

**LANDMINE EDUCATION PROJECT
KABUL**

**End of Year Report
for 1996
Submitted January 26, 1997**



**Save the Children (USA)
Pakistan-Afghanistan Field Office**

Introduction

In July 1996 Save the Children submitted a report on the activities of the Landmine Education Project (LEP) during the first six months of the year (please see the attached document). This report will serve as an update on activities carried out during the last half of 1996 and will summarize the overall achievements of the program during its first year of operation.

During the third quarter of 1996 Save the Children continued conducting LEP sessions in Kabul public schools, as well as training teachers, gathering mine/UXO statistics and interviewing mine/UXO victims, and working with the Ministry of Education. Save the Children also continued its construction of safe playgrounds at selected locations around the city.

The final quarter of the year proved to be an especially challenging one for the program and its staff, but with the support of the UNOCHA Mine Clearance Programme, donors, and colleague agencies, Save the Children was able to continue the Landmine Education Project, testing new ways of reaching target populations with our materials and messages. The takeover of Kabul by the Taliban at the end of September forced a temporary cessation of LEP activities, as the new authorities closed schools and forbade women to go to work. After a few weeks it became apparent that there was a serious need to continue mine education in some parts of the city that were experiencing especially high rates of mine/UXO incidents. Save the Children created the Emergency Response Team (all-male) to begin working in these areas. Throughout this period, Save the Children's Research and Evaluation Team continued to try to collect information from local hospitals about mine and UXO incidents, but this work was made very difficult by the restrictions imposed by the Taliban. In December, the Taliban's Ministry of Public Health agreed to let female facilitators from Save the Children work in clinics and hospitals around the city. At the end of the month 17 female staff began visiting children and their relatives in the hospitals, conducting landmine education and psychosocial activities.



Objectives and Activities

Objective #1. To reach 75% of children, ages five to eighteen, in Kabul schools with 2 hours of Save the Children-implemented in-school activities by December of 1996. Methodologies used will be designed to match children's developmental needs and abilities. Activities will be based on principles of non-formal education; they will be interactive and will work with a variety of media.

Facilitator Sessions

From April through September Save the Children facilitators conducted LEP sessions for children in schools and other venues, such as orphanages and the Aschiana center for children working in the streets. A total of 52,020 children (28,472 male and 23,548 female) participated in LEP from May through September (very few LEP sessions were run in July, because children were preparing for and taking exams and then had a 15-day summer vacation). These children all took part in a session lasting approximately two hours. This "facilitator session" featured a mine victim sharing his/her experiences, as well as a number of interactive games and activities designed to improve children's knowledge and decision-making skills and ultimately to change their behavior near potentially dangerous objects and areas. A total of 36,704 children (18,945 male and 17,759 female) also watched the LEP slide program, which has an accompanying cassette tape with music and narration. Save the Children facilitators involved children in a discussion of the most important concepts both before and after the slide program. During this session children also received their LEP passports, in which they receive a stamp each time they participate in an LEP session of any kind.

With the Taliban takeover of Kabul at the end of September, Save the Children was forced to temporarily suspend LEP activities. The Taliban immediately closed all schools and forbade women to go to work. Since most of our work had been carried out in the schools and because approximately half of our staff were female, we were unable to continue the LEP program as it had previously functioned. This remained the case even after some schools were allowed to reopen for male students and with male teachers. Save the Children issued a statement opposing the new policies (see attached document) and soon began a dialogue with the Taliban authorities in an effort to obtain permission for our female staff to return to work.

In December permission was officially granted for Save the Children's female facilitators to work in hospitals and clinics around the city. Senior staff then obtained permission to hold a 3-day training for female facilitators in a room of the Indira Gandhi Hospital. The training included discussions of security and staff conduct in the hospitals, running LEP under new circumstances, interviewing children in the hospitals, reporting procedures, and psychosocial activities for children and families. After the conclusion of the training, the 17 women divided into groups and began visiting children and their relatives at the city's six major hospitals: Attaturk, Fifty-Bed, Maiwan, ICRC, Indira Gandhi, and Wazir Akbar Khan. Visits are made during the first four days

of each week. Every Thursday is reserved for debriefings, reporting, planning, and refresher training. Each woman travels to the hospital on her own-- there is no transportation provided by Save the Children, so an attempt has been made to assign women to hospitals in their own districts. By the end of December hundreds of children and their family members had participated in LEP and psychosocial activities in the hospitals. In the future, these facilitators will concentrate their efforts on the hospitals and clinics with the most children and the ones located in some of the most mine-affected parts of the city.

In the meantime, a new *Emergency Response Team* began working in the areas of the city that were experiencing particularly high rates of mine and UXO incidents. This team of 12 male facilitators was created after Save the Children gathered data throughout the month of October that showed a drastic increase in mine- and UXO-related deaths and injuries. The new team began its work in District 7, an area experiencing especially high numbers of injuries and deaths. Staff approached municipal leaders, mullahs, and shopkeepers in that area. These people helped Save the Children staff gather together children so that they could participate in landmine and UXO education activities. In the future some of the shopkeepers will help educate the children by teaching them a lesson or telling them a story each day when they come to buy bread.

The Emergency Response Team was able to reach boys of all ages and girls up to age ten or twelve. In November and December 4,451 children (2947 male and 1504 female) participated in the activities led by this team. The facilitators used the same interactive methodology and activities in its work in these communities as had been used in the schools. At the end of December members of the team were working in the Kalei Wazir, Karte Seh, and Sarai Karez sections of the city. The Emergency Response Team will try to increase its cooperation with mine clearance teams so that they are continuously working in tandem in some of the most affected parts of the city.

The Emergency Response Team has the added responsibility of assisting the research team in a survey of District 7. The facilitators visit different parts of the district in order to identify and map shops, water wells, mosques, and other gathering places that the "bike boys" (see Objective 7) will visit regularly to gather information about mine/UXO incidents and disseminate information from LEP.

During the last two weeks of December Save the Children also began piloting a new LEP activity called *The Children's Network*. Two female facilitators identified five girls each (the participants are between the ages of 12 and 18) and trained them in one LEP activity. Each of these ten girls in turn found between five and fifteen other children and conducted the LEP activity for them. The girls will also train their own relatives. They currently plan to facilitate 12 LEP sessions during the pilot phase of this project, each time introducing one new activity. A report on the activities of the children's network will be available after the first quarter of 1997.

Objective #2. To ensure that 75% of students receive monthly follow-up sessions from their regular teachers.

Teacher Training and Follow-ups

Between April and September Save the Children staff trained 174 teachers (54 male and 120 female) to run follow-up sessions in the schools using LEP methodologies and materials. (Please see the semi-annual report for a complete description of the trainings.) Due to restrictions imposed by the Taliban authorities, Save the Children had to suspend its teacher training program as of the end of September. The new community-based activities of LEP all present the messages and materials in a series of sessions run by facilitators from Save the Children or by participants in the program. Save the Children is currently negotiating with the Taliban authorities, who have expressed interest in having Save the Children continue its training of teachers.

Objective #3. To build the capacity of the Ministry of Education (MOE) to respond to needs for mine education and to incorporate mine education into the curricula of the public schools of Kabul, as well as to spread similar programs to schools in rural areas.

Ministry of Education Resource Team

Save the Children worked with the Ministry of Education under the Rabbani government to establish a Landmine Education Resource Team. The group met and began discussing their objectives: to monitor LEP follow-ups run by teachers and to consider a long-term strategy for providing mine education to people all over the country. Since the Taliban takeover of Kabul, the resource team has not met, but Save the Children hopes to gather the remaining members of the team again and begin work on a national strategy for mine education. One representative of the Ministry has been involved in LEP since the initial training of team leaders. He worked mostly with the Teacher Training Team. He has continued to work part-time with the LEP staff even since the change in power.

Objective #4. To identify and clean 12 safe areas and convert them into playgrounds with appropriate equipment, toys, etc.; to establish semi-structured leagues/competitions in safe organized sports.

Safe Playgrounds

At the end of December Save the Children was in the process of completing its sixth safe playground, this time on the property of the government-run orphanage. (Please see the semi-annual report for more details about the playgrounds.) In spite of continued fighting and

restrictions imposed by Taliban authorities, children have continued to use the playgrounds in large numbers, sometimes accompanied by parents or other relatives. Girls up to the age of ten or twelve also continue to use the playgrounds, although it is not common to see older girls in these areas. Information gathered by Save the Children's research team indicates that children between the ages of three and ten are often injured or killed by mines or UXOs while at play. This reinforces the need for children to have alternatives to playing in potentially dangerous areas. Playground construction will remain a priority for Save the Children in 1997. While twelve potential playground sites were identified in 1996, Save the Children is still in the process of negotiating with the authorities to establish contracts for about half of the sites.

Objective #5. To reach 50,000 adults at a variety of venues in Kabul City (i.e., cinemas, parks, Basic Health Units, holiday celebrations, fairs, festivals, community gatherings, etc.) with a multi-media mine education program.

Adult Populations

As per Save the Children's memorandum of understanding with the UNOCHA Mine Clearance Program, we consult with the program heads regarding both curriculum materials and the venues in which we operate. Save the Children has taken responsibility for conducting mine education for children, particularly in the schools, while other organizations were given responsibility for running mine awareness for adults. Save the Children still hopes to provide limited landmine education at some adult venues, but providing landmine education to children remains our primary focus. Before we expend resources on reaching adult populations, we will expand our program to target more of the out-of-school children that we have not yet encountered.

Objective #6. To use the structure created for the Landmine Education Project in Kabul to extend Save the Children's mine education program to between 300,000 and 500,000 Afghans (depending on the number of people who attempt to return to their homes in Afghanistan) in transit camps in Herat, in displacement camps in Jalalabad, and at encashment points in Pakistan.

Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

Throughout 1996 Save the Children's primary aim was to provide landmine education to children in Kabul. Because LEP did not receive full funding Save the Children did not begin landmine education for refugees during 1996. We do intend, though, to incorporate landmine education into Save the Children's existing programs in camps in Quetta and Haripur, Pakistan. We will also offer training to other agencies interested in incorporating LEP into their existing programs. Research and planning for these projects is currently underway.

Objective #7. To evaluate the overall impact of the Landmine Education Project both quantitatively and qualitatively by gathering statistical data and conducting interviews; to evaluate the component parts of the project, especially the activities within the curriculum, and assess their value in changing the attitudes and behavior of program participants.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Save the Children's Research and Evaluation team continued to gather data on mine and UXO incidents throughout 1996. (Please see the semiannual report for a full account of the work of the team during the period April-June.) The team also continued interviewing mine and UXO victims until late September, when their ability to visit patients was hindered by the Taliban's policies that forbade women from working and also made it impossible for our male staff to enter the children's wards of the hospitals. Male members of the team continued to conduct interviews whenever possible, but there were no interviews of female patients or of young boys staying in children's wards. Interviews of female and young male patients began again in December when our female staff were allowed to begin work in the hospitals.

Overall, Save the Children's data has shown that children account for more than 50% of victims of mines and UXOs. At times the percentage was even higher-- in October 78% of the people injured and killed were children. Our research also revealed that most UXO victims are children-- the figure stood at 94% during the month of October. Most of the victims are boys who are either playing with UXOs or gathering them to sell to scrap metal dealers.

In October there was a dramatic increase in mine and UXO injuries and deaths in Kabul. Save the Children believes that the rise in incidents could have been the result of a variety of factors. There were reports that many mines and UXOs were discarded in and around the city by retreating Rabbani government forces and by residents responding to Taliban demands that all citizens give up their weapons. Also, as military frontlines shifted, residents began moving around in areas that were previously inaccessible to them-- these areas are typically strewn with landmines and unexploded ordnance. The onset of winter also meant that many more people, children in particular, were out foraging for firewood, an extremely dangerous activity in a mine-infested city like Kabul. Furthermore, because so many schools were closed, children were spending more time wandering about and playing outside, thereby increasing their chances of being injured.

The information collected by Save the Children's research team is now used by UNOCHA in the assignment of mine clearance and mine awareness teams. The data allows them to identify and concentrate their efforts on some of the worst-affected areas of the city.

"Bike Boys" Network

At the end of 1996 Save the Children initiated a new project in order to improve the ability of the Research and Evaluation Team to track mine and UXO incidents. Save the Children has employed two adolescent boys to gather information about mines and UXOs and related incidents in their parts of the city. Each boy has his own bicycle. When he learns of a mine incident, he takes down all relevant data and then Save the Children's research and evaluation team follows up on the information and tries to interview victims and/or relatives. In December, the bike boys

were responsible for discovering two mine-related deaths that had gone unreported. The bike boys are also responsible for communicating with community members and leaders to inform them about mines and UXOs and about any LEP activities that are going on in their areas. In return, Save the Children provides the boys with training, a pen and notebook, flags for their bikes, special t-shirts, and a stipend. Every boy is expected to work at least 2 hours each week. The bike boys network will be expanded in 1997.

Objective #8. To reduce the number of landmines, present and future, in Afghanistan by raising awareness, both in the international community and in Afghanistan, of the scope and effects of Afghanistan's landmines problem. Through intensified advocacy work, Save the Children will encourage contributions to Afghanistan's demining and mine education funds and will urge warring factions not to lay new mines.

Campaign to Ban Landmines

During the second half of 1997 Save the Children continued to play an active part in the campaign against landmines. Save the Children published a 1997 wall calendar with the support of Radda Barnen. The calendar features drawings made by Afghan children for the campaign's poster contest, which was part of Afghan Mine Action Month 1996. It also contains facts about landmines and their impact on Afghanistan. The calendar is being used as an advocacy tool. It will be distributed to a number of policymakers, dignitaries, and organizations in Pakistan, Afghanistan, the United States, and Europe. (Please see the semiannual report for the details of Save the Children's other major activities in this arena.)

Security

The security situation in Kabul has been unstable throughout the last six months. Some periods were relatively calm, while at other times heavy rocketing, aerial bombing, and even limited fighting in the streets impeded our ability to work. On two occasions our expatriate staff were forced to evacuate to Pakistan. We continue to maintain a minimum number of expatriate staff in Kabul: one Program Manager, one LEP Project Manager, and one Health Project Manager. Other staff make brief trips into Kabul as required. Strict security procedures remain in effect.

The arrival of the Taliban in Kabul has increased concerns over the personal security of our staff, particularly the female staff. Local female staff are fully covered by the *chadori* or *burqa* when they are out in public. Female expatriate staff must also be cautious to observe a dress code, although they are not required to cover their faces. Some male staff have received threatening remarks from the Taliban-- some grew beards and dressed in *shahwar kameez* in order to satisfy Taliban demands.



The local female staff are forbidden to visit the Save the Children office. They go directly to the hospitals from their homes. When they go to work in the hospitals, each one carries a copy of the Ministry of Public Health letter of permission with her.

Future Plans

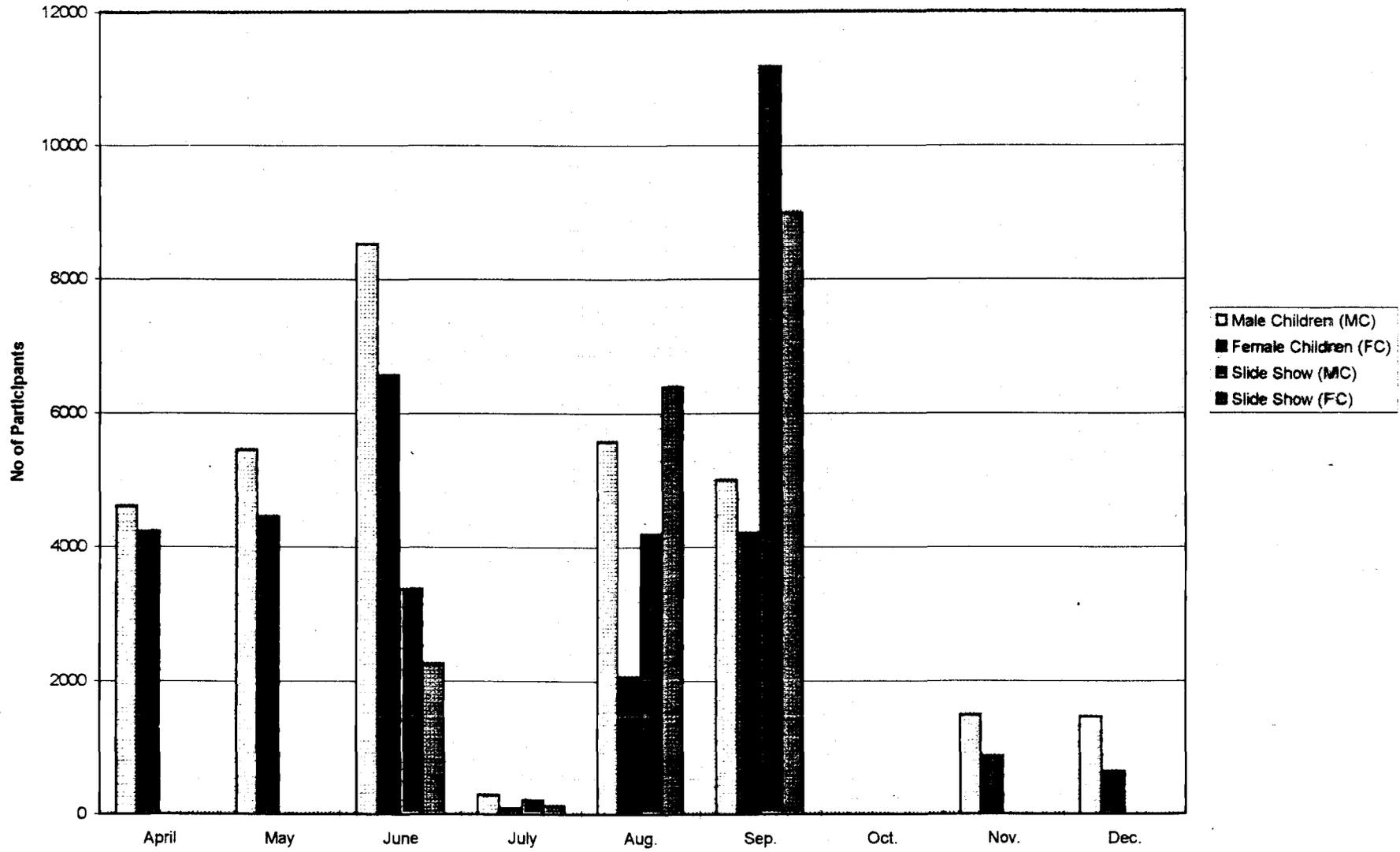
Save the Children will continue to investigate and improve community-based approaches to LEP, including programs in the hospitals, the Emergency Response Team, and the Children's Network. Save the Children remains hopeful that schools for boys and girls will reopen in the spring, in which case Save the Children facilitators will resume their work in the schools. Save the Children will also begin incorporating LEP into its existing programs for refugees in Pakistan and will offer training to other agencies that are interested in doing the same. Save the Children will continue to improve and expand its capacity to gather, analyze, and disseminate information about mine and UXO incidents in Kabul. The construction of safe playgrounds and establishment of community support groups in the surrounding areas will continue into 1997, as well.

Conclusions

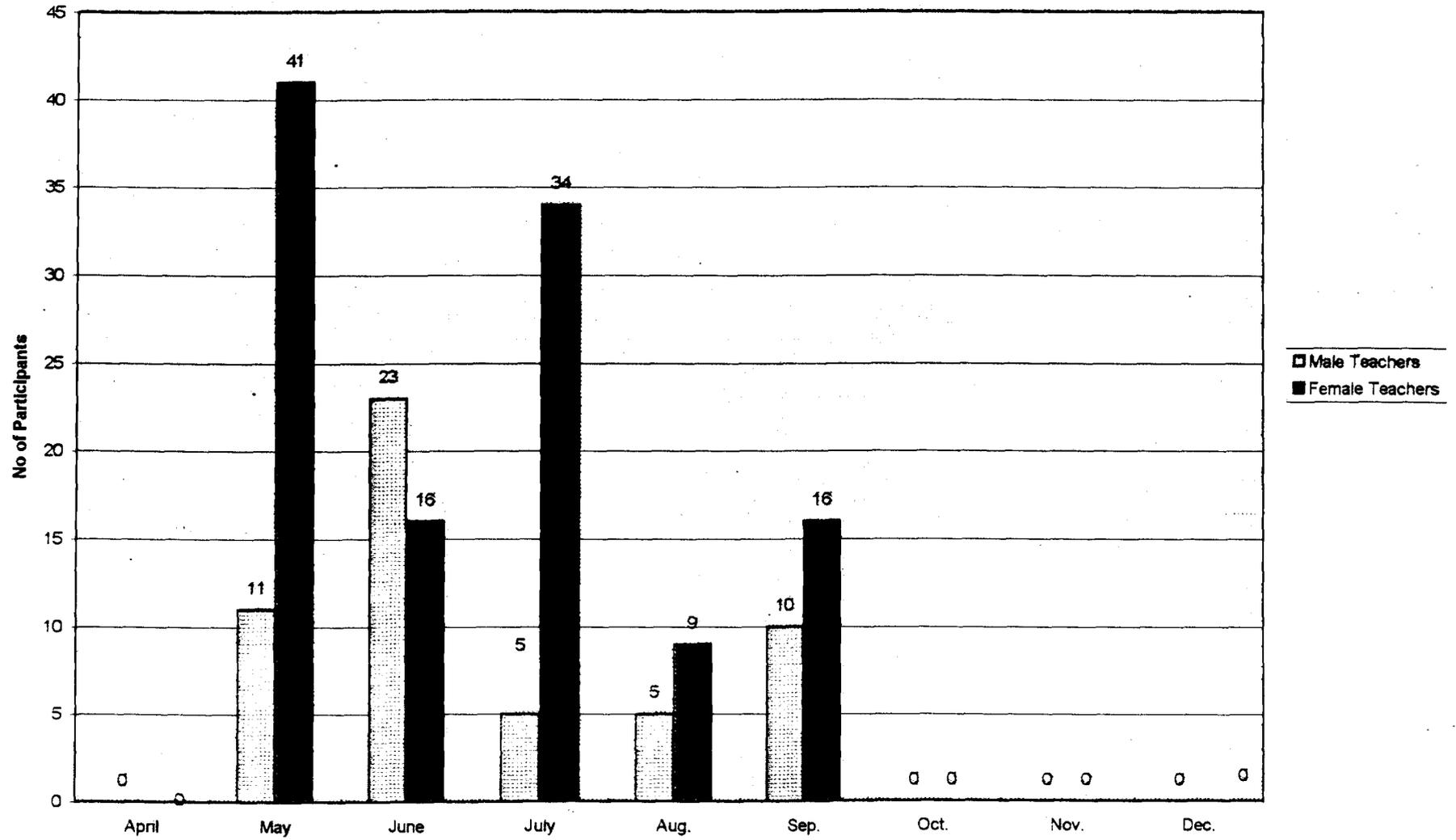
The Landmine Education Project has had a very successful, albeit challenging, first year of operation. Save the Children has learned a great deal through its successes and failures. This knowledge will be used to improve the program for the coming year. Our experiences will also enable us to advise agencies in Afghanistan and other countries that are interested in initiating similar programs.

Response to LEP has been overwhelmingly positive-- from participants and observers alike. Security problems and policy changes by the new ruling authorities forced the program to adapt and look for new approaches. This has had a negative impact on LEP, in that it has made the task of reaching the target beneficiaries much more difficult. Simultaneously, it has forced us to carefully reexamine the strengths and weaknesses of our program and to find ways to make it more efficient and more community-based, which will ultimately improve the program's potential for long-term sustainability.

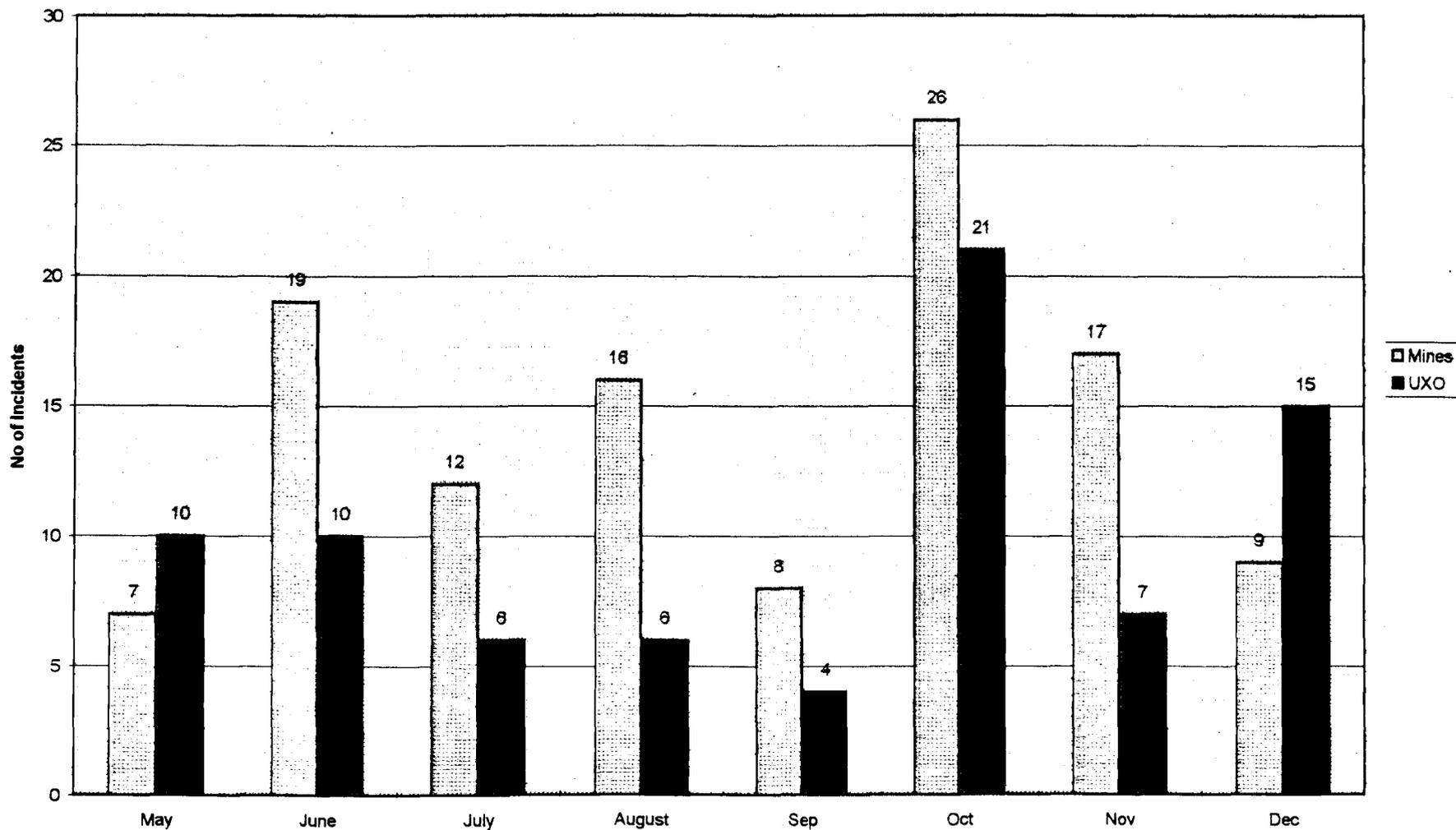
Child Participants in LEP Sessions - Kabul City
(April - Dec., 1996)



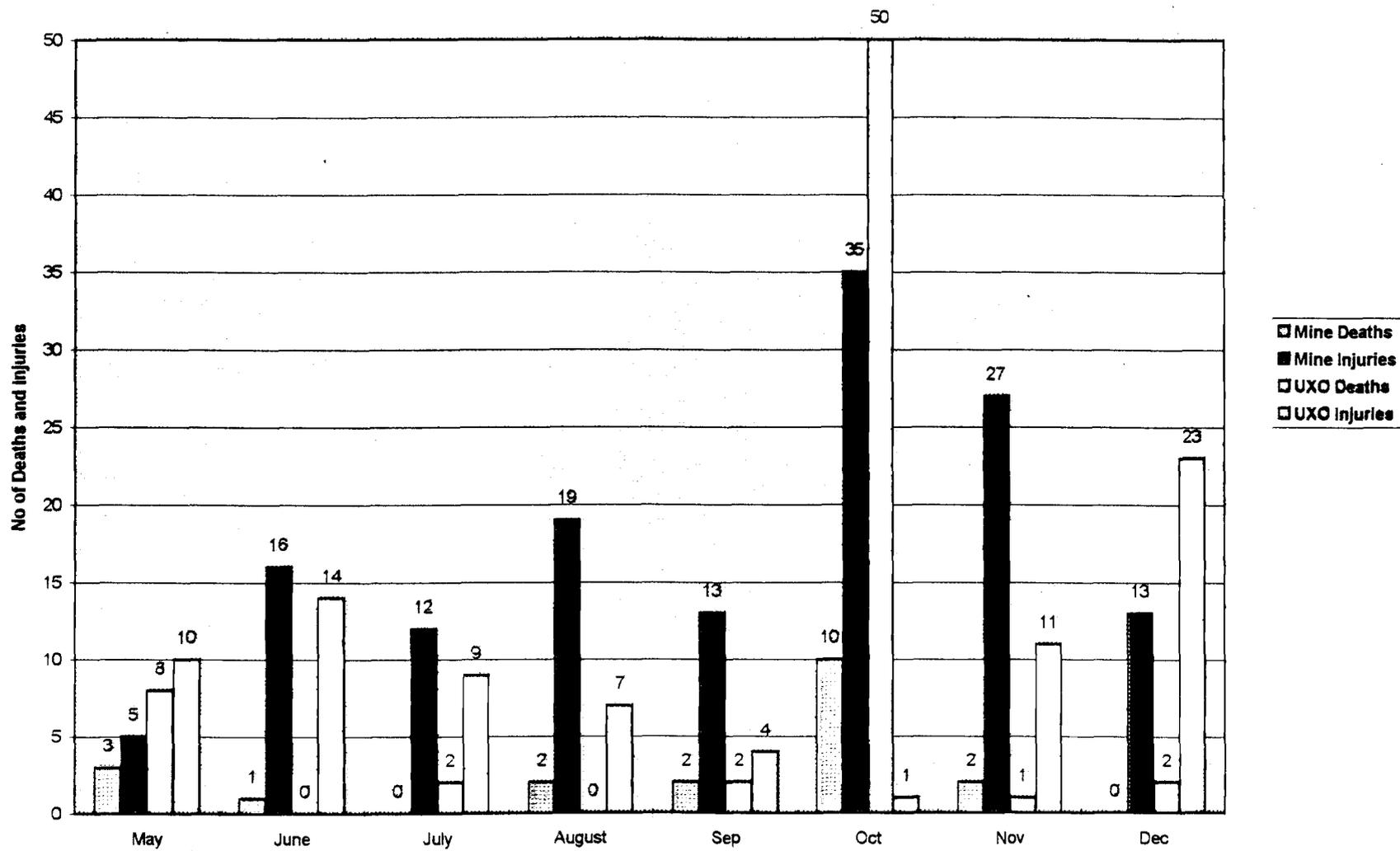
Teachers Trained in LEP - Kabul City
(April - Dec., 1996)



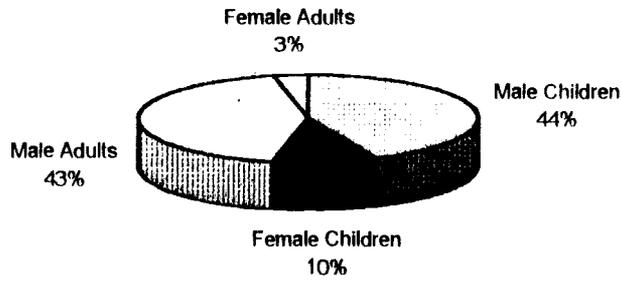
Mine and UXO Incidents in Kabul City
(May - December 1996)



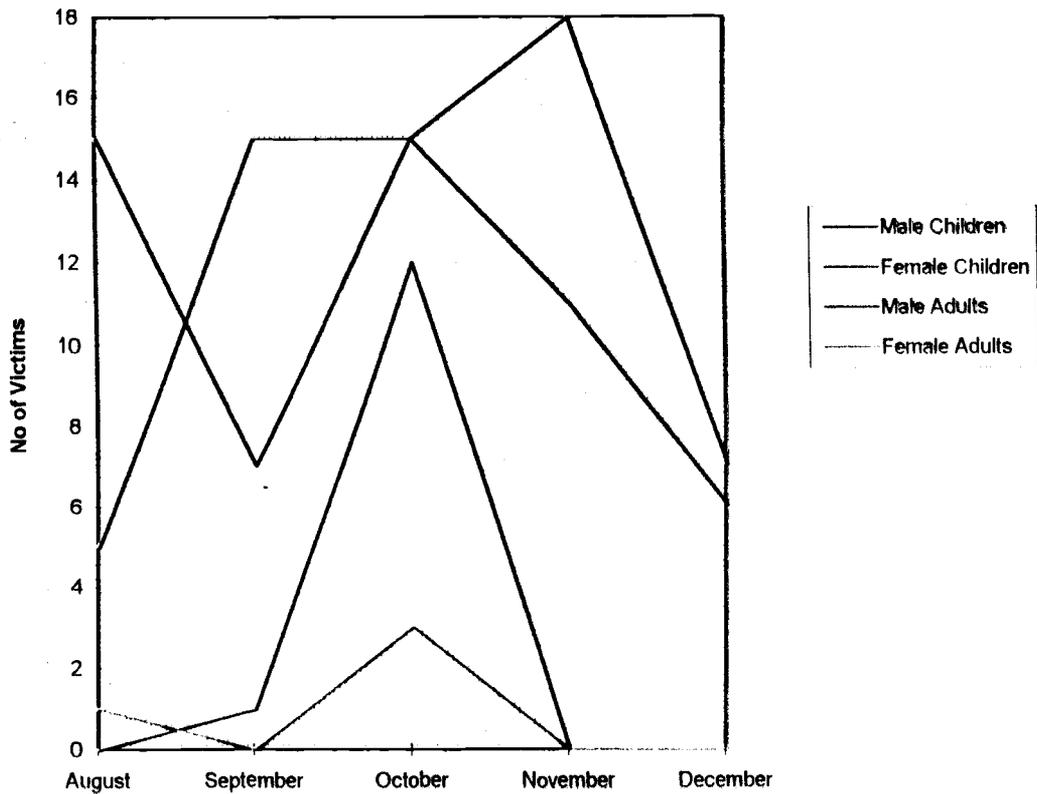
Mine and UXO Deaths and Injuries in Kabul City (May - December 1996)



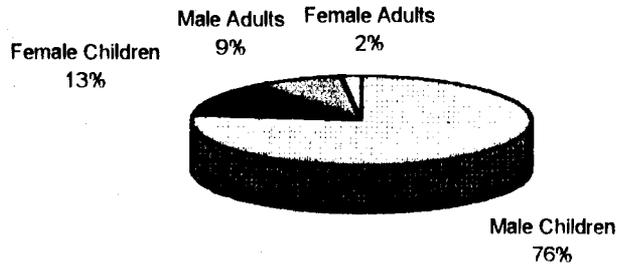
**Mine Victims in Kabul City, Aug. - Dec., 1996
(Adults vs. Children)**



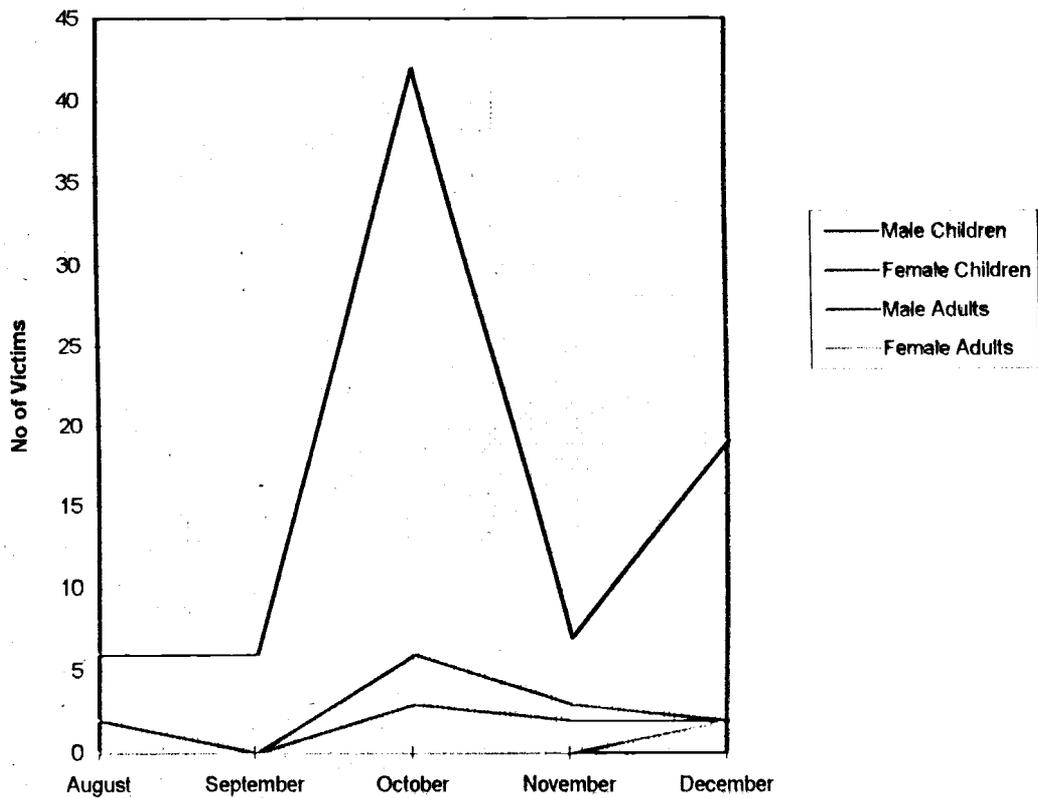
**Mine Victims in Kabul City, August - Dec., 1996
(Adults vs. Children)**



**UXO Victims in Kabul City, Aug. - Dec., 1996
(Adults vs. Children)**



**UXO Victims in Kabul City, August - Dec., 1996
(Adults vs. Children)**



Dramatic Increase in Children Killed and Injured By Landmines and UXOs in Kabul

October has seen a dramatic increase in the number of injuries and deaths caused by landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXOs) in Kabul, the war-plagued capital of Afghanistan. **According to statistics collected by Save the Children, of all mine- and UXO-related injuries and deaths in Kabul in the past six months, 37% occurred in October. Furthermore, children account for the majority of victims -- in October alone, 78% (66 of 85) people injured and killed were children.** The surveys conducted by Save the Children reveal that UXOs, commonly known as unexploded bombs, are particularly deadly for children -- 94% of all victims of UXO explosions in October were children.

Tragically, these numbers under-represent the extent of the problem as they reflect only the cases reported in Kabul's main hospitals. Some victims are never taken for medical treatment (e.g., those who die instantly) and some are taken to local clinics rather than hospitals.

Farmer Loses Two Daughters In Mine Explosion

On October 13, farmer Abdul Karim was working in his field on the outskirts of Kabul. His two daughters, Marina and Nabila (ages 7 and 6 respectively), and his one-year-old son, Naweed, walked out to the field to visit him. As they spread a cloth out on the ground and prepared to sit down, a landmine exploded underneath, instantly killing Nabila and seriously injuring Marina, who later died after an operation at Children's Hospital. Karim and the baby also sustained injuries. The father reports that the mines were laid during recent fighting between ousted government troops and Taliban forces.

Save the Children cites a number of possible reasons for the sharp rise in landmine and UXO incidents. There have been reports that many mines and UXOs were discarded in and around the city by retreating Rabbani government forces and by residents responding to Taliban demands that all citizens give up their weapons. Also, as military frontlines have shifted, residents have begun moving around in areas that were previously inaccessible to them-- these areas tend to be strewn with mines and unexploded ordnance. The onset of winter has meant that many more people, children in particular, are out foraging for firewood, an extremely dangerous activity in this mine-infested city. Furthermore, because many schools are closed, children are spending more time wandering about and playing outside, thereby increasing their chances of being injured.

There is also evidence that some new mines have been laid during recent fighting, in spite of the fact that the parties involved in the conflict have expressed support for a ban on landmines in documents collected by the Afghan Campaign to Ban Landmines. The Taliban deemed landmines "un-Islamic," while the Rabbani government made strong public statements in favor of a ban, including at the April UN conference that reviewed current international law pertaining to landmines (Convention on Conventional Weapons Review Conference, Geneva, April 22-May 3, 1996). Save the Children has called on all parties involved in the conflict to renew their commitment to a ban on landmines and to demonstrate this commitment by stopping the laying of new mines and by destroying existing stockpiles of mines.

(PRESS RELEASE Nov. 5, 1996)

