

Saving Lives, Building Futures



CARE's project *Saving Lives, Building Futures*, funded by the Mines Advisory Group (MAG), spent over two years working in remote communities which were still experiencing the effects of aerial bombing in the sixties and seventies. It is not uncommon for Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) to be found in the forest, on farms or even within villages. Without understanding what these were, many community members – including children – were putting themselves at risk.

Within these communities, UXO might be used for fishing, sold as scrap metal or even used as toys by children. Together MAG and CARE aimed to change behaviours to reduce people's risk of injury or death. The project established focal points in each village, supported them to educate community members on risks and encouraged calls to MAG's *Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team* so UXO can be safely removed.

CARE was invited to support MAG because of their expertise working with ethnic minorities. Ratanak Kiri is home to many different indigenous groups which each have their own language and customs. This presented challenges communicating with those who were most at risk due to their remote location. CARE's diverse team was able to provide training to focal points in their mother tongue and prepare picture cards appropriate for all languages or levels of literacy. CARE was also able to assist with translation where needed when communities reported finding UXO.



FACTS & STATS

- 56 villages in total over 2 years
- 6 different local languages
- 1 focal point per village
- 1 hour sessions informing community members
- 16 picture cards showing dangers
- 43 villages viewed community theatre shows

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Over **9,000 items of UXO removed** by MAG since July 2012
- Over **8,500 people** had UXO removed from near their home by MAG in 2014
- Over **4,000 adults** received risk reduction education in 2014
- Close to **4,000 children** received risk reduction education in 2014
- Over **11,500 people** reached through awareness raising and community theatre over two years



"One time two years ago, an employee from MAG convened a meeting in our community to explain about UXO, but most community members did not understand because they could not understand Khmer, the national language. This was especially the case for women. Now our villagers feel comfortable and secure with this new knowledge, and they can protect their families and themselves."

- Community focal point

“Women and girls have different roles in their society [in ethnic minority communities, so] they are impacted in different ways by explosive remnants of war. They are exposed to different vulnerabilities, for example ... girls collect water and firewood which can lead them far away from the village where UXO is not cleared yet.”

- CARE project officer



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“It is not easy to do this type of cooperation when people have previously sold items for money. However, we have been good at communicating the dangers so people understand why they should give this up.”

- CARE project officer



Key impacts

The *Saving Lives, Building Futures* project has had many positive impacts on remote communities in Ratanak Kiri.

- **Improved safety for communities**

Community members are able to go about their daily lives – including working on their farmland and collecting items from the forest – without risking injury.

- **Changed behaviour to avoid risk**

Community members are actively seeking external assistance to deal with suspicious items they find – demonstrated by the large number of UXO removed from villages following calls to MAG.

- **Prioritisation of safety over money**

Community members are consciously forgoing any potential income from selling metal or using explosives for fishing as they now recognise the dangers UXO pose to them, their families and their community.

- **Community ownership**

Focal points within each village allow community members to take responsibility for their own safety and to make their own decisions about when items need to be removed from their village.

- **Increased involvement of women**

Women were invited to be trained as focal points and over 40% of those who attended awareness-raising activities were women.

“Villagers have changed their behaviour in dealing with UXO now that they know how dangerous it is.”

- Community focal point

LEARNING FROM THE PROJECT

- Training in the local language was particularly important for engaging women.
- Picture cards were effective in helping people to remember information.
- Community theatre shows were more effective in sharing memorable messages with community members particularly children and youth.
- Including community members as actors in theatre was an effective way to increase retention of messages among the children involved.

