

REPORT FROM A VISIT TO ZARAFSHAN VALLEY

According to the MRE project action plan for implementation of activities in the Zarafshan Valley, the risk reduction activities (included creating safe playground in two Jamoats) were conducted in Panjikent district. These activities were conducted by:

- a. Mr Azamjon SALOKHOV - MRE Coordinator
- b. Mr Kholmat URUNOV - MRE Coordinator assistant

MRE FIELD VISIT AND PROJECT ACTIVITIES IN PANJIKANT DISTRICT:

On 26 August 2006 MRE Coordinator and assistant coordinator visited Zarafshan Valley (Ayni and Panjikant districts). The objective was to implement risk reduction activities including construction of two safe playgrounds in more remote border schools in Panjikant district. This is seen as a positive step in encouraging the children to gather and play in a safe area as an alternative rather than going to dangerous minefields near their village. During initial assessment, the border community of Jamoat Mogion was identified as a mine-affected community in need of a safe playground. MRE Coordinator and assistant coordinator held a meeting with the representatives of Mogion sub-district including the head of Jamoat, Mr. Istam Tupalov as well as community members of Obi borik village. MRE coordinator and assistant explained the aim of the project to the head of Jamoat in order to determine what kind of support the community can provide.

The representatives of Jamoat and school teachers anticipated help from the younger children who can clear the area clean of stones while older children can help with laying the foundation of the playground. During this meeting, it was agreed that the involvement of the youngsters and other members of the community is crucial to the success of the project. In this regard Jamoat representatives will arrange for several trucks for bringing gravel and sand to cover the playing area.

It was agreed that the playground for small children will include playing equipment such as swings, seesaw, slide, and shelter whilst the playground for older children will include a mini football pitch and basketball poles in school #61.

RCST branch has started construction of the playground on 26 August in accordance with the Agreement of Services. It is anticipated that the construction of these playground will take up to 2 weeks and the local community will be mobilized in support of this project. It is also envisaged that each playground will have a billboard explaining ways to identify danger zones.

On 27 August 2006 a similar set of meetings were held in the mine-affected Amondara Jamoat. MRE Coordinator and assistant held a meeting with the representatives of Amondara sub-district and community members of Roj village. In addition to discussion on construction of a safe playground, meetings were held with many members of the community, including teachers, parents, village leaders and children who will be involved and participate in the construction of the playground.

The playground will be constructed similar to that of Jamoat Mogion in school #63. The school is located approximately 2 km. away from the minefield. The members of local community will be closely involved with the project. RCST branch has already started to construct of the playground in accordance with the Agreement of Services on the day of the visit.

On 28 August 2006 MRE assistant coordinator visited Ayni district and held a meeting with representatives of Urmetan Jamoat and MRE volunteers. As MRE volunteers reported that on 27 August 2006, a number of antipersonnel mines were detonated in Jamoat Urmetan (on Langar

Mountain) in the border area near Uzbekistan. As the result of this, more than 70 sheep and goats belonging to local inhabitants were killed.

On 29 August 2006 a roundtable was organized for MRE volunteers, journalist and village leaders from five mine-affected districts in Sughd region. The participants of the workshop provided refresher knowledge on MRE activities and awareness training that can be used during the work in the field and designing information materials, monitoring results. A flipchart was also designed and worked out for future use of volunteers as an MRE tool in the field. The local government representatives also attended the MRE roundtable and discussed the necessity of Mine Awareness activities and prevention of landmine casualties in affected communities. It was agreed that MRE volunteers will work closely with government representatives in order to implement the project in the field.

Mr. Azamjon Salokhov
RCST MRE Coordinator

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