

Significant policy achievements

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Water Governance – Influencing Policy in Angola by Allan Gain, Development Workshop Angola

Angola experienced a massive shift of populations from the war-torn interior to the coastal settlements during the conflict years. Displaced families built their housing in unoccupied unserviced peripheral land around the existing towns. Low cost land was typically in the most environmentally vulnerable locations adjacent to coastal marshes or in river basins that have in recent years become increasingly susceptible to flooding. Most population shifts occurred in the civil-war years from 1974 through to the ceasefire in 2002 —years that coincide with increasing concern about global climate change. It was also in 1974 that the colonial power abandoned Angola and closed down over 500 meteorological and hydrological tracking stations leaving the country without means to track its increasing vulnerability.

For the displaced settling settlers in peri-urban coastal districts, once they had built a basic shelter, their next priority was obtaining sufficient water to sustain their families. Development Workshop (DW)¹ a longstanding IDRC partner, engages in research on issues of water and climate change in these vulnerable coastal settlements. The IDRC supported research² has been central DW's efforts to influence water policy in Angola. Research done in 2007 showed that the poorest families

¹ Development Workshop Angola was founded in 1981 at the request of the Angolan Government

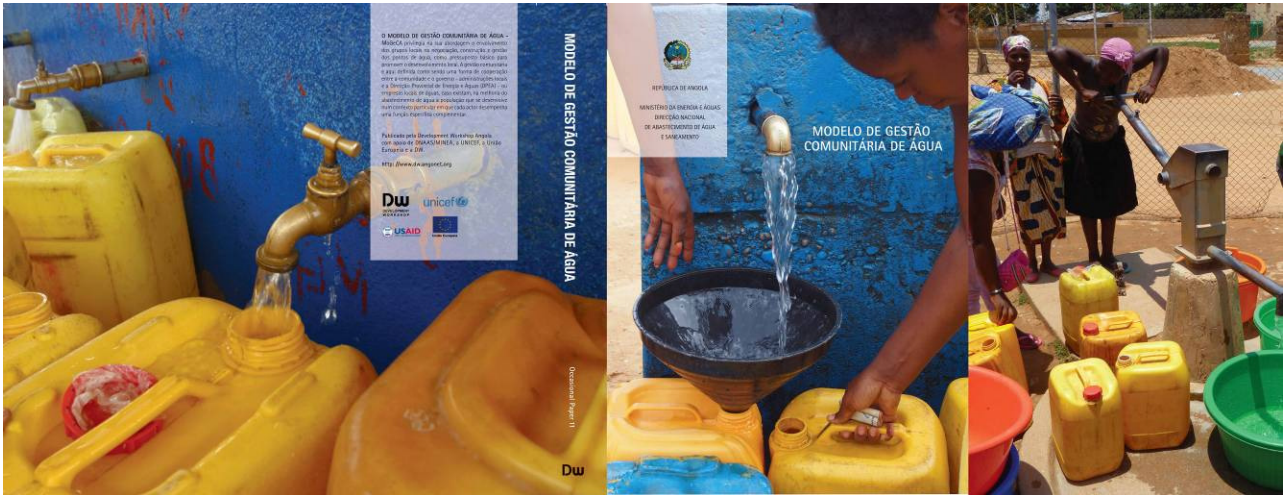
² <http://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/bitstream/10625/40329/1/128831.pdf>

subsisted on about seven litres of water per person³. Moreover, some families spent up to 30 percent of their monthly earnings to buy water that was often untreated.

DW worked with the Ministry of Water and Energy to support the “Water for All” program that commits to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and bring water services to 80% of the country’s population, were ever they live, including in high risk zones. Government - efforts were initially invested in building conventional water supply systems, which frequently ceased to function due to lack of maintenance or fuel shortages. A DW evaluation study concluded that a majority of installed systems had been abandoned or never functioned properly. Technological solutions were not sustainable on their own without local management and financial recovery systems in place to pay for ongoing maintenance.

Building on decades of research and evidence-based demonstration work with communities on service provision, DW developed a strategy of community management of local water standposts that involved the election of water caretakers by consumers and the creation of legally constituted water associations that collected user-fees, managed maintenance, and bought water in bulk from the parastatal provincial water companies. DW together with the Ministry tested this model of water governance in Luanda and several other provinces and proposed it as a remedial tool for incorporation into the “Water for All” program. In late February 2014 the Secretary of State for Water announced that the community water model (Modelo de Gestão Comunitária de Água - MoGeCA) was adopted as national policy and the training manual developed by DW was distributed to municipalities across the country. The African Development Bank with the National Water Directorate has engaged Development Workshop along with the Canadian company CoWater International to develop the post-2015, ten-year strategy for sustainable community water to be piloted in provinces across the country. The program will draw on the evaluation of the Water for All experience and incorporate the water governance lessons from the community management model.

Development Workshop’s experience in Angola illustrates that research and evidence based policy advocacy is an effective long term development strategy that can achieve outcomes at a national scale.



MoGeCA manual published by the Ministry of Water and Energy in February 2014

³ WHO considers 20 liters per day the minimum for refugee camp situations and 30 l/d minimum set by the Angolan Government