Mines Action Canada
Disarmament Training and Education Activities

Executive Summary

Mines Action Canada (MAC) has been involving youth in disarmament for almost 25 years through various programs. Since 2017, the Mine Action Fellows program has been a growing youth network who MAC sponsors to attend international meetings, where they have the opportunity to meaningfully participate in multilateral disarmament meetings as well as receive training. From June 2022-May 2024 MAC held five of these youth trainings alongside the Mine Ban Treaty and Cluster Munition Convention Meetings of States Parties/Intersessionals. The Mine Action Fellows learned how to lobby diplomats, draft statements, and some spoke at side events and delivered statements in Plenary. In 2024, MAC also hosted two international youth seminars to train youth on how to advocate against indiscriminate weapons. The first Seminar focused on explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA), and the second included EWIPA, cluster munitions, and landmines. Finally, MAC also produced a youth campaigning toolkit on EWIPA.

Full Submission

Activities in 2022

1. In June 2022, Mines Action Canada invited seven Mine Action Fellows to the Mine Ban Treaty Intersessionals and National Mine Director Meeting (NDM). During this week, the Fellows assisted MAC in hosting a reception, met with the Australian delegate, led their own peer learning sessions, participated in leadership training sessions convened by MAC, observed in Plenary sessions and side events, and attended a reception at the NDM. These activities gave the Fellows the opportunity to gain confidence and knowledge, which they can then bring back to their communities and on-the-ground jobs.
2. In August-September 2022, Mines Action Canada invited 22 Mine Action Fellows to the Convention on Cluster Munitions 10th Meeting of States Parties. During this week, the Fellows met with Ambassador Aidan Liddle of the United Kingdom, the conference President and other diplomats, delivered a statement, led their own peer learning sessions, participated in leadership training sessions convened by MAC, observed in Plenary sessions, and attended a reception hosted by the United Kingdom and Switzerland. The Fellows were the main advocates from civil society during the meeting, speaking with diplomats from over a dozen countries about their Article 7 transparency reports, the need to condemn use of cluster munitions in Ukraine, and the importance of gender and diversity in treaty implementation.

3. In November 2022, Mines Action Canada invited six Mine Action Fellows to the Mine Ban Treaty 20th Meeting of States Parties. Each Fellow had the opportunity to draft and deliver a statement in the regular plenary debate. This made history, as before youth had only ever delivered a final youth statement and never had their voices heard alongside states and civil society members in the debate. To read their statements you can visit the MAC website (www.minesactioncanada.org) and read the blog post A Historic 20 MSP. Further, three Fellows had the opportunity to speak at a side event on Youth Education on Universalization which MAC co-hosted alongside Ireland. The Fellows were also busy throughout the week holding meetings with various states such as the Colombian presidency, United States, Ireland, and Switzerland.

4. Mine Action Fellows also received a monthly learning email on topics such as: Russia’s use of cluster munitions, how to write a good funding proposal, and an Oslo Action Plan check-up.

Activities in 2023

5. In September 2023, Mines Action Canada invited 11 Mine Action Fellows to the Convention on Cluster Munitions 11th Meeting of States Parties. During this week, the Fellows met with the Iraqi Presidency of the Convention, the Swiss Ambassador, the UK
Ambassador, the Director of the Implementation Support Unit, participated in leadership training sessions convened by MAC, observed in Plenary sessions, and learned from civil society experts in clearance and victim assistance.

6. In November 2023, Mines Action Canada invited 22 Mine Action Fellows to the Mine Ban Treaty Meeting of States Parties. During this week, the Fellows met with the German Presidency and other diplomats, delivered a statement, assisted MAC with hosting a side event at which a Fellow was a speaker, participated in leadership training sessions convened by MAC, observed in Plenary sessions, and attended a reception hosted by Germany and Switzerland. The Fellows were the main advocates from civil society during the meeting, speaking with diplomats from over 40 countries about their Article 7 transparency reports, the need to condemn use of landmines by Ukraine, and the importance of progress with clearance and victim assistance.

7. Mine Action Fellows also received a monthly learning email on topics such as: a deep dive into individualized approach (a German priority for the year), an update on cluster munition use in 2022/2023, and updates on other disarmament campaigns (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and the Stop Killer Robots Campaign).

Activities in 2024

8. In February 2024, Mines Action Canada invited 16 youth from around the world to an Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA) Seminar. This seminar featured guest speakers from the International Network on Explosive Weapons, Norwegian People’s Aid, Airwars, PAX, and Humanity and Inclusion. The youth participants heard from these experts, and also learned new skills from interactive sessions. On the final day, they drafted and recorded a statement which was shown at the Oslo Meeting for the EWIPA Political Declaration in April 2024.

9. In March 2024, MAC invited 6 youth from the United States and Canada to a regional seminar on EWIPA, landmines, and cluster munitions. This seminar featured guest speakers from the Green Party of Canada, Human Rights Watch, the Explosive Weapons
Monitor, and Canadian Red Cross. Some youth participants prepared a peer learning session, where they shared the work they do with their organization on disarmament.

10. Mine Action Fellows also received a monthly learning email on topics such as: sustainable development and mine action, the Cambodian Presidency of the MBT RevCon’s priorities, and an update on explosive weapons in populated areas.

11. MAC hired a consultant to develop a youth campaigning toolkit. The toolkit provides youth with advice on how to create a campaign and advocate against EWIPA both internationally and domestically. There are also chapters written by two experts on how to engage with the military and how to engage with survivors.