



PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Saving lives and limbs

by John Filiatreau
Presbyterian News Service

In one sense, it's a numbers game, and the numbers can be daunting.

- It typically costs \$1 to \$5 to manufacture an "anti-personnel" landmine. On average, it costs \$1,000 to remove one safely from the ground.
- About 100 million unexploded mines are deployed around the world, in about 90 different countries.
- A mine can remain functional and lethal for 20 years or more.
- Every year, 15,000 to 20,000 civilians, 90 percent of them children, are killed by mines.

But numbers don't tell the whole story.

Lisa Henry, head of emergencies for DanChurchAid, talks about numbers differently. She says, "We like to talk about how many people would have died if removed mines had remained in the ground; We like to talk about how many people have been able to return to that land, to work their fields, to go to school, to walk that path, to carry water home. We try to communicate that mine-removal efforts have a direct impact on people's lives."



A landmine victim practices walking on his new prosthetic leg.
Photo: Paul Jeffrey/ACT

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) has supported landmine removal efforts in Cambodia, Kosovo, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sudan over the last year.

PDA supports DanChurchAid in landmine removal efforts as a member of Action by Churches Together (ACT), a worldwide alliance of churches and their aid agencies that responds to disasters around the world.

"Presbyterian support has been intrinsic to what we've been able to do," said Lisa Henry of DanChurchAid.

"Mine-removal is expensive. There are costs related to training, equipment and transportation, plus there is the expense of keeping fully trained and equipped medical teams on hand in case of an accident."

Henry said people who donate mission funds often like to see concrete results.

"They want their money to be used to dig a well, or

build a church — but

people cannot draw water from that well, or send their children to that school, until the area has been cleared of mines."



Landmines are a lethal legacy of war in many countries. Photo: Paul Jeffrey/ ACT, International

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has a designated account number for landmine removal. Please reference DR000132 to support this ministry. Checks can be made payable to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and mailed to Individual Remittance Processing, P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700.