Priorities for Peace-building in Angola

Report on research in
Huambo Province, November 2002 – March 2003

Voices for Peace Project,
Development Workshop Huambo

Development Workshop and Centre for Common Ground

(Revised – October 2003)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings of an '**Action Research Project on Priorities for Peace-building in Angola',** with the objective of to *identify opportunities and threats for the peace process in Angola over the short and medium term*, following the end of Angola's long civil war in April 2002. The need for this research was based on recognition of the vast challenges that Angola faces in strengthening the peace process and ensuring the country's stability, and on a desire to make a positive contribution to that process. The fieldwork was conducted in five peri-urban areas, two rural areas and three Gathering Areas in Huambo from November 2002 to March 2003. The research was conducted through unstructured discussions, focus groups discussions and questionnaires.

The research indicates changes in the underlying social structure and political and economic context that have repercussions for the capacity of communities to organise themselves and resolve problems. It is these capacities, however, that will be essential to the consolidation of peace and to development and stability. Community solidarity in rural and peri-urban areas in Huambo has been reduced. Traditional practices and culture have been weakened. Community and social groups can be exclusive, and may divide as well as unite. Community groups are linked to outside institutions. The capacity of communities to resolve internal conflicts has been weakened. The capacity of communities to influence local administrations is weak. Communities have limited access to information from outside.

The capacity of communities to deal with new challenges is constrained by these changes. New challenges include the return of IDPs, reintegration of ex-combatants, land conflicts, the presence of small arms, banditry and robbery, reconciliation and future elections.

UNITA ex-combatants are frustrated at their treatment, as are communities because they, 'the other side', receive support while they do not. Tensions are particularly high around Gathering Areas. Ex-combatants from previous peace processes and the civil defence feel abandoned by the government they served, and are a potential source of instability if their needs are not addressed. Lack of socio-economic reintegration of UNITA ex-combatants may lead to an increase in banditry and robbery, especially in the context of widespread availability of small arms and a lack of general economic opportunities.

A particular challenge will be elections, which for some awaken negative memories. Communities are frequently 'UNITA' or 'MPLA' by default rather than choice, based on geographical location. MPLA and government structures are closely intertwined at the local level, and this may also put political pressures on local administrations.

Communities which already struggle to maintain their internal stability and cohesion are now being put under additional pressure through the influx of IDPs and ex-combatants. Resources such as land will be (and already are) contested, creating new and potentially violent conflicts. It is important to focus attention on communities, to assist them to face the challenges of a post-war Angola.

Peace-building programmes causes of conflict, and development programmes need to be aware of the social dynamics of the areas where they are based. This requires an understanding of the underlying social tensions (Section Six) and the factors that may bring these to the surface (Section Seven). These need to monitored and addressed where possible. The research carried out in Huambo Province suggests that this requires support to local conflict resolution capacities and local institutions, support to media and access to information and promotion of debates on peace-related themes. A focus on youth is also desirable given the numbers of young people and the importance of youth for conflict prevention and future economic development.

1   INTRODUCTION

This report presents findings of a joint Development Workshop–Centre for Common Ground project '**Action Research on Priorities for Peace-building in Angola**'. The overall objective of this project is to *identify opportunities and threats for the peace process in Angola over the short and medium term*, following the end of Angola's 27 year long civil war in April 2002. The need for this research was based on recognition of the vast challenges and risks which Angola currently faces in strengthening the peace process and ensuring the country's stability, and on a desire to make a positive contribution to that process.

The main outputs of this research are the current report, and a 'Peace-building Manual', for use by NGOs, churches and government actors. Both the report and manual will help to increase the appropriateness and effectiveness of DW's and CCG's peace support activities, as well as providing guidelines and a tool for churches, civil society and governmental actors committed to the strengthening of peace in communities. The research project was carried out in rural and peri-urban communities in Huambo Province between November 2002 and March 2003 by Development Workshop, with the aim of seeing conflict and peace-building from the perspectives of rural and peri-urban communities, and so to:

> *Identify conflicts that may threaten the peace process and affect development work; and*
> *Identify strategies and initiatives that may contribute to reducing these potential conflicts*

The methodology (fully described in the next section) was based on questionnaires and interviews carried out with community members and key informants, and on background desk research where necessary. As a consequence, the results of the research are specific to Huambo Province, though they have been situated in the broader context of the country. A number of main research questions were identified, which are the following:

> What are the manifestations and causes of violent and non-violent conflicts that can be observed on the community level?
> How do these conflicts influence the broader provincial and national peace process?
> What are existing conflict resolution and peace-building mechanisms at the community level and how can these be supported by external actors?

The findings 'flag up' important issues for peace and conflict and draw attention to potential 'flash-points', but further research will be necessary for a complete understanding of these issues.

The report has the following structure: Section Two gives a fuller description of the methodology and sampling. Section Three gives an overview of the national context, the end of the war and the current national situation, while the specific history and patterns in Huambo Province are described in Section Four. Section Five gives a definition of the main concepts used, drawing on the results of the research to define the terms. Section Six then explores the underlying tensions within communities as expressed by the interviewees, concluding with an analysis of current community organisation and levels of solidarity. This leads on to preliminary conclusions about the major future challenges and risks for peace-building in Huambo Province, and nationally, in Section Seven. Section Eight then concludes with practical suggestions for how NGOs may be able to contribute to peace-building in the future. The information referred to in this report was collected up to March 2003. Results and analysis presented therefore refer to this period of time only, even though the report was published later.

2   METHODOLOGY

The research methodology combined quantitative and qualitative approaches: structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and life histories. Local and international media and a literature review related to both Angola and other countries of relevance provided a secondary source of information and ideas.

The field research sought information from the following groups of people:
>   Community members, with a mixture of age groups and gender balance
>   Demobilised UNITA combatants and families
>   Representatives of government and political parties
>   Representatives of NGOs and UN officials in Huambo and Luanda

Time-frame of Research:

November-December 2002: The *first stage* of research was based on unstructured discussions with communities in order to gather information for use in the formulation of questionnaires. Twenty-eight field researchers were trained on the objectives of the research and the information to be collected.

December-January 2003: On the basis of the information gathered in this first stage, structured questionnaires were devised, and used in the *second stage* of research (see Annex 7). Focus group discussions on the topics raised were held concurrently with the questionnaire-based interviews in order to deepen the understanding of the issues and to draw out any further issues for investigation.

January-February 2003: Data from the interviews and focus-group discussions were analysed, and used to draw up a second questionnaire that was used in the *third stage*, which addressed in more depth issues shown to be important in the second stage or that required further information (see Annex 7).

February-March 2003: The data were analysed and final information obtained by semi-structured interviews with key informants.

March-May 2003: A first draft of the report and the 'Peace-building Manual' were prepared. The draft was discussed by the CCG and DW and the field researchers. Comments and corrections were collected in a day-long meeting early May.

Sample:

The main field research was carried out in seven communities (five peri-urban and two rural) and also covered three Gathering Areas (see Annex 5 for Map of locations).   These are the following:

Name	Municipality	Type	No. of Structured Interviews (questionnaires)	No. of Semi-structured Interviews	No. of Focus Groups
Samacau	Huambo	Peri-urban	14	24	0
Vilinga	Huambo	Peri-urban	12	11	7
Kilombo	Huambo	Peri-urban	13	3	0
Nzaji	Huambo	Peri-urban	10	2	0
Santa Teresa	Huambo	Peri-urban	11	2	0
Lossambo	Huambo	Rural	13	4	1
Km 25	Caala	Rural	12	7	5
Menga		Gathering Area	4	2	1
Esfinge		Gathering Area	0	3	0
Chiteta		Gathering Area	2	2	2
		Total	91	8	9

Information was also gathered through DW's Voices for Peace Project which receives news for its bulletin from communities all over the Province. Apart from information taken from this news, a short questionnaire was sent out as a supplement to the December edition of the bulletin, 50 copies of which were returned and analysed.

Constraints:

One of the areas for research was to be Sambo Gathering Area. Preparation for research to be carried out had begun and plans been made, when in November 2002 an anti-tank mine exploded on the road to Sambo. The road remained closed throughout the period of the research so this component of the research had to be cancelled. However news from this area for the news bulletin has been incorporated into the findings.

Limitations:

The sample is weighted towards peri-urban rather than rural areas, and formerly UNITA-held areas were also not covered and may show significant differences.

3   NATIONAL CONTEXT

3.1   History of the war

There was armed conflict in Angola almost continuously from 1961 to 2002. The independence struggle was initiated in 1961 by the MPLA and FNLA and continued until Independence, with UNITA participating from 1966 onwards. From 1975, when the MPLA was recognised as the government of Angola, until the 1991 signature of the Bicesse Accords in Portugal, there was conflict between the Government and UNITA (and the FNLA until 1976). War resumed in late 1992 following UNITA's refusal to accept the election results and continued until the signature of the Lusaka Protocol in November 1994. Four years of 'not peace, not war' followed, leading to a 'fourth war' from 1998 to 2002. In February 2002 UNITA's leader, Jonas Savimbi, was killed in combat by government troops, leading to a cease-fire and the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in Luena on April 4th 2002.

Each phase of conflict had different characteristics. While the early phases of conflict were primarily rural guerrilla warfare, the 1992-1994 period is sometimes referred to as the 'war of the cities', reflecting its shift to urban-based conventional warfare in the cities themselves. This was the bloodiest and perhaps the most divisive period of the war, with on average 1000 people killed per day. This period of warfare ended with the signing of the Protocol of Lusaka in November 1994, but the period from 1994 to 1998 can scarcely be described as peace, and was characterised by sporadic fighting and growing tensions. The 'last war' from 1998 to 2002 was fought mainly in rural areas and led to further massive displacements of the rural population: the government sought to concentrate rural populations around urban centres where government control was greater while UNITA sought to displace rural populations in order to increase the strain on the government and to secure food for themselves.

3.2   Current situation

One of the results of 40 years of war has been a massive displacement of the population, to Provincial capitals and Municipal centres, to improvised camps and warehouses and to the *musseques* (shanty towns) around Luanda so that over 3 million people, or a quarter of Angola's population, is currently estimated to be resident in Luanda. Another 450, 000 people crossed Angola's borders to become refugees in Namibia, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Just after the ceasefire of April 2002 there were said to be 4 million displaced people in Angola, of whom 1.4 million were registered to receive international humanitarian assistance.[1]

The signature of the Memorandum of Understanding in Luena on 4th April 2002 has led to a resumption of the processes envisaged by the Lusaka Protocol of 1994. This requires the demobilisation and reintegration of UNITA's troops. By July 2002, 85,585 UNITA soldiers had presented themselves to the 'Quartering Areas' for demobilisation accompanied by over 280,261 family members, who were initially housed in 'Family Reception Areas' near to the 'Quartering Areas'. These were later merged into 35 'Gathering Areas'.[2]

The 'Gathering Areas' were in turn later closed, after considerable delay. The process of resettlement of the demobilised and IDPs in their areas of origin, or of choice, had to be managed in the context of Angola's largely destroyed infrastructure. There is a set of legal norms for the return and resettlement of the population, which stipulate minimum conditions such as access and availability of land, basic health and education services and security, especially in terms of landmines[3]. Provincial Governments are responsible for ensuring that return and resettlement are done according to these norms, and each drew up in June 2002 a Provincial Emergency Plan for

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[1] Angola, os desafios pos-guerra; Avaliação conjunta do país 2002, Sistema das Nações Unidas em Angola, Luanda, Angola, p.1.

[2] Parsons, I. & Porto, J.G. (2002) Sustaining the Peace in Angola, Monograph, ISS and BICC, p. 21

[3] Council of Ministers, Decree No 1/01, 'Norms on the Resettlement of Displaced Populations', *Diário da Republica,* Friday, 5 January, 2001

Resettlement and Return (PEPARR). Phase I covered IDPs resident in camps, while a second phase (PEPARR II), drawn up in September 2002 covered IDPs from other locations. However, according to OCHA, of those resettled in 2002 only 15% went as part of an organised plan, and only 30% to areas where the 'norms' were in place. Ex-combatants and families are also to be provided with transport and assistance in resettling but, as already noted, this process has been slow.

The demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants is planned to be supported by a 3-year World Bank funded Programme, the Angola Demobilisation and Reintegration Plan (ADRP), although negotiations have been protracted. The repatriation of refugees is also planned for 2003 under the management of UNHCR, with agreements having been signed with Namibia, Zambia and the DRC in November and December 2002.

At the same time, UNITA is in the process of conversion from a military to a political party, having already united with UNITA Renovada, a group which had split from Savimbi's UNITA following the resumption of war in 1998, and had participated in Government as the officially recognised successor to the Lusaka Protocol. Following on from this will be national elections, and potentially local, although the date for these has not yet been fixed.

4 HUAMBO PROVINCE

4.1 History

Huambo was one of the most contested regions of Angola in all the post-Independence phases of conflict. The people of Huambo are primarily *Ovimbundu*, one of the three largest ethnic groups of Angola. The area was not significantly colonised by the Portuguese until the late 19th and early 20th Century, when the Benguela Railway reached the Central Plateau and European traders and settlers began to arrive on a large scale. The period until Independence in 1975 was then marked by forced labour, racial discrimination and political oppression. It was also marked, however, by economic growth and success unprecedented in Portuguese colonialism. Even the 'forced labour' system became rather a system of 'contract work' after the 1960s in particular, integrated into people's survival mechanisms, and this system also supported agriculture by allowing purchase of oxen and transportation. An estimated 120 000 workers left the Central Plateau each year to the coffee plantations in the North, the diamond mines of the Lundas, and costal fisheries.

Because the Central Plateau was one of the few areas to experience an economic 'boom' in the late colonial period, and because it was distant from the borders of neighbouring countries, participation in the various liberation movements was less than in other regions. Nevertheless, when Independence came it was at the centre of fighting, where it was to remain right until the end of the war in 2002. Jonas Savimbi's *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (UNITA), which he had founded in 1966 after breaking away from Holden Roberto's primarily *Bakongo*-based FNLA, drew primarily on *Ovimbundu* support.

4.2 Huambo city and peri-urban areas

The 'City of Huambo', which was initially a station on the Benguela railway, was officially inaugurated by the Portuguese in 1912 (although it had largely yet to be built then) and was renamed Nova Lisboa in 1928. The city grew rapidly in the early 1970s, becoming the second largest in Angola with around 62 000 inhabitants, and capital of the most populous Province in the country (with around 850 000 inhabitants). The Portuguese had planned to make it the new capital of Angola, but this never took place, and so upon Independence the city reverted to its original name.

During the war Huambo was often the site of intense fighting. It was held by UNITA at the time of Independence but UNITA were driven out of Huambo by the MPLA in February 1976 and the city remained under government control until early 1993. During the '55 day war' for control of the city, from January to March 1993, fighting came right into the heart of the city itself until government soldiers, and a large number of civilians, abandoned the city. The city was then held by UNITA until November 1994 when, between the initialling and official signature of the Lusaka Protocol in November 1994, the government army (FAA) pushed ahead and retook Huambo. One of the tensions that revealed themselves as the Lusaka Protocol began to fall apart was the administration of Huambo Province. Following the resumption of war in December 1998, Huambo again came under fire, with sporadic shelling until January 1999 and again in June of that year.

The city of Huambo currently has an estimated population of 250–300 000 people[4], over a third of the Province's estimated total population.

4.3 Municipal towns

The majority of the Municipal towns in Huambo Province were under Government control for most of the post-Independence period, with little contact with the city of Huambo. Cut off in this way, their significance diminished and merchants, civil servants, teachers and tradesmen left, though the population increased as rural communities were displaced to the towns. Once there economic

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[4] OCHA, Huambo

opportunities were few, however they were relatively secure. Also, in some towns, from 1990 onwards, there was a presence of humanitarian organisations.

Bailundo was under the control of UNITA from the time of the Lusaka Protocol in 1994 until it was taken by the government only late 1999. UNITA had its headquarters during this period.

4.4   Rural areas

During the 'second war', from 1975-1991, UNITA controlled the majority of rural areas, expanding their areas of control as their external support increased. Some rural areas remained under UNITA for basically the entire war, until 2002.

The Benguela corridor was a particularly strategic area, one of the most densely populated rural areas, and the most badly affected from the end of the 1980s onwards. It was held by the government from 1994 onwards, although they controlled little else, and when UNITA left they took everything they could find with them. Areas North and South of the Benguela corridor were largely held by UNITA and so were largely untouched by the renewed fighting after 1992 although they suffered economically from the difficulties in accessing markets. Along the frontier between the two areas markets emerged, allowing some trade and contact between the two sides at least. Villages in government-controlled areas were defended largely by the civil defence, who were trained and organised by FAA but made up largely of young men from the communities and had a purely defensive role.

At the end of the war the province as a whole was divided roughly along a North-West/South-East axis, with the North-East and East largely under the control of UNITA right until the cease-fire in April 2002. The last commune to receive state administration was Chinhama (Katchiungu), in September 2002.

4.5   Displacement

As briefly sketched in the section above, Huambo's communities have been subject to cycles of forced displacement, with large sections of the rural population displaced. In 2002 around 450 000 were reported by MINARS, with 125 000 independently confirmed and registered. A simplified general pattern indicates that:

- people from rural communities fled to the administrative centres of comunas and municipalities;
- people from rural communities and administrative centres moved to Huambo city;
- people from Huambo city moved to Luanda.

Displaced people began gathering around Huambo in the late 1970s, the number increasing around 1984 with an escalation in the conflict. The greatest numbers of displacements came about, as in most of the country, after 1998, with a steady inflow into 'safe areas' right up until March 2002. Even after this date people continued to arrive in these areas, where humanitarian agencies were concentrated, from rural areas where they had been trapped by the war.

Large IDP camps were established around Huambo and the major Municipal centres, especially Caála in 1999. The Municipality of Huambo had nine major camps, in and around the city itself,[5] and a further ten were spread around the rest of the Province[6]. Many IDPs also settled in the peri-urban areas of Huambo, either with resident family members or by building their own houses. This

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[5] These were Acumol, Cruzeiro, Casseque III, Betanea, Chipipa and Lonanda I, II & III
[6] In Caála these were Cantão Pahula and Cassoco; In Longongo these were Joni II, Cassola and Desvio do Bongo; In Ukuma there was one camp at Ukuma; In Ekunha there was one camp at Caliamamo; In Bailundo there was one camp at Velha Xica; In Katchiungo there was one camp at Nambambe; In Tchicala Tcholonhanga there was one camp at Candumbo.

increased the population of peri-urban areas considerably and, as a member of the provincial government put it, overstretched completely administrative capacities for plot allocation and land regularization.

Following the end of the war in 2002, some IDPs were transferred to Bié, supposedly on route to other Provinces although some of these were in fact from Huambo Province. At the same time NGOs transferred in a number of civilians, mostly families of severely malnourished children brought for treatment in therapeutic centres, and who were subsequently stranded with no means to return to their Province of origin[7].

Subsequently many IDPs left the camps for their areas of origin, although some still return periodically to use social services. Interviews were carried out with IDPs who had gone back from Cantão Pahula and Cassoco camps, near Caála, to their villages in the South of Caála Muncipality, but still returned to the camps to use services such as health.[8] Furthermore some have even returned to the camps; IDPs who had left Casseque III for the area of Sambo and Samboto found a lack of basic conditions for resettlement and subsequently returned to Casseque III.

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[7] Information from OCHA, Huambo.
[8] These people travel on foot for as much as five hours to reach services in their previous camps.

5   DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

5.1   Community

The word "community" implies a homogenous social unit. Yet in practice groups of people who are described as "communities" are not necessarily a homogeneous social unit. Individuals and families within each community may show differing economic and social status, political views and beliefs. Their sense of belonging to that community may also vary radically.

Interviewees indicated that the sense of belonging had been affected by conflict and displacement, but that the idea of community is still an important one for people in rural and peri-urban areas of Huambo. In rural areas at least, communities have a shared history with families resident in the same area for generations. Displacement has affected this communal identity but has not completely destroyed it, a conclusion at least partially shared by other research[9]. There are groups of people who coordinate their social action under one leader, or a number of leaders. Many of these activities and institutions also connect to higher levels or external bodies. In Angola, as elsewhere, the State penetrates and influences (civil) society in many ways, and is frequently intertwined with it at the community level.

This research, however, looks critically at the assumptions about communities and the way in which they function, in particular in the context of socio-economic and political changes brought about by conflict. This is necessary to inform the strategies of any future work in communities by outside bodies.

5.2   Peace and peace-building

Peace is understood by the interviewees for this research as having a broader meaning than the simple absence of war or conflict. As Table 1 shows, the question "What does peace mean to you?" led to a wide range of responses, many of which refer more to freedom (*"liberdade"*) and peacefulness (*"tranquilidade", "sossego")* than to the absence of actual violence. Freedom in the sense of lack of restrictions is commonly invoked (*"to travel freely without being bothered by anyone").* The most common theme, however, is related to reconciliation and respect for others, which is seen as very important (*"feeling at ease with others"*).

These should be seen as an ideal end state, however, which people want to achieve and which requires further steps. This does not mean that dealing with conflict is unimportant: many interviewees, when asked about the principal risks to peace, mentioned physical conflicts and violence, lack of reconciliation and understanding within communities and between politicians, and the high number of weapons in society as major risks. Poor governance and leadership and a lack of freedom (of expression as well as action) were also mentioned as being important as was poverty, which interviewees feel may impede reconciliation and reintegration. As an interviewee said *"it is easier to forgive someone who stole your oxen if you have your oxen again. If you do not, it will be very hard to forgive him*." In one UNITA Gathering Area a group of elderly men said that peace was, of necessity, the result of a conflict. *"Peace comes out of a disagreement. Peace is the result of a war."*

Peace-building is therefore a broad social process, and goes much deeper than the resolution or management of conflicts. Many of the conflicts manifest in society are symptoms rather than causes of the absence of a deep peace, as understood by communities. The focus here is therefore on assisting communities to organise themselves in such a way as to diffuse potentially damaging conflicts, but also to understand their causes, current and historical, and to begin to find ways to address them.

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[9] Pachecho, Fernando (2001), "Rural Communities in Huambo", in Paul Robson (ed.), *Communities and Reconstruction in Angola: The Prospects for Reconstruction in Angola from the Community Perspective¸* Development Workshop Occasional Paper 1

Table 1: Responses to Question 'What is Peace for You'

Reconciliation	Happiness Feeling at ease with others Respect of differences Reconciliation Loving your neighbour	No hostilities Agreement Renewing contacts Harmony Being together
Development	Education for children Being self-sufficient Working on your own fields	Ending poverty Development
Freedom	Free movement of people and gods To travel freely	To work freely Liberty
Tranquillity	Tranquillity To sleep without fear To forget the past	To live without suspicion Peace of mind for everyone
Happiness	The beginning of happiness for the people	To live well
Physical Security	The guns fall silent	No more deaths from war
Absence of conflict	No more conflict between the two parties	

5.3   Conflict

Conflicts exist at all levels of society. These may be either violent or non-violent. The latter need not necessarily be a destructive force but may be a normal part of societal change. But at the same time conflicts may serve particular interests. Peace-building should address conflict on two levels: it should deal with the escalation and violent expression of conflicts, and should find ways to address the deeper structural issues of which open conflict may be merely a symptom.

The responses of interviewees indicated that problem of conflict in Angolan society goes beyond the war between the Government and UNITA, although the war has frequently channelled other underlying conflicts related to, for instance, power, economic status, or identity. Conflict has been at once a vector for and a product of societal change; the main objective of this research is to analyse these changes and how they have impacted on community organisation. Tensions within a community may be expressions of deeper, historical causes and of actions outside the community. This research therefore aims to identify activities that can support communities to re-organise themselves, both to help resolve internal conflicts, and to find ways to influence broader structural issues that affect them. This will help communities to achieve their ultimate objectives of peace, reconciliation, development and justice.

6   COHESION AND TENSIONS WITHIN COMMUNITIES

In order to facilitate the systemic analysis of peace and conflict at the community level, this section will look at tensions within communities that are indicated by the responses of interviewees. Four sets of tensions are indicated by the responses:

- The Impact of Violence
- Social Norms and Culture
- Poverty and Resource Distribution

▪ Leadership and governance

These are tensions that touch all communities to some extentand that are frequently interrelated. They are likely to be issues that will need to be addressed in peace-building efforts and in community development projects.

6.1 Impact of violence

6.1.1 Political divisions

> *"The two parties killed, and everyone knows this."*

Communities in Huambo Province have been split along political/military lines, with even families divided by loyalties to the MPLA or UNITA. This has not always been by choice as both sides resorted to forced recruitment. In areas held by UNITA, the population was not given a choice: they were compelled to produce food, to carry supplies, and provide young men and women for service, as well as to profess allegiance. Refusals to cooperate or attempts to escape were met with beatings or even death. In government-held areas coercion may have been less violent, but to be accused of 'sympathising' with the other side could nevertheless have brutal consequences. This was true in cities as well as rural areas, where levels of stress and fear were high.

Almost all respondents reported that they have witnessed violence against friends and family, and often know the perpetrators of the attacks personally. These atrocities were not only by the two armies, however, but within communities individuals frequently attacked and denounced even friends and family, in an attempt to ensure their own security or in extreme cases to further their own career within one or other party. This knowledge has created deep divisions and traumas.

> *"Reconciliation in communities is still not completely certain because many people still talk badly about those who contributed to the physical disappearance of their family members."*

There are also divisions within supporters of each party, since the two are not homogenous groups. A UNITA interviewee in a Gathering Area told us *"reconciliation with communities from the government side will be possible, but reconciliation among ourselves will be much more difficult"*. He referred to the fact that, especially during the last months of the armed conflict, UNITA members were executed by their comrades on the grounds of the slightest accusation of treachery. There is thus resentment of individuals towards their own 'side'. Intra-community and Domestic Violence

6.1.2 Intra-community and domestic violence

The high levels of violence during the war included violence that was linked to power-seeking or robbery or rape. Rural populations in particular lived in constant fear of violence from both sides, though this was also the case in the cities in 1992 – 1994. A consequence of this has been the high rates of domestic violence reported in all rural and peri-urban communities that were included in the research. This involves violence of men against their wives, but also against their children. One man who was interviewed also accused women in the community of killing their husbands by witchcraft: *"when peace came, there began to be cases of women killing their husbands with traditional medicines"*. Another case involved a man attempting to kill his own son for stealing a small amount of food. These cases also reflect levels of frustration caused by poverty and difficulties in survival.

6.1.3 Fear and silence

One legacy of the war is people's reluctance to speak openly about the past, the war, or indeed any political subject. For peace, it was said, "*it is necessary to forget the past*". But two reasons were given for never speaking again about the past. The first is to prevent the surfacing of painful

and divisive memories. The second is related to individual security and more precisely to a persistent fear of reprisals.

In the course of this research it was observed that communities would only begin to speak openly once a level of trust had been built, and even then were often reluctant when in groups to make their real feelings known. Communities have also learnt to protect themselves, since outsiders are an unknown quantity. As one community said, *"We had some doubts at the beginning, because of the war. When someone comes here from the outside, whether from a church or from another organisation, we don't know what they want. They might want to harm us."*

The deep level of penetration of communities by MPLA or UNITA, along with people's memories of the denunciations and killings common during the war, also mean people may be just as reluctant to talk in front of each other as to outsiders. While groups prohibit free expression they also provide a degree of security since there are a number of witnesses to what was, or more to the point, was not said. There is often a fear of speaking to outsiders alone, presumably due to the fear it may be misconstrued by other people as well as due to a mistrust of the intentions of their interlocutor. This is particularly prevalent in UNITA Gathering Areas, with people highly reluctant to speak alone without significant reassurances.

6.2 Social norms and culture

Social norms and values are generally understood as binding a community and as a contributing to solidarity and cohesion. But in the context of violent community division and rapid social change, norms and values may change and they may have a negative and divisive impact.

> *"At present most things to do with culture and myths have disappeared because of the war. All that is left is the resolution of conflicts in the ondjango. Culture has to pass from generation to generation so, with the coming of peace, traditional leaders are thinking about re-establishing the culture and myths that our ancestors left us but have been forgotten."*

The colonial authorities and the Churches prohibited many cultural practices and beliefs and forced them 'underground', creating negative connotations and uses that had not previously been present. Some other celebrations and rituals which performed an important function in binding communities and socialising young people have subsequently diminished in importance due to the disruptions of war. Understanding the current status of cultural norms and culture is important when assessing how communities can re-establish themselves.

6.2.1 Celebrations and festivals

Festivals and celebrations are part of culture that may help to contribute to solidarity and community cohesion. In rural and peri-urban areas in Huambo many of these have either diminished or have been adapted to changed circumstances. Some are carried out in secret, as a reaction to colonisation and the churches, and this makes it difficult to know what really happens within communities. However their significance in terms of social cohesion and creating norms of behaviour is reported by interviewees to be less than previously.

The circumcision of young men, for example, used to be an 'initiation' rite that involved a 6-month stay in the bush and the teaching of skills such as hunting and dancing. It has diminished significantly in importance.

> *"In the past, circumcision was carried out by setting up an encampment in the middle of the bush where the adolescents stayed for 6 months in the dry season, where secrets were revealed and traditional customs taught. Today it is done in a different way. Circumcision is done at home."*[10]

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[10] Interview, São José, Peri-urban area of Huambo

Funeral rites (*óbitos)* are still observed, however. Between the death of a person and the burial, the body will lie for 2-4 days in the family's house, the women keep up a near-constant wailing and visitors and family come to visit. After the funeral the family of the deceased give a lunch for the visitors who, during the *óbito,* contribute a small amount of money to cover expenses. Family members will travel from as far away as Europe to attend an *óbito*, reinforcing a strong family bond.

6.2.2   The *ondjango*

The *ondjango* (or *jango*) is a round building once found in all communities, functioning as a meeting place and debate forum. Traditionally it served many purposes, as a "men's club house", where men in a village would eat together in the evening and discuss the day's activities[11], as a place for the education of (male) youth and the passing on of social norms from one generation to another, and for the resolution of conflicts and disputes.

Today its role is diminished, although it can still be found in all rural areas and some peri-urban. It is reported by interviewees that it still maintains its role in the resolution of conflicts by traditional leaders, although many, more serious, disputes will now be passed onto the administration or police. As a forum for the transmission of social customs and norms it today has little function, however, since the church and government schools took over the primarily role in the education of youth, and political ideologies passed on by political parties gained in importance in education as norms of behaviour. Its decrease in significance parallels the shifts in power away from traditional leaders, and the loss of traditions in many areas.

6.2.3   Age and youth

Respect for age and experience are very important in Angolan society, as in most Bantu societies. It was reported that the war has to some extent had the effect of diminishing this, however, by transferring power to some degree to those with arms, i.e. young men, a topic dealt with further in the following section. This was reported as a problem in communities, who said young men no longer respected the traditions of their elders. Women also said that in social groups they no longer liked to work with young women because they did not follow the customs.   An example given to us was related to marriage, since young people apparently no longer follow their parents' advice.

> *"In the past when anyone wanted to get married, he or she had to ask the opinion of the older members of the community and their relatives about the family of the future husband or wife. The opinion of the older members of the community was vital and anyone who did not follow their advice had to bear all the consequences himself"*[12]

This reflects the diminishing importance of 'initiation rites' and of the *ondjango,* and the process of 'modernisation' accelerated by displacement and exposure to cities and urban areas. Rural areas no longer appeal to young people, as bored and frustrated youth have been leaving rural areas to go to the cities that they perceive as offering more opportunities.

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[11] Pacheco (2001), citing Childs, G.M (1949), *Umbundu Kinship and Character* , Oxford, Oxford University Press
[12] Interview, Kilombo, Peri-urban area, Huambo

6.2.4 Magic and witchcraft

Belief in magic and witchcraft was once a positive and cohesive force in communities. Leaders and powerful individuals were assumed to have magic powers, which they could use to punish or remove destructive elements of society and, although they were also able to use it for selfish ends, could be deposed if they did so. Today belief in witchcraft is still strong in rural and peri-urban areas of Huambo Province though it was mentioned primarily in a negative context linked to local tensions and divisions[13]. Interviewees reported that its use can never be absolutely proven, leaving it open to manipulation through false accusations and giving the *sobas*, who alone have the power to resolve these conflicts, a great deal of power. 'Uses' of witchcraft may be related to economic factors, since those experiencing a sudden rise in prosperity are often targets of witchcraft, or else are assumed to have succeeded through their use of magic. Thieves are also often assumed to be protected by witchcraft, which gives them a certain degree of impunity since people are too scared to resist them.

A related belief is that of 'traditional mines'. These are effectively 'magic', invisible landmines that may, like a real landmine, cause physical injury or put someone in a coma. People who suddenly become gravely ill are sometime said to have 'stepped on a traditional mine', in a disturbing amalgamation of traditional beliefs and the changed social realities of war. People strongly believe that modern medicine cannot heal victims of traditional mines so it is therefore in the hands of the traditional healers, who may even have 'laid' the mine, to cure the victims.
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6.3 Poverty and resource distribution

Conflicts within communities must be seen in the context of the widespread poverty that exists in Huambo Province and an unequal access to resources. These factors were reported as being 'hidden' issues behind other tensions. Those with access to resources through, for instance the government, party, churches, NGOs or business, may gain social status and power, but also attract jealousy and create social tensions. Accusations of witchcraft against people who have recently increased significantly their economic standing are frequently mentioned. The daily struggle of a subsistence existence also has an effect on community cohesion and solidarity, with personal concerns often taking precedence over communal. This, as mentioned earlier, may a significant impediment to reintegration and reconciliation of communities.

6.3.1 Access to land and secure land-tenure

Access to land and secure land tenure for housing and agriculture are important assets for the poor for production and investment. In rural areas, the majority of the population are dependent on subsistence farming for their livelihoods. In some peri-urban areas there are also various *bairros* where the population works in agriculture either in the vicinity of their house (where space allows) or in fields that are situated outside the city perimeter. In peri-urban areas in particular, access to land and secure tenure is important for housing and access to infrastructure (schools, health etc.) and employment. In the absence of effective financial services for the poor, investment in houses is an important savings asset, as well as facilitating the life of future generations within a family. Access to land was reported as creating tensions and, as will be seen later, a risk factor for future conflict.

6.3.2 Social services and physical infrastructure

> *"The result of illiteracy is that people are always subjects and serve other people, like captives or slaves"*

The economic problems of the Province are compounded by the poor state of the social services and physical infrastructure. A very serious problem is the high rate of illiteracy caused by

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[13] It is important to remember that the research probed only its relations with conflict, not any possible positive impacts, however, and so for a fuller understanding of its significance and role further research would be needed.

disruption to schooling during the war. Illiteracy makes communities more vulnerable to abuse and manipulation, since they are thereby denied access to written information and are unable to contradict leaders and others who refer to, for example, legal documents. It becomes more difficult to conduct any kind of business, or to become involved even in NGO social projects, since these often depend on literacy and more general education levels as well. Illiterate community members are unable to assist their children in school, compounding the problem, and there is also a detrimental effect on self-esteem as they are unable, for instance, to read the bible in church, an act conveying a certain amount of status within a community. Education is therefore one of the main priorities reported by of communities and of young demobilising soldiers.

> *"Education is important because without people studying we will never put a stop to war"*

> *"The reconciliation of people who are more educated takes less time"*

In the eyes of communities, education is also a major factor in ending the war, and in reintegration and reconciliation. Respondents also request that education include civic education that may help reconciliation.

The other major social infrastructure in need of rehabilitation is health. Constant attack by treatable diseases such as diarrhoeas, measles, coughs, various infections and skin diseases, and more serious ones like malaria, typhoid and tuberculosis weaken people and prevent them from working in fields, travelling to markets or businesses, or going to school. Health levels are worsened by the absence of clean water supplies and poor sanitation.

HIV/AIDS prevalence is unknown but it is likely to be increasing rapidly. It may further weaken communities, removing primarily those of working age who are most important in sustaining communities. In other places in Africa where this has been monitored the effect has been to destroy normal community support structures and solidarity networks, since livelihoods are reduced to such a level that no-one can afford to help anyone else anymore. The stigma often associated with AIDS may be a further factor in decreasing solidarity and support.

The majority of roads are in a very poor condition, especially in the rainy season, and in some places completely impassable. The high prevalence of landmines in some areas also cuts off large areas of the Province. This reduces access to humanitarian aid and to economic opportunities. The ability to travel freely and securely was mentioned by many interviewees as an important factor in peace.

6.3.3   Humanitarian aid

Given the difficult logistical context in which aid agencies work, it is not surprising that aid should fail to reach entire populations. Changing populations due to high rates of spontaneous return by IDPs, difficulties in access due to broken bridges, degraded roads and landmines, make it impossible for agencies to cover the entire province or even entire populations in areas assisted. However, in this type of situation, aid becomes a precious resource, access to which gives considerable power.

Tensions have thus been reported between villages where one has received aid and another not, and particularly aroused anger in communities located near Gathering Areas. Organisations such as churches which provide aid with donor support grow in significance within the community, and those who do not belong to them risk missing out. In some Gathering Areas, the lack of an organised distribution system has been reported as creating antagonisms between those who manage to receive food and those who do not.

6.3.4   Female-headed Households

One of the effects of the war has been to increase significantly the number of female-headed households in Angola, since their husbands have frequently been killed in fighting or else away in the army. This may increase the work load of women, but is more significant because of the effect it has on their security in terms of housing and land, which, as seen above, are vital assets in rural and peri-urban areas. Women's status in relation to ownership of property is very weak. Upon the death of a husband, land and possessions revert to his family, not to the widow. It was said that if she has sufficient children she may stay, although all movable possessions may be removed. If she has few children (1 or 2) she may prefer to go back to her family where she will be supported, but if she has no children she has no rights at all and is obliged to leave. However in one case reported, a woman had decided to fight her eviction, and had taken this case to the *soba*, who subsequently decided in her favour, suggesting a change in some cultural practices.

Some women felt that their status was likely to decrease now that the war is over, since news is filtering back to women that their husbands have died, confirming their status as widows. One told us: "*I have two battles to face. I am a widow, and as such how am I going to find a companion to help me look after my children? And before I do, what type of help will I find for my children?*"

6.4   Leadership and governance

The research identified three main 'pillars' of authority and leadership within communities: the MPLA, traditional leaders, and the churches. The government is indirectly present, transmitting directives through *sobas* with whom it holds regular meetings. For security and maintaining order, the police and newer forms of authority such as the *defesa civil* (civil defence) play an important role. In UNITA controlled communities, the roles of local authority is more difficult to understand:. it is unclear whether traditional leadership continue to have an important role or have been replaced by military structures, though military and party structures are more intertwined than is the case between MPLA and FAA. Be it on Government or UNITA side, one must take into account considerable mutations in local power and authority structures that have come about both during and because of the war, as well as the political development of the two parties.

Another important issue is the relationship between customary and statutory law. Being part of the state administration in the wider sense, traditional leadership bridges the gap, giving it considerable power through being backed up and influenced by the state apparatus, but having independent jurisdiction on some of the most important aspects of community life.

The role of women also needs consideration, since degree of power and influence they possess and their role in the resolution of conflicts are little understood but crucial to an effective peace-building. Finally, all of these institutions and power structures must be situated in the broader context of sociological changes such as the trend towards youth (almost half of Angola's population is now under 15), and 'modernisation'. Despite these generalisations, the operations of power and authority themselves, as well as their effects, are not homogenous. Each of these competing influences have an effect in constituting individuals as political and social subjects, creating a variety of conflicting norms of behaviour between individuals and from community to community.

6.4.1   Government and political parties

At the local level a clear distinction must be made between the government and the ruling party, the MPLA. While the government is responsible for provision of services and technically is the holder of power, in fact it appears that the party has a stronger influence. The MPLA has a coordinator in each village, who is responsible for party issues and social mobilisation. In one community visited for this research, an MPLA flag is raised every day. The community or *bairro* MPLA committee responds directly to its municipal representation with which it has regular meetings.

Political loyalty is often geographic, and people assume that if they are in an area formerly held by one party then they too are 'part of' that party.. This is understandable in a context where the party

has a strong influence and organises social activities through the women's movement and youth groups. A representative of OMA (the MPLA women's movement), for instance, said that it was very unlikely that LIMA (UNITA's women's movement) would establish itself in the same village. In one community it was said that "there is only one party here", and that it was difficult to perceive of another party being present through representation, social groups or a symbols.

The government's influence in communities is more remote, operating through the *sobas* with whom it holds regular meetings, generally at the Municipal level. The government regularly pays salaries to *sobas* and provides incentives for them to attend meetings. Laws and directives are transmitted to communities are in this way. The local administration also has regular meetings with the local MPLA committee, and Angolan government administrative structures are to some degree intertwined with party activities.

Despite the links between government administration and party politics, the government has been active in transmitting via sobas messages on the need for forgiveness. As a result many people even talked to us about the 'law of reconciliation'.

> *"People who robbed come back with the goods that they stole. ….. But it is a sin not to forgive. And we also forgive because of the law. If the leaders say that we have to forgive, then that is what we have to do".*

6.4.2 'Traditional' authorities

It is difficult to be precise about the role of so called 'traditional' authorities in rural and peri-urban communities in Huambo. There are many levels, of which the *soba* is just one, each working within a different area of jurisdiction. The main 'positions' in traditional authority structures are the following:

Rei (King): Huambo Province has five kings, resident in Huambo, Bailundo, Caála, Chicala and Chinjenje. Each king has jurisdiction over his kingdom (*reino*), which is the largest area of traditional authority, although his present-day role unclear.

Regedor/Soba Grande (Osoma inene): Each *regedor* has responsibility for an *Ombala*, which in turn falls within the *reino*. Each *Ombala* may contain many villages, or *bairros*.

Sobas (Osoma): Sobas are the most commonly known of all the traditional leaders, in rural areas with responsibility for one or more villages. In peri-urban areas each *bairro* will have a *soba*. Different means exist for selection of sobas, including lineage, elections and imposition by government.

Sekulu: The *sekulu* responds directly to the *soba*, with responsibility for sub-divisions of the *soba*'s territory. In rural areas this where a *soba* controls multiple villages, each will have a *sekulu*, while in peri-urban areas the *sekulu* corresponds with the *zona*, which is a sub-division of the *bairro*.

Conselheiros: Conselheiros perform an advisory role at various levels.

Sobas now effectively serve as the lowest level of state administration, through regular meetings with the government. This has its roots in the colonial administration that used *sobas* to recruit labour and to collect taxes. This has led, in certain cases, to communities nominating an official *soba* who would report to the government, in order to keep the identity of the real *soba* secret and preserve both his dignity and security, or to the term *soba* being used to designate a chief imposed by the Portuguese system, while the *Umbundu* term *osoma* indicated the authentic leader[14].

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[14] Possinger, H. (1986), *A Transformação da Sociedade Umbundu Desde O Colapso do Comércio das* Caravanas, Revista Internacional de Estudos Africanos 4-5, cited in Pacheco (2001)

Under UNITA co-ordinated the provision of food for UNITA troops, and the nomination of young men and women for conscription into JURA, UNITA's youth wing, and from there into the military or marriage to troops. The *sobas* had little choice in this, since UNITA has been accused of killing *sobas* who refused to collaborate[15]. The degree of real power they continued to exercise is debatable since it appears they were generally subjected to military authority. Sobas are (or were) generally present in the Gathering Areas[16], although their role appears to be restricted to the resolution of conflicts such as witchcraft or adultery, over which the Political Commission does not have legitimate jurisdiction[17]. Their 'official' role is, according to many interviews with leaders in Gathering Areas, to pass on tradition and customs of society, rather than the leadership role they traditionally enjoyed. Significantly, young ex-soldiers demonstrated less awareness or interest in the role of sobas, one replying, when asked if he knew what their role was in his *bairro*, "*I have to say that I don't have a clear idea of their role*"

The politicisation of *sobas* has contributed to their loss of legitimacy in some areas. *Sobas* find it difficult to be impartial community leaders. One *soba* said *"those who do not carry out orders die"*, while another said *"One reason why we have lost our power is the party movements.. And if you belonged to one party and then the other one entered the village, they would kill you."*[18].

Within some communities this has now led to a situation of competing *sobas*.   The return of ex-combatants is now being accompanied by the return of *sobas* who left with UNITA, although no reports were received of these resuming their old position, which had long been filled by another. *"The first soba was of UNITA and he went to the bush. When he came back he lost his position and the village elected another Soba."*

Perhaps more complicated is a situation in which a community has been displaced in waves, or in separate groups, and each has appointed its own *soba.* Upon return a conflict for authority may result. Displacement and death of *sobas* as a result of the war has also disrupted traditional lineage-based appointments, leading to the use of elections in some areas in order to choose a *soba,* and government imposition of *sobas* .But in rural and peri-urban areas, and even in UNITA Gathering Areas, *sobas* are still firmly associated with the resolution of conflicts related to 'traditional' beliefs such as witchcraft, which has shown no signs of weakening as a cultural force. Since witchcraft in its current form may often serve as a proxy for many social and economic inequalities and conflicts, and the *soba* alone can resolve these, this gives him a large measure of power within communities. Furthermore, this research has found them to still be strongly associated with traditional rituals, even in peri-urban areas where they have a strong link with government administration.

Thus the role of *sobas* is no longer clear. They are a part of the community and also of the government administrative system. This tension is highlighted by the 1992 law, which states that their role is to maintain tradition, and to pass on instructions from the government, both at the same time.

6.4.3 Churches
The main church denominations in the Central Highlands are the Catholic Church, the Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola (IECA) and the Congregation of Baptist Churches in Angola (CBA)..All three work in the city of Huambo, rural areas and the smaller towns. However interviews made in rural areas indicate that church leaders there feel quite isolated from their leadership in the Provincial capital and do not have information about peace activities promoted by the Churches such as COIEPA (Inter-Ecclesiastical Committee for Peace in Angola). Furthermore, given the association in the mind of some interviewees of certain churches with the two main political parties, some interviewees had reservations about their role as impartial peace promoters.

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[15] Human Rights Watch, *Angola Explicada: Ascensão e Queda do Processo de Paz de Lusaka,* (New York: HRW, 1999) / *Angola Unravels: The Rise and Fall of the Lusaka Peace Process*, (New York, N.Y.: Human Rights Watch, 1999)
[16] In a number of Gathering Areas, information was received that the *sobas* had already left for their villages, in one case having been taken there by government officials
[17] Interview, UNITA Camp Commander, Gathering Area, Huambo Province, February 2003
[18] Interviews, Sobas, Rural Community, Huambo Province, May 2002

The level of ecumenism in rural and peri-urban areas is also low, with churches sometimes competing with each other for congregations or with other authorities in the community such as traditional leadership. Conflicts with traditional leaders arise in particular over issues such as polygamy, which is commonly practised in rural areas and by *sobas* but is forbidden by the church. Certain churches also conflict with particular behaviours and beliefs in communities, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses with the Civil Defence over the issue of carrying arms. The Adventist church also prohibits certain traditional celebrations involving music and dance, allowing celebrations within the church and at certain times. In one community, the *soba* had built an *ondjango* (traditional meeting place) on land belonging to the church, creating a conflict. At the time of the interview the church had not managed to reclaim its land.

Churches are reported by interviewees as enjoying considerable respect within communities, however, and having an important role in community leadership and in promoting community solidarity and mobilisation. In the current process of national reconciliation, people mention that their particular importance lies in promoting peace and reconciliation, and '*brotherly love'*, as well as (or perhaps as part of) resolving domestic and intra-community conflicts. They have had a particularly important role in education, with church buildings often used as schools, and pastors acting as teachers. This has given them an added influence in communities, especially among young people.

Assessments made in 8 *bairros* in Huambo peri-urban areas indicate that the Catholic and some Protestant denominations in particular play an important social role for their congregations, although exclusively for their own members. They sometimes organize land or housing for members in need, distribute clothes and have a fund for elderly in need. In rural areas, also, churches have tried to maintain social programmes but the lack of resources has reduced their significance.

6.4.4   Civil defence

A final form of authority brought into being purely by the war is the civil defence force (*defesa civil*), which, as described above, was created in order to protect towns and villages from UNITA and from banditry attacks. It had a purely defensive role at the level of communities themselves, which has conferred on it a greater legitimacy than the armed forces have generally enjoyed[19]. Members, who are primarily young men, have also enjoyed a much higher status than would normally be accorded to a man (or youth) of their age.

Today their role is unclear, but in many areas they are still armed and active. It appears that they essentially function in support of either the police or the FAA, in a move away from their original role. "*They do patrols in the peripheral bairros of the city and prevent houses being robbed."* They also have some importance in the resolution of conflicts, in rural areas at least. In one community it was said that they could '*resolve conflicts with traditional authorities'*, and information was also received that in some communities conflicts may pass to them before referral to higher authorities. Some interviewees saw this as a potential problem as *"a person who has a weapon can give orders*".

6.4.5   Women

It has been argued that the status of women in Ovimbundu society was traditionally much higher than it is today, having been degraded in the colonial period by the authorities who, by assuming that women had no role, contributed to making this the case. Outsiders often assume that power lies exclusively in the hands of men , though the findings of this research are that women do have an important role.

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[19] Although in 1992 during the 55 day war they began to be used increasingly as a 'sub-division' of the FAA, actively engaged in military operations across the city.

While the majority of leaders are men, and women reported that they may not be able to change a decision made by a leader, they could exert an influence during the process of consideration. In communities it was said that women "*know how to teach", "know how to govern*" and should "*be leaders in communes, villages, municipalities and provinces*". Elderly women are more highly respected than young women, however, as is traditionally the pattern with men, and the fact of having children and grand-children bestows considerable status in society, to the point where childless women traditionally underwent a different burial ritual to avoid contaminating the rest of the family.

Furthermore they apparently have a particular role in the resolution of small conflicts such as physical attacks and, following the harvest, the excessive production and consumption of alcohol by men. In the latter case women said their role was largely '*to remind the men of their traditions and customs'*". These kinds of conflicts would normally be resolved by women in the *ondjango* or, if there is not an *ondjango,* then in their houses.

> *"Women can bring together all the parties where there has been a conflict"*

This gives them a particular importance in the transmission of the '*message of peace'* to their husbands and children. They should, it was said, "*create peace in the hearts of their husbands and sons."*

6.4.6 Leadership

It was frequently mentioned that traditional authorities are less accountable than in the past as they are partly answerable to authorities outside the community; previously a 'selfish' leader would have been deposed. Many communities spoke of unaccountable leaders and the negative impact on community solidarity and cohesion.

> *"Without accountability in the bairro, there will be conflict, not peace and not development."*

> *"Even now there are leaders who receive money to divert the process of peace"*

A lack of accountability in community affairs leads to various abuses. Interviewees reported that to some extent it is accepted as a part of life. The three most important examples mentioned by respondents were:

> The need to pay extra fees for basic services
> The lack of clarity about the distribution of humanitarian aid
> Payment of fees to the judiciary or to *sobas* for the resolution of disputes

These abuses are partly driven by poverty and have implications for social organisation and solidarity. A lack of accountability is also frequently cited by communities as an obstacle to social stability, to development, and to the achievement of justice. As one community member said: *"Low levels of accountability can be a weapon of war because this creates internal conflicts".* It puts an increased strain on people's livelihoods. Civil servants are frequently underpaid and face similar difficulties in earning a living as the populations they serve: *"the problem is that an agent of authority does not receive a salary for this work that corresponds to the cost of living".* Unaccountable leadership is in part a survival strategy. Within communities, also, the need to ensure personal survival often takes precedence over the communal interest, facilitating corruption.

> *"To do away with the problem of asking for extra payments, everyone has to be content with the little that he has. And it is necessary to bring under control the socio-economic situation these becoming a form of survival mechanism."*

People do realise that, although such behaviour is partly due to socio-economic conditions, it also blocks economic development.

6.4.7 Justice

> *"Where there is no justice you cannot have peace: there will not been transparency, there will only be injustice and conflicts."*

The fair resolution of disputes and conflicts depends on the impartiality of the people and institutions with responsibility for this resolution, namely the police, judiciary and leaders such as *sobas*. If this process lacks transparency, and people believe that individuals with access to money and resources able to 'buy' decisions, then confidence in the system is undermined.

> *"Criminals might be caught but they give money and stay free. Thus there is no fear in doing harm"*

> *"Today justice has lost its authority because of a lack of transparency".*

Interviewees cited cases at various levels where they felt that decisions were unclear, which left them feeling less secure and less confident in their dealings with others.

6.5   Communities organisations and solidarity

The interviews carried out during this research indicate the following changes in the underlying social structure and political and economic context that have repercussions for the capacity of communities to organise themselves and resolve problems. It is these capacities, however, that will be essential to the consolidation of peace and to future development and stability.

Community solidarity in rural and peri-urban areas in Huambo has been reduced: The division of communities through the war, violence and displacement, changes in leadership and 'the poverty factor' described above have disrupted community organisation and solidarity. In this context personal priorities often come before communal priorities.

Traditional practices and culture have been weakened: Cultural and social values may support solidarity and mutual assistance at the local level, but colonisation, war and the increased role of the churches have disrupted this. Young people have often become disconnected from the older generations and are frequently reported to no longer respect the elders.

Community and social groups can be exclusive, and may divide as well as unite: A variety of social organisations exist at the grassroots level, including church groups, women's groups, and youth groups. These mobilise community action, but are generally exclusive, with church groups for example catering only for their own congregations and the MPLA-run groups having a strong political role. Development projects may lead to a separate community group for each project.

Community groups are linked to outside institutions. This leads to vertical, top-down links displacing horizontal bonds within communities.

The capacity of communities to resolve conflicts internally has been weakened: In the past the *ondjango* provided a way for conflicts to be resolved but this has been weakened as yet no effective alternative has emerged. Today conflicts even emerge between those who should be resolving conflicts.

The capacity of communities to influence local administrations is weak: Communities have few opportunities to transmit their views and objections upwards. This lack of participation contributes also to the weak capacity of local administrations to execute their task as administrators in provision of basic services and resolution of conflicts.

Communities have access to limited information through a restricted number of channels. High rates of illiteracy, poverty, unaccountable leadership and a general lack of information, limit people's access to information.

The capacity of communities to deal with new challenges is constrained by these changes. It will be necessary to find ways to help communities to deal with the kind of new challenges that will be described in the next section.

7   PEACE AND CONFLICT: FUTURE CHALLENGES AND RISKS

This section describes some of the challenges that are likely to face communities in Huambo Province in the near future, and the reaction of interviewees to these issues.

7.1   Return of IDPs

After 4 April 2002, movement of people began from IDP centres and peri-urban areas to their areas of origin. According to PEPARR II, a further 170 000 people are expected to return during 2003. The majority are likely to return without substantial assistance from the Provincial or local Government.

IDPs are frequently unhappy with both Government and NGOs at the lack of support they have received, especially when compared with the treatment given to UNITA combatants and families. They express the view that they have suffered and UNITA are being rewarded. They are dissatisfied because they see NGOs and UN agencies passing them while they receive nothing. They also report conflicts between IDPs and those who stayed, especially over the issue of land that was occupied by those who stayed while the IDPs were away. One person interviewed in a peri-urban *bairro* in Huambo said that her son returned to his original village but was not well received by those residents he encountered, who feared that the returnee would claim back land that they had occupied in the meantime. The interviewee said that he eventually stepped on a 'traditional mine' leaving him severely ill and forcing his return to the city. Another interviewee said:

> *"I am a displaced person. I would like to return to my place of origin but I am reluctant to do so. I have lost the habit of living in a village. The family members that I will meet there do not know the laws on land and so might try to do away with me."*

Another said:

> *"There is peace because the war has ended, but there is a big struggle because of land and this leads to a war of witchcraft, and because of this I am not thinking about going back to my original land.".*

A further dimension is where rural communities have been split, and each has subsequently appointed their own *soba*. Upon return, it is clear that there can only be one *soba* in a community, and a power struggle often ensues. Information was received about one such situation in a rural community where one of the *sobas* was eventually killed.

Such problems are not exclusive to rural areas. IDPs are also returning from Luanda to Huambo, having fled Huambo during or after the UNITA occupation of the city. As a result, house prices have risen and there are conflicts with temporary occupants. As discussed in the section on land, returning commercial farmers also enter into conflict with local communities about land occupation.

7.2   Re-integration of ex-combatants

7.2.1 UNITA ex-combatants and families

At the time of the research there were 88 982 ex-combatants and family members in the five Gathering Areas in Huambo Province, some 26 513 of which are expected return to other Provinces. As a result 9 255 ex-combatants are expected to resettle within Huambo, along with dependents, and a further approximately 15 000 are expected to return to Huambo from other provinces with an unknown number of family members. Around 3 089 ex-combatants and 12 442 family members are believed to have returned as of February 2003[20].

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[20] IRSEM, 'Estatística de Reinserção de Ex-Militares na Província do Huambo por Município de Residência Pretendida', 7 February 2003

A fear in the national demobilisation and reintegration process has been the formation of UNITA 'enclaves', semi-permanent settlements around the Gathering Areas. While this has not yet happened, there are ex-combatants who leave and then return to their, or another Gathering Area. Since the land on which they are built is frequently already owned by someone else, it could cause major conflicts if the ex-combatants 'overstay their welcome'.

Ex-combatants also show a high degree of disaffection with the support that they are receiving as this has been less than expected through a lack of logistical capacity. UNITA ex-combatants are vocal about the lack of aid[21].

Further difficulties may arise when they do return to their areas of origin. In many places this is reported to have led to tensions. These have been aroused by the provision of support to UNITA combatants, by land disputes and old hostilities. Some who had left Gathering Areas have subsequently returned, either to the same or to another Gathering Area, and many others are consequently very reluctant to leave.

Many UNITA ex-combatants who have been badly received in their former communities blame this on the MPLA,. In one Gathering Area a story was recounted to us about an ex-combatant who, on arriving at his destination tried to rent a house. The owner of the house at first agreed, but subsequently was told this 'would create problems with the party', and the ex-combatant was forced to leave[22]. In another, the commander also alluded to the possibility of poor reception of ex-combatants being a deliberate strategy, although he appeared to have been somewhat reassured by the local administrator that it was not.

> *"It sometimes happens that people of a village do not receive well people who have come back from the bush. And this raises a question: are people doing this because they themselves feel that they should not welcome people from the bush, or are they following orders from above?"*

A balance must therefore be drawn between supporting ex-combatants to the exclusion of other members of the community, and potentially frustrating ex-combatants who may be a destabilising force on society. As one interviewee told us, *"The Government should give assistance to help communities receive demobilised soldiers. At present the Government only gives assistance to former UNITA combatants, though this is necessary to stop them from stealing."*

7.2.2   Ex-combatants from previous peace processes

> *"I am a demobilised soldier from FAPLA[23] and I have received nothing. I defended the country while UNITA destroyed the country but they now receive a great deal of assistance".*

Provision of resettlement assistance is essential, but it may also be a 'trigger' factor for conflicts, especially if such support is not forthcoming for other demobilised soldiers from previous peace processes in 1991 and 1994. The experience of other countries shows that , frustrated demobilised soldiers can prove to be a destabilising factor. Military training, experience of violence and easy access to weapons can lead to conflict if they become dissatisfied. Demobilised soldiers from the Bicesse peace settlement, interviewed during the research, expressed dissatisfaction with the aid that they had received and the delays. As some demobilised soldiers from the Bicesse peace process said *"they came to register us and promised us support. But that means nothing".*

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[21] Interviews conducted with UNITA ex-combatants in Uige Province, January 2002
[22] Interview, UNITA Camp Commander, Gathering Area, Huambo Province, February 2003
[23] FAPLA, the Government Army, was disbanded in 1992 when the new joint army, the FAA was created under the Bicesse Accords

A further consideration is the *defesa civil* force. The failure to include them in any reintegration and support programmes leads to dissatisfaction. As one interviewee said:

> "The Government and the NGOs should not make a difference between the different sides and the assistance should be equitable. That means that people from FAA, FAPLA, ODP and Civil Defence l[24] should get the same assistance. At present the Government only gives assistance to UNITA. The Civil Defence people receive nothing. This is dangerous because the Civil Defence people have not been disarmed and those who come back from the Reception Areas do not have arms. Civil Defence had many responsibilities but they receive nothing. This has not yet led to conflict but it is dangerous if the Government does not react".

7.3   Land conflicts

The return of ex-combatants and IDPs to rural areas, and the resumption of commercial farming after many years of inactivity, may lead to pressure for rural land. Land that was abandoned by IDPs and by those who left with UNITA (voluntarily or by force) has frequently been taken over and farmed by other families. In one rural area included in this research a piece of land was occupied by someone else and then sold on to another party, causing a major conflict when the original owner returned.

In the colonial period, large plots of fertile agricultural and pastoral land were expropriated from the local people and allocated to Portuguese and other foreign commercial farmers. Upon independence, this land was not given back to the original communities. It was allocated to state-owned companies or other state institutions such as the police. Due to the war, many of these so-called '*fazendas*' were not accessible. In the new context of peace however, an array of different parties and individuals claim this land. The original communities (that in many cases reoccupied *fazenda* land during the years of war), commercial farmers, businesses and state institutions may all claim access. It is unclear how the authorities will handle the issue of commercial versus small-scale farmers in cases where their claims on land overlap and conflict. It was observed in one rural area that the original rural community was active in drawing the attention of the media and the local government to their concerns about competition for such land.

In peri-urban areas, research in progress by DW has shown that access to land in peri-urban areas is mostly provided by the informal market, resulting in weak land-tenure security. The regularization of land-tenure rights is difficult for most of the land holders in these areas, due to land legislation that does not adequately address the specific context of peri-urban areas, and due to the lack of land administration capacity. People who left Huambo city during various phases of fighting in the city, or due to the occupation of the city by one or other party, are returning IDPs and claiming land and houses that they left behind. This creates conflicts among contesting land and house owners. Also, a new city plan is currently being prepared and it is suggested that it might include proposal to urbanize *bairros* close to the cement city. Residents of these areas express concerns about possibly being forced to move and the fear of not receiving adequate compensation and of losing what they have invested over the last years.

7.4   Small arms

Angolan police sources suggested in the national newspapers that there are an estimated 4 million light weapons in circulation in the country. At various times in Huambo during the war, weapons have been widely distributed to assist in defence of the city. In rural areas many people belonged to *defesa civil* and had Access to arms. The opinion of people who were interviewed is that those who are not part of *defesa civil* should hand in their weapons, to contribute to stability and, as one

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[24] Pre-Bicesse the Government Army was the FAPLA and UNITA's armed forces the FALA. Post 1992 the joint Government Army (including integrated FALA troops) was called FAA. UNITA's armed forces then became the FMU. The civil defence was formerly called the ODP.

interviewee told us, as a gesture to show that people believe the war is really over. *"The act of handing over arms to the authorities would be a symbol that a durable peace had come."* People interviewed show concerns that if the light weapons remain in their communities, there will be an increased risk of crime and brutality within families and among friends and neighbours, and even of revenge attacks. At the same time it was observed that people want to remain with their weapons precisely because of the fear of crime and continued instability at the community level.

> *"Some people want to remain with their arms so as to have some personal; defence, though this will not work as it increases the risk of brutal actions in the community and between friends."*

However, there is recognition that this is a vicious circle, since arms which are intended to protect against insecurity also provoke it and that the disarmament of the civilian population will be a major challenge in the coming years.

7.5   Banditry and robbery

Many people who were interviewed believe that the end of war may give way to a new form of armed violence through crime, as the large number of former combatants returning to areas where they may face difficulties in securing land and housing increases the risk that they resort to banditry and robbery in order to survive. Interviewees noted that previous demobilisation processes in 1991 and 1994 had led to this problem and that some people believe that there are still ex-combatants who are not fully disarmed still in the bush[25].

Some interviewees also mentioned another problem of thieves travelling from urban areas to steal from fields and houses in rural areas, though one community reported a decrease in this kind of crime since the end of the war. The opening up of roads has also led to an increase in attacks and armed robbery of trucks and *candongeiras*[26] along secondary roads, in particular, in Huambo Province. There is a tendency at times to blame these attacks on ex-UNITA combatants, although there is no evidence that they are responsible.

> *"Although not everyone has arms, there are people want to keep their arms for security as there are many robbers in the city, even right here. The problem is not so much UNITA, it is irresponsible people who should have their arms taken away from them."*

7.6   Reconciliation

> *It is difficult to say that there hás been reconciliation. People insult each other, are rude, even hit each other.".*

Reconciliation of communities is perhaps the ultimate, and most fundamental challenge in peace-building, since many of the conflicts described above have, at their root, the societal divisions described at the beginning of this report. Communities report that they have been ordered to 'forgive and forget', and are aware of the importance of this, with one interviewee telling us. *"Peace came not only because of the death of Savimbi. We have to say this so as not to give the impression that UNITA were completely defeated".* Many other people talked about the 'law of reconciliation'.

At a deeper level, however, this poses challenges. Forgiveness, while essential, is still, understandably, a long way off, and will be dependent on the actions of both 'sides'.

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[25] Information from confidential interviews with communities, in Gathering Areas, and with NGO representatives in Huambo and Luanda
[26] The word 'candongeira' covers anyone working in the informal sector, but here refers to privately run transport such as minibuses

> *"There is not a real reconciliation because former wrong-doers do not ask for forgiveness from the people who suffered. They think or pretend that they did no wrong. And this makes it difficult to forgive them."*

Demonstrations by rural people against the return of large groups of ex-combatants and their dependants to their native villages (Vila Franca, Londuimbali, or Mungo Sede) are an indication of underlying tensions.

7.7   Elections

Two types of elections are being discussed for the future. National elections would complete the Bicesse Accords of 1994. Local elections would be part of the process of decentralisation of power. Elections pose a major challenge and potential risk in terms of peace-building.

> *"Election are not the way to find peace, because it is at the elections that peace escaped from us last time."*

This comment by an interviewee sums up the feeling encountered during this research, although interviewees were often reluctant to speak openly about their feelings on this subject since it is still considered 'political' and therefore taboo. Elections still arouse a particular nervousness after the events of 1992 and 'multi-partyism' is even blamed for the war sometimes, with one interviewee saying "if there was only one party there would be no war". Interviewees perceive a risk in elections and do not perceive how they might help in solving their practical problems. Elections suggest polarised positions rather than the seeking of consensus.

Nervousness about elections is accompanied by ideas on how they should be managed so as to avoid 'confusion'[27]. Responses included the following:

> *"Politicians need to explain to the people that they must avoid any conflicts at the time of the elections"*

> *"Political leaders must ensure that elections are just and transparent."*

> *"There must not be so much rush with the elections"*

> *"There must not be corrupt observers, or else we will once again have confusion."*

> *"Nobody must be allowed to intimidate anyone."*

> *"Elections must be held in a climate of calm and confidence."*

The most important factor in successful elections will, paradoxically, be their de-politicisation, so that a situation is reached "*where each person feels that they are not going to vote because they belong to Party A or Party B but where each person votes for the person votes for a leader that he or she thinks should govern the country.*"

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[27] 'Confusão, a term used in Angola to refer to a variety of situations including general conflict, violence and war.

8. OPPORTUNITIES FOR NGO PEACE-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Peace-building programmes, projects and activities should address immediate, medium and long term causes of violent conflict at the same time. Development programmes need to be aware of the social dynamics of the areas where they are based. This requires an understanding of the underlying social tensions (Section Six) and the factors that may bring these to the surface (Section Seven). These need to monitored and addressed where possible. The research carried out in Huambo Province suggests the following ways of addressing underlying tensions and factors that may bring these to the surface.

Support to local Conflict Resolution Capacities and local institutions. Conflict resolution is not a technical short-term activity, but a process that involves mediation, empowerment, local engagement of youth, promotion of accountability and access to information.

It is questionable whether international NGOs should be involved in mediation of local conflicts, as there is the risk of doing more harm than good. As the research showed, there are often quite effective local mediation and conflict resolution mechanisms in place. There are local institutions for various purposes. Where their level of success is low it may be because they are marginalized or too weak. They may have been slow to adapt to the change in context. Trust, reciprocity and accountability, essential ingredients for the functioning of institutions, may have originally relied on face-to-face contacts in relatively closed communities and have been eroded by the movement of the population and the break-up of communities.

Intervening actors, such as NGOs, need to be aware that through their presence and their contacts they automatically support some types of local leadership while excluding others. The tendency is to contact and therefore strengthen *sobas*, church leadership and local administrations, while often excluding the less visible women and youth leaders. There is a risk of marginalising parts of divided communities. There is a tendency to assume that local leaders are trusted and accountable because they live in the community, which is not necessarily the case. Intervening actors will need to assist the development of trust in, and accountability of, local leaders. All this implies that they should first acquire a good knowledge of the local context.

Media and Access to Information is in another possible area of intervention for international NGOs. At the time of the research, Radio Huambo was keen to sell radio time to NGOs. This space could be used for appropriate programmes though care and skill is required for this. During the research, interviewees were asked to mention their favourite radio programme and almost without exception they mentioned '*Pasuka*', a programme in Umbundu that focuses on news and rumours from the *bairros* and villages. There is one local NGO in Huambo that does a Civil Education programme but this was not mentioned once by the interviewees. This is an indication that any programme presented should be in Umbundu, about local issues and to be presented in a creative and entertaining way.

The lack of access to written media is another constraint, especially the lack of access in Huambo to the 'private' newspapers that circulate in Luanda. Radio Ecclesia has not yet set up its transmitter in Huambo. When it does it will be an important source of information at the provincial level.

Promotion of Debates on Peace-Related Themes is a starting point to address many issues mentioned in this report. They are issues that require the seeking of consensus among a range of social actors. Real reconciliation in communities requires addressing issues constructively and not obliging people to stay silent about them. There have been experiences in Huambo Province of well-facilitated debates that have begun to address the issues mentioned in Sections Six and Seven. At some stage these experiences could be extended to Municipal capitals, and then to communal towns, villages and bairros. Observation during the research of a debate in Katchiungo for example showed that, with good facilitation, people can overcome restraints to talk about sensitive issues quite rapidly. It is however important that debates are held in the local language,

that facilitators do not dominate discussions and that participants do have the space to talk about issues that affect them directly. These kinds of debates can serve as a participative planning tool in order to identify local priorities and local partners. If conducted in an inclusive manner, such debates further bring together different political parties, government representatives, police, women, youth, traditional leaders etc, and therefore contribution to reconciliation and reintegration.

A Focus on Youth is required due to their numbers (about half of Angola's population is under15) and the importance of youth for conflict prevention and future economic development, Chapter 6.2.3 gave a short outline of the specific problems confronted by youth in contemporary Huambo province. Their needs are not being met, in rural areas particularly, and they have few opportunities. More research is needed on the situation of the youth in Huambo (and Angola in general). Specific research is needed on armed youth within the civil population (such as those in the civil defence). NGOs should revise their social mobilization methodologies, becoming more 'youth sensitive and specific peace-building activities should be organized for youth from both sides.