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## Landmine Awareness Activities

Summer 2003

### JUST TRY ONE MORNING

**Grades 1-6, 20 minutes**

Inform students that they will start the day at school by trying to empathize with landmine victims. About 28 percent of mine victims lose one or both legs. Give students ropes or scarves and ask some of them to tie their legs together at ankle level or to immobilize one leg somehow. Instruct other students to tie up one arm, go blindfolded, or block up their ears to simulate the loss of an arm, eyesight, or hearing. Have students continue their normal morning activities with their new disability. After some significant time, discuss together the difficulties faced.

#### Debriefing:

- Compare and contrast the activities of North American children or adolescents with those from developing countries, where most mine victims live.
- How would farming, gathering wood, collecting water, etc., be done with only one leg or one arm? Without sight or hearing? Ask students to reflect on their morning experience.
- If you lost a leg or arm suddenly, how difficult would it be for you to relearn everyday tasks and activities? What would happen if your family was not able to afford an artificial limb?
- How might this disability affect your future? How might it affect the future of a landmine victim in a developing country?
- Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, was a modern European city, not unlike Canadian and American cities in many ways. Yet, during the war of the early 1990s, Sarajevo became infested with landmines. Try to imagine your city or town during a war. Where do you think landmines might be laid? Which parts of your community might become dangerous?

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### IDEAL CITY

**All ages, 20-30 minutes**

Divide the class into groups of 6-8 students and provide each group with a large piece of paper and markers. Instruct each group to design its ideal city, reminding them not to forget the things a city needs: water, hospitals, housing, streets, schools, parks, shopping area, etc. Give the groups 10-15 minutes to complete the task.

Announce that the groups are now at war, and let each group strategically plant landmines (use pennies or red stickers) on another group's territory. Alternatively, the teacher or facilitator can walk around and place the landmines on each city. For a variation, prepare in advance pieces of paper that have mines drawn on them. Place the cities over the paper and show the students that their city was mined (this emphasizes the idea of mines being hidden).

**Debriefing:**

- How do people feel when their city is mined?
- How might their daily lives change?
- Which places in a city are most likely to be mined? Why?
- How many mines would be needed to keep people away from a certain location? (One, or none if people think there is one there; remember they are hidden.)

*Developed by Noelle DePape, Youth Mine Ambassador, Winnipeg, Manitoba*

**I THOUGHT WE COULD PLAY HERE****All ages, 10 minutes**

Set up several areas of the school or yard with reflective tape and “Danger: Landmines” signs. Make sure these are places where students normally walk, gather, or play. Observe how students react to the notices. Discuss the difficulties caused by “shrinking” trail routes and recreation/play areas.

A complementary activity is to set out everyday objects — a pop can, a child’s toy, a pencil box, a ball, anything that students might be curious about — before they arrive. They will then see these objects, perhaps be curious, and touch or move them. You could also “booby trap” desks with colored stickers or place them on heavily used areas of the floor.

**Debriefing:**

Ask how many students handled the objects. Then explain that these objects could easily have been mines. Why would children in mine-affected countries pick up unusual plastic or metal objects? (Most toys are homemade from natural materials, many children work in fields.) Why would adults pick them up? (Unaware of danger, selling scrap metal.) Discuss how it must be for children in a community full of landmines always having to be on guard.

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**OTHER IDEAS**

- Create a radio or TV commercial urging leaders to stop the use of landmines.
- Read essays by child victims of landmines (see [www.redcross.ca/english/international/other/publiced/peace/survive.html](http://www.redcross.ca/english/international/other/publiced/peace/survive.html)).
- Design a special suit for people doing the dangerous work of clearing mines, or invent a technology to detect and destroy mines hidden in the ground.
- Research a mine-affected country and make a presentation to the class on the economic, social, and medical impact of landmines.
- Organize a landmine awareness day or week in the school. As part of the campaign, design landmine-awareness posters or slogans; read a new fact about landmines each morning on the school announcements; build a shoe pile to remind everyone that mine victims rarely need both shoes; arrange with the school administration to ring the bell every 22 minutes throughout the day to signify that someone somewhere in the world has stepped on a landmine. (Bell-ringing idea from “Every 22 Minutes” in *Survive the Peace*, by the Canadian Red Cross.)

- Take action! Sign the Youth Against War Treaty at the website of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, [www.icbl.org](http://www.icbl.org). Click on [www.clearland-mines.com](http://www.clearland-mines.com) to help raise money to clear landmines. Fundraise for organizations that fund de-mining or provide assistance to victims. A 10-yr-old landmine victim gets help putting on a new prosthetic leg from his father. AP/Wide World Photos

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