

## **PROJECT PROPOSAL**

### **COMMUNITY PUBLISHING PROJECT OF DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP IN HUAMBO October –December 2001**

#### **Executive Summary**

It is widely argued that Angolan civil society must be part of the peace process in order to achieve just and sustainable peace. Looking at Angolan civil society and its involvement in the peace process though shows that its rural and poorest segment is virtually excluded from any real participation. The reasons for such exclusions are many. One important factor is that the people and communities of this segment of civil society are powerless in regard to having any meaningful influence on the political, economic, social and cultural life in Angola. If the Angolan peace process should be inclusive as the leaders of the peace movement confirm, the will and means of engagement have to be found pursued in order embrace those communities that never experienced any real participation on the provincial and national level. A first step towards such participation is to support those communities to make their preoccupations and problems heard, in other words, giving them a voice and the confidence that they actually can make a difference. Empowering and encouraging these communities to become part of the Angolan peace movement will enhance the movement in its representation and strengthen it through having an active and conscious basis.

Since 1997, DW Huambo is running a community publishing project with the aim to increase the flow and circulation of information within and among communities as a means of empowerment, raising awareness and ultimately peacebuilding. The project is building upon social structures as for example water point committees that were created by DW's water and sanitation program, and therefore meaningfully connecting development work and its outcomes with a bottom-up peacebuilding approach. With support of the African Community Publishing Development Trust (ACPD) of Zimbabwe that is engaging in community publishing for some 20 years, DW Huambo has achieved to build up a solid program, currently producing a monthly newsletter, research articles, alphabetization booklets and more. All of these products are the result of strong community groups that engage in information gathering, alphabetization programs and cultural activities supported by DW's community publishing project that brings the information together and facilitates its publication.

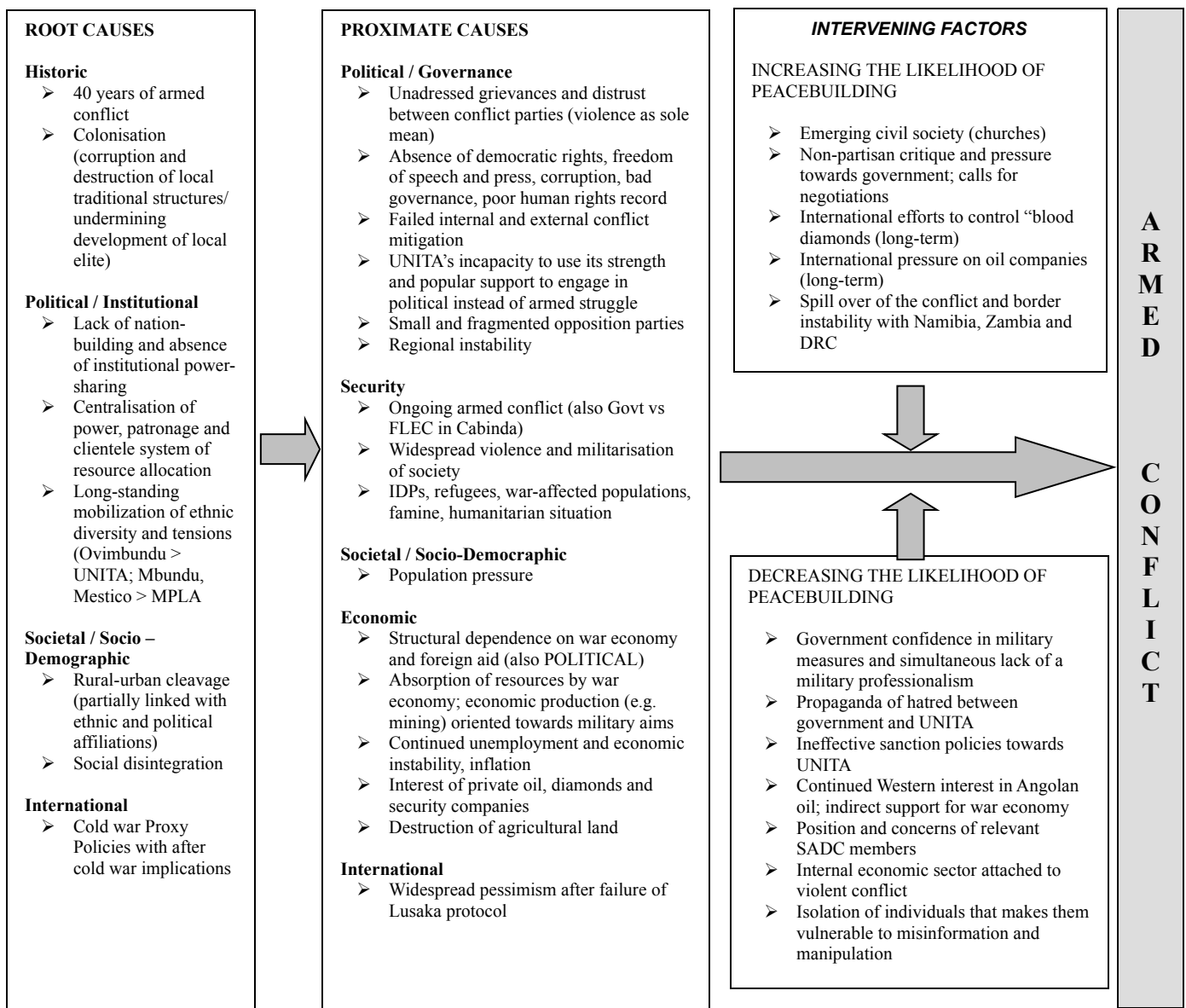
In July 2001, funding from the British Embassy terminated and the project is currently in a bridging phase until the next funding cycle that will most probably start in January 2002. It is currently running on a small grant from DW's Peacebuilding Project based in Luanda that will keep the project operational until the end of September. For the months of October, November and December therefore, the project seeks additional funding to

keep its current activities running before entering a new phase in 2002, for which the project is looking for a donor with a longer term commitment and interest towards the projects bottom-up peacebuilding approach.

## PROJECT CONTEXT

### Context of Conflict Situation in Angola

The following diagram shall give an overview of the Angolan context from a peacebuilding point of view. Listed are the root causes, proximate causes and intervening factors that lead to the violent conflict in Angola. The diagram does not pretend to be complete, it shall rather help to analytically order the different factors that play an important role in the Angolan conflict.



### Context of Huambo

Huambo is, since the beginning, in the centre of the around 25 old Angolan conflict. Before independence, Huambo and the Central Highlands in general, had its economy based on agriculture and its people had a strong influence from the different religious missions in the region. With independence a strong ideological clash took place between the people and the system based on a state controlled agriculture that excluded the majority of small private farmers. UNITA, the guerilla movement, also exploited the tribal tensions and created a permanent instability in the region.

In 1992, elections were organized with international supervision. In the Central Highlands region UNITA won a majority of votes but lost at the national level. UNITA didn't accept the electoral results and was unable to enter in the political game and using the institutions. As a result, a very violent war too place in end of 1992 to end of 1994. The destruction in this period was much bigger than the one caused by the previous, sixteen years war. Huambo and Kuito (the two major towns in the Central Highlands) were the ones that suffered more from this war. Factories and houses were destroyed or looted and a high number of casualties occurred. From the end of 1994, with the Lusaka Protocol, to end of 1998 Angola lived in a period of 'no peace, no war'. The Central Highlands are the area that is supplying more young people to both armies, more direct damage was caused to infrastructure, more displaced people, deeper disruption of the economy (road access is difficult, railway is not working, factories are destroyed, and agriculture is affected by lack of inputs, difficult access to markets and displacement of farmers).

Institutions suffered from the global disruption of economy and from the deep polarization that society suffered between MPLA and UNITA. Poverty and corruption resultant from different causes contributed to the weakness of the different institutions.

The opening process in the 1990s created a much bigger space to civil society. However the movement of creation of independent press, parties, trade unions and NGOs was slow. In reality it created a real space for civil society that is not completely occupied. NGOs and churches are giving a valuable contribution to the 'occupation' of that empty space through initiatives both at community and at regional or national levels. State institutions are frequently involved in workshops and projects improving the dialogue between citizens and government structures.

## **Main Problems**

Poor access to information – the big majority of the population has little access to information both on what's happening and on what is legal or illegal. Newspapers produced in Luanda almost don't circulate in Huambo city and are a rarity in communities outside the town or in its peri-urban zones.

High rates of illiteracy – The very high rates of illiteracy make it additionally difficult for a big part of the population to use written information.

Weak institutions – institutions with a role to monitor and inform on what's happening, to facilitate the participation of citizens on decision making and to regulate conflicts are weak or non-existent.

Polarization of society – Angolan society is very polarized between parties and the parties 'invaded' organizations like sports clubs, neighborhood associations, etc.

However with the inclusion of UNITA members in different structures (army, ministries, local government, etc) some improvement happened.

War – the existence of two armies and the going on war without respect by any rule (kidnapping of kids, attacks to civilians, force movement of populations, etc) are contributing to the above mentioned problems and also being fed by them.

## **COMMUNITY PUBLISHING PROJECT OF DW HUAMBO**

There is a need for work at different levels:

At national and provincial levels, creating capacity doing advocacy and lobbying with state, parties and civil society, but also spreading information. Human rights, good governance principles and practice, conflict resolution etc. At local level creating awareness and creating or strengthening institutions (the existing ones) to empower citizens and involve them in governance.

Work at national level should build on what is happening at local level and give voice to opinions and initiatives at the local level. At both local and national level the ‘political work’ shouldn’t be separate from the work related to the solution of concrete problems (poverty mitigation, provision and management of social services, natural resources management, etc.). Through action in those areas, a practice of participation, dialogue between citizens and decision makers, transparent management of public resources etc can be built.

In Huambo, DW is working since 1997 using this approach. Water and sanitation was the main sector in the beginning. Different projects made possible the construction of 350 water points (hand-dug wells in the majority). The project created water committees elected by the users of the water point. This local structure had a role in the management of the water point and in the interaction with local authorities. Later, another project in the construction of schools with local materials was started, keeping the same approach. With some of the best water committees a community publishing project was started. This project aims to build up the self confidence and initiative in the community groups. DW Huambo works with through the collection of information, analysis and publication. Six groups are active at present, with literacy, newsletter publication, personal stories collection, dance groups, arts, etc. Local culture is valued and its expression encouraged: use of the local language in printed materials and meetings, collections of local tales, traditional dances and music, etc. Information on human rights is distributed and included in the publications.

Most activities are done in partnership with other organizations like NGOs, churches, local authorities and community groups. ADRA, a national NGO and its civic education program and CBA, an association of Baptist churches, with its programs of literacy and support to the prison, are examples of those partnerships. Local radio, municipal administration, community associations are usually together in the workshops including themes as journalism, participation, conflict resolution and accountability.

The last funding was provided by the British Embassy in Luanda from March 2000 until July 2001. August and September 2001 was bridged by a small fund from DW’s peacebuilding project. The current proposal is seeking funding to the end of 2001, whereas a project proposal is in preparation for 2002 and 2003 and will be presented to SDC and CIDA.

## **Geographic Extension**

The project is active mainly in the peri-urban areas of Huambo city, namely in the communities of Casseque III, Lossambo, Km 25, São Bartolomeu, Samacao, and Kapango Nzag.

## **Objective of the project**

To grasp and facilitate the circulation of what is happening in the communities as a means of capacity building and strengthening of social structures mainly building upon those social structures created by DW's water/sanitation and shelter programs.

## **Target Audience and Participants**

Peri-urban and rural communities excluded from information circulation and provision.

Women, Catechists, community leaders, youth and children.

## **Methodology and Approach**

The project uses what is called a "context methodology", meaning that the project context defines the way of intervention, pace of intervention and methodologies used. It is an explicit "bottom-up" approach. Nevertheless, some specific steps can be mentioned that may help to illustrate the way of intervention by the project:

1. Creation of water and school committees by DW's wat/san and shelter program
2. Best committees are chosen by the community publishing project
3. Community publishing project engages with the chosen community, encouraging and facilitating a through analysis of the social structures of a given community. This analysis is done and presented by community members themselves.
4. In the course of this work, more people join the existing water and school committees, so that at the end of a community analysis often some 40-50 people are involved in the work.
5. With those people more specific researches are carried out and published (e.g. in the 'Ondaka' newsletter). Alphabetization courses are integral to this work, involving the wider community.

## **Concrete Deliverables from October to December 2001**

3 Issues of 'Ondaka', 250 copies/issue for each of the months of October, November and December;

Edition and production of 1000 copies of the second alphabetization booklet that, at present, is ready to be edited;

Publication of a research document (50 copies), produced by a community group and investigating into daily economic activities of people within the same community;

Publication of a book about proverbs (100 copies), that is, at present, ready for publication;

4 Training sessions with community groups. One in October, two in November and one in December. Each training session lasting between two and three days, involving some 100 persons from the project's community groups. The themes for the sessions are leadership, conflict, importance and value of our culture, and human development. Invited guests with a capacity in the respective area are facilitating the training sessions which are intended to strengthen the community groups.

## **Expected Results and sustainability of the impact**

### Results:

Changing the conscience of people in communities in a way that they start to realize that they can do things by themselves to improve parts of their life;  
Circulation of information.

Sustainability: At the moment DW's input is still necessary to facilitate the community publishing groups. It is hoped though that with more training input and growing confidence of the community publishing groups themselves, DW can withdraw from certain areas and hand over responsibilities to the relevant communities.

### **Risks**

Security may be a risk factor in Huambo, although the situation is stable at the moment and access to the communities is without constraints.

In regard to freedom of expression, there are some constraints that are to be considered but which are so far dealt with without considerable obstacles. This mainly due to the positive (in opposite of a negative/denouncing) reporting style fostered by the project.

### **Coordination**

Coordination will be carried out by DW Huambo, namely by the community publishing project. The coordinator is assisted in his tasks by three full-time assistants.

### **Monitoring, follow-up and reports**

The project report will be handed in at the end of December 2001. Close monitoring of the projects activities will be done by the project coordinator and his assistants. Regarding the follow-up of the project, as has been mentioned earlier, there will be project proposal presented to SDC and CIDA for the continuation of the project for the following two years.