

Risk Education in the Oslo Action Plan: from vision to reality

This side event to the 23rd International Meeting Of Mine Action National Directors And United Nations Advisers (NDM) was held on 12 February, under the organisation of the Explosive Ordnance Risk Education Advisory Group (EORE AG). Over 60 participants attended. This report presents a summary of the discussion points and main conclusions from the side event.

Background

Over the last year, there has been a significant momentum around the risk education pillar of mine action, with growing recognition that risk education efforts must be stepped up to protect civilians from the threats of explosive ordnance. This culminated in November 2019 with the adoption by States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) of the Oslo Action Plan, which included for the first time in treaty history a dedicated section with five concrete action points on risk education and reduction.

This side event recognises this important achievement while also launching the even more vital phase of translating these commitments into action. Through an interactive discussion format, it provided a forum for stakeholders, in particular national authorities, to explore:

- What is needed to translate the vision from Oslo into a reality?
- What knowledge and resources are already out there?
- What gaps do we as a sector need to address?

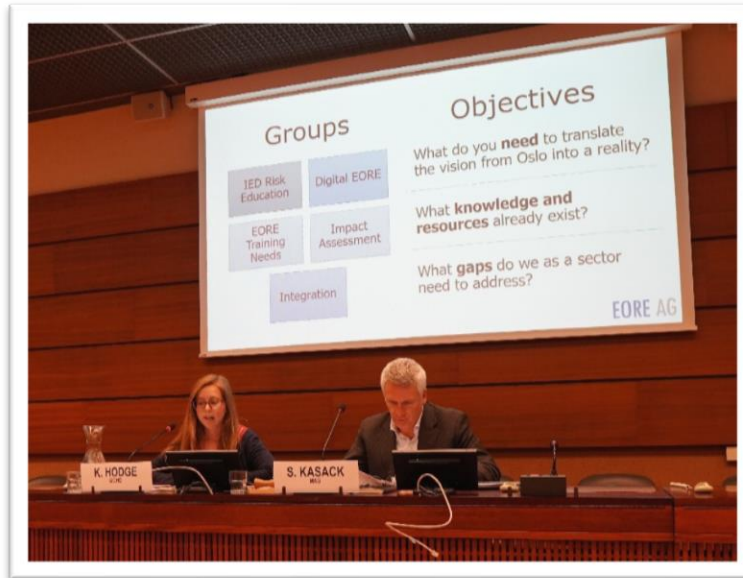
About the Organisers

Established in May 2019, the [EORE AG](#) aims to provide overall guidance to the sector and identify ways to improve the integration, effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of EORE. Its members include over a dozen UN agencies, international organisations and international NGOs. It is co-chaired by UNICEF and a rotating NGO – currently the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) – and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) serves as secretariat.

Format

Following an introduction from the moderators, EORE AG Co-Chair Sebastian Kasack (MAG) and Secretary Kaitlin Hodge (GICHD), participants divided into five small discussion groups. The topics for the groups were IED risk education, digital EORE, EORE training needs, impact monitoring and integration of EORE in broader humanitarian, development and education efforts.

Groups had 30 minutes to discuss their topic, facilitated by a national director and supported by a representative of the EORE AG. After this half hour, everyone reconvened in plenary to report back. Summaries of the discussions held in each group are below.



Conclusion

Hugues Laurence (UNICEF and EORE AG Co-Chair) concluded the session by linking the discussions back to the theme of the NDM: commitments, solutions and actions. For each group, an agreed action was highlighted:

Group	Action
IED Risk Education	Update the Technical Note for Mine Action (TNMA) on IED Risk Education to reflect new developments and emerging good practices.
Digital EORE	Think about how we can scale up the many promising digital pilots under way.
EORE Training Needs	Explore the set-up of an online course available to all EORE practitioners that promotes evidence-based approaches.
Impact Monitoring	Develop a strong results framework for impact assessment of EORE, with an emphasis on measuring behaviour change.
Integration of EORE in broader humanitarian, development & education efforts	Proactively engage other protection, development and education actors by offering concrete ways of integrating EORE with wider efforts.

Group 1: IED Risk Education

While the use of victim-activated improvised explosive devices (VO-IEDs) is not new, there has been a sharp increase in their use in recent years – so much so that IEDs caused over half (3,789 or 55%) of casualties from explosive ordnance in 2018. Opinion is divided about whether risk education has evolved sufficiently to effectively address the threats posed by improvised mines. Many believe that the basic messages are the same but are unsure that the timing, targeting and descriptions of the danger signs to recognise the presence of mines of an improvised nature are fully effective. Good practices for how the sector and affected countries should respond to contamination from improvised mines are needed.

Facilitator: Mohammad Shafiq Yosufi, Director, Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC), Afghanistan

Co-Facilitator: Ruth Bottomley, ICBL-CMC Researcher

Participants: Representatives from programmes in Nigeria, Somalia, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Zambia (among others) and from HALO Trust, NPA, NRC, UNMAS (among others).

Objectives

- Identify good practices and lessons learned for IED risk education
- Understand the challenges and gaps to be able to deliver effective risk education on IEDs

Discussion Summary

What (if anything) is different about risk education for improvised devices, compared to more “traditional” devices?

- In Afghanistan the IEDs are often placed haphazardly, not in patterns like many minefields, and so they are not always easy to identify. In Afghanistan they continue to provide risk education broadly (dealing with all EO) but have included some pictures of IEDs and also provide information about the context in which IEDs might be found – for example along roadsides.
- Victim-activated IEDs act as an anti-personnel mine (APM) and so should be dealt with as we deal with APM. States have a responsibility to report and deal with victim-activated IEDs under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Improvised AP mines should be addressed in the same way as APM. However, IEDs that are not victim-activated have to be addressed differently, particularly if they are still in play as part of a conflict.
- From an operational perspective, the way IEDs are dealt with requires a different skill set from traditional mine clearance.
- Traditional minefields are often laid in a more predictable fashion and it is easier to identify the boundaries. Victim activated IEDs are present in a wide variety of contexts and so this can make their detection and the defining of hazardous areas more difficult. For example, in urban areas, IEDs may be in the rubble of destroyed buildings.

- It should be looked at from the beneficiary perspective – all these devices pose a danger to life. When delivering RE we should include all EO that affect the lives of people and aim to make sure that they have the right information and behaviour to avoid coming into contact with these devices.
- In Somalia, IEDs are laid to target the army and security forces, but obviously civilians are being hurt and killed also. However, the conflict is active and so it is more appropriate for the national forces to do the clearance rather than humanitarian mine action actors, as this could put them at risk of retaliation from the opposition.

What approaches are you using for IED risk education? Do you have any good practices or lessons learned you can share?

- A key issue is about reporting of IEDs, particularly if it could be seen that reporting of a suspicious device might put the person reporting at risk from the armed group that laid it.
- Rather than talking about the technical nature of IEDs, it is important to talk about the “ground signs” – for example, where an IED might be found, e.g. along roads or in houses that have been abandoned.
- In terms of dealing with refugees in Lebanon, it is difficult to know what information they should be provided with as there is a lack of data to inform the development of a comprehensive risk education program – for example, there is little information about the types of contaminated areas; which devices are where; whether clearance has taken place; where accidents have happened. This creates challenges in terms of identifying the threat and who is most at risk. For the most part, currently basic RE messages are being used as there isn't sufficient information to tailor them better.

Should images of IEDs be shown?

- In Iraq many of the IEDs are of the same type and so it makes sense that images of these IEDs can be shown on materials for risk education purposes. However, in some countries/areas IEDs are made from everyday objects and so it may be counterproductive and increase fear if images are shown – for example jerry cans which are used for multiple everyday purposes. In these cases, it is better not to show the object but to direct people to look for things that might be out of the ordinary, e.g. wires.

What additional ethical considerations need to be taken into account when providing risk education for IEDs?

- The main issue is about reporting and ensuring that the rights of the affected people are protected. This could be done through anonymous hotlines or through apps (used in Afghanistan and Iraq).
- It was noted that reporting doesn't always have to be from local to national, but people could also be encouraged to report through local, trusted people. It was stressed that it is important to do careful analysis around how reporting should be carried out to ensure adherence to the principle of Do No Harm.

Have you referred to / used the draft technical note for mine action (TNMA) on IED Risk Education? If so, does it seem sufficient or are there still gaps?

- The question was asked but there was limited time for people to feed back. It wasn't clear if people were familiar with the TN, although a lot of the points made above are reflected in the TN.



Group 2: Digital EORE

Facilitator: Brig. Gen. Jihad Al Bechaalany, Director, Lebanon Mine Action Centre (LMAC)

Co-Facilitator: Hugues Laurence, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF and EORE AG Co-Chair

Participants: LMAC, FSD, UNICEF Syria, UNMAS Lebanon, UNDP Lebanon, Vietnam CRS, US Department of State, ICRC, UNMAS Palestine, Balamand University, GICHD, UNMAS Abyei, UNICEF HQ



The EORE sector is dominated by traditional delivery approaches such as dissemination of printed materials, radio campaigns, school lessons or other face-to-face sessions. At the same time, as of 2020, there are millions of people at risk who have not yet received risk education at all, and many other communities who have not received enough quality risk education. Most of these people, including youth, have nonetheless increasingly access to some forms of digital messaging or digital interaction, be it through text message, mobile application, web pages, social media, or other technologies.

We live in a fast-changing world where 95 per cent of the population has access to 3G mobile technology. Technology is accelerating at a rapid pace, presenting unique opportunities for risk education that have not yet been capitalised on. It is crucial to invest now in innovative risk education approaches, including with a more systematic use of digital engagement.

Objectives

- Understand what digital technologies can offer for EORE, as well as their limitations
- Share examples of promising digital innovations

Guiding Questions

How have your countries / organisations / partners used digital technologies (or seen digital methods used) for EORE? What has worked and what hasn't?

- Lebanon: SMS campaigns, Twitter, Facebook
- Syria (UNICEF): SMS, Facebook
- Vietnam (CRS): a new mobile app successfully piloted, available on AppStore with EORE games. Feedback from users is possible.
- Iraq (US Department of State): Pilot Facebook project with MAG conducted. USD 25,000 donated by Facebook for EORE Ads. Cost per person is very low (1 cent/person). The Facebook

platform offers possibility to target very specific groups with EORE messages, including people not traditionally willing to attend an EORE session.

- Ukraine (FSD): VK (previously known as VKontakte, the Russian Facebook with over 97 million monthly active users) is being used for EORE, especially to reach non-government controlled areas in Eastern Ukraine.
- Red Cross/Red Crescent movement are also using other platforms for EORE including Viber and WhatsApp.
- UNICEF developed the [U-report](#) platform active in 65 countries, benefiting 9 million young people and communities. U-report is available via messaging, social media and SMS channels, and even works on a basic mobile phone. It is free, anonymous, accessible in many languages and easy to use. However the platform is still under-utilised for EORE.
- There was discussion on whether television and radio should be considered digital means for EORE.

What can digital EORE methodologies offer that can't be achieved face-to-face?

- Digital technologies can improve coverage of EORE activities and provide access to 'hard to reach' areas. They are convenient and can be delivered quickly especially where there are blocked roads or unstable security situations.

What are the limitations of digital EORE?

- It can be difficult to know whether the sent message was well understood or if there are any clarifications needed.
- What if availability of internet is limited, especially for vulnerable populations? The group noted that there are tools (Apps) that allow the transfer of content, including an entire EORE App from one smartphone to another smartphone without internet access. Also many of the functionalities of the EORE App used in Myanmar (UNICEF/DCA) and Vietnam (CRS) work without internet access.
- While not a "limitation" per se, it must be stated that digital EORE products, like all EORE materials, need to be field tested with a representative sample of the at-risk population as is the case for any EORE material and as per IMAS 12.10..
- A major question we face now that we have a profusion of digital EORE initiatives is: how can we scale up the ones that look the most promising?

Are there contexts or conditions where digital EORE works best?

How can we achieve meaningful two-way engagement through digital means?

Who should be our key partners outside the mine action sector and why?

- Need for our sector to cooperate more with 'big tech' companies as well as telecom companies
- Behaviour change and design specialists

Group 3: EORE Training Needs

Facilitator: Martha Isabel Hurtado Granada, Coordinator of Action Group against Mines/ERW, Descontamina, Colombia

Co-Facilitator: Matthieu Laruelle, EORE Advisor, GICHD

Reinvigorating the risk education sector and fulfilling the commitments made in the Oslo Action Plan will require investing in its human capacities. However, according to the findings of a recent EORE Sector Mapping and Needs Analysis, there are currently no specific qualifications required for all EORE staff and, until UNICEF launched two courses in 2017 and 2018, there were no global qualifications even available for EORE staff. A number of countries and organisations have developed strong NMAS or SOPs in line with IMAS 12.10, but this is not always the case and the extent of training and level of internal expertise often varies.

Objectives

- Understand the current EORE training landscape at national and global level
- Identify good practices for EORE training, including policies and strategies
- Assess EORE training-related gaps and needs

Guiding Questions

- What training is *available* for EORE practitioners in your countries / organisations? What training is *required*?
- What EORE training policies and/or guidelines are available?
- For countries (or organisations) that have established EORE training requirements, what good practices and lessons learned can be shared?
- Is there need for greater consistency in EORE training requirements and packages in individual countries, between countries and organisations?
- Action 31 of the OAP states that States Parties will "Build national capacity to deliver mine risk education and reduction programmes with the ability to adapt to changing needs and contexts." What is needed to do so?
- There is some discussion about whether the sector would benefit from an online e-learning course for new EORE practitioners on the core principles of effective and ethical EORE, in line with IMAS 12.10. Is such a course needed?

Discussion Summary

Discussions among the group members highlighted the importance of key actions/factors that need to be taken into account when developing/informing EORE training needs assessments. Among these factors are the importance of drawing linkages with the wider mine action sphere, in other words, **EORE should be approached in an integrated manner** and not operate in silos. Linkages to the IMAS, sharing of best practices among peers, relying on data and evidence generated through mine action work should inform EORE training needs assessments.

Equally important is the need to ensure that **EORE is adapted to the local context**. People served should be considered as co-designers of EORE programmes and not just sitting at the receiving end, in other words, EORE programmes need to be culturally sensitive speaking to local specificities and involving local communities from the get-go.

A third factor highlighted among the group members was the **need to evolve EORE to EO risk reduction** as outlined in the Oslo action plan. Risk reduction goes beyond the traditional EORE activities; questions such as how can IDPs and refugees return to hazardous areas are more important than ever. Finally, being on the **lookout for emerging new technologies** and what that means for EORE needs to be done regularly. Technologies such as IT, social media, behavioral insights, and communication for development (C4D).

In summary, to have common understanding of EORE training needs the sector ought to adhere to core principles; these are, relying on data and evidence, the move to risk reduction, and adaptation to local contexts. These could be considered as a minimum common denominator to EORE training needs.



Group 4: EORE Impact Assessment

Facilitator: Sebastian Kasack, Senior Community Liaison Adviser, MAG and EORE AG Co-Chair

A recent EORE Sector Mapping and Needs Analysis found that “Difficult operating contexts, lack of funding and capacity are hampering the development of the sector’s ability to collect data and information about EORE needs and impact. Monitoring and evaluation and impact assessments of EORE often provide only limited insights into its effectiveness.” Nevertheless, understanding the impact of EORE interventions to be able to achieve behaviour change is important to maintain accountability and inform evidence-based planning of future activities. Information about impact can also be a powerful advocacy tool to attract additional resources to the sector. Moreover, following the adoption of the Oslo Action Plan, States Parties to the APMBC are now required to report on results achieved through mine risk education (action 32).

Objectives

- Understand if and how impact of EORE interventions is currently being measured
- Identify good practices for EORE impact assessment

Discussion Summary

What do we mean by “impact” when talking about EORE interventions?

- We should distinguish between knowledge and behaviour change. Behaviour is not only affected by knowledge but also risk management. Behaviours adopted may involve conscious decisions to engage based on a calculation and weighing of risks.
- There is a difference between EORE in emergency vs. development contexts, although some tools can be used for both. Knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) surveys are one example.

To what extent is your country or organisation measuring the impact of EORE interventions? Do you have any examples of good practices for measuring impact of EORE interventions?

✦ Traditional surveys focus on quantitative approaches:

- Pre and post assessments on selected individual beneficiaries of EORE sessions are common practice. The pre-assessments gauge the baseline level of understanding. An identical post-assessment is then conducted immediately post-session (to measure knowledge change) and again after three to six months (to measure knowledge retention). It was questioned whether such assessments must always be conducted individually, especially where there is difficulty locating individuals for the post surveys. There is recognition that a more systematic approach is needed to measure impact over a longer period (e.g. years).
- Key performance indicators (KPIs) may be used. We should try to better understand the different KPIs the sector is using.

✦ Semi-quantitative approach can be used to capture qualitative data with quantifiable indicators:

- An example is the use of qualitative responses to produce a score. These are used by at least one organisation to provide input for a workplan and monitor contribution to outcome.
- ✦ Another approach looks at measuring behaviour change:
- This can be done quantitatively through Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) surveys, as well as through qualitative methods. The use of KAP surveys does tend to be declining, as they are expensive and repeated use may correspond to an increase in false responses as respondents learn the “desired answers”.
 - Other indicators include number of hotline calls and number of reports received from the community (different from items removed). However, reports must be followed up on in order for this to be an effective tool.
 - Anecdotes and case studies can be useful for showing change in behaviour.
 - Several organisations are now using focus group discussions (FGDs) to engage with communities and capture behaviour changes. FGDs are a learning tool for targeted outreach that can be conducted before, during and after EORE campaigns. Use of FGDs is currently in a pilot phase for most organisations and therefore a work in progress. Some observations to date:
 - Through FGDs, educators build relationships with the community over time, and multiple encounters help to build trust levels. Having trust is essential for successful FGDs.
 - Interestingly, awareness levels have been seen to drop over time, showing communities becoming more comfortable reporting true behaviours. Having a control mechanism is important.
 - Having a control mechanism is important.
 - May work better in certain contexts, e.g. in Cambodia where the environment is stable. On the other hand there is also a very strong example of use of FGDs in Myanmar where there is ongoing conflict.
 - The facilitator should spend time *listening*, not just talking.
 - Better in a natural environment (vs. controlled interview).
 - Need to be aware of the audience, e.g. meeting with community leaders and farmers at the same time may not work.

Are there others outside of mine action with promising ways of measuring behaviour change? Who should we be partnering with? What can we learn from them?

- This discussion we are having within the EORE sector parallels those had by the HIV/public health sector. It would be good to learn from established norms in other sectors.
- Communication for Development (C4D) could be interesting to learn from.
- A question raised is whether there has been any long-term behavioural studies?



Group 5: Integration of EORE with broader protection, development and education efforts

Facilitator: Kaitlin Hodge, EORE Officer, GICHD and EORE AG Secretary

Participants: Representatives from programmes in Myanmar, Syria and Geneva and from UNMAS and UNICEF.



There is broadening recognition that, even where it is sufficiently resourced and well implemented, risk education alone is not always sufficient to prevent people from engaging in risky behaviours. Complementary measures, such as alternative livelihood support or construction of a communal water source in a safer area, can strengthen resilience and help reduce the need for people to make impossible choices. In this respect, risk reduction cannot be the sole responsibility of the mine action sector, but must also involve other humanitarian, protection and development actors, including those working with refugees and IDPs and on health, WASH, food security and early recovery. For this reason, it is important for mine action actors to engage with other sectors to design comprehensive, integrated risk education programmes, and also to ensure that other humanitarian and social protection programmes are designed with awareness of potential risks posed by explosive ordnance to beneficiaries and/or personnel.

Objectives

- Understand to what extent EORE activities are currently integrated with broader protection, development and education efforts
- Explore areas where cooperation with other sectors brings value
- Identify good practices and lessons learned for strengthening integration of EORE with other sectors' efforts

Guiding Questions

What are the reasons for integrating EORE with broader protection, development and education efforts?

- Integrating risk education in wider initiatives enables us to expand our reach beyond just the communities where the mine action sector is actively engaged. An example is the dissemination of EORE messages to beneficiaries of other sectors' campaigns (food assistance, WASH, disaster risk reduction, etc.). Integration of EORE in school curriculums is another example.

- Integration is also important for the prevention of harm. By sharing information about EO risk and safe behaviours with other sectors, we can prevent other campaigns from unwillingly putting their staff and/or beneficiaries at risk.
- As described above, risk education alone is not always sufficient to prevent risk-taking. Complementary initiatives by broader protection and development actors can help to reduce the need for people to take risks.
- These broader sectors can be a source of learning and inspiration. We should look to others for innovative new ways of achieving and measuring behaviour change.
- Finally, even after states achieve completion, the need for risk education against residual contamination remains. Integration of EORE in protection and development efforts, school curriculums, etc. helps to ensure sustainability once mine action operators have ceased their operations.

What obstacles do you face to working with other sectors and integrating EORE with broader efforts?

- There is a general perception among other sectors that mine action is a technical subject “better left to the experts.” This has sometimes been reinforced by the sector’s tendency to use technical jargon and position itself as a niche expertise.
- Even if they do appreciate the need, other actors do not always know *how* to go about integrating risk education into their work.
- When there has been strong integration of EORE with other sectors, this has often been due to personal initiatives or connections. There is a need to encourage cross-sectoral collaboration more systematically beyond an individual level.

Are there good practices or lessons learned you can share for the integration of EORE with broader efforts?

- Map activities that are likely to put communities into contact with EO contamination to identify where complementary activities are needed or where there is risk of an intervention doing harm.
- Develop packages that can be adapted by other actors, and make these lines of service clearly available. We need to be able to demonstrate the value of EORE and how, in practice, it can be integrated in others’ work (without making it seem like a burden). In some cases, this has been done through tip sheets and shared through the cluster system.
- Be approachable and welcoming in engaging with other sectors. Actively counter the perception that mine action is a standalone sector and minimise use of technical jargon.
- Seek ways to systematise working with other sectors, beyond just individual initiatives. Put accountability and reporting measures in place to ensure cross-sectoral cooperation.