

Fighting Urban Poverty

A year ago, Josefa Eduardo and her neighbours in the Luanda suburb of Hoji-ya-Henda had real problems finding clean water. They would walk for miles and pay exorbitant prices for water that was poorly-treated. Cases of water-related diseases like diarrhoea were rife.

But now the situation in the peri-urban community, around five kilometres from Luanda centre, is slowly changing for the better thanks to a poverty reduction programme designed for the capital and its environs.

The Luanda Urban Poverty Programme (LUPP), a partnership between Development Workshop, CARE International, Save the Children UK and One World Action, incorporates a range of different ideas to try and test potential solutions to urban

poverty, including getting local people mobilised and creating tools that allow them to solve their problems.

"LUPP is a successful programme that tests methods and approaches to reduce poverty which we then show to government to try to influence pro poor policy and practice," said Kate Ashton, LUPP Programme Manager.

LUPP concentrates on the priority needs of the urban poor by providing basic services like water and sanitation. It supports sustainable livelihoods through micro-credit schemes, teaching business development skills and promoting cooperatives and savings groups.

It also empowers local people to help themselves by reinforcing their capacity to work together in inclusive groups and local organisations while at the same time encouraging local

authorities to work with residents.

"We work with civil society and government," said Ashton.

In Hoji-ya-Henda, discussions with the local population just a year ago identified water as the number one priority, and now the community of around 400,000 inhabitants has 16 new water standpoints – not enough, but an important step towards improving access.

"The situation is much better now because we have the standpoints. Before we had to walk for a long time to collect water, and then it wasn't clean. This water is good to drink and we don't have to boil it or add chlorine," Josefa Eduardo said.

"Before, many people were sick but now, while there's still sickness, we cannot blame the water and there are far fewer cases of diarrhoea. That's why there are so many people here," she added, pointing to the line of women waiting with their brightly-coloured buckets for their clean water supplies.

Eduardo is a water committee member, meaning she collects payment for the water, makes sure the queue stays orderly and that no-one takes more than their fair share. That is often a tough task given that the water coming from EPAL, the Luanda provincial water company, flows on average only 13 days each month. LUPP advocates strongly with EPAL for a minimum supply of 20 days per month.

The LUPP programme, which played a key role in getting the standpoints up and running, is supporting the community as it addresses the wider issue of water flow and other problems in the neighbourhood.



Looking forward to a future without poverty and access to basic services

Photo by Nick Danziger

continued on page two

DW's planning must be built on this vision of "Luta Contra Pobreza"



The struggle against poverty is Angola's principal challenge if it is to make the successful transition to sustainable peace. It is fitting for Development Workshop, who pioneered support for Angola's peace-building coalition of civil society and churches, to today join with partners under the banner of "Luta Contra Pobreza". DW has been quietly working within Jubilee 2000 and with FONGA and CONGA to build a coalition of NGOs to engage with Government and contribute to developing Angola's first post-war Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. The process has been protracted and began even before the ceasefire had been signed off. The Government has been

reluctant at times to open the process to public debate but about a year ago the Minister of Planning invited NGO representatives to take the draft PRSP back to their constituencies for consultation and public discussion. DW helped lead a small coordination group that eventually supported FONGA to launch a nation-wide discussion on the PRSP and the setting up of thematic working groups on such crucial issues as urban poverty, women's participation and children & youth. DW has further facilitated the process by mounting a web-site on AngoNet so that essential documents and discussion papers can become part of the public domain. DW has been able to mobilise support for the civil society promotion of the PRSP from donors such as DFID, ASDI, NOVIB and CIDA.

Now that Angola has a *strategy for reducing poverty*, at least under discussion, the real challenge remains to mobilise national and international

resources and local communities' creativity to put it into action. We increasingly hear the call of an international round table, like the one that launched the post-Lusaka Accord "Community Rehabilitation Programme" in Brussels 1995. Such an international consultation can refocus Angola's international partners, both private and public to build a coalition between Government and Civil Society to see the "Transition Plan" through. Much can be learned from past failures and probably the most important is that successful programmes will need to build strong inclusion of the poor into conception, planning, execution and monitoring of all projects.

As Development Workshop undergoes the process of developing a revised strategic plan for the next three years, our planning must be built on this vision of "Luta Contra Pobreza".

Allan Cain - director

continued from front page

Residents' desire to change their situation is having a catalytic effect

Antonio Nhangá, Secretary General of the Association Committee of Water (ACA) represents the people of Hoji-ya-Henda when dealing with EPAL, as well as local, municipal and provincial government and local and international NGOs.

"I try to explain our problems. The first thing is water — it's essential — but we also have issues with the level of rubbish in the streets, sanitation, social projects such as schools and crèches and a community library. We try to work in partnership," Nhangá said.

For Ashton, this is precisely what the project hopes to achieve — a catalytic effect which is propelling urban residents to group together, share ideas and find strength to solve their

problems themselves.

"The programme aims to help people solve problems. It is mobilising people around a need and showing them that if they work as a group, look what they can achieve," she said.

"It has empowered communities. We cannot achieve everything but if we can show by example, we start finding champions of change within the communities and also within government," she said.

LUPP is focused chiefly on the areas around Luanda which during the war saw its population increase eight-fold when people fled fighting in the countryside for the relative safety of the capital.

Despite almost three years of peace, there are few signs that

people are going back, meaning Luanda's capacity to provide basic services and social services to its people remains woefully inadequate.

Yet the lessons learned in the peri-urban *musseques* of Luanda are already being transferred to other parts of the country.

"People are coming to us asking for information on what we've learned and, for example, MINARS has taken the Save the Children model (for crèches) and is potentially taking it out on a national level," Ashton said.

"That is precisely what the programme hopes to achieve. It's about sustainability, replication and promoting democracy," she added. "It's really progressive because it focuses on a bigger level of change."

DW Update is published quarterly by Development Workshop (DW) Angola. DW is a non-profit organisation working to improve living conditions for the poor in less-developed communities. Its programme focus areas include shelter, peri-urban settlement upgrading, water supply and sanitation, primary health care, small enterprise development and disaster mitigation. DW's strategy is to strengthen the capacity of communities and organisations to act on development problems and opportunities.

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New land law offers window of opportunity

The three year research project on peri-urban land rights is supported by DFID and carried out in partnership with the Centre for Environment and Human Settlements (Edinburgh) and OWA

A new land law, passed by parliament in August 2004 and became law in December, has provided a three-year window for those with informally-held land to legalise their titles.

While far from perfect, the law was moderated to take into account some of the advocacy work conducted by the Land Network (Rede Terra), Development Workshop and others.

Research by DW illustrated the sheer scale of the problem, with more than 80 percent of those living in peri-urban areas without legal title to their land.

The law puts in place a framework to allow people to claim legal title, but stops short of guaranteeing that those requesting a formal title will receive it.

Informing people of the need to regularize their informal occupation and then processing their claims would put a tremendous burden on the government, DW research showed, helping to convince National Assembly members to extend the timeframe for regularisation beyond the one year originally proposed. While NGOs would have preferred a five-year period, a compromise of three years was eventually reached.

Currently, local authorities only have the capacity to deal with around five percent of cases of land titling cases they receive, the studies showed.

"The legal and administrative capacity of the government to deal with local level conflicts, as well as the legal process, is

very, very weak," said Pacheco Ilinga, DW's Land Research Coordinator.

"You will have large numbers of people who submit proposals for titles but the government will not have the capacity to offer a response — that pressure can create tension," he said.

DW is working with the government and Rede Terra to make the most of opportunity offered by the law.

"The law on its own is not enough," said Allan Cain, DW's Director. "A massive programme needs to be mounted now to assist both urban and rural communities to regularise their occupation."

With rapid urban growth — the peri-urban population grows by an estimated 30,000 families each year due to natural growth alone — speed is of the essence.

"The law provides an opportunity, a three-year window of time for people to legalise their titles. But the mass of the population is unaware that this is a problem. They are unaware they will lose the right to occupy unless they do this. This is the threat," Cain said.

Media campaigns, simplified guidebooks and a concerted effort to strengthen the government's ability to administer what is undoubtedly a huge and complex programme will be urgent priorities for DW and other organisations involved in the land issue.

DW is developing pilot projects in Luanda and Huambo to test different ways of



Home sweet home

implementing land regularisation programmes and get some idea of costs for the government and for people who will go through the process.

The projects were developed on a workshop and training course on participatory planning and land management which DW organised for members of local and central government, Ilinga said.

The crucial nitty-gritty of the regularisation process will be spelled out in by-laws, currently under discussion and expected to be agreed upon early in 2005.

"We're not completely satisfied with the law, but it opens an opportunity to begin a process," Ilinga said. "Now civil society and the private sector must maximise this opportunity."

Residents of musseques like these have three years to formalise their land titles

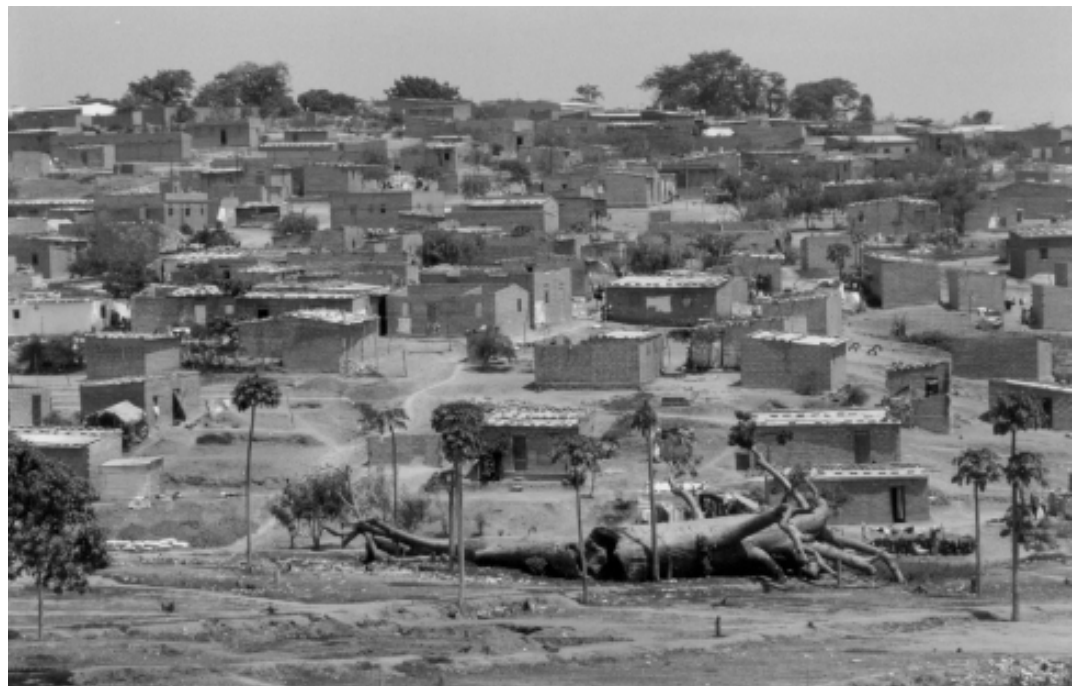


Photo by Nick Danziger



photo by H.Koning

Photo by Karen Iley

Helping people to help themselves

As humanitarian organisations switch their focus away from emergency aid to development assistance, strengthening the knowledge of citizens regarding their rights is crucial in supporting the country as it embarks on the long road to recovery.

Helping Angolans help themselves is a cornerstone of the Luanda Urban Poverty Programme (LUPP), which aims to find solutions to poverty around the capital.

As part of its strategy to provide local communities with the muscle to change their lives for the better, LUPP helped to set up Associations of Water Committees (ACAs) in many poverty-stricken suburbs of the capital.

While originally intended to monitor, maintain, improve and develop the water standpoint network in peri-urban communities around Luanda, these ACAs have taken it upon themselves to expand their role in a sure sign of capacity building.

Alfeu Simatiuka, Information Secretary for the ACA in Ngola Kiluangi says local communities are learning that they can take matters into their own hands.

“We are giving the community the knowledge and experience to resolve the problem themselves. Sometimes problems arise in areas when we are not there but the communities are learning and managing to resolve this problem,” he said.

“For example, certain areas still have no water but the people are not waiting for the association to arrive with materials. The community may have no equipment or digging machines, but they work with their hands.”

Seeing the success of a number of crèches around the Hoji-ya-Henda region, other segments of the community have latched on to the idea and decided that they want one too.

Supported by Save the Children UK as part of LUPP, they can see the benefits and peace of mind of having a safe place for children on the doorstep.

continued on next page

“Women are selling in the market and have no time to look after their kids or play with them, and now, when they come home from work, they find their children well and happy,” Simatiuka explained.

“In the past when the mothers were working, the kids often disappeared, got lost or were involved in traffic accidents. When the mothers came home they were saying ‘has anyone seen my son?’,” he said.

Pointing to a pile of concrete which local builders will soon transform into Ngola Kiluangi’s crèche, Simatiuka is obviously proud at the sheer determination of the local people.

“It was our idea initially, but the people are making it a reality themselves, with one person giving a place for the crèche and others offering to look after the children,” Simatiuka said.

Empowering local communities has instilled in the residents a deeper sense of hope that they will have a hand in building a better future.

“In just one year, people here are much more optimistic in both Ngola Kiluangi and Hoji-ya-Henda. There will be a lot of change in the future, because this is just the first year and we are just training people and beginning to teach them that they can change things,” Simatiuka said.

“When we finish we will do many more things – because there is still a lot to be done.”



A creative use of Luanda’s rubbish

Photo by Nick Danziger



Photo by Nick Danziger

While strengthening citizen’s capacity is all well and good, it is pointless and frustrating if local authorities fail to listen to the concerns and ideas of the community.

That’s why, as part of the LUPP programme, DW and its partners are creating an environment to encourage local municipalities to listen to those they are supposed to represent.

“We want to break this idea that the government and civil society cannot work together,” said Serafim Quintino, responsible for governance issues at DW.

While the local authorities are expected to hold regular council meetings, in reality few take place because of insufficient money to hire the premises and inform people of the gathering.

LUPP partners have provided logistical support and facilities for these council meetings to take place more often, under the stipulation that the meetings are open to community-based organisations.

They have also come up with the idea of holding much bigger and more open forums where the local authority is encouraged to invite community representatives.

“This is important because the local authorities tend to get information from government bodies like the police or municipal delegations which are not representative of the population. Now the forum opens this space to all the people, including representatives of community-based organisations,” Quintino said.

The goal of these meetings is to identify common needs in the community and discuss and find solutions for specific problems.

With LUPP support, some small issues like rubbish collection are already being dealt with, in the hope that with each success, local government will be encouraged to tackle bigger problems hand in hand with the community.

Ultimately this could develop into a strategic municipal plan which reflects the needs of the citizens and not just their own ideas.

“The government thinks it has the responsibility to solve all the problems, but it cannot do it alone. It needs to engage civil society,” said Quintino. “But the main problems are capacity and willingness. We are trying to break the communication barrier and work together with each other so that we can start having a wider vision of the whole municipality.”

Life in the Musseque as told by Manuel Soque



Just a snapshot, but musseque life is far from easy.

Photo by Nick Danzier

I wake up as soon as it's light outside and go buy two jerry cans of water from a neighbor who has a water tank in the ground in his yard. The nearest water stand is a 15 minute walk but it's broken. Even there we had to pay for the water but it was cheaper. There are nine of us in a three-bedroom house and the water has to be enough for a quick wash for us all with enough left

over to clean the house and prepare tea to drink with the plain but fresh bread we will have for lunch. We don't have breakfast, just maybe a drink of water.

I walk five minutes to the neighbor's house. Like most of us, he is poor. He makes his living selling water to neighbors. I walk past two widows who are already outside washing fish that they will dry in the

continued on next page

Logistician and pastor



Viegas at his work post

Viegas Joaquim may keep a low profile at his desk nestled under the stairwell, but he is the man who makes sure DW's Luanda office runs smoothly.

Most employees will know him as the person responsible for restocking vital supplies and making sure taxes and social security are paid on time.

But apart from his essential support role within DW, Viegas is a pastor at the MEPA (Missão Evangélica Pentecostal de Angola) church in the Luanda suburb of Sambizanga, providing much-needed support of a more spiritual nature to more than 400 parishioners.

Not that long ago, Viegas had some tough choices to make. A soldier in the Angolan military, he often struggled to cope with both his job and his faith.

"It was difficult to work as a soldier and be a Christian. My commander once asked me that question: Why was I trying to do both at the same time? My response was: 'I am Christian. No-one can take away my identity'."

"I saw a lot of injustice, a lot of bad things during the war so I decided to leave the armed forces and shift my activities to spiritual things," he said.

Viegas quit the military in 1990 and spent the next three years doing a course in pastoral studies and working for the church. He joined the DW team in 1994.

Today, Viegas heads out to the MEPA church four times a week to conduct sermons, give talks, preside over marriages and christenings and take bible class, and since last year, he has been attending an evening theological course at the Instituto Bíblico de Angola.

But the cheery father-of-six is also drawing on his work at DW to help within the church community.

"Some of the activities I do here are not so far removed from the work of the church. The church has the spirit of helping people and the vision to help humanity. DW is also a humanitarian organisation, doing the same kind of work – helping the people."

sun for four days and then sell. They have about seven children to support. Even though they smile and say 'Bom Dia' to me, like all people in the musseque, I know they worry about what they will eat tomorrow. I see kids already sitting at little tables outside their homes selling bananas and biscuits and bread. Their mothers left home at the crack of dawn to go to the city to sell things, walking around with their wares on their head. They're called zungueiras and will return home in the evening stopping at the nearby big Roque Santeiro market to buy food with the money they have earned that day.

When I am dressed I take my backpack and walk about 20 minutes to Roque to catch a mini van to school. I pass by my friend Antonio's (not his real name) house. Sometimes he walks with me to Roque. Antonio just got a job as a security guard. He makes about \$100 per month. His wife is a zungueira. She leaves their four month old baby at home with a sister-in-law. She gets back at 8 or 9 in the evening with food for the evening meal. Sometimes she comes home with nothing when her wares are confiscated by the economic police because it's against the law to sell on the street. If the police are walking with their dogs, she leaves her wares on the sidewalk and runs away. She doesn't want to go to prison. But she can't get a place in a licensed market because they are full and she can't afford the rent.

Antonio lives with his wife and five sisters and their children. A few months ago his 20-year-old sister died in the house while she was giving birth. The baby died too. The sisters and neighbor women were helping with the birth. Most musseque people cannot afford to go to the hospital. The sister died leaving two young children for Antonio to look after. All his sisters have children but no husbands. Normally in musseques the

girlfriends have sexual relations and then of course expect something in return from the guy, like food or some clothes. When the girl gets pregnant the boy usually runs away.

As I walk to my bus stop the narrow alleyways of my musseque are busy with people who are on their way to Roque market. This is where most of the people in my musseque earn their living. Most of my young male neighbors who don't have an education, earn their living carrying sacks of food like rice or flour or cases of oil from the warehouses to the vans going to Roque. They usually carry two fifty kilo sacks on their shoulders or head. If they carry two they can make more money. Their customers are always in a hurry.



Photo by Nick Danziger

Once I get past the market and catch my bus, I am relieved. It's not safe walking past Roque. There are gangs that rob people especially in the morning and evening. They are mostly young men who come to Luanda and can't find a job so rob people to survive. Even now inside the musseque it's not safe. A few weeks ago my uncle was robbed outside our house in the evening. He was surrounded by six teenagers wearing bandanas and sunglasses. Each had a gun and a knife.

We heard the whole thing from our side of the wall but were afraid to interfere and we don't own a phone. They took all his money and his cell phone. Another neighbor happened to be walking home the same time and when the gang heard his cell phone ring, they robbed him too.

At night my family eats funge and fish by the light of a candle. Before we go to bed we all pray together and give thanks that we were protected for another day and we pray for our family and for all our neighbors in the musseque.

Informal musseque settlements house about three quarters of Luanda's four million people

Thanks to

BP-British Petroleum, **CIDA**-Canadian International Development Agency, **DFID**-Department for International Development, **ESSO**-Exxon Mobil, **EU**-European Union, **IDRC**-International Development Research Centre (Canada), **Intermon**, **Netherland's** Cooperation, **NIZA**- Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa, **Norwegian** Ministry of Foreign Affairs, **NOVIB**-Organization for International Development Cooperation, **OWA**- One World Action, **SDC**-Swiss Development Cooperation, **UNDP**-United Nations Development Program, **UNHRD**-United Nations Human Rights

Division, **USAID** -United States International Development Aid

Life is looking up for Isabel Samba Mario

The single mother of five, no stranger to hard work, was struggling to make ends meet selling flour at Huambo's bustling San Pedro market.

But with a \$150 loan from Development Workshop's (DW) microfinance programme, Isabel raised enough capital to switch her business to the more lucrative pots and pans trade.

"Before I entered the microfinance programme I was selling flour in the market, but I didn't really make much money," Isabel told DW's weekly microfinance meeting.

"I borrowed \$150 and I quickly decided to stop selling flour completely, because I had enough money to start selling pots and pans," she added.

With support from USAID and the Mary Tidlund Foundation, DW has been running its microfinance initiative in Huambo since March 2002, offering small business training and providing loans of between \$50 and \$100 to local people already conducting a business in the area.

Once the first loan is paid back, with interest of 10 to 12 percent for four months, the programme will lend 40 percent more, and will up the amount by 40 percent after every successful repayment.

"I'm now in my third cycle, my third loan, and I can see that my life is slowly improving," Isabel said.

"Before I just used to buy what I'd consume in 24 hours - a cup of oil, enough flour to make bread to eat that

day, but now I can have stocks in the cupboard. I have money spare to improve the house a little bit and to buy school materials for my children."

Resourceful, determined and backed by business acumen garnered in her 10 weeks of training, Isabel now understands that she can buy her stock direct from the warehouse and benefit from economies of scale.

Isabel is just one of around 1050 Huambo clients of DW's microfinance programme, and with 30 new entrepreneurs signing up every month, the hope is that Huambo will soon have a thriving small and medium enterprise sector.

Emanuel Isaías, Head of Micro-finance at DW, believes the project has already been a huge success, and will have an increasingly positive impact once it reaches around 3,000 clients and becomes self-funding.

"I believe that this microfinance project has changed the lives of many people immeasurably," he said.

Once dependent on humanitarian aid, the microfinance project is helping these proud people to help themselves as they seek to rebuild their lives after Angola's devastating 27-year civil conflict.

"This kind of support is very important for self respect. It's much better to give this strength than to give people lots of things that keep them dependent and don't allow them to solve their own problems," said Carlos Figueiredo, DW Programme Manager.



Isabel: a source of inspiration

foto Karen Iley

Anyone interested in getting more information about this programme can contact DW's offices in Luanda or Huambo:

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