

 **FSD**



MINE VICTIM ASSISTANCE IN REMOTE AREAS OF AFGHANISTAN

A ROTARY PEACE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE



Global Grant
International Partner:



Global Grant
Local Host:



with support from the Swiss/ Liechtenstein
Rotarian Action Group for Peace



THE PROJECT



Millions of mines and cluster munitions have been laid or dropped within Afghanistan over the many years of conflict, leaving almost 7,500 people killed and close to 24,000 people injured.

In addition to physical injuries, mine accident survivors often suffer from psychological trauma, which manifests in debilitating symptoms such as headaches, stomach pain, depression and isolation. Mine victims are the first affected, but their family, community as well the wider society are also severely impacted.

Rotary clubs have decided to provide practical assistance to forgotten mine victims in the remote Afghan region of Badakhshan, in close cooperation with the Fondation Suisse de Déminage (FSD). This project was designed to maximize impact in two Rotary Focus Areas: peace and conflict prevention/resolution as well as economic and community development.

The FSD has been clearing landmines in Badakhshan since 2010. For the purpose of identifying the areas needing clearance, the FSD works closely with the communities, who provide crucial data on where mines are located and where accidents have taken place. Hence, over the years, the FSD has come across many survivors of mine accidents who lack any access to proper medical care.

The organization has started assisting these persons on a case-by-case basis, providing support corresponding to their most critical needs. Some have received prosthetic legs or other medical aid.

Others, for whom farming was the main source of livelihood, have been helped to start a new activity compatible with their disability. But many more survivors are in dire socio-economic situations that would greatly benefit from care and/or rehabilitation.



SYNERGIES BETWEEN MINE VICTIM ASSISTANCE IN AFGHANISTAN AND ROTARY PEACE AND CONFLICT PREVENTION/RESOLUTION

Socio-economic initiatives: One way of contributing to mine victim inclusivity is by giving mine victims a sense of self-worth and of purpose in the communities they live in. This promotes social cohesion as well as contributes to socio-economic activities.

Traditional justice and reconciliation: Mine survivors are a constant reminder of the negative impact of the conflict for the victims, but also for the families and communities. All mine victim assistance programs are deeply integrated with the local community, working closely with the immediate family of the survivor, local focal points, and the local medical network. These programs are also carried out in an inclusive manner with the support of the immediate community, so as to help change the perceptions, cultural views and attitudes of people to victims, who can then be seen as net contributors in the community. Such projects therefore inherently help repair the scar of conflict.

Factors leading to positive peace: Mine victim assistance is one of many mechanisms that can help break down the polarized views often generated in a post-conflict situation. Providing help to survivors is a way to promote equitable distribution of resources and acceptance of the rights of others. Demonstrating an inclusive approach to victims also helps foster better attitudes towards rehabilitation, trust and confidence in local authorities and the wider international community.



Rahmi Ali lost his leg by stepping on a mine while he was fetching some wood in the forest 25 years ago. Despite his prosthetic leg, he will never be able to farm again. The FSD provided him with bee hives, an activity compatible with his disability so that he can earn a livelihood for his family again.

LANDMINE VICTIM ASSISTANCE CONTRIBUTION TO SDGs



"Leaving no one behind: Mine action and the Sustainable Development Goals",
GICHD - UNDP, Geneva, June 2017.

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