



The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Colombia newsletter informs about the main technical assistance activities carried out through the projects implemented in the country to strengthen the mine action sector, in conjunction with the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP, in Spanish) - Descontamina Colombia.

The positive impact of demining in Colombia



UNMAS and the Faculty of Economics of Universidad del Rosario organized last April 21 the symposium "Building territories of opportunities" to make visible the socioeconomic impact that humanitarian demining is generating in territories that have been affected by the presence of explosive devices in Colombia.

At the symposium, the Universidad del Rosario and four organizations from the mine action sector presented the results of post demining impact assessment that have been carried out to learn about the positive effects of demining at the national level and in municipalities that have been declared mine-free.

Main findings of post demining impact assessments



Universidad del
Rosario | Facultad de
Economía

- Scope: National.



Municipal GDP increased by 0.8% in the first year after the end of demining operations.



For every dollar invested in demining, seven dollars in economic growth is generated.



2.4 dollars are generated for every life saved, totaling an estimated 9.4 dollars in social return for every dollar invested.



Improvement of 7 percentage points in the educational performance of children in SABER standardized tests.



- Scope: La Unión y Nariño, Antioquia.



88% of the cleared area is being used productively. 31% increase in income of beneficiary households.



33.7% increase in municipal tax collection after demining operations.



Significant increase in land values: up to 531% in beneficiary households.



Around 50% of the households have benefited from development projects developed after the end of the operations.



- **Scope:** National.

*Mine action's contributions to sustainable development in Colombia.



Humanitarian Demining contributes to the fulfillment of 14 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).



Supports 48 of the 169 SDG targets. It highlights the reduction of all forms of violence, of SDG 16.



The SDGs to which demining contributes the most:

#16: Peace, justice and strong institutions.

#6: Clean water and sanitation.

#8: Decent work and economic growth.

*The data included is related to demining. Do not include the contributions of other elements of the mine action (EORE, VA, among others).

The symposium also presented the results of the first four post-clearance impact assessments conducted by three organizations of mine action sector (CCCM, HUMANICEMOS DH and the Colombian Army Humanitarian Demining Brigade - BREDH) **using a standardized methodology developed in 2021 by UNMAS.**



- **Scope:** Algeciras, Huila.



98% of the population considers that demining protects people affected by armed violence.



99% affirm that demining has contributed to the implementation of the peace agreement.



97% of people feel safe to move around and use their mine-free territories.



99% indicate that demining has contributed to *improving the safety of people allowing community development.*

This event was held within the framework of the commemoration of **April 4, International Anti-Personnel Mines Awareness Day**, to learn about the positive impact of demining, beyond the square meters of liberated land, and to make visible the importance of continuing to invest in these operations in Colombia.

Ex-combatants to collect information on the location of anti-personnel mines installed during the conflict in Colombia



Embajada de Noruega
Bogotá

The project began on March 1, thanks to financial support from the Kingdom of Norway. Photo: UNMAS.

The Tripartite Mechanism - formed by the OACP, the National Council for the Reincorporation of the Comunes Party (CNR Comunes) and the United Nations through the UN Verification Mission and UNMAS - announced in March the start of the pilot project for the provision of information through which former FARC combatants will collect data on areas with possible contamination with explosive devices that were installed during the conflict.

A team of ex-combatants, who have already been trained by UNMAS on information gathering mechanisms, **will visit six regions of Colombia to interview ex-combatants in the process of reintegration and gather information.** As part of the first activities, on April 25, a sensitization day was held in Medellín to invite former combatants to participate in the project by providing information. This exercise evidences the commitment to work together to comply with the Peace Agreement signed in 2016.

Representatives from Norway, Switzerland and UN Women visit the HUMANICEMOS DH Regional Base at La Montañita, Caquetá



Representatives of the Swiss Cooperation and UN Women witnessed a demonstration of the skills of the deminers. Photo: HDH.



Deputy Minister Henrik Thune and the delegation from the Norwegian Embassy, together with the staff of HUMANICEMOS DH. Photo: Twitter @NoruegaEnCOL.

With the objective of showing the operational capabilities they have developed and the progress in mine action work they have deployed, HUMANICEMOS DH received two high-level visits to its regional base of operations located in La Montañita, Caquetá during March and April. The first visit took place on **March 30, with the participation of representatives of the Swiss Cooperation and UN Women** in Colombia. During this visit they saw a demonstration of the personnel who carry out humanitarian demining work. The second visit was on **April 25, when the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Norway, Henrik Thune, led a delegation** to see the progress of reintegration projects led by former combatants. Since February 2020 HUMANICEMOS DH is financed by the European Trust Fund for Peace.

Regional Coordination Project

Thanks to the financial support of the **Swiss Cooperation and the Government of the Republic of Korea**, the Regional Coordination Project supports the OACP, facilitating the coordination of the mine action in the departments most affected by anti-personnel mines and other explosive devices in Colombia. These are some of the activities carried out by the local coordinators who work in the country's regions:



Photo: Mario Aguirre / UNMAS.

Presents a report to the JEP on victimization by mines in Cauca

On March 21, a report was delivered to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP, in Spanish) on the victimization by explosive devices in Cauca during the conflict, which compiles the testimonies of mine survivors from Cauca and their families, with **the purpose to provide legal elements for the construction of truth and justice on this scourge**. The report is the product of a process started in 2021, and under the leadership of the Local Coordination Project, it was linked to organizations such as *Humanity & Inclusion*, the *Tierra de Paz Foundation*, the *Government of Cauca*, among others.

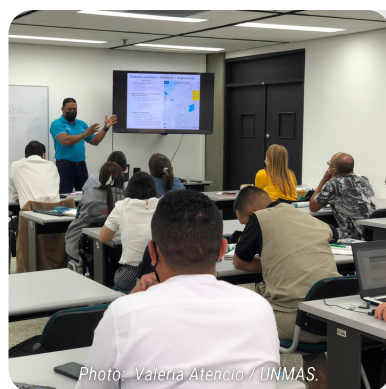


Photo: Valeria Atencio / UNMAS.

Antioquia approves departmental mine action plan

The Mine Action Departmental Committee of Antioquia approved on March 3 the mine action departmental plan 2022, a tool that proposes actions to reduce, mitigate and address the impacts of anti-personnel mines in the department. This plan includes methods for monitoring and evaluating actions. **The plan was approved after two years without Antioquia having this tool**, due to challenges in articulating the department's mine action actors. The mine action organizations, the Ombudsman's Office, the Attorney General's Office and Regional Government of Antioquia participated in this committee.



Seven municipalities of Antioquia create their Victims Assistance Referral Pathways

The municipalities of Apartadó, Amalfi, Yarumal, Sonsón, Guadalupe, Frontino and Murindó, in the department of Antioquia, now have Municipal Mines Victims Assistance Referral Pathways, thanks to the technical assistance provided by the local coordinator in the department, who trained officials of the municipal mayors' offices on the elements of the mine action policies and Victims Assistance. **These VA Referral Pathways will benefit some 600 direct and indirect victims** of explosive devices in these municipalities.



Officials who assist anti-personnel mine victims in Nariño are trained

Personnel from the Nariño Regional Victim Assistance Center, the largest in the department, received training on the Mines Victims Assistance Referral Pathway on March 16, given by the Local Coordinator in the city of Pasto. These officials provide guidance to mine victims from all over the department who are referred to this city for medical attention. **The training included the participation of a mine survivor**, who, based on her experience, made the participants aware of the importance of victims receiving adequate assistance.

The UNMAS Colombia team



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Didier is an environmental engineer from Universidad de La Salle in Bogota with a Master's degree in groundwater and soil management from the University of Strathclyde, Scotland. In his 11 years of work experience, he has developed environmental management work in technology and communications companies; he was a consultant at the Colombian Ministry of Environment, and a researcher at the Environment Agency of England. In May 2019 he joined UNMAS Colombia as Demining Operations Quality Management and since June 2020 he is an Information Management Assistant, a position from which **he is responsible for the management and processing of data on explosive ordnance contamination in Colombia and demining operations in the country.** Didier has certifications in demining operations and Geographic Information Systems, skills with which he supports the operations and technical assistance area of UNMAS.

About UNMAS Colombia

Since 2010, UNMAS has supported Colombia's national mine action authority, now under the leadership of the OACP, and mine action organizations to increase the sector's capacity, develop and strengthen their coordination and regulatory frameworks with global best practices. UNMAS works in Colombia with the support of the **European Union**, through the **European Trust Fund for Peace**; and the Governments of **Denmark, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Kingdom of Norway, the Republic of Korea and Switzerland**, to whom we are grateful for their contributions in 2022.

