ASSOCIATIONAL LIFE IN AFRICAN CITIES

Popular Responses to the Urban Crisis

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CHAPTER 15

Communities and Community Institutions in Luanda, Angola

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BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This paper is based on research carried out in December 1996 in urban areas in Angola, as part of a larger study of communities and community institutions in the country. The research examined community institutions as a potential basis for development interventions in urban areas, mainly in the capital city Luanda. The research was a response to the severe lack of information about people's living conditions, institutions and production systems in Angola.

The research project was carried out through semi-structured interviews with key informants in Government and in Non-Governmental Organisations. Case-studies in two peri-urban *bairros* (spontaneous, unserviced settlements) were carried out through semi-structured interviews and through focus-group discussions. The interviews and discussion groups focused on the growth and structure of Luanda, coping strategies, family and neighbourhood co-operation, community structures, relations with Government and views on development. Other previous studies were also re-analysed (Amado, Cruz and Hakkert, 1992; INE, 1993).

The two *bairros* which were studied in depth were Palanca and Hoji-ya-Henda. The *bairro* Palanca is inhabited by people from the north of Angola of the Bakongo group, many of whom lived in exile in Kinshasa from about 1961 to 1982. The *bairro* Hoji-ya-Henda is inhabited mainly by people from the immediate Luanda hinterland and from the Kimbundu group. Both *bairros* grew spontaneously during the 1980s and are located about 7 kilometres from the city centre ("Baixa") of Luanda.

The need for research

There has never been any significant amount of research carried out at the community level in Angola. Such research was not encouraged by the Portuguese during the colonial period, and only at the beginning of the anti-colonial struggle in 1961 was any need felt for understanding local customs, farming systems or coping mechanisms. Community based research has not been encouraged in the post-independence period either. There has been a strong belief in rapid industrialisation and modernisation, and the ability of the State to survive on off-shore production of petroleum reduced the need to understand basic socio-economic processes (Messiant, 1998). In fact, socio-economic development has become the *de facto* responsibility of donor organisations.

Knowledge about grassroots civil society is of importance for reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation in Angola. The high-profile September 1995 Round Table of Donors in Brussels endorsed a Programme of Community Rehabilitation and National Reconciliation as the main vehicle for social reconstruction. This states that "Angola's overall recovery depends on the ability of the country to bring about (among other factors) the rehabilitation of economic and social infrastructure through community rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes" (Government of Angola, 1995).

Communities and community organisations in Angola are expected to play an important role in physical reconstruction, social reconstruction, peace-building, and reconciliation. This is in line with the current ideology in the international aid community, which emphasises that "civil society" has a key role in development and democratisation and that the process of developing institutions is essential, especially in Africa where there has been institutional regression (Uphoff, 1993).

Some observers have argued that the enormous changes in Angola following from war, forced population displacement, rapid urbanisation etc. have led to an individualistic society in which community organisations have disappeared. Other observers have postulated that it is only through community solidarity that most Angolans have survived the past 40 turbulent years.

URBANISATION IN ANGOLA

Urban population growth has been extremely high in Angola, even by African standards. The percentage of the population living in urban areas is now estimated at over 50 per cent (UNDP, 1997) (UNICEF/GoA, in preparation), compared to only 14 per cent in 1970 and 11 per cent in 1960 (Amado, Cruz and Hakkert, 1992). All population data in Angola are uncertain, but approximately 3 million people are now believed to live in Luanda and another 3 million live in the other major towns of Lobito, Benguela, Huambo, Lubango, Malanje and Uige. The total population in Angola is 12 million.

At the same time, the contribution of rural areas to the economy has declined dramatically. By 1996 agriculture contributed only 7 per cent of GDP, in stark contrast to the early 1970s when Angola was a large net exporter of agricultural products and the fourth largest producer of coffee for the world market (UNICEF/GoA, 1999). The petroleum sector's share of GDP reached 60 per cent in 1996, compared to insignificant levels in the 1960s.

Rapid urban population growth from 1960 to 1974 was associated with attempts by the Portuguese colonial government to accelerate economic development. Immigrants from Portugal, contract labourers brought from the central highlands to work on the railways and ports, and people from surrounding areas attracted by urban employment were the main components of urbanisation.

Since 1975, urban migration has not been caused by the attraction of urban areas or the availability of employment, but rather by push-factors in rural areas. The first twenty years of Independence have been a period of extreme turbulence, with forced population movements, destruction of infra-

structure and deterioration of the agricultural sector. This turbulence continues, despite attempted peace settlements through the Bicesse and Lusaka agreements of 1991 and 1994 respectively (Tvedten, 1997).

Until recently there has been an assumption that at least some of the urban growth would be reversed with the end of conflict. But the end of conflict has proved elusive, and even when it comes it is by no means certain that people will return to rural areas. During the periods of relative peace (such as the period of "no war, no peace" between 1995 and 1997), the enhanced freedom of movement within the country led even more people to migrate to urban areas rather than return to rural areas. At the same time very few recently arrived urban dwellers are making plans for returning to rural areas, as the conflict has continued for so long and the rural economy and trade has collapsed. Despite the difficulties of urban life, the perception of rural areas is mainly negative with forced labour in the colonial era, continuous armed conflict, and inadequate social services.

A high urban birth rate also means that a large proportion of the urban population is made up of young people born in towns and cities, as children of rural people who migrated to the city. Sixty-one per cent of people in Luanda are under 20 yeas of age and 49 per cent under 15 (INE, 1993). Thirty-six per cent of the total population of Luanda was born outside the city, but only 44 per cent of the population under 30 and 13 per cent of the population under 15 were born in other areas. These young people do not consider themselves as displaced people who will eventually return to rural areas.

There is a growing realisation that reconstruction needs to take into account that present-day Angolan society is heavily urbanised. Reconstruction cannot be based on traditional perceptions of Angola as primarily a rural society: Despite this, however, there is no strategic view of urban development in Angola.

The growth of Luanda

The most spectacular growth in the urban population has taken place in Luanda, which now contains about a quarter of the total population of Angola. There has been migration to Luanda from rural as well as other urban areas, and from all provinces in the country. The siege and occupation by UNITA of cities such as Huambo, Uige, Kuito and Malanje during 1993 and 1994 were particularly important events and led to large-scale migration from these towns to the relative safety of Luanda. The population of Luanda is estimated to have grown as follows (Table 15:1).

Historically the arrival on a large scale of Portuguese settlers from 1945 onwards led to the construction of many multi-story buildings and larger, permanent houses in the "down-town" area of Luanda (presently the Municipal District of Ingombotas and parts of the Municipal District of Maianga). This led to the expulsion of the local people who already lived there to surrounding areas. The central cement city (mainly inhabited by Portuguese) became known as the "Baixa", while the surrounding, unplanned African settlements became known as *musseques* (from a local Kimbundu word describing the sandy soil of the higher areas surrounding the city). The peripheral

musseques grew rapidly while older musseques, closer to the Baixa, disappeared under multi-story buildings.

Table 15:1. *Population growth, Luanda*

Year	Population	Year	Population
1930	50,000	1970	480,000
1940	61,000	1980	940,000
1950	141,000	1990	2,000,000
1960	224,000	1997	3,000,000

By 1970, the inhabited area had reached out in a semi-circle of 5 kilometres radius around the port of Luanda and the Baixa. Beyond this, industry was expanding out further along the main roads, with some small residential areas close to the main industries. However, most of the land between the main roads was uninhabited, with only vegetable gardens and *mandioca* (cassava) fields, cultivated by people who lived in Luanda but worked their fields and gardens a few days each week.

The population distribution changed markedly from 1970 to the 1990s. The flight of the Portuguese after 1975, civil conflict in the city after Independence, the arrival of Bakongo people from Kinshasa and northern Angola after 1982, and successive waves of immigrants from various parts of Angola completely changed the city. Between 1974 and 1982, the areas between the main roads became slowly occupied, and this occupation intensified after 1982. By 1986, the residential areas formed a semi-circle reaching out about 8 kilometres from the Baixa. Growth has continued since, so that the residential area now reaches more than 10 kilometres from the centre of the city. At the same time all areas of Luanda have suffered a continuous increase in population through increases in the number of people on each building plot, and in each house, and with people even occupying the edges of roads or uncompleted high-rise buildings.

Luanda communities

The population of Luanda has come from all parts of Angola at various times and has integrated in various ways. The trajectories of different population groups migrating to Luanda are complex, and not everybody migrated directly to the city from their areas of origin.

Before Independence in 1975, Ovimbundu people (speaking Umbundu) from the central plateau of Angola were forcibly recruited to work in the port and railways in Luanda and made up 20 per cent of the population of the city. Ovimbundu people were also forcibly recruited in the late colonial period to work on cotton and coffee plantations in northern Angola. As the plantations gradually collapsed from 1975 onwards, they migrated to Luanda as well. Ovimbundu people are often found living in precarious conditions on the periphery of Luanda.

Before Independence in 1975, only two per cent of the population of Luanda were Bakongo people from northern Angola. Bakongo people (speak-

ing Kikongo) tended to migrate to Kinshasa (Belgian Congo, Republic of Zaire, Democratic Republic of Congo), especially from 1961 onwards when there was a massive flow of people following abortive uprisings against Portuguese rule in the north. Significant numbers of Bakongo returned to Angola from 1982 onwards, mainly to Luanda and not to their rural areas of origin. They tend to live in *bairros* such as Palanca and Mabor, and now make up a significant (but unknown) percentage of the city population. Many Bakongo returned to Angola with educational qualifications that they had obtained in exile, and with an outlook on life that they had learned in Kinshasa.

The other significant population group in Luanda is the Ambundu (speaking Kimbundu) from the hinterland of Luanda, who in 1970 represented 68 per cent of the city population. They are still probably the largest group in Luanda. Certain areas contain high concentrations of Ambundu people from particular areas (such as Malanje or Catete) while other areas contain more mixed populations.

The way that migrants integrate themselves in the city is still not fully understood. Most migrants initially seem to go to a *bairro* where they have family members, or people from their immediate area of origin. They stay with them for some time before they find land where they can build their own houses, sometimes in more peripheral area of the city where there are also people from their area of origin. But it is not always the case that *bairros* are populated by people from the same region: Viana II on the outskirts of the city has residents from fourteen of the eighteen Provinces of Angola, and many other *bairros* also have mixed populations.

Survival in the city

Migrants from rural areas come to a city with few services and few employment opportunities. The current population of Luanda is about 3 million, with services designed for a city of only 500,000. Residents are particularly concerned about the poor water and electricity supply, poor schools and medical services, deteriorating roads and inadequate security.

Findings from our 1996 survey indicate that the lowest levels of government administration function very poorly, and respondents argue that the Government Administration is hardly visible. Communal Administrators report neither receiving a budget to maintain and operate the offices nor a salary. The Municipal Districts, which are comprised of two or three *Comunas*, are perceived as marginal with limited budgets and depending on the Provincial Government of the City of Luanda for supply of services.

Only thirty-five per cent of incidents of sickness are treated by public health services, with 42 per cent being treated by private services and 24 per cent by self-medication. The poorest section of the population usually cannot afford medical consultations, and buy medicines in the market without seeking medical advice.

Furthermore, most parts of the city outside the Baixa area do not have piped water, and people purchase their water from private water-sellers who are supplied by private water tankers. The price of water is high, being highest

(about 15 US$ per cubic metre) on the southern periphery of the city which is furthest from the main water pipes and the River Bengo (the main source of water). While aid organisations have defined certain groups of the population as particularly vulnerable (street children, war-disabled, some groups of displaced people) the opinion of most people is that there are large sections of the population who do not have an adequate income and are vulnerable to a whole range of shocks, such as poverty, illness, and crime.

The income of a typical family comes from a number of different sources and from different family members. More men than women are employed, but as many as 58 per cent of women are economically active. A young woman will often look after many children from her extended family to make it possible for other women from the family to generate income. It is only innovative social organisation like this that makes it possible for a family to survive in present day Luanda.

An analysis of one extended family (Van der Winden, 1996), revealed a monthly income of 780 US$ for 10 adults and 13 children. Three women with informal economic activities contributed 55 per cent of the income, and small scale agricultural activities contributed 18 per cent. Twenty-seven per cent came from formal sector employment, though this may be atypical, as this family had one member paid by an international aid organisation. Those employed by the State receive much lower and irregular salaries.

Thus the majority of families in Luanda depend on the informal sector market and petty trading for their survival. This means long hours of work by women, which in turn depends on co-operation between members of a family and between neighbours for child-care and housework. Figures of the National Statistical Institute indicate that 50 per cent of the households in Luanda have at least one member involved in small scale trading (in markets or on the street) (INE, 1996). The ease with which it is possible to begin informal trading and the small amount of capital required makes it an attractive prospect, but profit margins are very low. INE data indicate that the more people in a family who are employed, the poorer is the family. For most families the informal labour market is characterised by a large number of low-paying jobs which each contribute a small amount to the family income.

The informal labour market is a relatively recent phenomenon, but continues to expand. Competition to enter it is high, which lower profits. Women who sell fish usually sell between one and three boxes per day, and the profit is about 3 US$ per box. This is barely enough to feed a family.

There is no official poverty line for Angola, nor defined criteria to determine one (Lopes, 1993). The National Statistical Institute (INE) has defined its own criteria and indicates that 60 per cent of the Angolan population are below this poverty-line and 10 per cent are in extreme poverty, with more than 70 per cent of family expenditure being used for food (INE, 1996).

There are few data available to show differences in income levels and poverty between the different areas of the city. Data are unreliable and are generally aggregated to the level of Municipal Districts, which are made up of different types of *bairros*. Health data indicate lower morbidity and mortality in the Districts of Maianga and Ingombotas than in Districts which contain

more spontaneous peri-urban *musseques*. But all health indicators show very poor health, and declining health conditions over the last 20 years.

ORGANISATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS
Traditional organisations

"Traditional" institutions of solidarity, to which all members of an area belong by birth and which regulate all aspects of life, still exist in many places in Angola. The pastoral population in Southern Angola could not have survived without institutions regulating vital aspects of the life of the community, such as migration patterns, use of water, and numbers of cattle. The national animal of Angola, Palanca Negra Gigante, has survived in the Malanje Province thanks to protection by traditional leaders. Also development projects in some rural areas have been based on "natural" forms of solidarity which unite a whole village.

In all rural areas of Angola, as well as in some urban areas, there are still traditional leaders or *sobas* (Neto, 1998). However, conflict and instability have affected the role of *sobas*. In some areas the Soba is someone in whom a community has confidence. In others the Soba is appointed from outside and mainly acts as an intermediary in the transmission of information between the village and lower levels of the State Administration (Andrade et al., 1998; Pacheco and Ryle, 1998).

In Luanda no remnants of "traditional" organisational structures have been identified, and the word Soba is not used. There are no leaders who are able to speak for all the people living in one area, even when people have recently arrived from the same area of origin. Migrants become urbanised rapidly, and rural values and institutions seem to disappear quickly.

Neither has it been possible to identify organisations which link people with their areas of origin. Home area associations, which are an important feature of African cities such as Khartoum and Addis Ababa, are not found in Luanda. Most people seem to lose contact with their rural areas of origin, partly because the difficulties of travel are so great. This is a concern for people, as they are not able to help their family members in rural areas. Some people report that they travel outside Luanda, but to areas with easier access such as Kwanza Sul (where it is possible to buy agricultural produce) or the Lundas (the diamond-mining areas) and not to their own areas of origin.

Although no "traditional" organisational structures have been identified, Bakongo-people living in Luanda place particular emphasis on their traditional culture and the role of solidarity. They express a greater belief in the concept of community, show more recognition of being part of a specific group and tend to work together. They conceptualise this as s*angolo sako*, which signifies the link to an African tradition of individual or collective self-help. The Bakongo believe that taking initiatives will attract support from others. They contrast this tendency with other Angolans, who they feel have been heavily influenced by European colonial and post-independence paternalism which makes them wait for help instead of taking initiatives themselves.

Official organisations

Residents' Committees were organised by the Government in all urban areas in 1983, as a means of communication between urban populations and the State. Members of the Residents' Committees were elected and the Committees functioned for some time. However, these committees are currently not functioning. People knew of their existence, but they were unable to say what they did or when they had last met. The explanation that residents give for their disappearance is that there are no clear Government counterparts with which such committees could maintain dialogue, and hence that they could rarely resolve problems and became redundant.

A similar reason was given for the lack of other kinds of autonomous residents' committees. There is little reason to create such organisations if there are no effective local government bodies with which to speak. Another reason given is that there is very little experience with such organisations, in either pre-Independence or post-Independence Angola.

Organisations inspired by NGOs

Despite the lack of tradition and political climate for local organisations, international NGOs have had positive experiences with supporting the few committees that exist for concrete tasks such as water-points committees and Parents' Committees in schools. This indicates that there is potential for organising communities, when this helps to resolve a problem being given high priority by the community itself.

Water committees are responsible for maintaining a water-point, and for collecting money from users for its maintenance and upkeep. Committees of this type are elected by the users, keep the latter informed about the management of the water-point and liaise with the Luanda Water Company. Parents' committees work with the Director of a school, collect funds for school maintenance and monitor the work of the school staff. Parents' Committees have been encouraged by the Ministry of Education.

Both Water Committees and Parents' Committees have succeeded in organising residents of peri-urban *bairros*, and in creating a dialogue with state service providers. In both cases, the input of NGOs has been important for structuring the Committees and creating linkages with the relevant state agencies. NGOs have helped create systems of financial management; carried out leadership training to create accountable and transparent organisations; helped to create an environment of trust between the users and the State service supplier; and dealt with technical aspects of water supply and primary education, which allow residents to participate in a functioning service.

Residents have been less willing to organise when they do not feel that there is a concrete problem to which to relate. It has, in other words, often been necessary to construct a water point before a Water Committee can be organised. Committees bring together people in the same *bairro* who already know each other, who already see each other regularly, and who have common goals which can be dealt with fairly quickly.

Ad-hoc *bairro* organisations

In the two *bairros* studied, Palanca and Hoji-ya-Henda, community organisations were identified which had been established to resolve specific problems and had had a short life span. Families who do not have electricity develop relations with those who have, in order to iron clothes or watch television, and some other service is arranged in return. Families who have poor access to water develop relations with people who have better access to wash their clothes, and some other service is arranged in return etc.

Groups of families join together to repair holes in a street or to remove rubbish. Sporting, cultural and recreation groups have been established and are important for young people. Groups of young people join together to organise an excursion or a sporting event. These recreational groups are small and get little financial assistance. Nevertheless they help create a community feeling.

Residents of the *bairro* of Palanca reported ad-hoc community organisations of this type more frequently than residents of the *bairro* of Hoji-ya-Henda. Palanca is as noted a *bairro* where almost all the residents come from the north of Angola and share a common set of values which emphasise self-help and mutual assistance. Hoji-ya-Henda is a *bairro* with people from more diverse origins, though most are from the Luanda hinterland and from the Ambundu group. They themselves say that they have lost much of their traditional African solidarity, often do not share common values, and have less experience in community organisation than people from the north of Angola. Residents of Hoji-ya-Henda *bairro* also say that even mutual assistance between neighbours or members of an extended family is difficult under the existing economic circumstances.

Ad-hoc organisations in the informal economy

As was noted previously, most people survive through their participation in the informal economy in petty trading on the street and in markets. Their ability to participate in the informal economy depends on developing networks. Women represent the majority of the traders, leaving their children with extended family members or friends and neighbours. Vital knowledge about available goods and where they can be bought and sold also comes through networks. These networks are fluid and to some extent "hidden", as people prefer that outsiders, who may be potential competitors, know little about them.

Some of these networks are "horizontal", in that they are formed between equals who have similar interests. But some are "vertical", with a strong aspect of exploitation and divergence of interest. Longer-term residents, with accumulated assets and superior knowledge, act as gatekeepers to networks of information and services. Those who have sufficient assets or contacts to be involved in wholesale trading are at an advantage in trading networks, as the profit margin in the wholesaling of fish (from the port to the market) is five times higher than at the retail stage (in the market and to the door).

The informal market is not without its rules: it is, in some respects, or-ganised. The huge market of Roque Santeiro in Luanda (where several hun-dred thousand people pass through every day) appears anarchic, but has rules which control the hours of operation, what is sold where, where marketing stalls are located and how an individual gains access to a place to sell. No one is able, or willing, to say how such rules are set or how they are enforced. They create order in a context where the State has not been able to create order: most participants welcome the informal organisation, even though it seems to benefit longer-term and influential residents more than newcomers. The strong correlation between sectors of trade and certain ethno-linguistic groups indicates that access to trade sectors depends on contacts made through extended family links and other people from the same area of origin.

Many people who are involved in petty trading are also involved in an informal savings and credit system known as *kixikila*. A group of between 10 and 15 people who know each other well, and have regular face-to-face con-tact, put money into the *kixikila* regularly: the whole amount is put at the disposition of one of the members in a system of rotation. This gives each member access to a large sum of money once or twice a year, which permits purchase of large quantities of goods or investment. *Kixikila* is similar to *Xi-tique* found in urban areas in southern Mozambique, and to rotating savings societies found in almost every country in Asia and Africa. Similar credit insti-tutions existed in Europe in the past and in some cases, financed small scale industrial development (Putnam, 1993). *Kixikila* was reported to have disap-peared between 1994 and 1996 (a period of very rapid currency devaluation) but is now reported to have re-appeared and grown in importance, to the ex-tent of financing the import of cars and lorries. The institution of *kixikila* is an indicator of a high degree of mutual trust between workmates, friends or neighbours in an environment which is usually depicted as being devoid of such trust.

Local NGOs

Local NGOs have been established by people from the two *bairros* under study since the revision of the Constitution in 1990 made this legal. They vary in size, competence and capacity, but most of them are small with limited funding. The NGOs fill gaps in service provision left by the State and the pri-vate sector. However, many residents remark that they have little information about the local NGOs and are not actively involved in their work.

Local NGOs have only recently begun to work with long-term social mo-bilisation, to help resolve conflicts and to raise the level of trust in a commu-nity. Residents express a desire that NGOs begin to help them create a dia-logue with Government. However, the NGOs themselves are reluctant to take on this role, as they have little experience with being intermediaries and do not want to become involved in what should be direct communication between communities and the Government.

The local NGOs argue that they are almost completely dependent on for-eign donors, and thus have to define their strategy on the basis of the strategy of the latter. This limits them to short-term actions, and to providing services

in the same way as private service-providers (i.e. without involvement by the users).

Local NGOs also report that it is difficult for them to obtain help to build their own capacity, and to cover their running costs. They normally receive a series of small grants, which implies considerable administrative work. They have grown during a period in which foreign donors have been looking for partners to implement emergency programmes, and now face a challenge in adjusting to the donors' new agenda of rehabilitation and development.

Churches

Churches are important institutions in peri-urban Luanda. The large denominations (Roman Catholic, Salvation Army, Baptists, Methodists) are represented, as well as a proliferation of very small Churches. The latter are the most visible and best-organised organisations in peri-urban areas.

Peri-urban residents explain that the rapid growth in the number of churches in their areas has taken place because the churches act as a refuge in times of turbulent and difficult conditions. They act as a substitute for "traditional" structures which have disappeared. But although they are well rooted in peri-urban *bairros*, they do not represent the complete *bairro* or even a sub-area. In some cases they exclude part of the population, or even create divisions in the community. Some residents feel that the large number of very small churches is a particular cause for concern. Where they provide services, such as health-posts, they rarely collaborate among themselves and are unwilling to follow the standards set by the relevant Ministries.

SOME CONCLUSIONS ON URBAN ASSOCIATIONS AND RECONSTRUCTION

We have argued that migrating to an urban area in Angola implies an abrupt break with "traditional" rural forms of solidarity. The function of rural forms of solidarity has been taken over by informal forms of organisation, as well as churches. Both types of institutions fill the gap created by the inadequate services provided by the State and the private sector. It will require time and energy to build the necessary trust and linkages, and to define the rules of co-operation necessary to function constructively.

People from the northern Angola, who historically have experience from the urban context of Kinshasa, bring a set of shared values which allows them to recreate forms of solidarity more easily. People from other areas do not yet have the same experience of creating their own associations or NGOs, even though they argue that such institutions have the potential to resolve practical problems in their *bairro*. Activities which involve collecting or saving money, are said to present particular difficulties, because money tends to disappear.

However, the institution of *kixikila* indicates that, under certain circumstances, trust and appropriate mechanisms of monitoring can be developed. Where there has been some success in organising collection of funds (e.g. for managing water points or improving schools), it has involved long-term social

mobilisation, usually by an NGO, to help resolve conflicts, raise the level of trust, develop a transparent leadership and create appropriate rules.

Duffield (1994) uses Angola as an example of a complex political emergency where not only economic and physical infrastructure have been damaged, but also the country's institutions and organisations: cultural, educational and health structures; market and business networks; human resources and skills; and social, civil and political organisations have all disintegrated and left an institutional void, undermining the foundations upon which conventional social relations are based and upon which recovery should be built. The associational forms which currently exist in peri-urban Luanda do little to fill this institutional void. The state has retreated, but the market and collective action have only partially occupied the space.

Residents state that life in urban areas is costly, and that there are important services which simply do not exist. The residents of both *bairros* studied reported difficulties in their relations with Government, but they still argue that development of civil society requires a more active role by the State rather than its retreat.

There is a potential to link local initiatives with the relevant government structures. However, this necessitates a re-definition of the role of the State, to actively link with local initiatives and work at the micro-level. The fact that community initiatives do not produce a response from Government creates a feeling of cynicism and frustration. This is particularly true among people from the north of Angola living in Palanca, who feel that the State is against them due to their ethnic background. People from the north of Angola feel that their greater propensity to take initiatives or organise themselves creates misunderstandings with other Angolans, who are influenced by paternalism or dependency in their relations with institutions such as the state and the Church.

In the peri-urban areas of Luanda, there are initiatives which at present are directed mainly towards family and individual survival. There is, as we have argued, a potential for community-level responses when there is adequate response by other parties. Residents of peri-urban *bairros* are only interested in organising themselves around activities which they feel can resolve their problems on a more permanent basis. Because of promises made in the past that did not bear fruit, communities tend to be wary of promises, plans and fine words.

It is currently mainly NGOs that are concerned about the institutional void in the poor areas of Luanda. The State has not shown much sign of being aware of this problem, and continues to be more concerned with technical than institutional development. The "international community" appears mainly to see the solution in terms of the creation of multi-party democracy or, in the case of the World Bank, privatisation of State services. We have argued that the concept of community based rehabilitation advocated by NGOs is still valid, and that the creation of sustainable institutions is potentially an important contribution to peace-building, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development in Angola.

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