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## NCDR and Women in Jordan

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## NCDR and Women in Jordan



الهيئة الوطنية لإزالة الألغام وإعادة التأهيل  
THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR DEMINING AND REHABILITATION

by Adnan Telfah [ National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation ] and Leah Young [ Mine Action Information Center ]

High levels of gender inequality exist within Jordan—inequalities that affect the workforce. In a nation like Jordan, where women have minimal political participation and only 26 percent of women are active economically, it is difficult for women to be incorporated into the workforce.<sup>1</sup> Fewer women are employed outside of the home when compared to men, with only 9 percent of Jordanian women above the age of 15 working outside their homes. Among females, unemployment rates are double those for males; further, high percentages of women are discouraged from seeking employment outside of the home.<sup>2</sup> Women who are employed are typically compensated with much lower wages than men in the same fields. The roots of these problems arise from a lack of available employment options that are compatible with the current social roles for women.

### What the NCDR Is Doing

To combat this inequality, the National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation, Jordan's leading mine-action authority, works to provide equal opportunity in employment, regardless of gender. The NCDR has a "Mine Action Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan," and has consistently aimed to recruit women.<sup>2</sup> The organization is careful to make certain that job opening announcements convey that both males and females are welcome to apply for the positions. The NCDR is also sensitive to cultural norms within Jordan and is careful to hold job interviews in areas that are "accessible and suitable for both genders."<sup>3</sup> Currently, 25 percent of NCDR's employees are women; furthermore, 40 percent of the organization's employees with decision-making and leadership roles are female. Out of the organization's five departments, there are two departments with women serving as the head of the department.<sup>4</sup>

The NCDR's "Mine Action Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan" is two-fold; working to integrate women into their organization in the areas of mine-risk education and surveying.<sup>2</sup> In NCDR's MRE department, one out of three employees is female. Additionally, over 40 percent of the MRE service providers in the field are female. The manager of the most recent survey project, the 2007 Landmine Retrofit Survey, is a woman as well,<sup>4</sup>

and 30 percent of the LRS project team was made up of female employees.<sup>3</sup> A survey on explosive remnants of war funded by NATO began in September 2008 and is expected to continue for 18 months; NCDR is striving to incorporate women to comprise at least 30 percent of the survey team.<sup>3</sup>

### Gender Mainstreaming and MRE

The NCDR works to make gender mainstreaming a part of its MRE programs. It does this among school-aged children by creating specialized brochures for boys and girls, addressing differences between them. MRE efforts also aim to reach women within their households by holding sessions designed specifically for their demographic. These women are crucial to the MRE efforts, as women who participate in these MRE sessions tend to pass the lessons that they learn on to their communities

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and families. The NCDR found that its efforts to incorporate women into its MRE team had positive results in the field. Having women on the teams made it easier for the teams to access households, especially the women and children in these households.<sup>3</sup> Cultural and social norms in Jordan make it inappropriate for a woman to talk with a man she does not know, so the incorporation of female MRE employees opened up new opportunities for discussions with women in these households and communities.<sup>4</sup> Female team members also provided crucial insight into how to present the MRE materials to the target audience: women and children.<sup>3</sup>

The overarching purpose of the Landmine Retrofit Survey was to "gather mine-related data, prioritize areas, facilitate clearance operations and minimize the risk on impacted communities."<sup>4</sup> The LRS

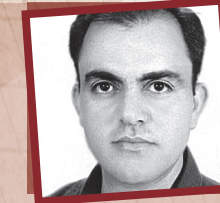
made certain to apply gender mainstreaming to the survey process, as it is proven that the most comprehensive data is collected when all members of a community are polled. The NCDR did this by ensuring that information for the survey was gathered from all population demographics, including women and children, who are typically excluded from surveys. Surveyors also incorporated men, women and children into the process by having them identify areas in their communities that were suspected of being mined. The LRS process demonstrated that households are more easily accessed when gender equality is a part of the process. It also found that it is important to incorporate all members of a community, without a gender bias, as different dangers and priorities stand out to individuals, depending on their gender.

### The Results

Despite existing gender inequalities within Jordan, the NCDR has found ways to involve women in the mine-action process. Through its "Mine Action Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan" and efforts to actively recruit female employees for the organization, the NCDR has made the field of mine action within Jordan increasingly equal. Aside from creating increased gender equality within the workplace, NCDR's inclusion of female employees has been proven to increase the success of survey and MRE teams within Jordan. ♦

See Endnotes, page 113

This article was compiled with the help of Iris-Marie Norvor, Intern/Editorial Assistant at the Mine Action Information Center.



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## News Brief

### Relief for Amputees with "Phantom Limbs"

Dr. Atul Gawande recently published an article in *The New Yorker* titled, "The Itch," in which Gawande offered some inexpensive and rapid methods to minimize or eliminate pain that comes from a sensation known to many as a "phantom limb." For an amputee, a phantom limb is a sensation that makes one's amputated appendage feel as if it is still attached and moving. This sensation can be very painful for amputees.

Gawande cited a phantom limb case study by Dr. V.S. Ramachandran from the University of California, San Diego. In his experiments, Ramachandran used a mirror-in-a-box contraption that helped give his patients immediate relief by "tricking" the patient's brain into believing the limb was still attached and could be moved to relieve the discomfort. The patient spent a few minutes a day lying with the mirror reflecting the remaining limb as if it were the missing limb; movement of the remaining limb was found to relieve the stress and pain caused by the phantom limb sensations. The rest of Atul Gawande's article on these experiments/techniques can be found online at <http://snipurl.com/41uj9>.