

Women, Peace and Security

Welcome

To **'AICMA** – gender mainstreaming in actions against anti-personnel mines.



Columbia

What is the Project about?

Background

Since 2005, Switzerland, through SDC, has been supporting Mine Victim Assistance and Mine Risk Education projects with the participation of affected communities (including indigenous communities) and local authorities in Colombia. In the area of mine action, the SDC in Colombia has effectively forged a partnership with the Colombian National Mine Action Authority. This collaboration is strategically designed to optimize the allocation of resources in alignment with the Colombian Government's delineated priorities. During this current phase of the program, the emphasis is on maintaining continuity and bolstering the existing interventions. The overarching goal is to amplify the impact on security, and the living standards of communities impacted by mines, thereby fostering their socio-economic advancement.

Context

Colombia is the country with the highest number of new victims of antipersonnel mines and explosive remnants of war per year. The 2016 Peace Agreement provided the opportunity to focus on the demining process, and significant contributions were made to the demining process, such as the reintegration of ex-combatants through AICMA. Demining operations have advanced and positively impacted on areas that are no longer controlled by the guerrilla Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army (FARC-EP). However, since 2018 and 2021, Colombia has experienced an increase in the number of new victims of antipersonnel mines, resulting from the new conflict dynamics. Colombia is committed to its Strategic Plan of Action against Mines 2020 – 2025 which was made in the context of the 1997 Ottawa Convention banning antipersonnel land mines.

Summary

Theory of change

A comprehensive response combining humanitarian, development and peace promotion approaches (triple nexus) will generate positive change in mine-affected communities, survivors and ex-combatants and enable Colombia to comply with its national strategic framework and international commitments. More concretely, if SDC, through its interventions, contributes to develop and increase the AICMA capacity of institutions and humanitarian actors to address the urgent and medium-term needs of the most affected communities, then the risks caused by the presence of anti-personnel mines and the humanitarian needs can be mitigated and the socio-economic conditions of the affected population can be improved.

Overall goal

The overall goal is to ensure an augmented level of coordination between the Colombian Mine Action Authority and various other initiatives that are integral to the Peace Agreement, notably the implementation of the Territorially Focused Development Plans (PDET).

Specific objective(s)

Improve the safety, living conditions and conditions for sustainable development of communities affected by antipersonnel mines, guided by the principle of leaving no one behind and a differential approach (mainly gender, ethnicity and disability).

Expected results

- AICMA stakeholders are strengthened in their capacities to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Mine Action Plan 2020-2025 with articulated, focused and efficient actions that promote development and peace.
- The humanitarian and protection needs of mine-affected populations (male and female survivors/victims, caregivers, communities) are addressed through interventions in Mine Risk Education, Comprehensive Victim Assistance and Humanitarian Civilian Demining, in coordination with the authorities.
- The communities affected by antipersonnel mines enjoy better socioeconomic conditions and reconciliation, in coordination with the authorities. Their capacities are strengthened.

Stakeholders

Project partners

- The Colombian Campaign Against Mines (CCCM)
- Humanity & Inclusion (HI)
- The Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) are in charge of the evaluations of the Operational Procedures of the humanitarian operators.
- **Humanicemos DH**, explicitly expects the transformation of gender roles, through AICMA action that addresses gender inequality, and focuses on how gender identities are intertwined and connected to be victims of explosive hazards. In this aspect, the organization focuses on strengthening equity and inclusion through Mine Risk Education, with the purpose of promoting advocacy and active participation in this area.

Project primary stakeholders

- The population (women and men) in the relevant territorial areas benefit directly of humanitarian demining, mine risk education, risk management activities.
- Survivors, people with disabilities and their caregivers (mostly women) profit from comprehensive victim assistance.

Project secondary and boundary stakeholders (system actors, duty bearers, service providers etc.)

National Authority for Mine Action in Colombia of the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP) the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and UNICEF.



Key Activities:

- Improving OACP's capacity to coordinate and promote public policies with local authorities and other key actors and expand its institutional presence and response in the territory;
- Supporting the OACP departmental managers to facilitate the coordination of actions, organize events, foster dialogue, raise awareness at all levels for the importance of AICMA, ensure participation of communities, women, ethnic groups, landmine survivors and grassroots organizations in decision-making processes and forums of discussion;
- Supporting the actors involved in developing a gender approach;
- Supporting mine risk education and assistance to victims in 8 municipalities;
- Promoting community initiatives family micro projects that stimulate socioeconomic development post demining.

What did the project do and learn?

Design and Implementation

Key design and implementation features, included:

From the beginning of the project the CCCM felt the need to understand the high percentage of resignation of women in the operations teams and the low participation of women. With this, CCCM recognized that its needs analysis must be differentiated, taking gender identities and intersectional discrimination into account, focusing also on internal organization. The analysis found out that there is a low level of presence of women at various levels of the organization, particularly at management level, that salaries differed, that gender-based violence was present, without adequate recognition and accompaniment. There was no understanding of gender issues in general as well as of the gender dimension of humanitarian demining in particular. As a result, the organization started with sensitizing its own staff on gender issues. By organizing family days for collaborators the organization raised awareness among the families and fostered dialogue about the gender issues that were coming out of the analysis. Gender focal points were institutionalized – volunteers who invest 10% of their time in gender related work.

The gender work in the CCCM started by putting into place a gender policy, gender focal points who were specifically capacitated on gender equity, gender-based violence and in general how gender is viewed within the organization.

Key Achievements and Good Practices

Gender mainstreaming strategies included:

- CCCM's intra-organizational diagnostic tool providing an annual gender survey, including the organization and its collaborators.
- Both organizations focused on awareness raising and education. CCCM's awareness-raising workshops on gender issues, gender-based violence, including a care route for individual cases, new masculinities; while Humanicemos DH had identified a series of gender equality topics and organized workshops with staff and communities accordingly.
- Gendered territorial needs analysis were done, recognizing the diversity of identities and different needs, with a view to ensure responsiveness and "do no harm" as well as effectiveness of the intervention.
- Expert personnel in the technical management of operations on gender and diversity issues were recruited and trained.
- CCCM developed and distributed Information tools on GBV and more generally on promoting equality, particularly in the times of pandemic. Humanicemos DH developed a range of learning materials for gender workshops, validated with UN Women.
- Humanicemos DH's explicitly targeted the elimination of existing gender gaps in the humanitarian demining sector, and measurable and achievable actions with direct impact were defined: the representation of women and diverse communities in non-traditional and leadership roles, equal access to jobs and roles within the sector, and economic empowerment. Gendered indicators were established, as part of the organization's internal control system. All activities have input and output evaluations, which were scored individually to collect the average scores in each of the stages and to verify, for example, the effect or progress made by the participants in the workshops held.



For more on the project, and SDC Gender in LAC experiences

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- <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/es/home/paises/colombia.html/content/dezaprojects/SDC/es/2021/7F10748/phase1?oldPagePath=/content/deza/es/home/laender/kolumbien.html>
- <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/PGE/Gender/Pages/Toolbox/Knowledge%20sharing/Gender-experiences-from-Latin-America.aspx>



Key Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

- Although a cultural change is perceived in both organizations, resistance from some collaborators remains. Constant attention to and monitoring of the causes for resistance and the needs for mitigation of resistance are needed.
- While there is currently specific funding for promoting and deepening gender achievements, it is possible that at some point there may be limited resources for gender mainstreaming policies. Budgetary limitations or the lack of personnel trained in gender issues could hinder progress. Specific resources (and maybe additional funding sources) might be needed for gender-specific actions.
- A specific gender policy of the implementing organizations was key for success, making the commitment visible, setting the basis for targeted action, and sensitizing the collaborators and the communities at all levels.
- Consistent gender sensitive practices and tools increase effectiveness, institutional ownership within the organization as well as credibility among other actors.
- Specific indicators that measure success facilitate the monitoring and the transmission of results. Gender sensitive monitoring systems helped improve effectiveness, recognize good practice and integrate a learning approach into the project management.
- Awareness raising and training of the organization's collaborators on gender issues helps create an internal culture of gender equality and promotes understanding of the challenges and needs of different groups within the organization as well as in the targeted communities.
- Defining gender focal points in the organization allows for a better understanding of the operational realities and specific dynamics. It also contributed to developing a sense of ownership and gender commitment within the organization.