



***Baseline Study of the
Socio-Economic
Empowerment of
Women through Mine
Action in Ninewa
Governorate, Iraq***

**A Rapid Impact and Perception
Survey**



Acknowledgements

This survey was conducted by the United Nations Mine Action Service in Iraq (UNMAS Iraq) from January to April 2021. It was funded through a dedicated contribution from the Government of the Netherlands and the general contributions of all donors who support the programmatic activities of UNMAS Iraq.

The format and methodology draw upon past standard-setting collaborative surveys carried out by the Geneva Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), through its Gender and Mine Action Programme (GMAP) and the United Nations.

In 2019, UNMAS Afghanistan and GICHD collaborated on a baseline and end line study in Bamiyan province: *"Afghanistan's First Female Deminers: An Analysis of Perception Changes among Deminers, Families, and Communities"*. Following this, also in 2019, GICHD conducted another baseline study in Sri Lanka with the title: *"The Socio-Economic Impact of Employing Female Deminers in Sri Lanka"*. An earlier reference source was an academic paper prepared in 1996 by three students at the Geneva Institute of International and Development Studies which presented a comparative survey of women in mine action in Lebanon and Colombia: *"Women in Humanitarian Mine Action: Assessing Agency in Families and Communities"*.

The survey design, methodology and structure of this study has employed the GICHD-GMAP model and adapted it to the context of Iraq's political, cultural and social environment. UNMAS Iraq highly appreciates the cooperation of GICHD and UNMAS Afghanistan in the preparation of this survey and report.

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Glossary

DMA	Directorate of Mine Action
EHM	Explosive Hazard Management
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
EORE	Explosive Ordnance Risk Education
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
FSD	Swiss Foundation for Mine Action
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
GMAP	Gender and Mine Action Programme
GoI	Government of Iraq
HI	Humanity and Inclusion (Previously Handicap International)
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons/People
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IHSCO	Health and Social Care Organization in Iraq
IKMAA	Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency
iMMAP	Information Management and Mine Action Programs
IP	Implementing Partner
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Also known as “Da’esh”)
MAAoR	Mine Action Area of Responsibility
MAG	Mines Advisory Group
MoD	Ministry of Defence
Mol	Ministry of Interior
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA	Norwegian People’s Aid
NTS	Non-Technical Survey
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Survey Overview

In its measurement of the socio-economic status of women in mine action and their potential empowerment, this baseline study examines source data from UNMAS-supported mixed-sex Explosive Hazard Management (EHM) teams and Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) teams in Ninewa Governorate in Iraq. Aspects of empowerment are studied through the survey of male and female mine action staff, stakeholders and women's family and friends. Five case studies profiling history, family, community, career, and policy implementation were also carried out.

In Iraq, women and men have distinct roles and responsibilities within their families and communities that govern social behaviour including the right and access to employment opportunities. In Ninewa, there is a rich ethnic and cultural diversity within which social and gender norms range, from traditional to liberal openness to change. Given the very real physical dangers of mine action work and the masculine, military-style uniforms of mine action staff, it was viewed as a job for men. The inclusion of women as EORE educators generated less concern given the need to have access to girls and women as well as the association with teaching that the role involved. Nevertheless, women in EORE faced social pressures that result when non-traditional roles are breached. While EORE mixed-sex teams have been operating for several years, explosives clearance activities were an exclusively male domain until the UK-based humanitarian organization Mine Action Group (MAG) deployed the first mixed-sex teams in Sinjar in February 2016. The introduction of women explosive searchers (deminers) was a new development for families in Ninewa. Concerns expressed by families on the inclusion of women in survey and clearance teams included safety, travel, absences from home and working with unknown men.¹

In 2018, UNMAS worked with its implementing partners (IPs) to begin the recruitment of women and the deployment of mixed-sex search teams for their EHM (survey and clearance) operations. This provided the opportunity to further the understanding of the effects of breaking gender barriers and empowering women in mine action. In 2019, consistent with UN initiatives supporting women's empowerment, UNMAS Iraq saw the potential of its mixed-sex teams to gauge the socio-economic impact of women's employment, and, accordingly, the need for a baseline study.

In Ninewa Governorate, the problem of unexploded ordnance dates from the 2003 conflict and subsequent anti-government actions culminating in the occupation by ISIL of much of the Governorate in the 2014 – 2017 period. During this survey, three of four organizations implementing EHM in Ninewa Governorate deployed mixed-sex teams. Two of these organizations were UNMAS IPs. Seventeen per cent of all teams in the field were teams with female staff. Thirteen percent of all EHM staff were females. Of these, female team leaders represented seven per cent of the total number of team leaders.

EORE activities in Ninewa are implemented entirely by mixed-sex teams. A total of five UNMAS partner EORE teams were surveyed for this study.

¹ *GMAP Gender and Diversity Assessment in Kurdistan Region of Iraq, December 2018*, p. 14

Methodology

The survey was carried out from January to April 2021 to assess the experience of the past two years of operation of the mixed-sex teams deployed in UNMAS operations. It was conducted in Ninewa governorate in northern Iraq: Mosul, Sinjar, Tal Afar and communities in the Ninewa plain, including Tal Kief, Hamdaniya and Makhmour. In-place quantitative questionnaires were completed with female and male mine action workers employed with UNMAS IPs. Telephone qualitative interviews were conducted with family and community members due to security and logistical constraints. A total of 176 participants (96 female and 80 male) took part, of which 41 participants were women employed in mine action. The survey design, methodology and structure of this gender study employed the GICHD model of past socio-economic baseline surveys adapted for the context of Iraq's political, cultural, and social environment.

Findings: Overview

In Ninewa, the survey data shows that women of mine action have made evident development in their skills, improved their agency, and felt empowered within their families and communities. In the workplace, they have demonstrated their capacity to the majority of male colleagues and supervisors. At a personal level, their self-perceptions portray life changing levels of socio-economic-personal empowerment for many of them, and career ambitions by most. Elements of doubt and resistance to women in mine action remain in family, community and workplace environments. Women in this study who are coming from a more conservative environment admit their mine action empowerment is often constrained and expressed covertly given social pressures they feel subject to. Others are increasingly prepared to express their opinions and ideas overtly. A recent, positive development is an increase in inquiries by women and their parents about employment opportunities.

Demographic Profile

- The typical woman in mine action is three years younger than her male counterpart and twice as likely to be single or divorced. She is better educated than most of her male colleagues.
- Men were more likely to have pre-mine action work experience than women (82% versus 68%).
- Women were more likely to be unemployed than men, prior to mine action (49% versus 18%).
- Men have almost 3 times the duration of past work experience of women but there is comparable mine action work experience (2.25 years vs 1.75 years).
- Females' motivations for employment in mine action were primarily to obtain a job (42%). Other motivations were community service (32%) and IDPs returning home (26%).

Economic Impact

- Family, community and male colleagues are consistent in the degree to which they positively recognize women in mine action's financial support to their families.
- Women's average monthly income increased 48% after starting a job in mine action.
- Women increased their share of household income from 31% to 62% with a mine action job.
- 71% of women increased their household financial contribution.
- 50% of women became an equal or majority contributor to the household.

Social Impact: Family and Community

- **61% of family members see no changes in men's behaviour and attitude towards their female family member in mine action since she started to work.** Women working in mine action reported only a slight decrease in their time spent on household chores thereby absorbing a 'double burden' of work-home duties.
- **More than two-thirds of family and community members in Ninewa believe that if their family / community knew of a woman working in mine action, their reaction would be positive.** In some communities the majority is not supportive of women in mine action. Negative reactions registered 29% in Mosul and 33% in Tal Afar, and 6% in Sinjar.
- **80% of families and 63% of community members had no prior information about women in mine action when recruitment notices were publicized.** The survey found that as understanding of the feasibility and benefits of women in mine action grew, so did their acceptance.
- **49% of community members believe women in mine action face social risks². 12% believe they face safety risks.** Governments, communities, and employers have a duty of care to their constituencies: citizens, staff and neighbours. 17% of the women stated that the discomfort they have telling people they work in mine action has decreased.
- **68% of family and 73% of community members saw changes in empowerment in the behaviour of women in mine action.** The majority of comments were effusive in describing the multiple changes observed in personality, confidence and the expression of opinions.

Employment Impact: Men and Women

- **69% of male mine action workers believe women searchers are needed.** While 31% disagree, there remains a significant majority of support for women by male colleagues. 100% of male mine action workers believe women in risk education are needed.
- **100% of women in mine action said their confidence in themselves increased. Of these, 39% said it had strongly increased.** Women in mine action identified similarly high levels of increased decision-making capacities in terms of life goals, high value expenditures, daily expenditure and daily activities.
- **Women registered a 90% increase in their confidence to express their opinions freely during community discussions and decisions.** This element of personal agency rated the second highest score in women's self-perception. Confidence to express opinions with male colleagues and to speak up in the face of unfair treatment also ranked highly. In assessing increases in decision-making, "decisions on life goals" scored the top ranking by a wide margin.
- **17% of EHM teams in Ninewa are mixed-sex or female-only teams. 13% of EHM staff are female. 7% of EHM team leaders are female.** While these numbers are well below the goals of gender

² Social risks are understood to be pressures from extended family members, neighbours, friends and other members of the community who may disagree or reject the idea of women doing work that is traditionally understood to be done only by males.

parity³, it is noted the mine action sector for women is only five years old and has experienced much broader growth in the last two years.

- **93% of women in mine action believe they can do the highest level of hazard management work – Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD). 73% of women would accept an opportunity to work as an EOD specialist.** When asked the same question of themselves, 87% of men would accept an opportunity as EOD specialists. Women are approaching parity with men in their goal setting.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered for consideration by all partners of the mine action sector in Iraq, and in particular via the Mine Action Gender Task Force, an advisory body of the sector established by the Directorate of Mine Action.

1. A sector-wide recruitment strategy should be developed for EHM mixed-sex and all-female teams that engages communities in the process and provides information and responds to questions.
2. The mine action sector should promote mixed-sex teams to the public as serving a key role in Iraq's reconstruction and social cohesion.
3. Government EOD training facilities should be made accessible equally to men and women.
4. A focus group discussion should be organized for members of EORE and EHM mixed-sex teams to discuss the personal and professional experiences of women working in non-traditional jobs.
5. A joint DMA-IKMAA dedicated webpage for mine action staff in Iraq should be created to provide information on the sector, training opportunities, employment opportunities and post-mine action employment transition strategies and resources.
6. A workshop should be organized for mine action partners to review the experience of organizations' deployment of EHM and EORE mixed-sex teams in Ninewa and identify best practices and lessons learned to contribute to a common strategy for advancement towards gender equality and parity in mine action employment.
7. The mine action sector should engage in a dialogue with other stakeholders in communities to obtain feedback and generate discussions on possible opportunities to further broaden gender equality in Iraq and contribute to supporting the GoI efforts in that regard in line with its commitments.
8. A follow-up end line study of women in mine action in Ninewa should be carried out with particular attention to economic motivations and perceived social risks to women.

Conclusion

The information generated in this baseline socio-economic survey of women in mine action supports organizations' responsibility for duty of care of employees who are pioneering positive change in existing gender roles, in non-traditional jobs, in a post-conflict society. The statistical data and the qualitative data obtained indicate that the more information communities and families have, the more accepting they are of the mixed-sex teams concept. Once gender negative norms are challenged and women's employment in these roles is seen as positive, social boundaries are breached leading to positive transformational change in gender norms. The sum of the survey findings supports an

³ As per UNOPS System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity, October 2017.

understanding that the introduction of women in mine action in Ninewa has established a solid foundation and manifested gains in the empowerment of women of mine action and in society.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In its measurement of the status of women in mine action and their potential socio-economic empowerment, this survey gathered source data on the experience of staff and related family and friends in UNMAS-funded mixed-sex teams in Ninewa Governorate. The overall goal of the study was to inform future mine action best practices, programming and international support within Iraq.

The United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) addresses the impact of armed conflicts on women and girls and the necessity of their inclusion in post-conflict processes. UNMAS responds to this obligation and works to ensure women's participation in mine action operations and gender mainstreaming in its programming. Policy and practice are guided by the United Nations Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes (GMAP).

UNMAS Iraq promotes gender equality through gender mainstreaming towards the empowerment of women in the peace and security sector, and for the wider empowerment of women in Iraq. UN agencies such as UNMAS are obligated to exercise due diligence and duty of care in the management of programmes. Implementation should be carried out on an evidence-based understanding of the socio-economic impact of the non-traditional employment of women in mine action. The impact is not only on the women; the non-traditional employment of women inevitably has an ancillary effect on their male colleagues, families and communities. As such, the empowerment of women in mine action, and the eventual achievement of gender equality in the sector is a process that involves all levels of community engagement.

A better understanding of the economic, social and career challenges the women face allows UNMAS to fully consider potential positive and negative consequences. This applies both in the communities they come from and the communities they work in. The reaction of communities to the employment of women in non-traditional jobs impacts the degree to which women can demonstrate the self-described life-changing social and economic empowerment many of them say they gain from their work and income. That reaction also impacts the degree and pace of progress that may be made toward greater gender equality in the sector and ultimately in society.

With the support of the Government of the Netherlands, this survey was originally conceived as a twelve-month research project covering the evolution of the socio-economic impact of women's empowerment through a baseline and end line survey. In the face of the Covid-19 pandemic and related restrictions the scope was limited to a baseline study at this time.

2.0 AIM OF THE STUDY

In 2018, UNMAS directed its implementing partners to begin the deployment of mixed-sex search teams for their EHM operations in Mosul, Sinjar and Tel Afar. This provided the opportunity to further the understanding of the effects of breaking gender barriers and empowering women in mine action. In 2019, it was determined that a baseline study was needed to assess how women's empowerment within mine action affected women, families and communities in the Iraqi context.

The aim of the study is to examine, through primary data collection from female and male staff of mixed-sex (EHM) and (EORE) teams in Ninewa Governorate:

1. The rapid impact of income generating activity for women, through mine action employment, on the livelihood of the individuals as well as families and communities;
2. The change in perception of women's role through empowerment in mine action within the families and communities;
3. The gender dynamics within mixed-sex teams and changes in perception of both men and women.

Objectives:

1. Establish a baseline against which to monitor the impact and progress of income generating activities for women in mine action on individuals, families and close relatives;
2. Assess contributions to and progress towards gender equality as a result of women's participation in mine action and economic empowerment (independent income, contribution to family support, access to and control of family resources);
3. Increase understanding of social benefits and challenges of women's inclusion in the mine action sector to women, families and communities;
4. Assess men and the broader community's perception and possible behavioural changes (positive and negative) towards women working in mine action.
5. Understand the benefits of women in mine action through mixed-sex teams and at all levels of staffing from team members to team leaders.

For the purposes of this study, these benefits were identified as:

- Mixed-sex teams reflect gender balance and diversity that exists in society.
- Mixed-sex teams demonstrate equal treatment and equal sharing of risks.
- Mixed-sex teams enable equal opportunity for income-generating employment.
- Women and men bring different, complementary perspectives to their work.
- The presence of women and men facilitates engaging all members of the community.
- Mixed-sex teams offer opportunities for all citizens to fulfil civic responsibilities.
- Team harmony is promoted through gender balance.
- Mixed-sex teams present models of service to all youth.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Society and Culture in Ninewa Governorate

Gender equality and gender parity are relatively recent social aspirations. Traditional roles and responsibilities in human relationships have, however, evolved over many centuries in locations such as Ninewa, where some of the first human settlements originated.

Population concentrations are in the east of the governorate, along the Tigris River and in the rich farming lands of the Ninewa plains which adjoin Mosul, Iraq's second largest city.⁴ Districts to the west of Mosul towards the Syrian border are more lightly populated. Ninewa's majority population is Arab, with minority communities of Armenians, Chaldo-Assyrians, Kakai, Kurd, Shabak, Turkmen and Yazidi.

The occupation of much of Ninewa by ISIL from 2014 to 2017 resulted in large scale contamination by ordnance such as explosive remnants of war (ERW) and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and "massive under-reporting" of casualties in cities such as Mosul.⁵ The fighting also drove the displacement of whole communities. In 2020, Ninewa continued as the area of origin for the most internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Iraq: 58% (705,370).⁶ Mosul, Sinjar and Al-Ba'aj were the main communities of origin. For this population to return to their homes, mine action serves as a key activity to restore safety, revive economies, clear infrastructure and lands, and enable families to make such a decision.

The large movement of people was both a physical and social displacement. In the close living arrangements of IDP camps and settlements, the proximity of different groups exposed people to new ideas and practices, augmented by regular engagements with non-governmental organization (NGO) staff who were represented by both men and women. As mine action staff have related, once returns to home communities began post-ISIL, the experiences and views gained in the camps travelled as well. This has meant the reconstruction period for the people of Ninewa has been a time of a society in flux, as a return to old homes has not meant a return to old ways and ideas. Gender norms in some communities have been changing, especially with the post-conflict consequence of more female-headed households.⁷

Ninewa is one of two governorates in Iraq for which there are no statistics on unemployment. The national average was 10.8% in 2019, rising to 15% in eleven districts.⁸ It was estimated however that 47 per cent of the displaced in Ninewa live below the poverty line.⁹

In UNDP's Gender Inequality Index for 2020, Iraq ranks 123 out of 189 countries.¹⁰ In the 2019 Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, Ninewa was in the lowest ranking of all governorates in Iraq on women's happiness. Given the years of occupation under ISIL rule were especially damaging to women, these statistics are not surprising. Beyond the trauma of conflict and experiences of displacement were the kidnappings, forced marriages and systematic rape of women, particularly those from minority groups

⁴ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/iraq/#people-and-society>

⁵ <http://the-monitor.org/en-gb/reports/2018/iraq/casualties.aspx>

⁶ <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/iraq-%E2%80%9494-displacement-report-119-november-december-2020>

⁷ Survey interviews and *GMAP Gender and Diversity Assessment in Kurdistan Region of Iraq, December 2018*

⁸ 2019 Iraq Socio-Economic Atlas, p. 40, 42

⁹ 2019 Iraq Socio-Economic Atlas

¹⁰ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>

such as the Yazidis. In 2018, an Iraqi Yazidi woman from Sinjar, Nadia Murad represented their suffering when she was named as co-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. In her book, *“Women and Gender in Iraq: Between Nation-Building and Fragmentation”*, Zahra Ali, an Iraqi Arab author, postulates that violence in the country is gendered by the forms of sectarian and militarist forces competing in society.

In the relative peace that increasingly characterizes Ninewa’s reconstruction period, job opportunities for both men and women remain limited. In past years women’s employment was estimated to be almost four times less than men.¹¹ Given that bleak outlook, the value of women working in a barrier-breaking non-traditional job such as mine action goes beyond enjoying certain rights and helps to address an enormous gap in employment.

In remarks at a Security Council Open Debate on Mine Action on 08 April 2021, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said, in relation to gender, *“from Afghanistan to Iraq, Colombia to South Sudan, women deminers and risk educators have broken stereotypes to keep their communities safe, contributing to the Women, Peace and Security agenda.”*¹² Within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, mine action activities have a cross-cutting impact, especially in conflict and post-conflict environments. In the context of gender in Iraq, SDG 5 is directly related to the current goal for gender equality in recruitment and training of mine action staff in implementing organizations.

In December 2020, the Second Iraq National Action Plan (INAP) on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) was launched. The Mine Action Gender Task Force organised by the DMA has prioritized women’s participation in mine action and planning of action is underway. This is an opportunity to normalize mixed-sex teams as a part of post-conflict reconstruction in communities in Iraq and increase the employment of women in mine action.

3.2 Mine Action in Ninewa Governorate

The Iraq DMA has identified 587 hazardous areas in Ninewa covering 97,801,881 square meters. Of these, 358 hazards are IED, and 213 hazards are ERW. Almost all contamination is located in six of the nine districts: Mosul, Tal Afar, Sinjar, Makhmour, Tel Kief and Hamdaniya. The threats affect agricultural land, infrastructure, roads, waterways and non-agricultural land. Mine action activities are directed by DMA and carried out by the Iraqi government, UNMAS, NGO, military and commercial entities. Explosive ordnance contamination affects IDPs and returnees alike, as it impedes safe return to their areas of origin, and their capacity to resume their lives and livelihoods.

UNMAS Iraq EHM and EORE activities in Ninewa Governorate were carried out through national and international implementing partners in the six affected districts.

¹¹ https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Iraq/Male_labor_force_participation/

¹² <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2021-04-08/secretary-generals-remarks-security-council-open-debate-mine-action-delivered>



UNMAS Survey and Clearance Operations

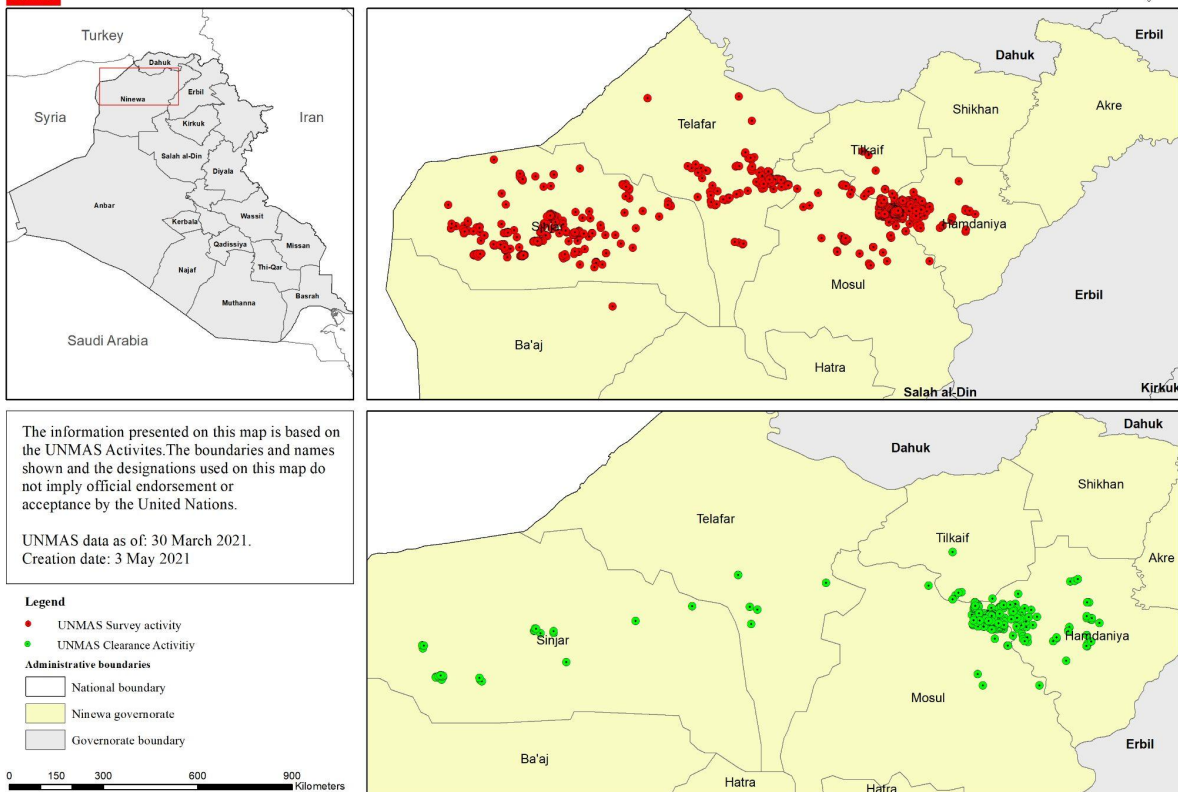


Figure (1): UNMAS Iraq Survey and Clearance Operations

Survey and clearance teams were exclusively staffed by men in Iraq until February 2016, when the UK-based humanitarian organization Mines Advisory Group (MAG) deployed the first female operators team¹³ in Sinjar¹⁴, followed by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). Communities were already accustomed to mixed-sex teams for EORE, community liaison and non-technical survey activities. The introduction of women searchers into what was seen traditionally as the work of men was a new development for people in Ninewa and the mine action sector. A GMAP survey of gender in Kurdistan identified family resistance to the recruitment of women as explosive searchers. Concerns included safety, travel, overnight absences and working with unknown men.¹⁵ In 2018, UNMAS worked with its implementing partners to begin the recruitment of women and the deployment of mixed-sex search teams for their EHM operations in Ninewa Governorate.

Searchers normally have Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) 1 or EOD 2 certification. EORE educators are not required to have EOD certification but benefit from EOD 1 if available. EOD specialists authorized to dispose explosives have EOD 3 or EOD 3+ (IED)¹⁶ certification. There are no facilities in Iraq that allow for the accommodation and training of women at higher EOD levels though this can be carried out in-house by organizations with testing conducted and certification awarded by MOD.

In the period of this survey, January – April 2021, EORE activities in Ninewa by UNMAS were implemented entirely by mixed-sex teams. A total of five UNMAS partner EORE teams were surveyed

¹³ Teams of ten staff with five to ten female team members (MAG source)

¹⁴ <https://www.instyle.com/lifestyle/MAG-deminer-women-iraq>

¹⁵ *GMAP Gender and Diversity Assessment in Kurdistan Region of Iraq, December 2018*, p. 14

¹⁶ Note: corresponds to Iraqi level 4 certification by MOD at their EOD Training school in Besmaya.

for this study. Three of four organizations carrying out EHM in Ninewa had mixed-sex teams. Two of these were UNMAS implementing partners. 17% of the teams in the field had female members.

Table (1): A list of Mine Action Organizations in Ninewa Governorate: Mixed-Sex Teams, April 2021¹⁷

Active Organizations (Random)	Total EHM Teams	Mixed-Sex or Female-Only EHM Teams	Male Only EHM Teams	Mixed-Sex EHM Teams	Year 1st Female EHM team
Organization 1	48	9	39	0	2016
Organization 2 ¹⁸	6	0	6	0	2021*

¹⁷ Data collected at source by UNMAS survey team.

¹⁸ Two female HM teams with 18 staff are intended to begin in 2021, subject to donor funding approval.

Organization 3	4	2	2	0	2019
Organization 4	13	1	12	0	2019
TOTAL	71	12 (17%)	59 (83%)	0	

The twelve EHM female-only teams had a total of seventy-seven female searchers which represented thirteen per cent of the EHM staff in Ninewa Governorate. Of these, five were female team leaders, representing seven per cent of the total number of team leaders.

Table (2): A list of Mine Action Organizations in Ninewa Governorate: Female / Male Staff, April 2021¹⁹

¹⁹ Data collected at source by UNMAS survey team.

Active Organizations (Random)	Total EHM Staff	Female EHM Staff	Male EHM Staff	Total Team Leaders	Female Team Leaders	Male Team Leaders
Organization 1	411	55	356	48	4	44
Organization 2*	54	0	54	6	0	6
Organization 3	24	12	12	4	0	4

Organization 4	91	6	85	13	1	12
TOTAL	580	73 (13%)	507 (87%)	71	5 (7%)	66 (93%)

4.0 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Survey Design

Building on prior surveys in Afghanistan by UNMAS / GICHD and in Sri Lanka by UNICEF / GICHD, two data collection methods were employed to collect baseline quantitative and qualitative data. A survey questionnaire generated quantitative data through direct information gathering and the testing of hypotheses via multiple-choice questions. Structured interviews provided qualitative information through open-ended questions and allowed the opportunity for follow-up discussion and socio-ethnographic observations. All participants were assured anonymity in the management of the data.

Given the conditions of the security situation in Iraq, and to mitigate the possibility of self-censorship, two approaches were taken to mitigate this risk. First, in some questions, sensitive issues were raised indirectly by soliciting responses based on what the participant believed were the opinions of friends and family members. Second, 'level of change' questions are normally presented in positive terms. When 100 per cent of statements are given with a positive condition, the potential for a bias may be heightened. To mitigate this risk, 'level of change' questions were alternated; framing the questions negatively in a series, then positively in the next series. This was a purposeful intention to provoke the survey participant into actively disagreeing with the proposition, if necessary.

The quantitative questionnaires were delivered through in-person oral interviews of equal numbers of male and female mine action staff. Questions framed for 'yes/no' and multiple-choice responses were employed. Questions that presented level of change multiple response options (example: *strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree*) were presented with a visual tool to aid in

choosing: ‘smiley face’ images ranging from full frown to full smile expressions (see Annex).

Qualitative interview forms were used in one-on-one interviews with participants associated with the female mine action staff, or the communities in which they worked: family, community members and community stakeholders. In the case of family members and community members, the interviewees were identified to the UNMAS survey team by the female mine action workers themselves. For security and logistical reasons these interviews were conducted exclusively by telephone.

Qualitative interviews with community stakeholders were conducted in-person and were identified by the UNMAS survey team during the course of the survey.

4.2 Survey Overview

4.2.1 Geographic location

The survey was conducted in Ninewa governorate in northern Iraq: Mosul, Sinjar, Tal Afar, Makhmour and Tal Kief and Hamdaniya in the Ninewa Plains.



Figure (2): Ninewa Governorate Geographic Borders

4.2.2 Timeline

Survey interviews were carried out from 31 January to 08 April 2021.

4.2.3 Survey Team

The survey was implemented by one international consultant and two national Community Liaison Officers who contributed diverse perspectives by gender, language and ethnicity. Administrative and operational support was provided by the UNMAS Erbil office.

4.2.4 Scope of the Survey

The survey engaged mine action mixed-sex teams, both EHM and EORE, currently operative in Ninewa

governorate. Only implementing partners contracted directly by UNMAS were invited to take part. Missions were conducted to Mosul, Tal Afar, Sinjar, Makhmour and Tel Kief.

4.3 Targeted Samples

4.3.1 Target Populations

The target population for the data collection process comprised five groups of Iraqi nationals:

Quantitative questionnaires/interviews:

- Female mine action staff.
- Male mine action staff.

Qualitative Interviews:

- Family members.
- Community members /friends.
- Stakeholders / Community leaders.

Family member respondents were majority siblings, followed equally by parents and spouses. Community member respondents were primarily friends of the interviewed female staff.

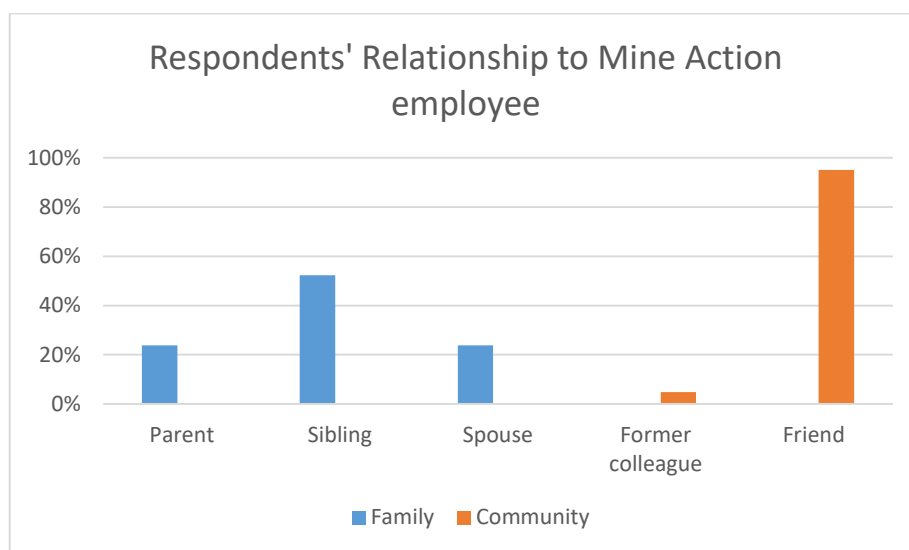


Figure (3): Family and Community Respondents' Relationship to Mine Action Employee

The gender of respondents was an important element of the data. Most community respondents were females (as friends of the interviewed female staff), and most family respondents were males. The community stakeholders totalled eight men and six women.

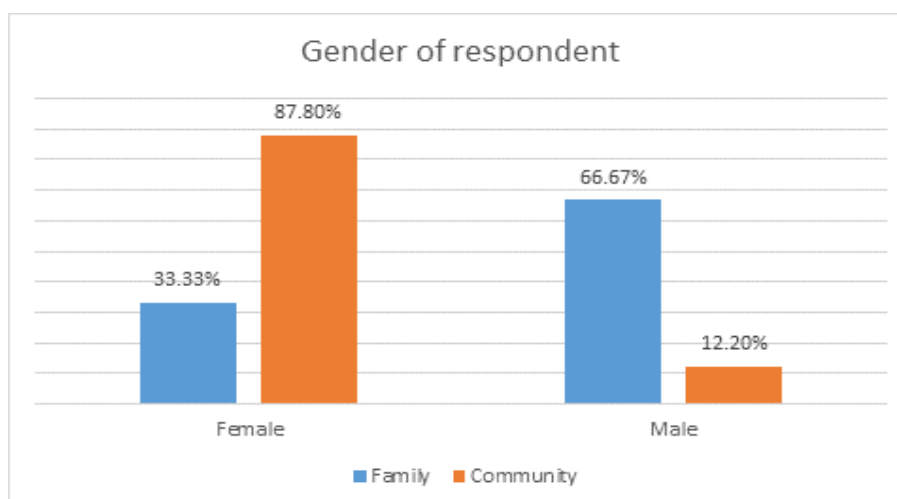


Figure (4): Gender of Respondent

4.3.2 Sampling Source of 176 Participants:

- Mine action staff participants were drawn from existing UNMAS supported EHM and EORE mixed-sex teams in Ninewa: 96 females and 80 males.
- Two-thirds of participants were from Mosul and one-third from Tal Afar and Sinjar.
- All the female mine action staff who were asked to participate in the survey gave their permission. The selection of participating EHM and EORE male staff was random, subject to their agreement and on the basis that they have the same job as the female staff they were 'twinned' with; when a female EORE worker was surveyed then as far as possible a male EORE worker was correspondingly surveyed.
- One family member and one community member per every female EHM/EORE staff were interviewed.
- "Mine Action" female employment functions for the purpose of this survey were deemed to include all women who work in field operations, on the reasoning communities would not make a distinction according to employment activity. Mine action is understood to be a non-traditional sector for women's employment. As such, women employed to carry out duties in mine action in field operations were surveyed. The functions identified as constituting mine action employment included EHM, EORE, community liaison, language interpretation and medical assistance.
- Community stakeholder participants in the survey were drawn in equal representation from the communities represented in the survey sample. There was a balance of stakeholders from government, civil society and mine action organizations, with gender considerations.
- The composition of an EHM team is six to nine members and of an EORE team is three to five members.

Table (3): Distribution of Survey Participants by Category

Gender	Male Staff	Female Staff	Family Members	Community Members	Community Stakeholders	TOTAL
FEMALE	0	41	13	36	6	96
MALE	39	0	28	5	8	80
TOTAL	39	41	41	41	14	176

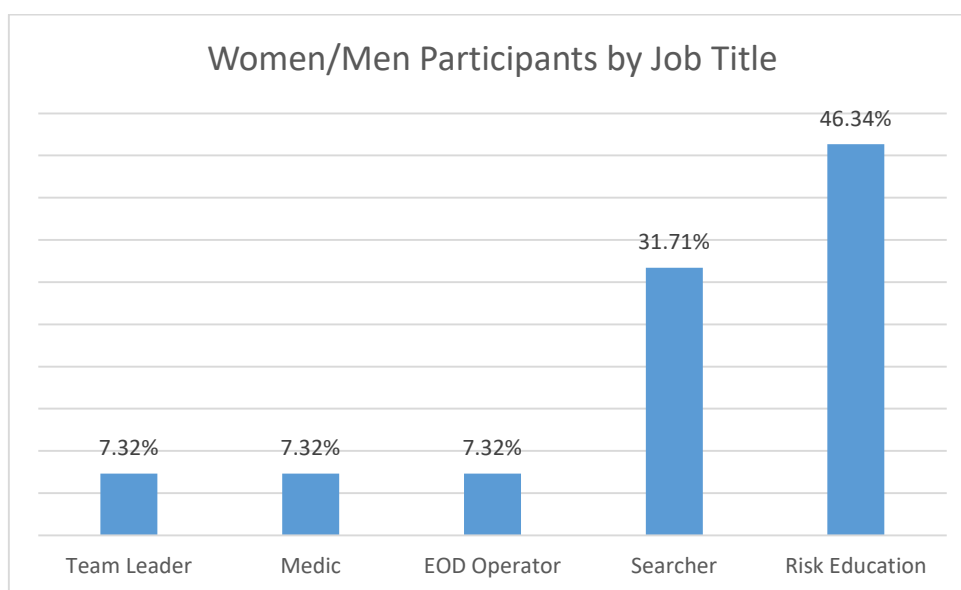


Figure (5): Categorisation of Participants by Employment Function

4.4 Implementation:

All female and male EHM and EORE staff were interviewed directly by the UNMAS survey team, on a one-on-one basis, normally at the work sites. Stakeholder interviews were also carried out in-person. The in-place interviews were conducted via day missions from Erbil or Dohuk, Kurdistan region due to security conditions. During periods of heightened Covid risk, in-place interviews were suspended until conditions allowed missions to resume.

Family and community participants in the survey were interviewed by telephone due to security considerations they faced at their residences and logistical limitations. The telephone interviews were normally conducted within one to three days following the in-place interviews. Ninety-two interviews were conducted in-place while 84 interviews were conducted by telephone.

The survey used ArcGIS Survey123 licensed by UNMAS Iraq and already in use for operational statistics and analysis.



**Field survey interviews in Makhmour District, Ninewa Governorate
March, 2021**

4.5 Case Studies

Five case studies (see Annex 9.3) were identified to explore key issues through the experiences of individual survey participants. Gender, family, community of origin, employment and ethnic characteristics were taken into consideration when selecting topics and subjects. The case studies provide an opportunity to complement the statistical data analysis with human experience and give voice to the survey participants.

5.0 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Structure

The findings of the study are presented in five sections:

1. *Demographic Profile* of the mine action staff participants in the survey.
2. *Economic Impact and Perceptions* with a focus on household spending and the empowerment of female mine action workers.
3. *Social Impact and Perceptions* within the family household and the community, and the empowerment of female mine action workers.
4. *Employment Impact and Perceptions* within the mixed-sex teams, and the empowerment of female mine action workers.
5. *Self-Impact and Perceptions* of the female mine action workers, and their empowerment.

The intention of this approach is to gain an incremental understanding of the socio-economic-environment which female mine action workers experience at the family, community and workplace levels. This is then used as a measure against the self-perceptions of the women themselves, personally and in relation to others' perceptions of them.

5.1 Demographic Profile

5.1.1 Personal Demographics

Key Findings:

- Average age of women is 28 years. Average age of men is 31 years.
- Age range of women: 21 to 43 years. Age range of men: 19 to 40 years.
- 32% of women are married versus 62% of men.
- 78% of women have a post-secondary education compared to 57% of men.
- Experience of displacement is higher for women than for men (68% versus 59%).
- Ongoing post-conflict displacement is approximately equal.
- No physical disabilities or landmine injuries were reported.
- 37% of women sought psycho-social health services prior to mine action employment.
- Over half of surveyed women were from Mosul. The second highest total was from Sinjar.

In general, the typical woman is three years younger than her male counterpart and twice as likely to be single or divorced. She is better educated than most of her male colleagues. She is most likely to be from Mosul or Sinjar. Her male colleague is most likely to be from Mosul or Tal Afar. Both women and men have experienced comparable levels of displacement during the conflict period and now have more stable home lives.

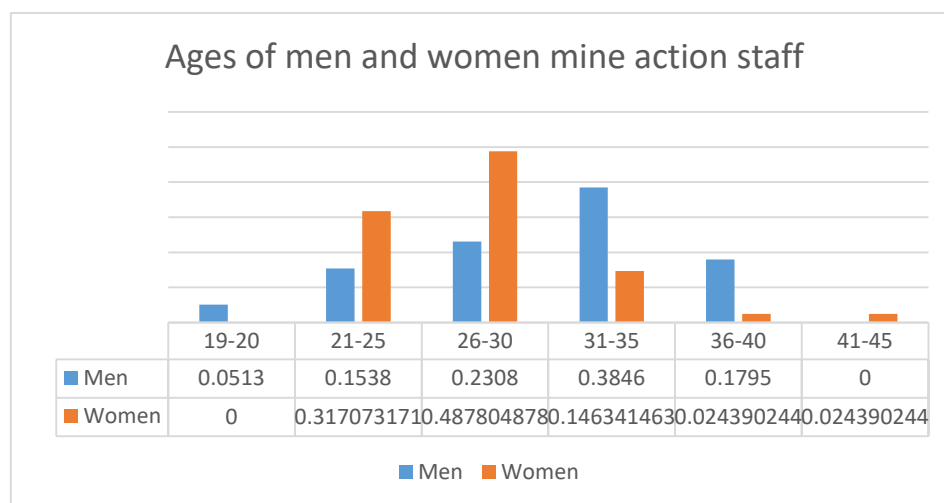


Figure (6): Breakdown of Ages of Men and Women Mine Action Staff

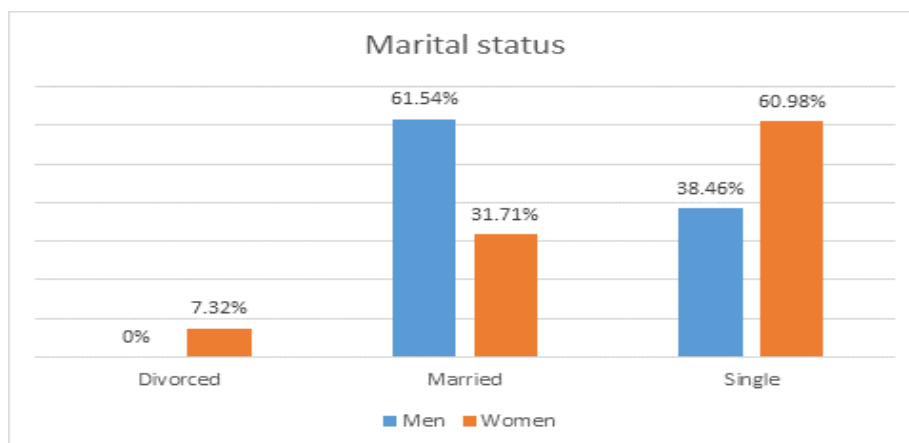


Figure (7): Marital Status of Surveyed Men and Women Mine Action Staff

Table (4): Communities of Origin of Mine Action Workers

Gender	Mosul	Sinjar	Tal Afar	Other
Women	56%	24%	05%	15%
Men	62%	8%	23%	7%

As shown in **Figure (8)** below, women’s educational levels are higher than men’s, particularly at the post-secondary level. At the lowest level of educational attainment, 18% of men do not have a secondary school diploma compared to 7% of women.

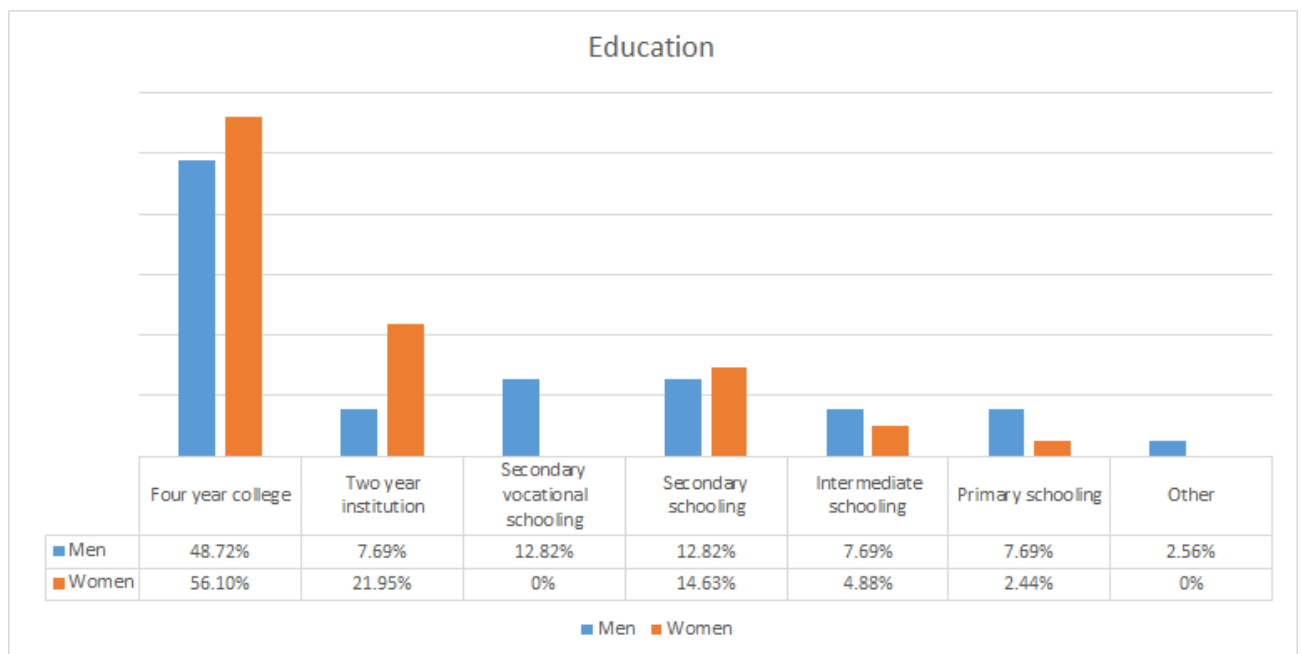


Figure (8): Surveyed Men and Women Education Level

5.1.2 Employment Demographics

Key findings:

- Men are more likely to have previous mine action work experience (82% versus 68%).
- Prior to mine action, women were more likely to be unemployed than men (49% versus 18%).
- Men have almost three times the duration of past work experience (46 versus 17 months).
- Men and women have comparable mine action experience (2.25 years versus 1.75 years).

Women’s motivations for employment in mine action were primarily driven by job market priorities: unemployment, desire for a better job or higher salary. Thirty-six percent had motivations more purposeful: an interest in community service and the appeal of a non-traditional job.



Figure (9): Surveyed Women Motivations for Work in Mine Action

Women's higher post-secondary education qualifications, compared to men, explains in part their lower level of work experience. In employment prior to mine action, most women and men worked in public administration (42% versus 31%). However, the second highest employment sector for men was small business (25%) in which women had no prior experience and indicates a lack of opportunities especially involving direct engagement with customers. This is evident in their respective employment interests post-mine action employment, as shown in **Figure (10)** where small business is the highest option for men but minimal for women.

Perhaps the most significant demographic indicator for women is the high unemployment rate they registered compared to men (49% versus 18%). This highlights the degree to which gender equality serves to narrow the gap in employment opportunities for women. This survey examines the different forms and levels of empowerment that women in mine action gain. This should not, however, overshadow the reality that the source of that empowerment is the act of employing women in non-traditional jobs, in the first place.

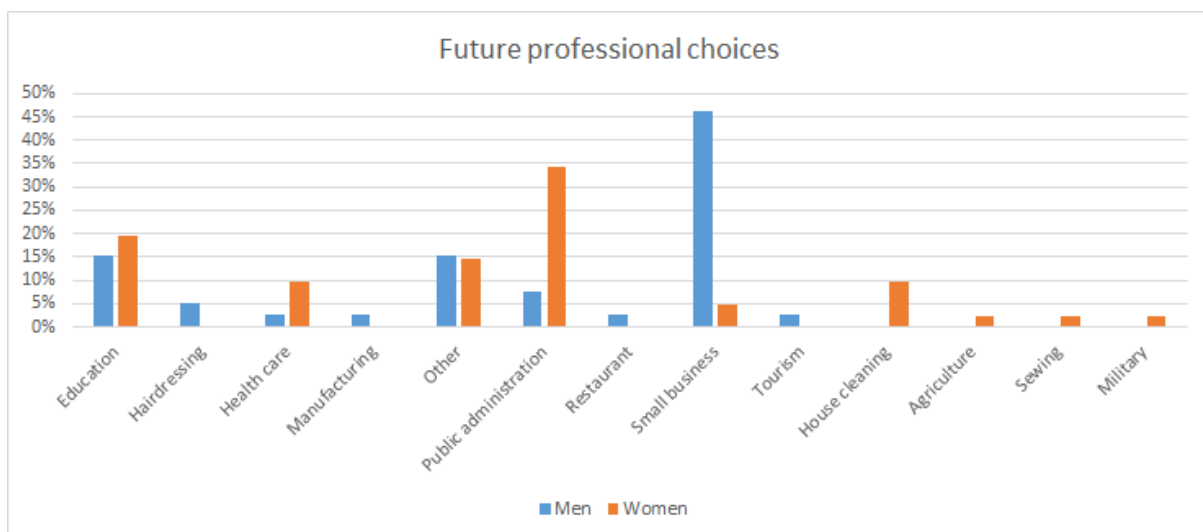


Figure (10): Future Professional Choices of Surveyed Men and Women Mine Action Staff

5.2 Economic Impact and Perceptions: Access to Resources and Services

5.2.1 Household Economic Contribution and Spending Changes

- The average monthly salary for women before mine action was IQD 622,453 (USD 426). This rose to a minimum IQD 1,200.000 (USD 822) per month for mine action field operators, an increase of 86%.
- The contribution of men and women to household income increased substantially following employment in mine action. On average, their contributions doubled. Women increased their share of all household expenditure from 31% to 62%.
- 71% of women and 78% of men increased their household financial contribution.
- 50% of women became an equal or majority/sole contributor to the household.
- Women's top spending changes: Family Support, Clothes, Food, Electric Devices, Savings.
- Men's top spending changes: Savings, Household Appliances, Housing, Food, Education.

The increase in salary following employment in mine action had a similar impact on both men and women in terms of the percentage of household expenditure they became responsible for. This represents a significant change in their role in the family, and implications for how they are seen by the other members of the household given the majority financial security they provided.

Table (5): Percentage of Financial Contribution to Household Expenses

	% Before Mine Action	% After Mine Action	Difference
Female mine action	31%	62%	31%

Other household members	69%	38%	
Male mine action	42%	78%	36%
Other household members	58%	22%	

A large majority (78%) of women experienced enhanced status within the household due to their mine action income (**Figure 11**). A larger percentage of men compared to women reported no change, which suggests a higher rate of dependency in households where women seek work.

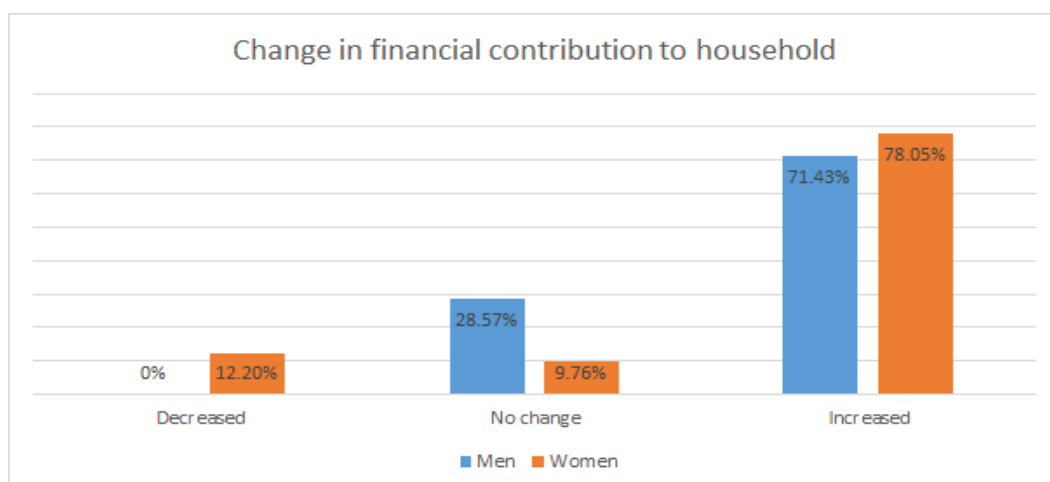


Figure (11): Demonstration of Change in Financial Contribution to Household

The increase in household finances generated changes in spending priorities for both men and women. **Table (6)** presents how these changes ranked for each.

Table (6): Spending Changes in the Household Post Mine-Action Employment

Women			Men		
Ranking	Items	Category	Ranking	Items	Category
1	Family Support	Discretionary	1	Savings	Discretionary
2	Clothing	Basic need	2	Household Appliance	Discretionary

3	Food	Basic need	3	Housing	Basic need
4	Electronic Devices	Discretionary	4	Food	Basic need
5	Savings	Discretionary	5	Education	Discretionary
6	Education	Discretionary	6	Electronic Devices	Discretionary

7	Household Appliance	Discretionary	7	Transport	Basic need
8	Health	Basic need	8	Clothing	Basic need
9	Transport	Basic need	9	Health	Basic need
10	Housing	Basic need	10	Family Support	Discretionary

The top spending changes of women address immediate basic needs that arise daily: clothing, food, electronic devices (such as a mobile phone). Men's spending changes tend to address longer term discretionary considerations: savings, appliances and housing. The top rankings for each also demonstrate a contrast in likely cost level. Men's priorities involve potential high-level investments while the women's have only one that is categorized as high cost. This suggests a different level of decision-making or spending responsibilities within households by men and women in the study. Differing gender relationships, preferences and interests may also be represented here. The second

top change in spending for women is the second bottom change for men: clothing. In turn, the bottom spending change for women is one of the top three changes for men: housing.

In addition, 'Family Support' presents the greatest contrast between men and women and is the least clearly defined. For women it is the highest ranked spending change and for men it is the lowest. 'Family Support' is understood to be the share of income that is given to family members to support their specific needs, as opposed to general household expenditures.

With their higher rates of employment prior to mine action, men said they were accustomed to supporting family members when needed and this continued when they transitioned to well-paying mine action jobs. For many women, especially the 32% who were unemployed prior to a mine action job, the transformation of their financial status meant they suddenly had the resources to help others.

Many women stated that when they received their salaries, they would take a portion for their personal expenses and give the balance to their families for household expenses. This was mostly reported in Sinjar. Even when this was not done, the sharing of the salary with others could be substantial. One EORE educator explained that with her mine action salary she had assisted her father to pay off his debts, her mother to go on Haj to Mecca and her brother to purchase a car.

5.2.2 Family / Community Economic Perceptions

Findings:

- Females in the family and community look more positively on women's financial support to the household than their male counterparts.
- Male mine action colleagues have *increased* confidence that women in mine action could support their family financially.
- Families' economic imperatives can be a factor in allowing daughters to work in mine action.

Family, community and male colleagues are consistent in the degree to which they positively recognize women in mine action's financial support to their families. One UNMAS implementing partner noted that in the communities where they work with women, families now regularly inquire about the possibility of jobs for their daughters. The visibility of female mine action workers appears to attract interest in the work and provides a new role model for women to consider.

A stakeholder interviewee reinforced the effect that family income generation needs had on questions regarding women as explosive searchers. *"The community knows that all NGOs ask for mixed teams. Their main concern with mine action was because it was a high-risk job. Economic support was a big motivation for families to accept their daughters to take the job."*

5.2.3 Women's Economic Empowerment: Decision Making Power, Agency and Skills

Findings:

- Women in mine action found they significantly increased their decision-making powers on daily expenditures and high value expenditures in the household.
- Women in mine action report an increased impact on decision-making within their families.
- Female family and community members recognize new financial management skills more than males.

There is a clear consensus among women in mine action that their decision-making powers within their families have increased on issues of access to resources and services. This is apparent for daily purchases and infrequent significant expenditures.

Case Study

Adela and Aqeel: A Mosul Family in Mine Action (Part 1)

**A profile of the personal, economic and social empowerment of a female searcher
and the role of family in that process.
(Full case study in Section 9.1)**

5.3 Social Impact and Perceptions: Family

5.3.1 Family Social Perceptions

Findings:

- Mine action's role in reconstruction is very well understood and appreciated by families, including their positive impact on IDP returns.
- Information on the need for women in mine action inadequate during recruitment campaigns.
- Initial perceived family reaction to women in mine action rose over time from 34% positive to 65% positive.

When women are employed in non-traditional jobs such as mine action, they and their families share the risk of social judgment by the community. As such, the family's views are critical to the experience of women who work in mixed-sex mine action teams. Those views are in turn shaped and influenced by the perceived attitudes and behaviours of the wider community.

The importance of mine action activities to post-conflict reconstruction was well understood and overwhelmingly appreciated by families. While 10% of families reported no changes in their community, 68% saw improvements and 12% cited specific locations where IDP returns were facilitated by mine action activities. *"Before," a family member explained, "people couldn't plant the lands or even walk around their houses. But since UNMAS activities of clearance and risk education, the families felt supported, and the situation improved a lot."*

In Sinjar in particular, the work of mine action teams was seen as the prerequisite for IDPs return, and even served to motivate men and women to seek mine action work. As one family member explained, *"My uncle's family returned before these [clearance] activities. Sadly, there was an explosion in their house in which three people lost their lives. But now it is safe to return. So, we were very appreciative to mine action, to the degree that we wished to be a part of this service."*

When implementing partners began to recruit for the mixed-sex teams, however, there was an evident information gap regarding the rationale for the employment of women in such a traditionally male activity. Among families, 80% reported not being aware of any public information explaining the need for, and benefits of, mixed-sex teams, especially for the dangerous task of explosives hazard management. This meant that for applicants and their families, the justification and the balancing of

risks and opportunities had to be conducted within the limits of their own personal knowledge and awareness.

The initial reactions in response to the idea of women in mine action revealed a range of opinions (**Figure 12**) as only 34% were supportive. This was countered by a comparable 29% that rejected it. For 22%, the main issue was physical safety. When families consider the issue of daughters, sisters or wives being part of mixed-sex mine action teams, it can be expected they will carefully consider the social consequences of ignoring such negative opinion.

Some families embraced the new opportunity that appeared. *“My parents were excited. They encourage women’s development, and they know it is urgent to have cleared lands and safety in the area.”* For another, it was prior knowledge that informed the parents’ response, *“They had more information about women in mine action because they had visited Sinjar many times before me, and their reaction was normal.”*

There were also concerns about the very real physical risks. *“At first, it was difficult for them to accept because of the high risk. But my sister insisted. She was happy with this job, so they had to approve.”* This concern about physical risk went beyond gender considerations, as men in mine action also reported resistance from family members when they applied.

Other parents expressed outright fear, especially when social risks were considered:

- *“At first they were afraid because she was a woman.”*
- *“Most people find it embarrassing for women to work long hours outside the house and think it is impossible for women to work in this field.”*
- *“They didn’t approve of women working in NGOs in general.”*

Finally, for some families, the first reaction was unequivocal.

- *“They refused the work and the idea.”*
- *“My family’s initial answer was fear and rejection.”*

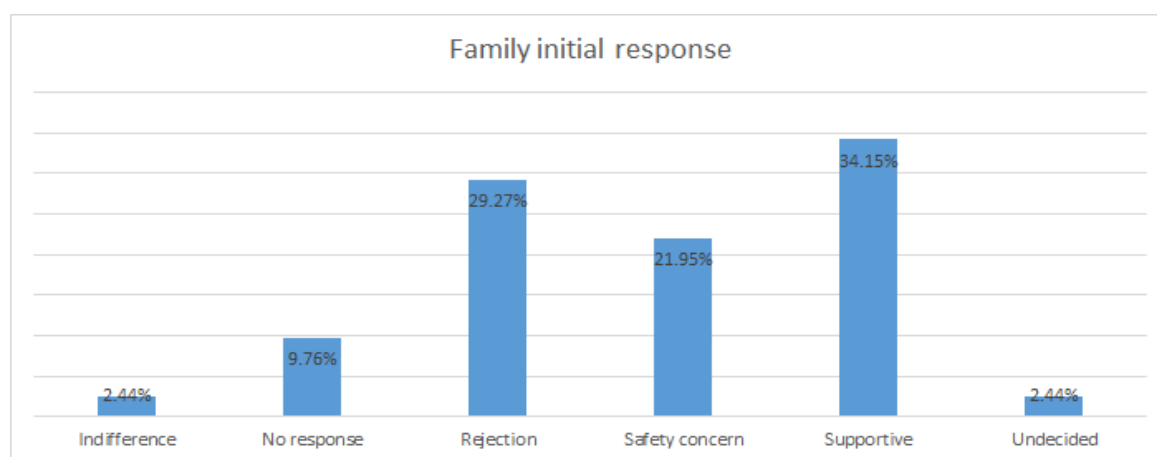


Figure (12): Family Initial Response to Women Employment in Mine Action

It is important to note that in these cases, the initial concerns, fears and rejections were overcome, and the women were able to get jobs in mine action and take part in this survey. In some cases, however, the path to agreement, would require certain conditions and family rules to manage the perceived

risks. As one interviewee's husband explained, *"We kept it a secret and we have not shared with others that my wife works in mine action because our community does not accept this idea."*

It must be recognized, however, that it is not known how many women wanted to apply but due to family resistance were unable to. As one stakeholder explained, *"Some families are open minded and educated and would feel proud to let their women work in different sectors. But they can't because of the social challenges they will face."* As understanding was gained, viewpoints evolved. 34% of family respondents reported they initially thought women could work in mine action. 88% of family respondents now believe mine action is good for women as a career to follow and seek promotion in.

Risks were, however, still recognized as a factor. While only 10% of respondents thought safety challenges were a concern, 49% of respondents believed that social challenges were faced by women in mine action. Given that there are varying levels of acceptance in different communities, this suggests that in some communities the social challenges would be less of an issue, and in other communities they would be more.

Nevertheless, 66% or two-thirds of respondents estimated their communities' current reaction to knowledge of a family member working in mine action would be positive (**Figure 13**). Only 17% of the community were expected to react negatively. It should be noted that these figures are measures of communities where on average only 20% had benefited from prior information about women in mine action. Had there been a systematic engagement with communities launched in parallel to the recruitment campaign that reached even just 50%, there could have been an improved chance of greater, and earlier, acceptance of women in mine action.

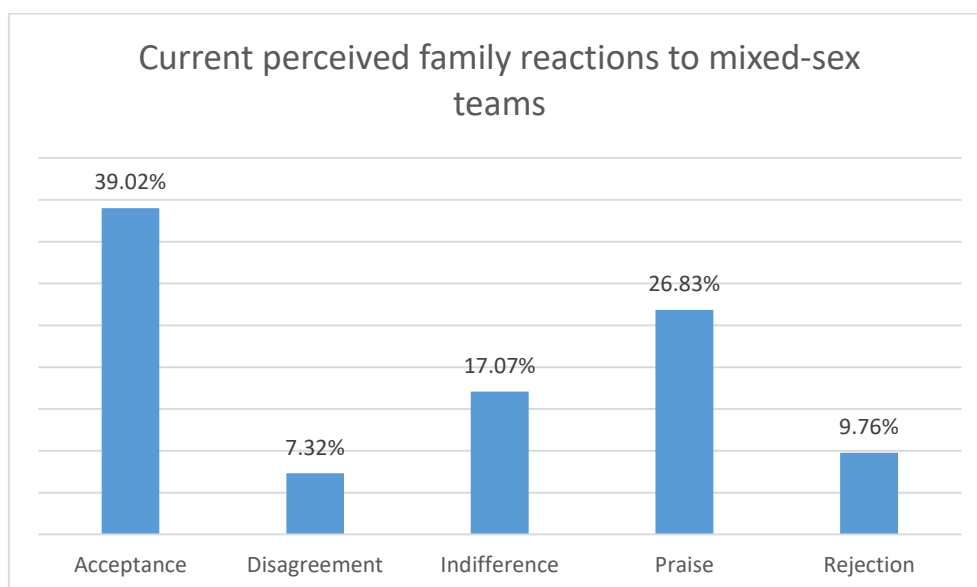


Figure (13): Current Perceived family Reaction to Mixed-Sex Teams

The perception of female mine action workers themselves, of the views of their family members is instructive of the growing awareness and acceptance that has taken place.

In their belief, gender-based viewpoints showed only slight differences, with females tending to be more positive than males:

- *Look more positively upon women working in mine action?* Male and female family members' views were more positive over time, in equal measure.
- *More confident women can be employed in the same jobs as men?* Female family members accepted this slightly more than their male family members.
- *More comfortable telling people that their sister/daughter/wife worked in mine action?* Female family members became somewhat more comfortable over time.

5.3.2 Women's Social Empowerment in the Family: Decision Making Power, Agency, Skills

Findings:

- Women see insufficient change in men's role in household chores.
- Most families see a significant increase in women's empowerment and confidence.
- Male and female family members take women's opinions more seriously.

Family members recognized that the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the household would be affected to some degree when the women started working in mine action. The traditional expectations were understood to be clearly established between the sexes. *"The man was taking the responsibility of providing a living for the family and the woman the responsibilities of housewife and looking after children and sometimes the jobs that could be done at home like sewing."* Some men might only help out with "difficult chores". Others would do more according to the extent of their willingness to assist.

The demands of women's full-time employment outside the home quickly challenged this arrangement and in the views of family members the response to that challenge was almost evenly divided. Almost half of survey respondents – 46% - reported no change in how roles and responsibilities in the household were carried out.

One respondent, a woman perceived it as a gender injustice: *"The woman assists the man in family expenses, but the man does not assist her much in household chores."* This gap in filling household needs could create tensions. *"It has affected the family negatively. It creates disagreements because it affects the children's care."* Other family members were relied on to assist, such as mothers, sisters and in-laws. In the case of the 54% that reported changes, there were positive developments, although sometimes qualified by low expectations:

- *"They almost take the same share of responsibilities. But men do a little bit less."*
- *"Now men help a little more in housework especially if they have children."*

For some, however, the new circumstances led to deeper changes in attitudes and understanding:

- *"Both do time management to take care of their responsibilities at home."*
- *"Men help their wives and do housework like women."*
- *"If the woman has ambition and interest to have a job, we encourage her. Her responsibilities at home became less, and we support and respect each other. If she is not home, I cook and do the dishes and there is no need to cause problems."*

The perceptions of women going out of the house to work every day largely reflected their families' impressions. They observed that their jobs did not affect their contact with family members in general, but diminished contact with those younger, including children. Their household chores were perceived to have decreased slightly, and there was recognition that female and male family members did increase their contributions.

The perceptions of women in mine action also demonstrated a strong increase in their knowledge and confidence to give their opinions in the household. They perceived a strong increase in how seriously their female and male family members took their opinions and a moderate increase in impact on decision-making in the family. Meanwhile, newly acquired skills in leadership and communication were strongly understood to be recognized by their female and male family members.

For some families, the employment of a daughter, sister or spouse in mine action enabled or prompted a return to their community of origin, as one mother related, *“After my daughter worked in demining in Sinjar, we moved to Sinjar to be together.”*

A substantial majority of family members – 68% - reported positive changes in the behaviour and attitude of women in mine action, with descriptions of transformational personal growth:

- *“She had fears, but now she is bold and more daring”*
- *“She challenges herself to improve her skills more and more.”*
- *“She feels she could confront any challenge and get any job done!”*
- *“She has become more patient and knowledgeable and has dealt with so many people.”*
- *“She feels stronger than others who do not work in non-traditional jobs.”*

Case Study

Adela’s Secret: Covert Empowerment in Mosul (Part 2)

**When communities are uncertain about social changes, knowledge is sometimes kept hidden.
A female searcher finds that empowerment cannot always be expressed overtly.
(Full case study in Section 9.2)**

5.4 Social Impact and Perceptions: Community

5.4.1 Community Social Perception

Findings:

- Reaction to mixed-sex teams in Ninewa is generally acceptance but in specific communities there is a substantial core resistance.
- Communities reported more prior knowledge of women in mine action than families.
- Community members view men more positively in behavioural change in the household than family members do.
- Community members are equally divided in opinions on whether or not women of mine action face social challenges.
- The military-style, masculine uniforms worn by women in mine action is a general concern of families and communities.
- Women in mine action are less confident of community support than of family.
- Initial positive perception of community acceptance to women in mine action rose over time from 20% to 70% positive.

In Ninewa, the most common response given when asking about social conditions was “it depends”. This qualifier referenced the ethnic and religious diversity throughout the Governorate. To understand

the situation of women in mine action according to their community friends and neighbours, it is necessary to understand the communities they come from. **Figure (14)** shows, by count, the opinions towards mixed-sex teams in the major cities as currently perceived by men and women mine action workers, as well as their family and community members. While most respondents either accepted or praised the concept, the breakdown of the negative reaction showed which communities were most resistant to changing their traditions and cultural practices. Mosul and Tal Afar had the highest Disagreement/Rejection totals while Sinjar and Makhmour had negligible to non-existent totals.

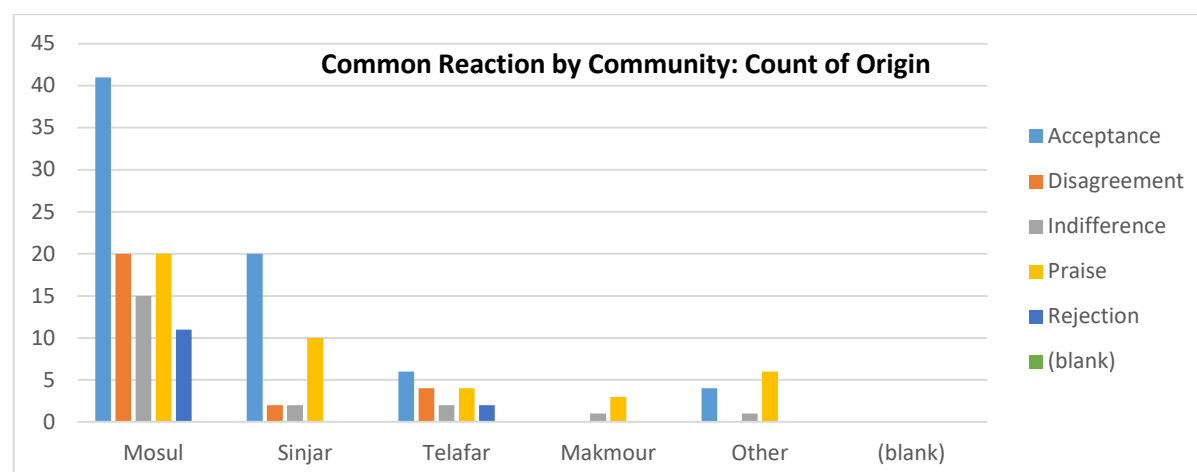


Figure (14): Common Reaction to Women in Mine Action by Community

Community friends and neighbours of women in mine action reported a better understanding and awareness of women in mine action than family members did (36% to 20%). They were equally familiar with the activities of mine action as a prerequisite to the reconstruction activities. *“These organizations have done a very good job. They are still working on the minefields and provide risk education to communities. People inform them when they suspect areas to have explosive ordnance.”*

On the question of women working in mixed-sex teams however, the perception of the communities’ reaction was more negative than that of families’ reaction. This contributes to understanding the pressures on families wherein their decisions are based on anticipations of majority community opinion. A stakeholder has witnessed this self-censorship, *“There are so many women who want to work with NGOs and have very strong abilities, but I know that their families and community will not accept it. In community gatherings, more women attend and participate than men, which shows that they are willing to take part.”*

Figure (15) shows that only 20% of the community was judged supportive of mixed-sex teams versus 34% of family.

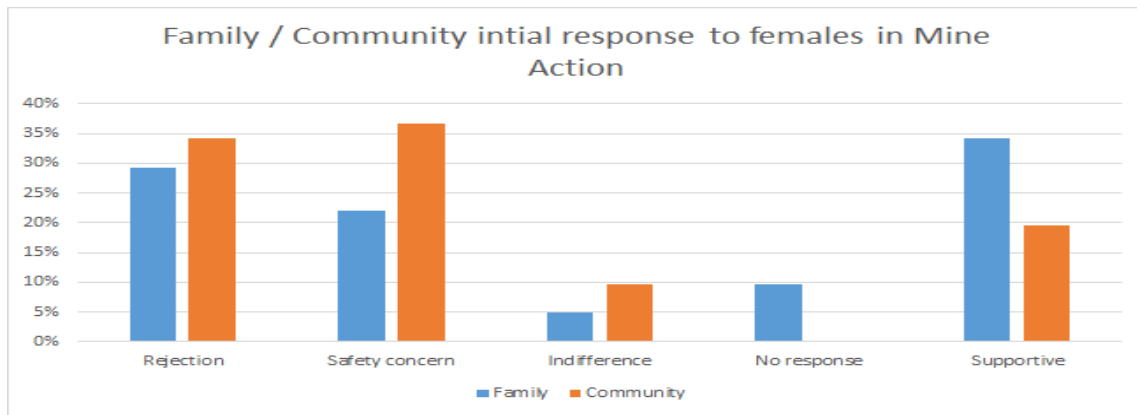


Figure (15): Family and Community Initial Response to females in Mine Action

The reactions of community members reveal how new ideas can fail for a lack of information as might be provided in an information campaign:

- *“They were shocked. How could women work in mine sites? They used to question everything, like how come they are not afraid? Why do they dress like the military? And so on.”*
- *“They were surprised: How could women be ok to do this risky job? Some others were praising the women for their courage and their will to clear their land.”*

In their assessment of changes in household roles and responsibilities between men and women, the perspective of family and community members had similar estimates of the change in women’s behaviour. But in assessing changes in men’s behaviour, there was a clear difference of opinion. As shown in **Figure (16)**, the community’s external perspective to family dynamics was almost the opposite of the families’. Sixty-six per cent of the community believed men changed their behaviour while only 39% of families did.

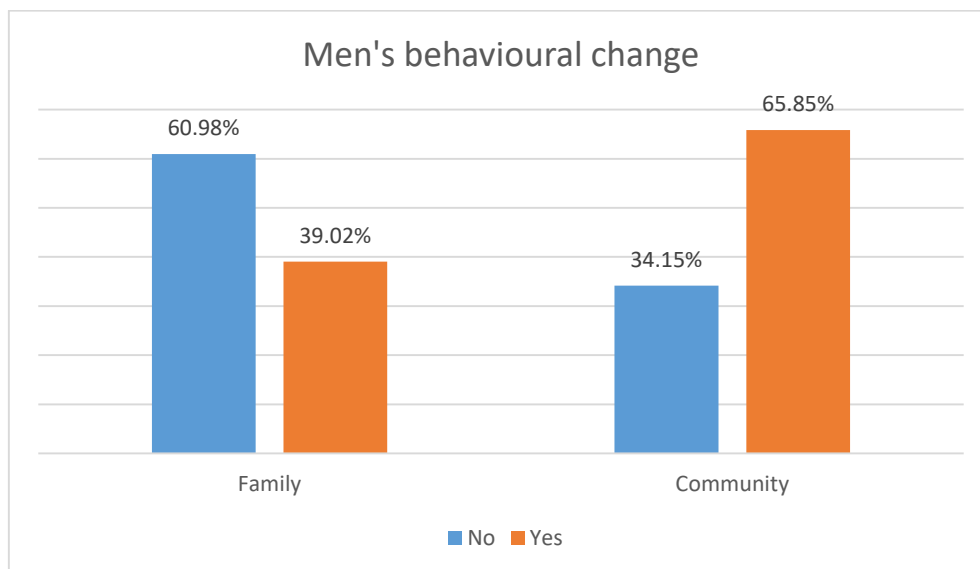


Figure (16): Family and Community Men’s Behavioural Change

The community members also had differing viewpoints from family members on the issue of social challenges. While family opinion was clear that there was only a small risk of women in mine action facing social challenges because of their non-traditional work, community opinion was equally divided.

Fifty-one percent of community opinion believed there were no social challenges, while 49% believed there were. The social risks women faced were various. Women could face criticism or even unrelenting pressure to quit their mine action job. Relationships could end as in the case of a woman whose fiancée withdrew his proposal. Reputations in families and social networks could be damaged and suspicions raised. Given the military style uniform of mine action work it is possible that misunderstandings about the true nature of the work could develop and rumours spread.

Figure (17) contrasts perceived community and family reactions to mixed-sex teams. Interestingly, community members (who were often friends of women in mine action) perceived higher acceptance rates and lower rejection rates than family members. This suggests families may be misjudging community opinion, or community members are. Community members' personal opinions had a slightly higher level of support for women to pursue a career in mine action than family members: 91% versus 88%.

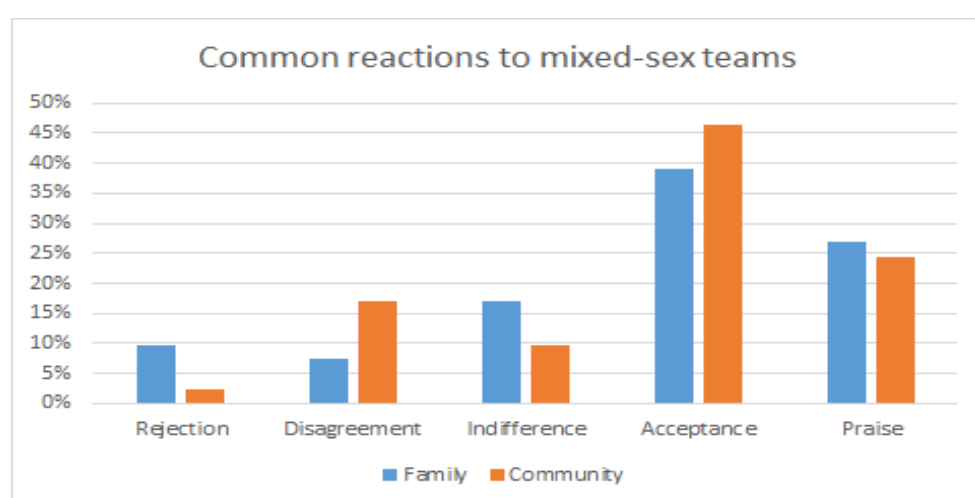


Figure (17): Family and Community Perceived Common Reactions to Mixed-Sex Teams

Women of mine action themselves see community members as less supportive of them than family members. They believe the community looks upon them more negatively, more doubtful women can do such non-traditional jobs, and therefore more likely to conceal their true jobs. In some communities, concerns were expressed about social restrictions. *“We are not allowed to go freely outside or to places where there are men. There are certain things we can’t do, and certain jobs we should not be doing.”*

In discussions of social views on women in mine action, and the causes of resistance, there was recurring mention of safety, propriety in men-women relations, travel and overnight stays. The issue of women wearing the military-style, masculine uniforms regularly surfaced as a key concern for communities. In some locations, the concern was beginning to ease as the post-conflict reconstruction progressed and civil society began to allow a relaxation of habits that had been engrained during extremist rule. As one community stakeholder explained, *“Uniforms are a good measure of how open women are about their work. Some change into their uniforms at the site and others now do it at home.”*

Another stakeholder was more emphatic about the calculations families make in the face of community resistance. *“I assure you, after 2014, women have gotten so much more powerful. But they*

can't reveal this empowerment. If it wasn't for conservative families and tribal thinking, 30-40% of women would apply for demining. But the community will not accept this; especially the uniform."

In rural areas, the appearance of a group of people in uniforms would cause initial worry, in particular at checkpoints. In these situations, and due to previous security breaches, the level of suspicion is considered to be high. On some occasions it was reported that villagers did not believe that women were providing humanitarian services and there must be a hidden agenda behind their presence. Once it was apparent that women were part of the group, the anxiety was lessened, in the expectation that men would act more reasonably while women were there. In some mixed-sex teams, the women altered their uniforms to make them less military-like and more appropriate for women to wear as per social expectations.

5.4.2 Women's Social Empowerment in the Community: Decision Making Power, Agency and Skills

The community's positive views on the impact of mine action employment on women's personalities and behaviour mirrored that of family members. A female friend of a women working in mine action revealed how she shared in her friend's empowerment. *"Before we were always at home, and we felt inferior about ourselves, and we didn't have courage to face and talk with men. But now we go out and have communication skills and a strong sense of helping others without worrying about people's judgment."*

Women of mine action believed that they had strongly increased their ability to support their community since beginning their jobs. They also believed their confidence to express their opinions in community discussions had strongly increased and this led to community members taking their opinions more seriously. In turn, community members recognized that their friends had gained new communication and leadership skills.

Survey participants consistently identified a growth in the respect accorded to women in mine action, including the support they provide their family, the service they deliver to the community and the benefits they bring to the mine action organization. In other work contexts where physical risks are accepted, such as policing or fire response, society recognizes those roles as heroic. The men and women of mine action do not yet have an established image in public media. There is however much potential to portray them as protectors of the community and role models for youth.

Case Study

Gender and Change in Tal Afar: When Tradition Meets Policy

**An ancient community with a tribal culture, social constraints and uncertain security
is confronted by global expectations of gender roles.**

(Full case study in Section 9.3)

5.5 Employment Impact and Perception: Mixed-Sex Teams

5.5.1 Men's Perceptions

Women in mine action have majority support in the family home and the community where they were known before and after their employment in a non-traditional job. The perception of men in mine action of their female colleagues is limited in terms of the duration of the workday and the specific environment of the work site. **Table (7)** presents men's degree of confidence in the employment of women in what had previously been 'their' jobs and workspaces. The indicators measure the level of change they have experienced in working with women.

Table (7): Men's Perception of Women of Mine Action

	Male Mine Action Workers: Level of Change: Decrease - Increase	% Increase
1.	Confidence women can work as RE/CL	77.80

2.	Confidence women can work as searchers	75.80
3.	Confidence women can be employed in men's jobs	74.80
4.	Confidence working in mixed-sex teams with women	74.20
5.	Confidence women are comfortable saying they work in mixed-sex teams	71.20

6.	Confidence women can pursue a career in mine action	71.20
7.	Confidence to recommend women to work in mine action	70.80
8.	Confidence women are able to meet mine action quality standards	69.20
9.	Confidence women are not worried about social or safety threats	69.20

10.	Confidence women searchers are as productive as men searchers	67.20
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The top four rankings show the highest rate of increase and are general statements of principle. These affirm men's acknowledgment that women can function in these jobs, and they are agreeable to working with them. The three middle rankings all refer to longer term considerations of women in mine action as a career option which may affect them sometime in the future.

The three bottom rankings however all focus on specific issues that men must address on a daily basis. The quality of women's work directly concerns men's personal safety. The issue of social or safety threats fully implicates men given their own inclusion in, and de facto acceptance of, mixed teams. The productivity of women's work has an impact on the progress of work at a site and the demands on men's own work rate. While the percentages confirm a degree of confidence in women on these issues, the fact remains they are the lowest levels of increase in change in their thinking. This suggests that, while men accept women entering into mine action as a career path, they may not yet be convinced that women are as expert or productive as they are. In short, their view may be interpreted as, "Yes, women can certainly do the job, and do it well, but not yet as well as us."

For other men who don't have jobs, the question of job ownership arises. As a stakeholder stated, *"Mostly they [the men] praise them [the women] a lot. But some men without work, they say why do they [the women] work and not us?"*

When asked if women are needed as EORE educators, men's response was 100% affirmative. When asked if women were needed as explosive searchers, however, men's response was 69% affirmative. For women searchers this means that one third of their male colleagues do not accept them. Further, when asked if women can become EOD experts, only a slight majority (56%) of men agreed.

5.5.2 Women Empowerment: Decision Making Power, Agency and Skills

Table (8) presents men's rankings of women's skills attainment and agency. The top four rankings recognize men's perceived assurance that women have in regard to self-confidence, knowledge and interpersonal skills.

The bottom four rankings all relate more towards women's interactions with authority or peers, both men and other women. This suggests that while women in mine action have been empowered by their work experiences, those inner resources are not yet perceived by men to be fully asserted in relation to others.

Table (8): Men's Perception of Women

	Male Mine Action Workers: Women's Skills / Agency Decrease - Increase	Level of Change:	% Increase
1.	Women's confidence in themselves		72.80
2.	Women's technical skills		72.20
3.	Women's confidence to give their opinions freely		71.80

4.	Female community takes their opinion seriously	71.20
5.	Women's leadership skills	70.20
6.	Women's preparedness to speak up to unfair treatment	70.20
7.	Women's knowledge of their rights at work	69.20

8.	Male community takes their opinion seriously	67.60
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Case Study
When A Job Becomes a Career: Two Team Leaders
 An examination of how providing women with job opportunities leads to higher aspirations and gender equality at all levels of organizational activity.
 (Full case study in Section 9.4)

5.6 Self-Impact and Perception: Female Mine Action Workers

5.6.1 Women's Self-Perception

Before examining women's self-perception, it is helpful to have a comparative overview of the attitudes of the different environments of household, community and workplace in which they interact with family, friends and colleagues.

Figure (18) shows that the common reaction to mixed-sex teams as perceived by family, community, men, women and stakeholders are relatively the same. All five groups follow the same trends of majority levels of positive reaction to women in mine action. Men and communities share similar results while women and families share similar results. The results demonstrate that women of mine action are perceived by survey participants to be supported by a majority of the community.

One site manager noted that a few of the female staff in his team have begun to put on their uniforms at home rather than at the work site. He thought this represented a change in the level of comfort that the women had in their neighbourhood in showing the true nature of her job. His view was that as society moves more toward the former relaxed social habits of the pre-conflict period, this comfort level will continue to grow. It is also worth noting that in the course of the study no information was provided of actual incidents, threats or emotions directed against women in mine action.

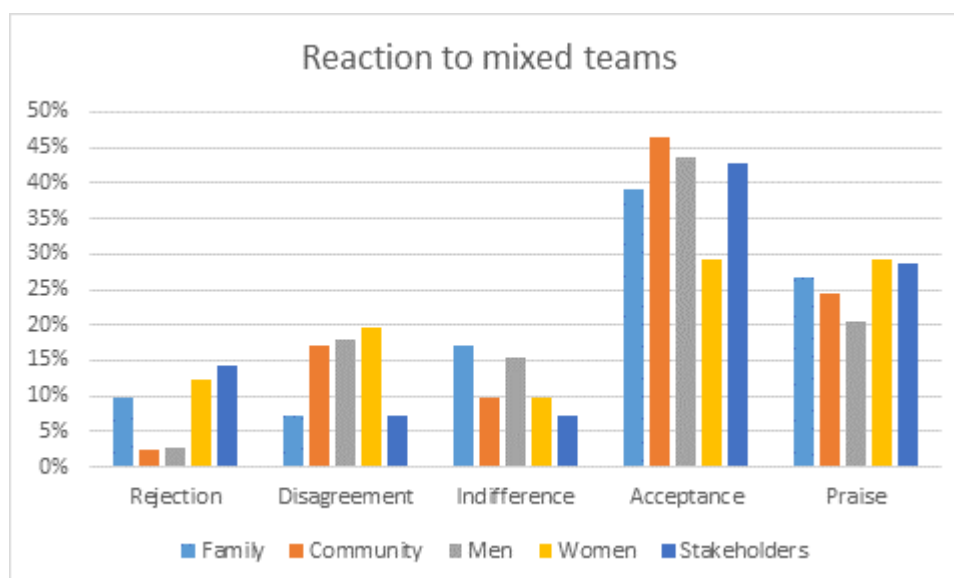


Figure (18): Family, Community and Stakeholders Reaction to Mixed Teams

After looking at demographic, economic, social and employment aspects of women in mine action, what do the women think of themselves? For the UNMAS gender survey team, the top ranking of 'confidence in myself' was not a surprise. The survey was an exercise in meeting women who were not only consistently happy, but motivated and self-assured with ambition for the future.

Table (9): Women's of Mine Action Self-Perception

	Female Mine Action Workers: Self-Perception Level of Change: Decrease – Increase	% Increase
1.	Confidence in myself	87.8

2.	Interest in a career in mine action	84.0
3.	Ability to support my community	83.0
4.	Confidence women can work in mine action	83.8
5.	Ability to support my family	82.4

6.	Confidence to recommend mine action to women	82.0
7.	Confidence women can work in the same jobs as men	81.4
8.	Comfort to say I work in mine action	79.6
9.	Comfort to say I work in a mixed team	78.0

10.	Happiness of friends / family	72.2
11.	Energy level when with family	67.8
12.	Importance of my own happiness	67.8
13.	Motivation to spend time with my family	61.4

14.	Motivation to spend time with my community	57.4
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The top half of the rankings present a range of issues that are mostly outward looking: mine action as a career, community needs, family needs and consideration of other women. Three of the seven rankings show a strong conviction on the central question of the entry of women into the male domain of hazard management: that women can work in non-traditional jobs such as mine action. The lower rankings are issues that one might expect to find at higher levels if someone is unhappy with their work and needs to find fulfilment elsewhere. The rankings also refute that and demonstrate a group of women who are very much fulfilled by their work.

5.6.2 Women Empowerment: Decision Making Power, Agency and Skills

The top three rankings (**Table 10**) indicate women who have taken charge of their lives. This is especially apparent in the top ranking “*decisions on life goals*” which shows an increase by a margin of five per cent over the second ranking. This arguably represents the zenith of personal empowerment.

Table (10): Women’s of Mine Action Self-Perception

	Female Mine Action Workers: Decisions Change: Decrease – Increase	Level of % Increase
1.	Decisions on life goals	83.4

2.	Decisions on daily activities	78.6
3.	Decisions on daily expenditures	78.0
4.	Impact on family decision making	77.6
5.	Decisions on high value expenditures	76.6

6.	Impact on friends' decisions	76.0
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It is interesting to observe (**table 11**) that the most increasing indicator “*Confidence to express opinions in community discussions*” represents the most public activity in the list. Conversely, the least increasing indicator represents the most private activity, “*Time I spend on household chores in my household*” and is actually decreasing on the level of change scale. This points to a trend in women’s orientation towards relationships and issues beyond the household environment.

Table (11): Women’s Self-Perception

	Female Mine Action Workers: Agency Level of Change: Decrease – Increase	% Increase
1.	Confidence to express opinions in community discussions	83

2.	Extent I feel I can speak up if I face unfair treatment	83
3.	My female family members take my opinion more seriously	82
4.	Confidence to express my opinions with male colleagues	81
5.	Knowledge and confidence to give opinions in household	80.8

6.	Male family members take my opinion more seriously	79.6
7.	Female community take my opinion more seriously	77.0
8.	Male community take my opinions more seriously	74.2
9.	Time female family members spend on household chores	72.2

10.	Time male family members spend on household chores	66.8
11.	Time I spend on household chores in my household.	45.4

Table (12) shows which skills women found to have increased the most in their work experience. As the top-ranking skill, ‘communication’ is key to interpersonal activity and increasing agency with peers and the public. It also is a skill without which empowerment gained cannot be expressed. It is noteworthy that the skills which follow all have practical applications at the worksite.

Table (12): Women’s of Mine Action Self-Perception

	Female Mine Action Workers: Skills Change: Decrease – Increase	Level of	% Increase

1.	Communication skills	86.4
2.	Safety and security skills	83.4
3.	First aid / medical care skills	83.0
4.	Teamwork skills	83.0

5.	Time management skills	81.4
6.	Financial management skills	79.6
7.	Leadership skills	79.4
8.	Technical skills	79.0

9.	Language skills	73.0
10.	Computer skills	67.8

The support expressed for women in mine action to pursue careers is remarkably uniform for all groups, and overwhelmingly positive, as seen in **Figure (19)**. One stakeholder who is an implementing partner manager described his organization's imminent actions in giving women more responsibility. *"Yes, we have a few female searchers who are ready to be a team leader. We are going to send them to do a team leader training course in the months to come because we see they are very well organized and ready to lead."*

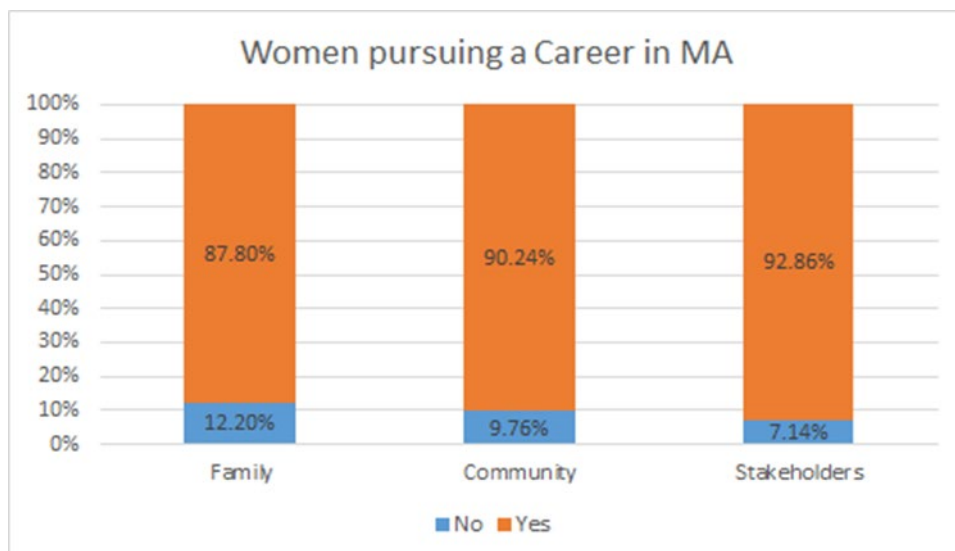


Figure (19): Family, Community and Stakeholders Support for Women Pursuing a Career in Mine Action

The final questions of the women’s survey were an assessment of the degree to which they felt empowered in their work. The results measured a remarkable assurance. Ninety-three percent believed women can work at the highest level of EHM hazard management work: EOD specialist. Seventy-three percent stated they would themselves accept an opportunity to work as an EOD specialist.

To the question “*Does mine action need women workers?*”, the response was 100%. “Yes.”

Case Study

Bottom-Up Change: The Sinjar Model

A community traumatized and displaced by conflict responds to the urgencies of return and reconstruction by re-thinking the role of women.
(Full case study in Section 9.5)

6.0 KEY TAKE-AWAYS: EMPOWERMENT IN 10 STATISTICS

This survey has presented an understanding of women’s empowerment in mine action through the range of daily interactions they experience: family, community and workplace. Each has its own dynamics that women must navigate, in a job for which there is no inherited knowledge passed on from previous generations of women.

The best opportunity for women, and men, to enjoy the maximum potential of their work experience arises when all three social environments are in alignment in dealing with the special risks and constraints of a job in mine action. When organizations have promoted knowledge sharing in their launch and management of mixed-sex teams, the outcomes were better.

The selected survey statistics that follow present a profile of the situation of women in mine action in Ninewa, with particular attention to those who work in hazard management, the most non-traditional function of the mixed-sex teams.

- 1. 69% of family members see no changes in men’s behaviour and attitude towards their female family member in mine action since she started to work.***

Women working in mine action reported a slight decrease in their time spent on household chores thereby absorbing a ‘double burden’ of work-household duties. They recognized a corresponding slight increase in the time other females, and, to a lesser extent, male family members contributed. It was clear, however, that their mine action jobs meant a daily requirement to work ‘overtime’ in the home when there was inadequate support. Seventy-eight per cent of women’s financial status improved upon joining mine action. They understand well the extent of their contribution to the household and, as survey comments showed, they accordingly expect a corresponding acknowledgment of this within the family.

2. Over two-thirds of family and community members in Ninewa believe that if their family or community knew of a woman working in mine action, their reaction would be positive.

Such a strong majority confirms a general support for mixed-sex teams in Ninewa Governorate. But the survey found that there is diversity on social issues according to specific urban, rural, tribal and cultural environments. In some communities there is substantial minority opinion against women working in mine action. Negative reactions registered 29% in Mosul and 33% in Tal Afar. In Sinjar, however, the negative reaction was only 6%. In such communities, opinions may be the same, but the reasons may be different, such as concerns about male-style uniforms or women working in proximity to males. For implementing partners, the challenge is to ensure their recruitment campaigns and operations are appropriate and specific to the expectations of communities with which they engage. Community opinion is a key factor in families' decisions to allow a female member to apply for a job in mine action.

3. 80% of families and 63% of community members had no prior information about women in mine action when recruitment notices were publicized.

The survey found that among family, community members and male mine action workers, as their understanding of the feasibility and benefits of women in mine action grew, so too did their acceptance. The perceived initial reactions of families to women entering this job sector were only 34% positive. The perceived initial reactions of communities were only 20% positive. The learning process can be accelerated by building relationships with key community partners and organizing information sessions in neighbourhoods when recruitment activities are launched. Such change management activities require a strategic plan that prioritizes effective communication.

4. 49% of community members believe women in mine action face social risks²⁰. 12% believe they face safety risks.

Governments, communities, and employers have a duty of care to their respective constituencies: citizens, neighbours, staff and neighbours. This responsibility is enhanced when employment involves confronting social traditions. Seventeen percent of the women stated that the comfort they have telling people they work in mine action has decreased since they joined mine action. Though the percentage is small, it is a perceived risk that the women must live with.

5. 69% of male mine action workers believe women searchers are needed.

While 31% disagree, there remains a significant majority of support for women in the sector by their male colleagues. The attainment of such a high level of acceptance in a relatively short period of time can be due to women's demonstrated ability in their work, and men's preparedness to recognize that. An important factor in this success however has been the sensitive management of male and female staff by the implementing partners. This was evident in discussions with managers in their offices, questions put to supervisors in the field and observations of mixed-sex

²⁰ Social risks are understood to be pressures from extended family members, neighbours, friends and other members of the community who may disagree or reject the idea of women doing work that is traditionally understood to be done only by males.

teams at work. This organizational motivation is complemented by the support on gender issues provided by the DMA and UNMAS. As pioneers in the introduction of mixed-sex teams, MAG and NPA in particular deserve credit. It is noted that 100% of male mine action workers believe women in EORE are needed. This suggests women working as searchers will also be seen as normal.

6. 68% of family and 73% of community members saw positive changes in empowerment in the behaviour of women in mine action.

The participants in the survey made frequent reference to the non-traditional aspect of the women's work experience and its motivating impact. No other question in the survey generated as much comment. The descriptions were mostly effusive in describing the many changes that were observed in personality, confidence and the expression of opinions. In communities where women feel a need to conceal their true employment in mine action, any empowerment they develop must, as a result, remain covert to some degree.

7. 100% of women in mine action said their confidence in themselves increased. Of these, 39% said it had strongly increased.

Women in mine action reported similarly high levels of increase in their decision-making capacities in terms of life goals, high value expenditures, low value daily expenditure and daily activities. Such empowerment demonstrates the impact their work has had on their personal lives and self-perception. This confidence indicator might represent the most important measure of women's empowerment in mine action given the effect it will have on strengthening other capacities and skills such as leadership, communication and interpersonal relations.

8. Women registered a 90% increase in their confidence to express their opinions freely during community discussions and decisions.

This element of personal agency rated the second highest score in women's self-perception. Confidence to express opinions with male colleagues and to speak up in the face of unfair treatment also ranked highly. Male and female family and friends were seen to take their opinions more seriously. The survey results showed that in several indicators of self-perception – the way in which the women saw themselves – there were increases at levels which can be considered transformative. In assessing increases in decision-making, "decisions on life goals" scored the top ranking by a wide margin.

9. 17% of EHM teams in Ninewa are mixed-sex or female-only teams. 13% of EHM staff are female. 7% of EHM team leaders are female.

While these numbers are well below the goals of gender parity, given the mine action sector for women is only five years old and has experienced much broader growth in the last two years, the achievement has laid a strong foundation on which to build. Communities are becoming more accustomed to the idea of women in mine action and better understanding the benefits. An implementing partner that currently does not have mixed-sex teams may soon secure new funding. If that happens, all non-governmental mine action organizations operating in Ninewa will have deployed EHM women and men staff. It should be remembered that 49% of women in the survey were unemployed prior to mine action, versus 18% of men.

10. 93% of women in mine action believe women can work at the highest level of hazard management work – Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD). 73% of women would accept an opportunity to work as an EOD specialist.

The highest technical aspiration in mine action work is EOD specialist. It is also the most dangerous job in mine action. For three quarters of women to express a preparedness to work at that level exhibits a high degree of confidence and ambition. When men were asked the same question, only 54% believed that women could function as EOD specialists. When asked the same question of themselves, 87% of men would accept an opportunity as EOD specialists. Women are approaching parity with men in their goal setting.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered for consideration by all partners of the mine action sector in Iraq via the forum of the Mine Action Gender Task Force, an advisory body of the sector established by the Iraq DMA.

1. The mine action sector should develop a sector-wide strategy for the recruitment of mixed-sex and all-female teams. Communities should be engaged through meetings hosted by local organizations and officials. Information should be provided about the sector, the organizations' missions, the rationale for mixed-sex and all-female teams. Concerns such as safety, uniforms, training, travel and gender mixing should be addressed.
2. The mine action sector should promote the image of mixed-sex teams to the public as serving a key role in Iraq's reconstruction. A public information campaign should sensitively inform communities of the benefits of mixed-sex teams, introduce women who have pursued a career in mine action and initiate annual awards to recognize individuals and groups who have contributed to the sector, or gender in general.
3. Government led EOD training opportunities at all certification levels should be made accessible equally to men and women. The mine action sector should support the Government of Iraq, in particular DMA and MoD to provide facilities for women at the MoD training centre. Organizations that currently arrange training for their own staff should consider coordinating joint regular courses that all organizations can have their staff attend.
4. The mine action sector in Ninewa should organize a joint focus group discussion for their EHM mixed teams to discuss the personal and professional experiences of women working in non-traditional jobs. The information gained can inform future deployment of mixed-sex teams in other parts of Iraq. It can also serve to build stronger social networks among staff.
5. A joint DMA-IKMAA webpage for mine action staff in Iraq could provide information on the sector, training opportunities, employment opportunities and post-mine action employment transition strategies and resources.

6. A workshop should be organized by the sector to review the experience to date of mixed-sex teams in Ninewa and their own gender policies. It should identify best practices and lessons learned to contribute to a common strategy for: i) advancement towards gender equality and gender parity in EHM employment, ii.) best practices for engaging communities which address public sensitivities and make effective use, as some organizations do, of community liaison staff and EORE teams and, iii.) the issue of uniforms which was consistently raised as a concern by communities and families.
7. The mine action sector should engage in a dialogue with other stakeholders in communities to obtain feedback and generate discussions on possible opportunities to further broaden gender equality in Iraq.
8. A follow-up end line study of women in mine action in Ninewa should be implemented with particular attention to economic motivations and perceived social risks to women.

8.0 CONCLUSION

When the survey was carried out in the first quarter of 2021, UNMAS implementing partners had gained up to two years of experience with mixed-sex teams. The data obtained confirm that the more information communities and families have on gender in mine action, the more accepting they are of mixed-sex teams. This reduces social risks for women working in mine action.

In Ninewa, women of mine action have made clear gains in skills acquisition, agency in families and communities, and all forms of decision-making. They have proven their capacity in the work sites with the majority of male colleagues and supervisors. At a personal level, their self-perceptions suggest life changing levels of empowerment for many, and collective ambition by most, to make mine action a career. Elements of doubt and resistance do remain in family, community and workplace environments. Women in more traditional communities and families admit their empowerment is constrained and expressed covertly due to perceived social pressures. Others are increasingly prepared to express their opinions and ideas overtly. A recent, positive development is the rise in inquiries by women and their parents about mine action employment opportunities.

Future mine action operations in Iraq could benefit from a social and economic mapping of diverse communities, which was not within the scope of this survey. The sector would also benefit from knowledge of organizations' experiences in their engagements with communities where women are recruited. Organizations' approaches are key in achieving gender equality and gender parity objectives with the least social and cultural disturbance. The Government of Iraq, the United Nations and donor agencies can all contribute to promoting culturally sensitive approaches to social change.

Finally, it is apparent there is a lack of clarity and data on the operational, programmatic and social benefits of deploying mine action mixed-sex teams. Gender equality is a principle that is properly established on a rights basis, but is generally absent in the form of practical, empirical evidence at the field level. Organizations should have such information resources available to them when they engage with communities in re-thinking established ideas of gender roles and are asked 'why'?

The sum of the survey findings supports an understanding that the introduction of women – and mixed-sex teams - has established a solid foundation and manifested gains in the empowerment of women of mine action and in society. Once social boundaries are breached and seen as positive, there is potential for majority opinion to shift. One female searcher suggested this evolution has been reached, in some communities, in a comment that could serve as a profound response to the question ‘What’s next?’. *“Everybody is proud of us and we feel proud of ourselves. If my organization opens new vacancies, so many women will apply.”*

A similar display of women’s empowerment was observed at the end of the survey interviews. After the final question, the women of mine action were asked if they had anything else to say. A recurring response soon came to be expected by the survey team. *“We want other women to get this same empowerment, which we are experiencing and enjoying.”*

The experience of this small group of women demonstrates how, when opened to women, a very non-traditional occupation can yield positive results both for the sector and the individual. The survey findings suggest that mine action can legitimately view itself as a bellwether for women. The job is dangerous, dirty, demanding and risks social approbation. But women have shown they are prepared to accept the risk, and they can do the work. Other jobs traditionally thought of as “men only” can be similarly re-imagined.

9.0 CASE STUDIES

9.1 Adela and Aqeel: A Mosul Family in Mine Action (Part 1)

Case Study

Adela and Aqeel: A Mosul Family in Mine Action (Part 1)

1.0 Introduction

Ensuring inclusion in mine action creates opportunities for women that can lead to personal, social and economic empowerment. However, this does not happen in isolation; family and community play a key role in the extent to which empowerment happens. In this case study, a housewife responded to a vacancy notice for a job entirely non-traditional for women in her community.

2.0 Situation: Life Before Mine Action

It was at his workplace in 2018 where Adela's²¹ husband, Aqeel, first learned that an NGO in Mosul supported by UNMAS was recruiting women to work as searchers in mixed-sex teams in Ninewa governorate. That night he told Adela about the job and promised to support her should she apply.

Adela's life was traditional in every sense. In her late thirties, she was a housewife with four children from seven to 14 years of age. She sewed as a part-time occupation but even without that extra work it was a busy household; her entire life revolved around her family and her home.

As Aqeel knew, Adela fully understood the risks of mine action. Her brother had been killed by an IED. His sudden and violent death remained in her memory and now she was presented with a chance to act against the very threat that had ended his life.

For them both, mine action was perceived as a way to help protect people so other families would not suffer the same loss. Further, the clearance of mines and unexploded ordnance was a prerequisite for reconstruction of communities which is urgently needed in Mosul. There were, however, harsh realities to consider; it was dangerous work, it was not a job that women had done, and it came with a specified set of technical skills to be learned and mastered.

Adela's full-time work would be a change for the family too. They would have to alter their daily routines and help more with the housework. In addition, many years had passed since she had last worked in formal employment. If she was ever going to have another career, this was perhaps the right time and the right job. Although there were concerns, she sent in her application.

"Not more or less able, just equal."

Adela



At work in Mosul

3.0 Impacts and Change: Life in Mine Action

Now 40 years old, Adela has worked since early 2019 as the oldest female member of her mixed-sex search team. *"Working in mine action has completely changed my life" Adela said, "I am a different person now. Before, I felt weak, and I wasn't able to stand up for myself or take decisions even within the household. Now, I can take a stand, give my opinions and speak for myself. Even at home, when an important issue is raised, I give my opinion for the decision I want".*

After Adela began her work in mine action, her husband, Aqeel, started to see the changes in his wife. *"Her personal power is definitely reinforced" Aqeel stated, "Now, she has firm opinions, and she does not hesitate to express them."*

With the demands of a full-time job, Adela's contribution to household chores is only a third of what she did before. Everyone in the family takes part in doing more, including Aqeel though he admits it is still not at the level of his wife. Moreover, Adela contributes to the household economy equally to Aqeel. The increase in income has allowed the family to buy more electronic devices and appliances

²¹ Pseudonyms are used for the confidentiality of the survey participants.

and this has contributed to the family's support of her work. She now fully participates in the decision-making process on family expenses, whether large or small, daily or long term.

4.0 Outcomes: Life Ahead in Mine Action

Adela is proud of the new skills and knowledge she has gained. Her family and friends confirm they have witnessed an increase in her confidence. With pride, her daughter has told her closest friends that her mother is an explosive ordnance searcher. The young women regard Adela as a hero. Her sons have seen their father's example and are equally proud of her.

When asked what she would have done if her husband had been against her work in mine action, Adela said that she may have still taken the job, but his opposition would have made her sad and may have strained their relationship. His understanding, support and pride is motivating and helps her feel more comfortable in doing such a non-traditional job.

Aqeel says that for some men it will always be difficult, if not impossible, to accept women working in mine action. For many, however, he thinks their understanding has evolved. *"They have seen women can do tasks that men do and, in some ways, perhaps even better. In time the idea of women in mine action can become normal."* As in helping more with household chores, the perception of gender roles and responsibilities can shift.

If his wife wants a career in mine action Aqeel will always support her, even if there are social criticisms. In his view, it all depends on family support. *"A community always has some narrow ways of thinking. If a woman joins mine action and works hard, and if her family supports her, then she doesn't really have obstacles. She can have the confidence to do the job. It may not be easy, but it is doable."*

Adela says that her primary motivation in her work is the memory of her brother and to safeguard people in the communities. Sometimes when she is in a dangerous situation, she thinks about how he did his job in the face of similar risks and it inspires her.

She would recommend other women to work in mine action. She is happier and she enjoys the financial security. Her perception of her ability to support her family and community has increased greatly. She believes women in mine action should be given space for career advancement.

"No one should specify which areas women should work. Let them do different tasks – and have more responsibility – as team leader, EOD technician, and supervisor. If they increase the number of women working in mine action and give them more responsibility, then gradually the community will come to accept the idea of more women in mine action. For now, the community still sees women being managed by men in the job. But they need to see women managing mixed-sex teams – males and females. After all, they are working at the same level. Not less able or more able, just equal."

"Her personal power is definitely reinforced." Aqeel

5.0 Conclusion

Adela is aware she has become a role model for her daughter and her daughter's friends and is influencing a new generation. *"In time, it will not be strange for them and more of the community will accept the idea of women in mine action."*

She has seen this change of thinking occur with her male colleagues as well. Now, Adela says, they are comfortable in the daily activities of the mixed-sex teams. The women, she says, had to prove themselves and the men gave them the chance to do that. As Aqeel had when he informed her of the job opportunity in mine action and gave his full support.



"Working in mine action has completely changed my life." Adela

9.2 Adela's Secret: Covert Empowerment in Mosul (Part 2)

Case Study

Adela's Secret: Covert Empowerment in Mosul (Part 2)



Mosul, March 2021

1.0 Introduction

Adela's²² experience as a woman in mine action has an impact on her life beyond the changes that have occurred in her family routines. Employment in a non-traditional job in a traditional society requires discretion and, sometimes, concealment.

The social condition in the community is the focus of part two of this case study. It gives a perspective on the negative reaction to women in non-traditional jobs that is sometimes manifested in men, in extended families and in the wider community.

2.0 Situation

Adela has the support of her husband and children. But she has not told her father of her work because it would worry him too much given the cause of the death of her brother by an explosive detonation. Her other brother and her sisters know she works in mine action and they support her, although they worry she may be injured or killed. When she shares photos and stories of her work, they show both pride in her bravery and emotion at the risks she takes.

There is, however, a necessary deception. She keeps the true nature of her job well hidden from her brothers-in-law. Like the communities in which they live, they are traditional and believe that women working in military related activities and wearing a masculine uniform is not acceptable. The traditional view has always been that women are too weak for certain types of physical and dangerous work. It is also considered shameful for a woman to work outside the house for long hours in the company of other men. If the brothers-in-law knew of her job, then she would be pressured by them and others to quit. Her husband would also be challenged: *"How can you let your wife do such a job?"*

The community perception is positive for women who support their families financially, but negative for those who work in non-traditional jobs. According to one of her colleagues, in rural communities

²² Pseudonyms are used for the confidentiality of the survey participants.

the biggest concern is women wearing a male style uniform. This could even lead to women being forced to leave the job.

Adela wishes she could tell everyone about the job she likes and believes in so much. When asked by friends what she does she assesses how much of the truth she can reveal to them. Usually, she simply says that she works with an organization. Beyond that, she may say she does explosive ordnance risk education which is socially seen as more acceptable work for a woman.

3.0 Changes and Impact

‘Zara’ is a friend of Adela and works in mine action, as a medic. At twenty-three years, she is much younger. Her own initial reaction to mixed-sex teams and the nature of mine action was that it would be an exceedingly difficult challenge for women, and they might fail. But she saw female colleagues get used to the work and become equal to the men in their performance. There was a clear system to the work of searchers and if the searchers followed the procedures, they could do it safely.

She came to realize it was not the nature of the work that was important. It was the principle of equal opportunity for women in the community that was the real issue. She also saw among her colleagues that women were empowered on many levels through their jobs. This extended into the home where husbands were asked to change their attitude on the responsibilities for household tasks.

Zara saw a stronger personality emerge in Adela as she became more animated and self-confident. Her friend was growing comfortable in having a greater role in the community and helping to solve problems. Adela was more assertive compared to women who did not work, or work in jobs as challenging as mine action. How did they regard these women who went against tradition and worked in mine action? According to Zara they have a high regard; they see these women accept the physical risks and manage the social criticism and make a great effort to provide for their families and serve the community. These positives are recognized and respected.



Explosives searching, March 2021

“There are always social challenges,” Zara admits. She knows of one woman who received a marriage proposal but with the condition that she leave her mine action job as a searcher. The woman refused and the proposal was withdrawn.

Given these social pressures, most women choose to act covertly. They change into their uniforms at their employers’ office or at a mosque near the work site. They hide, as Adela does, the truth of their employment. Zara says this is a reality to varying degrees in urban and rural communities.

4.0 Outcomes

According to a female explosive ordnance risk education team member in Mosul, women face multiple fears in their work. There are the physical risks of death or injury. There is the potential of social criticism. As a potential future risk, there are the dire consequences if ISIL or other extremists were

to return to Mosul. It leads to a life of concealment. *“We hide our addresses and phone numbers and avoid talking to people we don’t know. I am comfortable working in mine action, but I do take all of these things into account in my daily life.”*

Despite all this, she reports that there is a positive element of having mixed-sex teams. Her observation has been that when people see a group in military type uniforms there is instant anxiety as to who they are and what their intentions are. But when it becomes apparent that there are women in the group, the perception of a threat is much lessened. The community believes that the men will be more trustworthy and careful in what they do because of the presence of women.

Sometimes Adela has served as an assistant to the team leader. It involves working more closely with explosives, but she is confident in her training and makes every effort to learn. She now has the most experience in the team and ranked first in her training course. If given the opportunity she would like to become a team leader herself and even an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technician who disposes of explosives in controlled detonations. The views of traditionalists have not censored her professional ambitions.

“We hide our addresses and phone numbers and avoid talking to people we don’t know.”
Female risk education team member

5.0 Conclusion

With two years of experience in mine action, Adela remains uncomfortable to share knowledge of work she is proud of. Only a quarter of her friends are fully aware of what she does for a living. When she told them the truth of her job, they were shocked, but they came to regard her with more respect, and she admitted she liked that acknowledgment of her service to the community.

Her husband, Aqeel believes that it takes understanding for collective ideas to change. When there are men who do not have jobs, it is considered wrong for women to ‘steal’ employment that men have traditionally done. The idea that women should have equal opportunity as men is a new concept, but he said he has seen men change their views when they observe women equal to the tasks, working hard, getting tired and trying to support their families. In his view, most men who see this now accept women who work and no longer see it as shameful or a failure of a household or society.

9.3 Gender and Change in Tal Afar: When Tradition Meets Policy

Case Study

Gender and Change in Tal Afar: When Tradition Meets Policy

1.0 Introduction

In most of Ninewa, the question of women employed in mine action is determined more by family than community. What happens when the policies of global development and the priorities of implementing organizations arrive at the gates of tribal culture?

In 2019, an international organization came to the stark realization that, in Tal Afar, the recruitment of women working in mixed-sex teams, wearing western style uniforms and detecting explosives quickly encountered thick walls of tradition.

2.0 Situation

Ninewa Governorate is rich in cultural diversity. Tal Afar is distinct as a majority Turkmen Sunni city. Its eighteen neighbourhoods are organized and administered in accordance with tribal identities and largely populated by extended families with close social ties. The community experienced regular terror attacks after 2005 and then occupation by ISIL forces after 2014. With the withdrawal of ISIL in 2017 the local extremist elements fled with them. Since then, there has been a tentative calm as IDPs have returned and the reconstruction of the city has gone forward.

In 2019, an UNMAS NGO implementing partner carried out a recruiting drive for explosive searchers to work in female and male mine action teams. The hiring of men proceeded rapidly. But the efforts to hire women were met with no response. As a result, the NGO directed their recruitment of women to Sinjar where women readily applied. The two teams, Tal Afar males and Sinjar females, subsequently carried out clearance of explosives in and around the community, together. No difficulties were encountered. The people welcomed the work of the teams so that reconstruction could proceed. As the women searchers were not from Tal Afar there was not a concern.

“Tal Afar has a tribal mind set.”

Salah



Tal Afar, March 2021

Salah²³ is the elected mayor of a district in Tal Afar. He is blunt about his community: *“Tal Afar has a tribal mind set and neighbourhoods function like villages.”* Women face many social constraints he explains. Some families with higher education are more open-minded but they know they will face social pressure if they allow their daughters to work in non-traditional sectors such as mine action.

A local government officer, Olaa has personal experience of the extremes to which such constraints on women can reach. In pre-ISIL years, she twice received death threats while working for an NGO. At that time, translators working with foreign forces were regularly assassinated. Today, families in Tal Afar are still much more influenced by the close-knit neighbourhood social network than other cities such as Mosul. It is more the community than the family that deems what is allowed and what is not. For Olaa, too, the roots of these limitations are cultural. *“We are a tribal thinking community. I know so many women with amazing talents, but they can’t practice them in Tal Afar.”*

Many women come to Salah seeking job opportunities for both personal and economic motivations. The job options are limited however by the anticipated objections of the community which in turn instills caution in families.

3.0 Changes and Impact

Maher is a lecturer in a local college who has observed improved security and eased social constraints in Tal Afar, especially for women. Before 2014, he says, it was a problem for women to work directly with men. But that is changing. *“Each year progress is made on women’s freedom to do things. They now work as cashiers and in shops for women and even in cafes.”* He sees more women attending his classes. Part of the reason is that during the ISIL occupation, when many families were in IDP camps, they were exposed to Iraqi women working for NGOs. This, he says was a liberalizing epiphany.

Olaa agrees. *“Before, you could never have beauty salons in Tal Afar, but now it is possible.”* In Salah’s district, NGOs sometimes offer focus group discussions to women about sensitive issues such as jobs and gender-based violence. When he announces the meetings, women attend more and more frequently and actively take part in discussions. They have a clear interest to have a greater role in the community. There are men who support this but keep their views largely hidden.

When it comes to an international NGO proposing the recruitment of women in a high-risk non-traditional job such as an explosive searcher, the social constraints that govern community behaviour are hard to see. For Maher, however, the issue is clear. *“Foreign organizations trying to introduce new concepts against cultural traditions are naturally going to be met with suspicion as to what their motive is and who they are supporting. They need to build relationships, explain their objectives and build trust. Trust is the key. Families want to know that their daughters will be safe. They want to know the community understands the opportunity and the conditions of work and accept it.”*

Maher, Olaa and Salah all agree that one of the main problems is the uniform that women in mine action wear, especially the trousers. Cultural traditions do not allow females to wear male clothing, even if they are more suitable for the nature of the activity. All women are expected to wear a cover similar to an abeya that extends at least to the knee, and a hijab covering the head. The uniforms that women in the police service wear could be an appropriate model for mine action activity.

The people of Tal Afar are accustomed to NGOs using mixed-sex teams for their activities. Explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) mixed teams are fully accepted. Maher believes that these EORE

²³ Pseudonyms are used for the confidentiality of the survey participants.

teams could be used to explain to the community the benefits of mixed-sex teams for the clearance of explosives.

4.0 Outcomes

Olaa is confident that with the right approach it is possible for the women of Tal Afar to be recruited as searchers, as long as the uniform issue is resolved in line with community expectations. She leads an informal group that works with women in the community. In her view it is a matter of explaining the work of mine action, the benefits of women doing the work of searchers and answering questions to the satisfaction of the families, including the physical risks.

“The hardest part is the start.”
Olaa

She believes that if a few strong women came forward and accepted the burden of social criticism then others would follow. The community has severe economic problems. Solutions to financial problems are a great motivator and persuader. *“Once the first women overcome that obstacle then they can be very strong role models for the whole community.”*

Supportive local officials such as Salah can help influence community opinion and support initiatives as Olaa proposes. *“We want women to join mine action” he says. “I know we have to give women their rights and the chance to take part in community development.”*

Olaa believes it is best for women to have experience in all sectors including mine action given the extent of the problem in Tal Afar. *“When we have women with this expertise after NGOs depart, they can help the community to deal with remaining explosives such as identifying them and securing the area. It is good for self-protection, family protection and community protection.”*

5.0 Conclusion

The introduction of changes that counter millennia-old rules governing the behaviour of women and men is a precarious exercise in change management. This is magnified in a security context where, as in Tal Afar and throughout Ninewa, the return of extremist forces remains a real concern. Families are aware that one’s unconventional job today could become a social or civil crime next year.

In Tal Afar, the gradual easing of constraints on women and the emergence of leaders encouraging more progress has potential for new ideas. International organizations working in patient partnership with communities may find ways to help the people open up their walls of tradition. The women of Tal Afar may then, finally, be able to work as explosive searchers and bring those economic and social benefits to their families and communities. As Olaa avowed, *“The hardest part is the start.”*

***“NGOs need to build relationships.
Trust is the key.”***
Maher

9.4 When a Job Becomes a Career: Two Team Leaders

Case Study

When a Job Becomes a Career: Two Team Leaders

1.0, Introduction

Gender equality in employment is not only an objective to achieve comparable numbers of women and men working in mine action. While horizontal growth is important, an equally important objective is vertical growth, as represented by the rise of women into higher levels of management and decision-making roles.

This case study follows the paths of two women who each found a passion for mine action that drove them to reconsider their chosen career goals.

2.0 Situation: Samira and Hadeel, Team Leaders

Samira is a former IDP who works for an international NGO in Mosul in Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE). Now, at 29 years of age, she is married with one child with a husband who fully supports her career in mine action.

When ISIL occupied Mosul, she and her husband fled to the Kurdistan region of Iraq where she was able to complete her engineering degree. Unable to find a job in that profession she worked for over a year in providing EORE and social support to IDPs at a local NGO. She appreciated the chance to help people during the ongoing crisis and prepare them for when they would return to their communities.

After taking a year off following the birth of her first child, Samira returned to work for the same NGO. She wanted to seek promotion but lacked the required English language proficiency.

"I chose mine action over a legal career."

Hadeel



Hadeel, Makhmour, March 2021

After diligent self-study while taking care of her baby, she reached the needed level and was recruited as a Risk Education Assistant. Eight months later she was promoted to the post of Risk Education Officer which included team leader responsibilities.

Following the retreat of ISIL from Mosul in 2017, Samira had job opportunities in Mosul to finally start her career in engineering. She had, however, come to love her work in risk education and decided to remain with the NGO and take up a new post they had created in Mosul. Her husband followed her and got a job in his profession.

Hadeel's first work in mine action began while she was a university student in her hometown of Kirkuk. She needed an income to support herself and responded to an online job vacancy in EORE with a local NGO. For three years she worked part time while she studied for her law degree. Following graduation, she was faced with a career decision. *"I chose mine action over a legal career."* She soon was hired as a searcher in Sinjar with another NGO and with their support obtained her level three explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) certification. After two years the project funding ended, but with her expertise she was recruited by another NGO as a team leader for explosive searchers. She now has one year of experience in that role.

3.0 Changes and Impact

For Samira, the promotion has meant an increased salary and equally shared household expenses with her husband. As a result of her employment in mine action, they were able to purchase a car and land to build a condominium.

The promotion brought new challenges that Samira had not dealt with before. Her international supervisor was replaced by a male Iraqi manager with whom the relationship became difficult. He subverted her authority over her staff by giving them tasks directly. This caused Samira so much stress she sought psycho-social counselling and eventually took the problem to senior management. Doing so, she felt a sense of empowerment in defending herself, especially when management resolved the problem to her satisfaction.

"I compare myself to the best I can be."

Searcher

For Hadeel, the promotion has meant economic empowerment that is manifested in buying and driving her own car to her rural work site. She is not married but plans to continue her career when she has her own family. On her days off she returns to Kirkuk to stay with her proud mother. In Kirkuk, women have freedom to pursue their careers and Hadeel is comfortable to tell people about the nature of her work. She has requested training to pursue EOD certification level 3+.

4.0 Outcomes

Samira is comfortable in her choice of mine action as a career and is confident other women are able to do the same. The skills she has developed the most have all enhanced her leadership ability: language, computers, time management and communication.

She realized her improved communication capacity one day when her EORE team arrived at a village on their task list but were barred from entering. The villagers were furious over an incident from the previous month and would not allow them to enter. A different NGO had carried out clearance of explosive ordnance but had missed an explosive and a father and his child were killed. The villagers told Samira they no longer trusted NGOs. After the team left, Samira remained and approached a household to get more information and talk to them. She explained the work of her team and how it could help the villagers to avoid future tragedies by being aware of and avoiding explosive ordnance. The villagers learned of this and decided to accept her team's EORE training.

On another occasion the UNMAS survey team unexpectedly met two of her male colleagues. When asked if mine action needs more women, they said ‘yes’ because of women like Samira whose energy motivates them. *“She has strong leadership and very good teamwork skills”* they said.

Hadeel has identified a range of skills that she has developed in her mine action work, but in general she feels they all contribute to her understanding of leadership and management. This capacity is recognized not only by her team of female searchers, but also by the team of male searchers who work currently in the same sites and know her. When UNMAS asked them, *“Do you think women are needed in mine action?”* they replied, *“Yes, if they are ambitious enough like Hadeel.”* When further asked *“Do you think women can do EOD work?”* their response was again given in a praiseworthy reference to her, *“Yes, if they are like Hadeel!”*

These spontaneous appraisals of Samira and Hadeel indicate they are respected based on their performance and merit rather than their gender. Several women however have expressed concern at limited opportunities for higher level EOD training due to a lack of institutional capacity. Without further training, men would continue to be promoted at higher rates than women.

5.0 Conclusion

During the implementation of the UNMAS survey on women in mine action in Ninewa, there was a question that consistently generated the weakest response: *“What benefits can women add to mine action?”* One answer however got instant attention: *“A woman can add whatever a man can add.”* This has proven as true for male and female team members as it has for male and female team leaders.

For another respondent, however, it was not about competition. *“I don’t compare myself to the men or even the women searchers,”* she said. *“I compare myself to the best I can be.”*

Team leaders such as Samira and Hadeel have an impact beyond their own personal goal setting. They serve as role models for the next generation of women who apply for work in mine action. In doing so, they also establish new expectations of what is considered normal for the next generation of women and men who seek not just jobs, but careers, in mine action in Iraq.



At work in mine action, March 2021

“A woman can add whatever a man can add.”
Searcher

9.5 Bottom-Up Change: The Sinjar Model

Case Study Bottom-Up Change: The Sinjar Model

1.0 Introduction

The UN Guidelines for Gender in Mine Action Programmes²⁴ serves as the tool providing “practical steps to mainstream gender and promote gender equality in mine action programmes”. But sometimes communities find their own way to expand the role of women.

Prior to the 2014 ISIL occupation of the Yazidi-majority town of Sinjar, the remote community was traditional in all aspects of daily life, including the distinct roles of women and men. This case study seeks an understanding of how, in their own deliberations, the people undertook a fundamental re-thinking of their way of life as they grappled to respond to the urgent needs of their community. In doing so, they created an exemplary social environment for women in mine action.

***“We are half of the community.
We have to do our part in
community service, whatever is
needed.”
Female searcher in Sinjar***

2.0 Situation

Traditions in rural areas normally have deep roots that make it difficult to convince people to change old customs and inherited values. In 2016, however, with the liberation of Sinjar from the horrific years of ISIL occupation, the Yazidi people were facing an unprecedented crisis. The first priority was the safe return of the over 2,600 Yazidi girls and women still held by ISIL. Next was the protection of the community and the return of the displaced to rebuild it. But the town and the economy were devastated. An assessment by UNMAS found extreme levels of explosive hazards in the city, surrounding villages and fields, including IED belts that were like tactical mine fields. Three quarters of households were damaged. IDP return was dependent on timely clearance of explosives.

MAG was the first NGO to begin operations in Sinjar, in 2016. It quickly received over a thousand applications from men and, unexpectedly, forty from women. More applications from women followed. These convinced MAG to deploy mixed-sex teams and they soon had the first female team of eight members. The organization covered the cost of family members to visit the training centre to observe the conditions and sessions. That assured families that their daughters were well cared for and were, most importantly, safe.

Dalal was in one of the very first families to return to Sinjar. Her father worked in education and believed Sinjar needed to start rebuilding immediately. Their house was damaged and had to be rebuilt. Motivated by the distressing frequency of people injured and killed in explosions when they

²⁴ https://mineaction.org/sites/default/files/publications/mine_action_gender_guidelines_web.pdf

re-occupied their properties, Dalal volunteered as a risk education team member. After three months she was formally hired and received training. The need for removal of explosives was urgent. They posed a constant danger. With many men killed in the conflict or working elsewhere for their families' livelihood there was an acute shortage of labour, especially for such life-threatening work.

3.0 Changes and Impact

Dalal's friend, **Khalaf** was a recent university graduate in engineering who was hired as a translator in a female team of searchers in Sinjar in June 2019. As a Yazidi he knew well that before 2014, women would not have considered to do work that was so clearly a job for men.

From mid-2014 to the beginning of 2016, the people of Sinjar made a 180 degree turn in the role of men and women in the community. The depth of this conviction among the young men and women was so strong that when the first male and female teams were being established, they insisted that the teams be equally mixed, not separated by sex.

In Khalaf's understanding, the motivations for these radical changes were several. There were the ongoing casualties among IDP returnees, the willingness of women to work in hazard clearance and the preparedness of the community to accept it, given the urgency of the problem.

In addition, these young women were different from who they had been pre-ISIS. They had witnessed the fighting, the life-or-death flight to the mountains and the years of suffering that followed, either in IDP camps or kidnapped by ISIL. Khalaf saw this as a realization by women, especially young, that they had to depend on themselves for their livelihood and protection. The traditional male-dominated society had demonstrated an incapacity and the result was catastrophe.

The IDP camps in places like Zakho and Dohuk became unintended learning centres in which different Yazidi communities could interact and together discover a broader understanding of the outside world, their own predicament and what was needed once the conflict ended. International and Iraqi NGOs provided many forms of training and awareness sessions including gender and human rights. The services of NGOs were delivered almost equally by men and women which gave a daily exposure to and normalization of the idea of gender mainstreaming. Even further along the path of radical new thinking, thousands of women responded to offers of informal instruction in how to use weapons.

Finally, there were the economic imperatives that drove decisions by women and their families' unconventional opportunities for women's employment. This desperation compelled some men and women to join the Peshmerga or other armed groups. Some chose to remain in the displaced camps while others sought employment in Kurdistan.

The prospect of a job in mine action for women was a new option that in the past would have been shameful for a woman and her family. After a year of employment, and clearance work, their families could afford to return to Sinjar, rebuild their homes and recover their fields and businesses. Women judged the risk against lesser employment options or the aimless inactivity of the IDP camps. There was also an awareness that in future they needed to have a greater role in social issues and security. A female friend of Khalaf told him of being warned by a man against taking a mine action job because the work involved was too challenging for women. *"We are half of the community," she replied. "We have to do our part in community service, whatever is needed."*

4.0 Outcomes

As the mixed teams began to work Khalaf was apprehensive but happy. *"My male colleagues and I were afraid for the women and the new risks they faced. But also proud of them for their courage and*

initiative.” His appraisal of their capacity grew over time. “Women showed they could be even better than men. More organized, patient. Sometimes they are more fearful than men. But fear can be an advantage – it keeps you more cautious. Do the job more carefully.” Men changed their opinions when they saw the results. What started as an emergency response came to be accepted as a normal job for women to do. Khalaf observed that men also began to assist more in the household.

***“Mixed teams are more collegial, have better spirit, better morale.
When women and men work together, they are both more organized.”
Khalaf***

He also saw the effect on women’s confidence. *“The salary made them independent and gave them status, self-esteem. Their freedom of movement through the job broke ties to the house. Women in mine action DO feel more empowered than other women”* Khalaf added. *“Their jobs are not easy, and they have a lot of responsibility. The visits of international staff added to their status. And as the women went to so many places for their work, they met more people and got to know them. They saw beyond their own homes and community. It widened their perspective of the world.”*

There was also an effect on men’s attitudes, which Khalaf said was mostly positive. He says there are still some traditionalists but, *“I don’t recall any worth mentioning. Anything new gets a negative reaction at first but eventually they accept it.”*

Khalaf is convinced that mixed-sex teams are better for mine action than separate male and female teams which have less opportunity for exchange of ideas. *“Different perspectives are good. Generally, mixed teams add pleasant vibes to the work environment. When I was working, we used to encourage each other, give emotional support to each other. Mixed teams are more collegial, have better spirit, better morale. When women and men work together, they are both more organized. Maybe they watch each other’s behaviours better.”*

Sara is in her third year of study towards a sociology degree at the university in Mosul. She sometimes works with NGOs and women’s groups when she visits her family in Sinjar. She finds that more and more people do not differentiate between men and women in terms of their abilities. *“Most of the community accept women and look positively on their role.”*

“Women have started and managed their own small businesses – restaurants, gyms, clothing boutiques. Women are ready to make their own opportunities. They even drive their own cars now. Before 2014 women didn’t drive but now it is not unusual. This is a distinct change.”

In her view, women have more determination than men. This makes her more positive about her own career plans. The community is allowing them to do this now. *“If you search in Sinjar for a social challenge against women in mine action limiting them you won’t find any – both in mine action and in general. Even married women can work in mine action and other non-traditional jobs and roles. They take these initiatives because their husbands don’t have objections to it. They have full freedom.”*

In conservative communities, family support is a main factor for work in mine action. Without this support, women would not feel comfortable. It is not the family wanting women to work in mine action for the salary. The women are the ones motivated to work and the men accept it.

“If you search in Sinjar for a social challenge against women in mine action limiting them, you won’t find any – both in mine action and in general.”

Sara, sociology student

5.0 Conclusion

In central Sinjar, there is a military supply shop that advertises itself on the sidewalk with a single female mannequin in a stylish pose. Rather than a typical women’s fashion, it is dressed in a well-cut camouflage uniform. Inadvertently, the mannequin also advertises how much concepts of gender have evolved in seven years of conflict, displacement, and reconstruction.

A tale told by Sara confirms this. Recently, the Yazidi female team of searchers working near the town

attended the wedding reception of one of their friends. They came directly from the work site wearing their uniforms. *“It seemed strange to the community but also delightful in a way and there was no objection of any kind.”* The women were soon dancing and enjoying themselves with their friends.

In small incidents of every-day life such as these, Sinjar reveals itself as a gender model for the mine action sector in Iraq and traditional communities everywhere. The bottom-up, community-led transformation was generated by a timely convergence of change agents: women unyielding in their determination to play a full role in the community and to secure their rights; an international community providing information on women’s rights; a group of NGOs employing women to provide services to the displaced; IDPs who observed those female employees in their work; a local community open to unorthodox solutions in a struggle for survival. Into all this potential, UNMAS and other organizations such as MAG offered new opportunities for women in the very non-traditional work of mine action.

The results are unique in Ninewa: a female mannequin displayed publicly, on streets cleared of explosives by similarly uniform-wearing women in mixed-sex teams, while watched by younger women who wish to emulate them.



Sinjar shop, March 2021

“In Sinjar, our circumstances led to this change. Because we had lost everything.”

Shireen, mine action driver

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10.3 External Documents

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10.4 Survey Interview Forms

10.4.1 Interview Form for Female Mine Action Workers

UNMAS Iraq Rapid Impact and Perception Survey

Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women Through Mine Action

INTERVIEW FORM FOR FEMALE MINE ACTION WORKERS

FOR COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER (CLO) USE ONLY

O.1. Name of CLO

O.2. Date of survey

LOCATION

L.1. Governorate

L.2. District

L.3. Sub-district (if applicable)

CODING SYSTEM FOR SECTIONS X

1	2	3	0
Decreased	No change	Increased	No response
<i>CODING SYSTEM FOR SECTIONS Y</i>			
1	2	3	0

Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	No response
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INTRODUCTION

My name is _____. I am with UNMAS Iraq, an organization that works in humanitarian demining. We are conducting a survey on the impact of employment of women in the mine action sector. We would like to interview you and get your opinions, experience and ideas. We especially welcome whatever you think. There are no right or wrong responses. Your openness will help us to have accurate knowledge that benefits mine action's work in Iraq. Your answers will be kept completely anonymous. Your participation is voluntary. You are free to decline to answer any question. This should take around 45 minutes.

1- CONSENT

1.1 Do you agree to participate in this survey?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Thank the respondent for his/her time and proceed to the next question.

2 - RESPONDENT DETAILS

2.1 Survey Respondent number:

2.2 Position of interviewee:

2.3 Organization (Implementing Partner):

2.4 Community of origin:

2.5 Sex of interviewee:

☐ *Female*

**2.6 Age of
interviewee:**

2.7 Marital status

- ☐ *Single*
- ☐ *Married*
- ☐ *Divorced*
- ☐ *Widowed*
- ☐ *Other*
- ☐ *Prefer not to say*

Basic Information

1. Please tell me about yourself and how you heard about this job.
What was your motivation to work in mine action?

a) Unemployed b) Better job c) Better salary d) Interest e) Non-traditional job f) Other
2. Please list the gender/sex and age of all household members (people who live with you), and how they are related to you?

	Relationship	Gender	Age	Occupation
1.				
2.				

3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

7.				
8.				

3. Were you employed before your employment in mine action?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Prefer not to say
 - d. If yes, for how many years or months? (insert numbers):

4. *Ask only if the answer to the previous question was 'Yes' -*
 Where were you working before mine action?
 - a. Agriculture and farming
 - b. Education
 - c. Health care
 - d. Manufacturing (textiles, etc.)
 - e. Auto mechanic
 - f. Sewing
 - g. Hairdressing
 - h. Bakery
 - i. Public administration (Government or NGO)
 - j. Small business
 - k. Tourism
 - l. Military
 - m. House cleaning / Childcare
 - n. Restaurant
 - o. Other

5. How much were you paid per month in your previous job before being employed in mine action? *(Insert numbers only)*

6. What level of schooling have you completed?
 - a) No formal schooling
 - b) Incomplete primary schooling
 - c) Primary Schooling
 - d) Secondary Schooling
 - e) Secondary Vocational Schooling
 - f) Two-year Institution Diploma
 - g) Four-year College Degree Education
 - h) Other
 - i) Prefer not to say
7. Were you or your household forced to leave your home because of the conflict?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Prefer not to say
8. Are you or anyone in your household currently forced to live outside of your home because of the conflict?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Prefer not to say
9. For how many years or months have you been working in mine action? (*insert number only*)

10. If you were not working in mine action, where would you most likely be working?

Agriculture and farming	
Education	
Health Care	
Manufacturing (textiles, etc.)	

Auto mechanic	
Sewing	
Hairdressing	
Bakery	

Public administration (Govt or NGO)	
Small business	
Tourism	
Military	

House cleaning / Childcare	
Restaurant	
Not working or Other	

11. Are you living with a disability? (if necessary, defined as physical, mental or sensory impairment)?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Prefer not to say

12. If yes, are you a landmine survivor?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Prefer not to say

13. Have you ever **asked for** psycho-social health services?

(The interviewer should confirm, again, that the survey is anonymous and the interviewee's answer to this question will have no impact on their employment).

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Prefer not to say

Access to resources and services

14. Before you worked in mine action, approximately what percentage of income did you and other family members contribute to your household per month?
(insert numbers only)

	Percentage
Myself	
Other household members	

TOTAL	100%
--------------	-------------

15. Now that you work in mine action, approximately what percentage of income do you and other family members currently contribute to your household per month?
(insert numbers only)

	Percentage
Myself	
Other household members	

TOTAL	100%
--------------	-------------

16. How has your spending on behalf of you and your family changed as a result of your employment in mine action?
(strongly decreased, decreased, no change, increased, strongly increased)

Possible responses	Code (0 to 5)
Food	
Education	

Health	
Housing	
Clothing	
Household appliances	

Electronic devices	
Transport	
Saving / Investing	
Support to family	

Other / Observations	
----------------------	--

Self-perception, the Family and the Community

17. Please rate the level of change in the following statements, since you started working in mine action.

(strongly decreased, decreased, no change, increased, strongly increased)

Statement	Code (0 to 5)
17.1 My perception of my ability to support my family	

17.2 My perception of my ability to support my community	
17.3 My energy level when I am with my family	
17.4 My motivation to spend time with my family	
17.5 My motivation to spend time with my community	

17.6 Confidence in myself	
17.7 The importance I give to my own happiness and well-being	
17.8 The importance I give to the happiness and well-being of my friends and family	
17.9 The comfort and safety I feel telling family, friends and strangers that I work in mine action	

17.10 Confidence that women can work in mine action	
17.11 Confidence that women can be employed in the same jobs as men	
17.12 The comfort I feel working in a mixed team	
17.13 My interest to make mine action a career and seek promotion	

17.14 The assurance I feel to recommend other women to work in mine action or other non-traditional jobs	
--	--

Any other observations or additions?

18. Please rate the level of change in the following statements, since you started working in mine action.

(strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)

FAMILY

Statement	Code (0 to 5)
18.1 My female family members look <i>more negatively</i> upon women working in mine action	

18.2 My male family members look more negatively upon women working in mine action	
18.3 My female family members look more negatively upon women who financially support their family	
18.4 My male family members look more negatively upon women who financially support their family	
18.5 My female family members are less confident that women can be employed in the same jobs as men	

18.6 My male family members are <i>less confident</i> that women can be employed in the same jobs as men	
18.7 My female family members are <i>less comfortable</i> telling anyone that I work in mine action.	
18.8 My male family members are <i>less comfortable</i> telling anyone that I work in mine action.	

19. Please rate the level of change in the following statements, since you started working in mine action.
(strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)

COMMUNITY

Statement	Code (0 to 5)
19.1 My female community members look <i>more negatively</i> upon women working in mine action	
19.2 My male community members look <i>more negatively</i> upon women working in mine action	
19.3 My female community members look <i>more negatively</i> upon women who financially support their family	

19.4 My male community members look more negatively upon women who financially support their family	
19.5 My female community members are less confident that women can be employed in the same jobs as men	
19.6 My male community members are less confident that women can be employed in the same jobs as men	
19.7 My female community members are less comfortable telling anyone that I work in mine action.	

19.8 My male community members are <i>less comfortable</i> telling anyone that I work in mine action.	
---	--

Decision-making Power and Agency

Decision-making power:

20. Please rate the level of change in the following statements, since you started working in mine action.

(strongly decreased, decreased, no change, increased, strongly increased)

Statement	Code (0 to 5)
20.1 Decisions I make on daily expenditures in the household	

20.2 Decisions I make on high value expenditures in the household	
20.3 Impact I have on decision-making within my family	
20.4 Impact I have on decision-making among friends and within community	
20.5 Decisions I make on my daily activities and interests	

20.6 Decisions I make on my life goals and interests	
--	--

Agency:

21. Please rate the level of change in the following statements, since you started working in mine action.

(strongly decreased, decreased, no change, increased, strongly increased)

Statement	Code (0 to 5)
21.1 Knowledge and confidence to give my opinions in my household	

21.2 Time I spend on household chores in my household	
21.3 Time other female family members spend on household chores	
21.4 Time other male family members spend on household chores	
21.5 Time spent with my children	

<p>21.6 Time spent with my other family members</p>	
<p>21.7 Confidence to express my opinions freely during community discussions and decisions</p>	
<p>21.8 Confidence to express my opinions in discussions and decisions with my male colleagues</p>	
<p>21.9 Extent to which I feel I can speak up if I face unfair treatment or harassment at my workplace</p>	

21.10 My female family members take my opinion more seriously	
21.11 My male family members take my opinion more seriously	
21.12 Female community members take my opinion more seriously	
21.13 Male community members take my opinions more seriously	

22. How many hours a day did you spend on household chores **before** employment in mine action? *(Insert numbers only)*

23. On average, how many hours a day do you spend on household chores **now**? *(Insert numbers only)*

Impact of work

24. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

'Employment in mine action has provided me with...'

(strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree):

	Code (0 to 5)
24.1 Technical skills	
24.2 Leadership skills	
24.3 Computer skills	

24.4 First aid (medical care)	
24.5 Financial management and planning	
24.6 Teamwork skills	
24.7 Communication skills	

24.8 Time management skills	
24.8 Safety and security skills	
24.9 Language skills	

25. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

‘Since I started working in mine action...’

(strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree):

	Code (0 to 5)
--	----------------------

<p>25.1 My female family members believe I have gained new communication skills.</p>	
<p>25.2 My male family members believe I have gained new communication skills</p>	
<p>25.3 My female family members believe I have gained new financial management skills</p>	
<p>25.4 My male family members believe I have gained new financial management skills</p>	

25.5 My female family members believe I have gained new leadership skills	
25.6 My male family members believe I have gained new leadership skills	
25.7 My female community members believe I have gained new communication skills.	
25.8 My male community members believe I have gained new communication skills	

25.9 My female community members believe I have gained new financial management skills	
25.10 My male community members believe I have gained new financial management skills	
25.11 My female community members believe I have gained new leadership skills	
25.12 My male community members believe I have gained new leaderships skills	

26. If people in your community knew that you are working in mixed teams in

mine action what might be their reaction?

Support? Acceptance? Indifference? Disagreement? Rejection?

27. Does mine action need women workers? If yes, why? What can they add to mine action?

28. Do you think women can do Explosive Ordnance Disposal work? Why or why not?

29. Would you yourself accept an opportunity to work as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal specialist? Why or why not?

10.4.2 Interview Form for Male Mine Action Workers

UNMAS Iraq Rapid Impact and Perception Survey Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women Through Mine Action

INTERVIEW FORM FOR MALE MINE ACTION WORKERS

FOR COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER (CLO) USE ONLY

O.1. Name of CLO

O.2. Date of survey

LOCATION

L.1. Governorate

L.2. District

L.3. Sub-district (if applicable)

CODING SYSTEM FOR SECTIONS X

1	2	3	0
Decreased	No change	Increased	No response
<i>CODING SYSTEM FOR SECTIONS Y</i>			
1	2	3	0

Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	No response
----------	----------------------------	-------	-------------

INTRODUCTION

My name is _____. I am with UNMAS Iraq, an organization that works in humanitarian demining. We are conducting a survey on the impact of employment of women in the mine action sector. We would like to interview you and get your opinions, experience and ideas. We especially welcome whatever you think. There are no right or wrong responses. Your openness will help us to have accurate knowledge that benefits mine action's work in Iraq. Your answers will be kept completely anonymous. Your participation is voluntary. You are free to decline to answer any question. This should take around 45 minutes.

1- CONSENT

1.1 Do you agree to participate in this survey?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Thank the respondent for his/her time and proceed to the next question.

2 - RESPONDENT DETAILS

2.1 Survey Respondent number:

2.2 Position of interviewee:

2.3 Organization (Implementing Partner):

2.4 Community of origin:

2.5 Sex of interviewee:

☐ Male

**2.6 Age of
interviewee:**

2.7 Marital status

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Basic information

1. Please list the gender/sex and age of all household members (people who live with you), and how they are related to you?

	Relationship	Sex	Age	Occupation
1.				
2.				
3.				

4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				

8.				
----	--	--	--	--

2. Before you worked in mine action, approximately what percentage of income did you and other family members contribute to your household per month? (*insert numbers only*)

	Percentage
Myself	
Other household members	

TOTAL	100%

3. Approximately what percentage of income do you and other family members currently contribute to your household per month?
(insert numbers only)

	Percentage
Myself	

Other household members	
TOTAL	100%

4. Were you employed before working in mine action?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Prefer not to say
 - d) If yes, for how many years or months? (insert numbers)

5. *Ask only if the answer to the previous question was 'Yes' -*
 Where were you working before mine action?
 - a) Agriculture and farming
 - b) Education
 - c) Health care
 - d) Manufacturing (textiles, etc.)
 - e) Auto Mechanic
 - f) Public administration (Government / NGO)
 - g) Small business
 - h) Bakery
 - i) Tourism
 - j) Military
 - k) House cleaning / babysitting
 - l) Restaurant
 - m) Other

6. How much were you paid per month in your previous job before being employed in mine action *(Insert numbers only)*

7. What level of schooling have you completed?
- a) No formal schooling
 - b) Incomplete primary schooling
 - c) Primary Schooling
 - d) Secondary Schooling
 - e) Secondary Vocational Schooling
 - f) Two-year Institution Diploma
 - g) Four-year College Degree Education
 - h) Other
 - i) Prefer not to say
8. Were you or your household forced to leave your home because of the conflict?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Prefer not to say
9. Are you or anyone in your household currently forced to live outside of your home because of the conflict?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Prefer not to say
10. For how many years have you been working in mine action? (*insert number only*)
11. **If you were not working in mine action, where would you most likely be working?**

Agriculture and farming	
Education	

Health Care	
Manufacturing (textiles, etc.)	
Auto Mechanic	
Sewing	

Hairdressing	
Bakery	
Public administration (Govt or NGO)	
Small business	

Tourism	
Military	
House cleaning / Childcare	
Restaurant	

Not working or Other	
----------------------	--

12. Are you living with a disability (defined as any physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment)?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Prefer not to say

13. If yes, are you a landmine survivor?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Prefer not to say

Access to resources and services

14. How has your financial spending on behalf of you and your family changed as a result of your employment in mine action?
(strongly decreased, decreased, no change, increased, strongly increased)

Possible responses	Code (0 to 5)

Food	
Education	
Health	
Housing	

Clothing	
Household appliances	
Electronic devices	
Transport	

Saving / Investing	
Support to family	
Other / Observations	

Perception of female mine action workers at work, with the family and the community

15. Please rate the level of change in the following statements, since you started working with women colleagues in mine action
(strongly decreased, decreased, no change, increased, strongly increased)

Statement	Code (0 to 5)
15.1 My confidence that women can be employed in the same jobs as men	
15.2 My confidence in working with women in mixed mine action teams	
15.3 My confidence that women are capable to work in mine action as risk education and liaison officers	

<p>15.4 My confidence that women are capable to work in mine action as explosive searchers</p>	
<p>15.5 My confidence that women searchers are able to meet quality standards equal to men</p>	
<p>15.6 My confidence that women searchers are able to search ground equal to men</p>	
<p>15.7 My confidence that women in mine action can support their family financially</p>	

<p>15.8 My confidence that women in mine action are comfortable informing friends and community members that they work in mine action</p>	
<p>15.9 My confidence that women in mine action are not worried about social or safety threats</p>	
<p>15.10 My confidence to recommend other women to work in mine action and other non-traditional jobs.</p>	
<p>15.11 My confidence that women can pursue a career in mine action and have higher levels of responsibility.</p>	

16. Please rate the level of change in the following statements, since you started working with women colleagues in mine action.
(strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)

Statement	Code (0 to 5)
16.1 My female family members are less confident that women can be employed in the same jobs as men	
16.2 My male family members are less confident that women can be employed in the same jobs as men	

16.3 My female community members are less confident that women can be employed in the same jobs as men	
16.4 My male community members are less confident that women can be employed in the same jobs as men	
16.7 My female community members look less positively upon women who financially support their family	
16.8 My male community members look less positively upon women who financially support their family	

16.9 My female community members look less positively upon women working in mine action	
16.10 My male community members look less positively upon women working in mine action	

17. Please rate the level of change in the following statements.

'Have you noticed any changes in females employed in mine action in terms of . . ?'

(strongly decreased, decreased, no change, increased, strongly increased)

	Code (0 to 5)
--	----------------------

17.1 Leadership skills	
17.2 Technical skills	
17.3 Confidence to express their opinions freely in discussions and decisions	
17.4 Confidence in themselves	

17.5 Female community members take their opinions more seriously	
17.6 Male community members take their opinions more seriously	
17.7 Knowledge of their rights at work (working hours, vacation, maternity leave, health insurance, etc.)	
17.8 Extent to which they feel like they can speak up if they are treated unfairly or experienced harassment in their workplace	

18. If people in your community knew that you are working with women in

mixed teams in mine action what might be their reaction?

Support? Acceptance? Indifference? Disagreement? Rejection?

19. Does mine action need women risk education workers? If yes, why? What can they add to mine action?

20. Does mine action need women explosive searcher workers? If yes, why? What can they add to mine action?

22. Do you think can women do Explosive Ordnance Disposal work? Why or why not?

23. Would you yourself accept an opportunity to work as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal specialist?

Why or why not?

10.4.3 Interview Form for Family Members

UNMAS Iraq Rapid Impact and Perception Survey Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women Through Mine Action

INTERVIEW FORM FOR FAMILY MEMBERS

FOR COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER (CLO) USE ONLY

O.1. Name of CLO

O.2. Date of survey

LOCATION

L.1. Governorate

L.2. District

L.3 Sub-district (if applicable)

INTRODUCTION

My name is _____. I am with UNMAS Iraq, an organization that works in humanitarian demining. We are conducting a survey on the impact of employment of women in the mine action sector. We would like to interview you and get your opinions, experience and ideas. We especially welcome whatever you think. There are no right or wrong responses. Your openness will help us to have accurate knowledge that benefits mine action's work in Iraq. Your answers will be kept completely anonymous. Your participation is voluntary. You are free to decline to answer any question. This should take around 45 minutes.

1- CONSENT

1.1 Do you agree to participate in this survey?

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

Thank the respondent for his/her time and proceed to the next question.

2 - RESPONDENT DETAILS

2.1 Survey Respondent number:

2.2 Relationship of interviewee to the mine action employee:
a. father b. mother c. younger sister d. younger brother e. older sister f. older brother
g. other

2.3 Sex of interviewee:
Male/Female

2.4 Age of
interviewee:

2.5 Community of origin:

Questions:

1. Please introduce yourself.
2. How has the situation in the community changed since the explosive clearance work of UNMAS in terms of access to food, water, land, education, health care or any other services?
3. Before _____ applied for this job had you seen any media stories or information brochures from the UN, NGOs or government about women in mine action? If yes, how did you feel about them?
4. Mine action has been a traditionally male-dominated sector but now includes mixed teams of men and women. At first, did you think women could work in the mine action sector and add to mine action work? (Why? Why not?)
5. Has your initial reaction to women in mine action changed? How?
6. What was your family and friends' initial reaction to the idea of women working in mine action?
7. Has the initial reaction of your family and friends changed? How?
8. Before women started working in mine action, what were their roles and responsibilities in the home? What were the roles and responsibilities of men in the home?
9. Since women have started working at full time jobs in mine action how have the roles and responsibilities in the home of both women and men changed?
10. Have you noticed changes in _____'s behaviour and attitude since she started her work in mine action? If yes, what are the changes? Do you think she feels more empowered than other female family members and friends who do not work in non-traditional jobs like mine action?
11. Have you noticed changes in men's behaviour and attitude towards _____ since she started to work in mine action? Has there been any change in the way she is treated in the home, positively or negatively?
12. Do you think that there are social challenges women face because they work in mine action? If there are any, what are they?
13. Are there any safety challenges women face because they work in mine action? What are they?
14. If people in your community knew that _____ was working in mixed teams in mine action what might be their reaction?
Praise? Acceptance? Indifference? Disagreement? Rejection?
15. Do you think a job in mine action is good for women in the long term or as a career to advance in and seek higher promotion? If yes, how?
16. Do you have any other thoughts or comments, positive or negative, about women

in mine action?

10.4.4 Interview Form for Community Members

UNMAS Iraq Rapid Impact and Perception Survey Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women Through Mine Action

INTERVIEW FORM FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

FOR COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER (CLO) USE ONLY

O.1. Name of CLO

O.2. Date of survey

LOCATION

L.1. Governorate

L.2. District

L.3 Sub-district (if applicable)

INTRODUCTION

My name is _____. I am with UNMAS Iraq, an organization that works in humanitarian demining. We are conducting a survey on the impact of employment of women in the mine action sector. We would like to interview you and get your opinions, experience and ideas. We especially welcome whatever you think. There are no right or wrong responses. Your openness will help us to have accurate knowledge that benefits mine action's work in Iraq. Your answers will be kept completely anonymous. Your participation is voluntary. You are free to decline to answer any question. This should take around 45 minutes.

1- CONSENT

1.2 Do you agree to participate in this survey?

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

Thank the respondent for his/her time and proceed to the next question.

2 - RESPONDENT DETAILS

2.1 Survey Respondent number:

2.2 Relationship of interviewee to the mine action employee:
a. father b. mother c. younger sister d. younger brother e. older sister f. older brother
g. other

2.3 Sex of interviewee:
Male/Female

2.4 Age of
interviewee:

2.6 Community of origin:

Questions:

1. Please introduce yourself.
2. How has the situation in the community changed since the explosive clearance work of UNMAS in terms of access to food, water, land, education, health care or any other services?
3. Before _____ applied for this job had you seen any media stories or information brochures from the UN, NGOs or government about women in mine action? If yes, how did you feel about them?
4. Mine action has been a traditionally male-dominated sector but now includes mixed teams of men and women. At first, did you think women could work in the mine action sector and add to mine action work? Why? Why not?)
5. Has your initial reaction to women working in mine action changed? How?
6. What was your family and friends' initial reaction to the idea of women working in mine action?
7. Has the initial reaction of your family and friends changed? How?
8. Before women started working in mine action, what were their roles and responsibilities in the home? What were the roles and responsibilities of men in the home?
9. Since women have started working at full time jobs in mine action how have the roles and responsibilities in the home of both women and men changed?
10. Have you noticed changes in _____'s behaviour and attitude since she started her work in mine action? If yes, what are the changes? Do you think she feels more empowered than other female family members and friends who do not work in non-traditional jobs like mine action?
11. Have you noticed changes in men's behaviour and attitude towards _____ since she started to work in mine action? Has there been any change in the way she is treated in the home, positively or negatively?
12. Do you think that there are social challenges women face because they work in mine action? If there are any, what are they?
13. Are there any safety challenges women face because they work in mine action? What are they?
14. If people in your community knew that _____ was working in mixed teams in mine action what might be their reaction? Praise? Acceptance? Indifference? Disagreement? Rejection?
15. Do you think a job in mine action is good for women in the long term or as a career to advance in and seek higher promotion? If yes, how?

16. Do you have any other thoughts or comments, positive or negative about women in mine action?

10.4.5 Interview Form for Community Stakeholders

UNMAS Iraq Rapid Impact and Perception Survey Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women Through Mine Action

INTERVIEW FORM FOR COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

FOR COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER (CLO) USE ONLY

O.1. Name of CLO

O.2. Date of survey

LOCATION

L.1. Governorate

L.2. District

L.3 Sub-district (if applicable)

INTRODUCTION

My name is _____. I am with UNMAS Iraq, an organization that works in humanitarian demining. We are conducting a survey on the impact of employment of women in the mine action sector. We would like to interview you and get your opinions, experience and ideas. We especially welcome whatever you think. There are no right or wrong responses. Your openness will help us to have accurate knowledge that benefits mine action's work in Iraq. Your answers will be kept completely anonymous. Your participation is voluntary. You are free to decline to answer any question. This should take around 45 minutes.

1- CONSENT

1.1 Do you agree to participate in this survey?

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

Thank the respondent for his/her time and proceed to the next question.

2 - RESPONDENT DETAILS

2.1 Survey Respondent number:

2.2 Position:

2.3 Employer

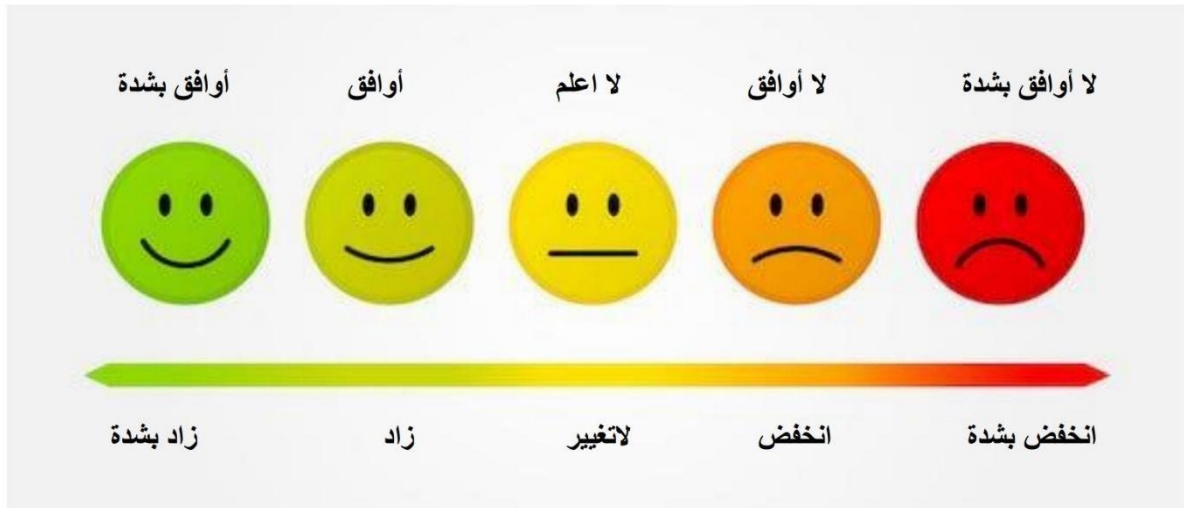
2.4 Sex of interviewee: Male/Female	2.5 Age of interviewee:	2.6 Community of origin:
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Questions:

1. How would you describe your community and Iraqi communities in general in terms of traditional roles for men and women and community openness to changing social norms and gender roles?
2. Do you think women, their male colleagues, their families and communities are being adequately prepared for the concept of mixed teams working in mine action? what can be done if they are not prepared?
3. If people in your community knew that women were working alongside men in mixed teams in mine action and searching for and finding explosives, what would be the common reaction? What would be the uncommon reaction?
4. Do you think women in your community can openly reveal that they are working in a dangerous non-traditional job such as mine action where they wear distinctive uniforms and protective equipment?
5. How do you think men in your community perceive working women especially when they are working in non-traditional jobs and providing substantial economic support to their families?
6. Women in mine action can be personally, economically and socially empowered by their work. Will they be able to openly show leadership in the community and serve as role models for girls and other women? If yes, to what extent?
7. Are there safety and security challenges women perceive for a career in mine action? If so, what are they?
8. Do you think a job in mine action is good for women as a career to advance in and seek higher promotion? If yes, how? If not, why?
9. Do you think women should be supported to do dangerous Explosive Ordinance Disposal work which requires specialized training and government approved accreditation? Why?

10. Do you have any other thoughts or comments, positive or negative about women in mine action?

10.4.6 Visual Images Level of Change



UNMAS in Iraq would like to thank all its donors who contributed
to explosive hazard management, risk education, and
training and technical support activities in 2021.



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