Barista Jam.” In addition to corporate support, grassroots and student outreach are also essential to the CLVT. These efforts have included presentations at local cafes and participation in fair trade events at Michigan State and Tufts University. Through these partnerships, and grants from PM/WRA, the CLVT raised over \$150,000 (monetary and in-kind donations) in 2007.

The Coffeelands Landmine Victims’ Trust has found that these partnerships help to bridge the gap between different countries, cultures and languages. They make it possible for individuals in the U.S. to connect to general issues surrounding mine action, as well as to the coffee farmers themselves and communities around the world that are the most impacted by landmines and remnants of war. To learn more about the CLVT, please visit www.coffeelandslandmine.org.

Combating Abandoned Weapons Caches in Sudan

by Derek Kish [Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement]

Devastated by over two decades of civil war, the Republic of Sudan has been inundated with explosive remnants of war and contains numerous caches of conventional weapons, mostly small arms and light weapons. These lethal vestiges of conflict continue to plague the Sudanese long after warfare's end and can fuel fresh armed violence.

Created haphazardly and abandoned at the cessation of hostilities, there are many unguarded SA/LW caches in Sudan. A typical stockpile may contain a number of assault rifles, projectiles, grenades, mortar rounds, rockets, fuses and landmines. Fueling lawlessness and instability, these weapons and munitions may be acquired by any of the numerous armed groups operating in the area.

Even if they escape paramilitary hands, communities burdened with these caches face a severe humanitarian risk, one that was gravely illustrated in the February 2005 ammunition depot explosion in Juba. The

primary blast killed dozens and injured hundreds while scattering countless amounts of unexploded ordnance to maim and kill at a later date.

Neutralizing abandoned weapons caches is vital to stabilizing southern Sudan and plays an essential role in promoting the peace process as outlined in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005. Within the CPA, both the North and the South agreed to hold a 2008 census, new elections in 2009, and an independence referendum in 2011. Crucial to the success and legitimacy of these three milestones is the return of internally displaced persons and refugees to participate in all these processes. Unfortunately,

abandoned caches continue to cause casualties, and the presence of uncontrolled weapons deters many IDPs and refugees from returning.

To combat the multitude of risks abandoned caches present and to help stabilize southern Sudan, the U.S. Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement has made conventional weapons destruction a pillar of its Sudan program. Since 2003, PM/WRA has provided \$1,760,000 to support Mines Advisory Group's weapons destruction teams, operating primarily in the southern Equatoria regions of Sudan. Through community liaison and United Nations Mine Action Office direction, MAG's mobile teams identify, assess and neutralize abandoned caches. MAG delivers fully-operational items to the southern Sudanese authorities and destroys all unserviceable or unwanted items. Through a 2006 grant from PM/WRA, MAG disposed of 42 stockpiles and eliminated or secured 339,844 items of ERW.

PM/WRA intends to continue to support these valuable conventional weapons destruction programs in South Sudan. Every cache neutralized reduces the severity of the threat that continues to take the lives and limbs of the Sudanese people and moves us one step closer to a stable Sudan.



Derek Kish

WRA-funded MAG EOD team preps for a demolition of over 5,000 pounds of ordnance and ammunition.

"Mill" Continued from Page 1

When he joined the first farmers' coop in spring 2006, Sok Khek had little savings and even fewer tools to cultivate rice effectively. The partners qualified his household for a \$250 loan and his membership in the coop gave him access to equipment. After a successful harvest in early 2007, he repaid his loan in full. His grandson is employed at the mill as a security guard.

Projections are that about 750 landmine survivors will benefit from the rice mill project by 2010, while at least 2,000 disadvantaged urban families will receive the plant's rice every year. The mill itself is expected to generate revenues for vocational training programs within three years. For more information about Clear Path International, please visit <http://www.cpi.org>

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U.S. Department of State
2121 Virginia Ave. NW, Rm. 6100
Washington, DC 20522

Phone: (202) 663-0093
Fax: (202) 663-0090
Email: SteveJE@state.gov

www.state.gov/t/pm/wra

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