

AR/060

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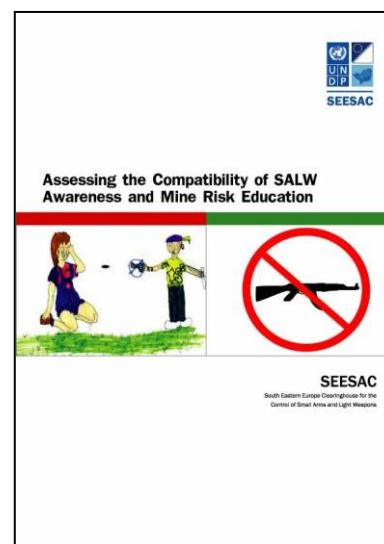
SEESAC ACTIVITY REPORT – AR/060

ASSESSING THE COMPATIBILITY OF SALW AWARENESS AND MINE RISK EDUCATION

SEESAC FUNCTIONAL AREA	FA 3 - Management Information FA 4 - SALW Awareness and Communication Strategy
SEESAC OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY	OA 3 - Information Management and Exchange Activities OA 8 - Research Activities

The region of South Eastern Europe (SEE) is still exposed to the dangers of mines, Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) and other Explosive Remnants of War (ERW), as well as there being a high number of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in civilian possession. There are several organisations raising awareness both on the dangers of mines (often including UXO/ERW) and on SALW in SEE.

SEESAC has developed a SALW Awareness Support Pack (the second edition of SASP (SASP 2) is due out in November 2005) to guide organisations in their work on SALW Awareness - chiefly in support of SALW Control initiatives and for stand-alone Risk Education. So a study was commissioned to identify the potential for cooperation, in terms of sharing lessons learned between the two fields, and also to identify potential conflict (mixed messages) between SALW Awareness and Mine Risk Education (MRE).



A Technical Consultant was recruited to assess how core messages and dissemination strategies used in SALW Awareness and MRE compare. Field research was carried out between 18 - 22 July 2005 in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and FYR Macedonia with representatives from both international organisations and local non-governmental organisations. Information gathered was supplemented by a literature review.

Below are some of the key findings, explored in greater detail in the Report.

- ❑ SALW Awareness is inherently more complex than Mine Awareness owing to the fact of legal weapon ownership. The challenge in SALW Awareness is striking a balance between encouraging individuals to hand in illegal weapons whilst promoting safe behaviours that do not necessarily endorse gun ownership.
- ❑ There is a great deal of scope for SALW Awareness interventions to learn from the field of MRE, most notably in Risk Education.



- MRE and SALW Awareness share the priority of reducing the number of injuries caused by SALW and mines (UXO/ERW), and in SALW Awareness (Risk Education) and MRE for elementary children the 'don't touch' message applies equally in both fields. However, amongst weapons holders, there is also a need to promote the adoption of safe behaviours when handling and storing a legally owned weapon.
- There needs to be coordination between Mine Action teams and SALW Awareness initiatives so as to minimise the potential for mixed messages in SALW Control initiatives. Weapons-holders, who are encouraged to hand in their illegal weapons, have been known to also hand in UXO/ERW and mines (possibly motivated by an incentive to do so), which has resulted in accidental injury and even death.
- MRE and SALW Awareness share a common need to continually improve techniques in inducing and evaluating behavioural change through learning from the latest research in the Public Health domain.

The report will shortly be available to download from the SEESAC website. For further information, or to obtain an electronic copy, please contact Ms. Ana Martinovic, SEESAC Communications Officer, ana.martinovic@undp.org.