

**Trip Report
Displaced Children
and Orphans Fund
Angola**

January 2001

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Additional information or copies of this report can be obtained by contacting

The Displaced Children and Orphans Fund and War Victims Fund
North Tower, Suite 405
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004
(202)789-1500

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ACRONYMS

CCF	Christian Children's Fund
DCOF	Displaced Children and Orphans Fund
IACYF	Initiatives for Angolan Children and Youth Futures
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
MWTT	Mobile War Trauma Team
PBWTT	Province Based War Trama Team
REDOS/ESA	Regional Economic Development Services Offices for East and Southern Africa
SC/UK	Save the Children/UK
UNITA	Union for the Total Independence of Angola
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

INTRODUCTION

The Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) planned a trip to Angola to meet with representatives of two grantees: Christian Children's Fund (CCF) and Save the Children/UK (SC/UK), to discuss progress and visit programs in the field. Lloyd Feinberg, manager of the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund and the Leahy War Victims Fund, led the team. Lynne Cripe, technical advisor for DCOF, based in the Regional Economic Development Services Offices for East and Southern Africa (REDSO/ESA) mission in Nairobi, Kenya, and Danuta Lockett, consultant, accompanied him.

The team spent a considerable amount of time in the field, visiting DCOF grantee project sites in the cities of Luanda, Luena, Lubango, and Huambo, as well as those of grantees supported by the War Victims Fund and the USAID mission. The team thanks the USAID mission for its support and hospitality, particularly Alfreda Brewer, general development officer, and grantee project directors, Marcia B. Jovanovic of CCF, Sheri Lecker of SC/UK, and Daniel Tessema of Veterans International. A list of individuals the team met with during trip and documents reviewed appear in the appendices.

Purpose of the Trip

DCOF periodically visits its project sites to meet with grantee staff to develop a firsthand appreciation of work being done in the field. A DCOF grant recipient since 1995, CCF has developed a culturally rich and sensitive understanding of the impact of war on the psychosocial development of children and families in Angola. Its experiences offer the potential to extrapolate lessons learned to other DCOF programs. Additionally, CCF recently submitted a proposal for extending the project another year, August 2001–August 2002. The team therefore spent considerable time in the field observing CCF's current program, known as the Initiatives for Angolan Children and Youth Futures (IACYF).

The team observed the progress of SC/UK's program on family tracing and reunification and learned of its action research project on identifying factors affecting children's voluntary separation from families.

This report captures the team's observations, particularly with regard to CCF, and recommends future actions.

Background

CCF's present Initiatives for Angolan Children and Youth Futures program has evolved from its earlier Mobile War Trauma Team (MWTT) program initiated in 1994 and the DCOF-supported Province Based War Trauma Team (PBWTT) program, which operated from September 1995–September 1998. The present IACYF program incorporates a number of elements from the PBWTT project, principally its focus on a community-based approach to remedy the psychosocial effects of war and trauma on children and community members. The IACYF program continues to focus on improving the psychosocial well being of school-age children and added youth ages 12–18 to its target population. Initially, the project planned to continue to work in the eight provinces of the PBWTT project in Luanda, Benguela, Huila, Huambo, Bie, Malanje, Moxico, and Uige, but later eliminated Malanje with the return to war in December 1998.

The implementation plan incorporated into project amendment number 5 in September 1999 outlined the following objectives for the IACYF phase:

- Reinforce key adults' knowledge of children and adolescents' psychosocial needs.
- Improve adolescents' social integration into the community.
- Improve the social integration of children ages 6–11 years.
- Improve basic care of pre-school children ages 0–5 years.
- Influence public policy regarding the impact of violence on children and adolescents.

Program activities included the following:

- Situation analysis and identification of areas appropriate for work.
- Training of adults based on the PBWTT curriculum expanded to include youth and strengthening of basic life skills.
- Initial training of national and provincial teams.
- Training and support of key adults working with youth and children in communities.
- Job skills training for youth through an apprenticeship system and small grants for projects.
- Training young adults and senior youth volunteers in child development, impact of violence, and organization of activities that promote healing and social integration.

- Dialogue with parents and key adults in communities on needs of pre-school children, covering areas of basic hygiene, the importance of interaction with infants, alternatives to corporal punishment, and positive parenting.

Angola's December 1998 renewed violence and armed conflict had a significant effect on the intended expansion of the IACYF program. The violence directly affected the project sites, adding considerable instability to communities targeted by the program, particularly in Bie and Huambo provinces, although the effects were also strongly felt in Malanje, Moxico, and Uige. In early 1999, the Malanje office was closed and project staff was evacuated from Huambo, Bie, and Uige provinces. Project staff returned to Bie, Humanbo and Uige provinces, but the Malanje office remained closed. Because of renewed fighting, the safety perimeter around the affected cities was dramatically reduced, minimizing travel outside of the provincial capitals and limiting CCF's selection of communities to urban and peri-urban areas. The population of internally displaced people (IDP) within the safety perimeters also increased dramatically. For this reason, the IACYF program redirected itself to include populations of IDP in its target group.

The psychological effects of returning to war strongly affected the staff and communities. Openly discussing reconciliation can be misconstrued as provocative especially at a time when the government was openly pushing its agenda to return to war, according to staff members. In response to the continuing political instability in Angola, CCF staff redesigned the curriculum to emphasize resilience to trauma rather than recovery. The project was not able to begin and sustain its activities for a six-month period because of disruptions caused by a return to warfare and perceptions that the project might be viewed as advocating anti-war sentiment in its training seminars.

Although the armed conflict continues in outlying areas, particularly in the Lundas and Zaire province, conditions have somewhat stabilized in locations where CCF is based in that the government continues to maintain and in some instances expand control of territories previously held by the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). However, the previously contested areas continue to be under heavy security by government forces and national police. The government in some areas is pursuing the resettlement of people displaced by the most recent conflict and USAID is supporting reintegration programs in Huambo province in the Caala area to attract ex-combatants and deserters to the resettlement sites.

OBSERVATIONS

The DCOF team's observations and comments on the CCF program, based on site visits to Luena, Lubango, and Huambo, focus on the linkage between community-level activities and the psychosocial development of children and youth. The DCOF team observed many activities with children and youth, such as games and sports being played in communities and playgrounds and community infrastructures—schools, playgrounds, and community centers known as *jangos*—being renovated. However, the linkage between these activities and psychosocial development was not apparent in discussions with community members, youth, and children or CCF staff. Team members believed they were observing a community development program with participatory aspects that was focused on the experiences of youth and children. The richness of CCF's past experience with the impact of war and conflict on psychosocial development seemed diluted.

The team members understand the conceptual shift of CCF's project during the PBWTT phase to community-based interventions. It is reasonable to assume that without contextual changes in living conditions and mobilization of community members, raising the awareness and understanding of the impact of trauma on psychosocial development is limiting. Awareness alone cannot address the devastation wrought by war on the physical, economic, and social dimensions of communities and their members. Nor can it right the violence and maltreatment caused by war and its effect on children, youth, and adults who absorb its effects in daily interactions.

By taking on a more contextual approach to psychosocial development and treatment, CCF's earlier approach has evolved from awareness to actions initiated with community members to change the conditions which limit their hopefulness and perspectives on the future. Through community improvement, apprenticeship, and microcredit programs accompanied by training, CCF was attempting to regenerate a sense of hope, a future perspective and a return to normalcy for communities battered by war—in itself a major jump to improving the psychosocial status of war-affected populations, and well within the objectives of CCF's traditional approach.

Unfortunately, the project appears to be revitalizing communities and not taking advantage of community interventions to improve “transgenerational” coexistence, to reduce conflict, to improve psychosocial well being, or to understand the effects of war trauma. In other words, the program appears diffused. It was difficult to identify the links between interventions and

psychosocial improvement of children and youth. This was of particular concern in light of DCOF's mandate to strengthen the capacity of families and communities to provide the necessary care, protection, and support for war-affected children and youth.

Stemming from this basic observation were several others. There did not seem to be a coherent strategy in the field at the community level. Community selection criteria did not appear well defined, although CCF apparently used a situational analysis and assessment process to select communities for project intervention. The elements of competition and conditionality seemed to be missing. Not only do communities need to meet pre-qualifying conditions, the process of selecting and administering to a community should include conditionality to engender and strengthen the sense of ownership.

Furthermore, it was not clear from the site visits where CCF's interventions were hoping to go. What indicators were being used to measure progress and define an end-point to interventions with the community? At what stage would CCF establish that communities have sufficient capacity to graduate from the project or that the project could come to an end?

Finally, there was not enough evidence that the field staff and promoters understood the process in which they were engaged or the method needed to proceed along the mobilization and development track. Again, it did not appear that staff was linking community activities to psychosocial interventions, at least at the action level. The team did not see tools to provide guidelines to the field staff or protocols for training community members.

As a result, it is difficult to determine what the program does and what it has achieved. The team believes the project is overextended in its geographic coverage, commitments to communities, and targeting of too many people over too broad a range of content. It is difficult to grasp the essence of the program or to see clear evidence of it in project sites. In its third phase, the program seems to have departed from its roots and core strengths (e.g., child/youth-focused, culturally grounded program) making it difficult for the team to understand how in its present form it was serving the objectives of the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund.

COMMENTS

This visit was not an evaluation, however the team was placed in an evaluative mode as it sought to understand why the program activities did not represent DCOF's understanding of the project. The team left Angola with a different impression of the program than was portrayed in the midterm reflections and lessons learned report submitted by CCF on December 1, 2000. For example, the midterm report states that

- Many youth report that as a result of the project, they have more activities, higher levels of self-esteem, improved behavior, better relationships with peers and parents, and increased hope.
- IACYF has generated much enthusiasm among teachers, who feel well supported by the training.
- The teachers report that the trainings have helped them understand children's needs and have provided many useful ideas on how to assist children.
- Local communities report consistently that the respect demonstrated for local culture helps to build positive relationships, to increase self-esteem in a context in which colonial regimes had taught local people to feel inferior about their own culture, and to give them the confidence needed to build a positive future.
- By encouraging critical thinking, the trainings are essential tools for increasing community independence and reducing their susceptibility to political manipulation.
- Trainees particularly like the mixture of Western and traditional approaches, feel more hopeful and well supported by the partnership with CCF, and say they are now in a better position to care effectively for their children.
- Trainees report that as a result of the trainings, adults have better relations with their children, are less likely to use harsh corporal punishment as a means of discipline, and talk more extensively with children about issues.

- Many trainees said that the seminars provided the first opportunity to step back from the war; consider how they had been affected; and begin connecting past, present, and future.
- Youth report that the trainings have increased their understanding of key issues facing adults, given them new perspective, increased their confidence and self-esteem, and helped to improve their role and status in the community.
- Now that the youth have become organized into groups and engage in a wide variety of activities, youth report that they feel better supported, have more options, experience high levels of solidarity, and benefit from participation in different activities.
- Youths' enthusiastic participation in community initiatives has increased their social integration, elevated their social status, and strengthened their spirit of community service.
- Adults and youth report that the youth have more hope, fight less often, and exhibit better values.

These are exactly the linkages and effects the team was hoping to witness in their field visits, either directly, through project materials, or through interviews with key staff or community members. Unfortunately, the team did not come away with such observations.

Essentially, there appears to be a gap between the expectations of the project, the reported results, and the reality of the project on the ground. The project and staff are stretched too thin geographically (too many provincial offices and too many sites within provincial offices), across too many age and population groups (those ages 0–5, 6–11, or 12–18; adults; permanent inhabitants; IDP communities; and national policymaking bodies), and types of community interventions (rebuilding *jangos*; improving water systems and roadways; constructing schools and playgrounds; creating children's youth groups for sports, reading, or handicrafts; initiating microcredit programs; providing apprenticeships; conducting training for all age levels; assessing communities; and mobilizing members to initiate activities).

There may be a few reasons why the program has become overextended. For a program of this magnitude, there is a need for strong programming and staff development to ensure consistency across offices and within office teams. Perhaps the program expanded without adequate time to prepare the program for expansion with appropriate systems, reporting, and supervisory structures in place. Furthermore, a program of this size requires strong management and organizational support. The director of programs reported that she was in Angola for seven months of last year, traveling the remaining months to conferences and other activities requested by the headquarters office. Such demands on her time may hamper her ability to provide adequate field supervision. A program of this size requires the full-time presence of a director of programs and the assistance of a field coordinator.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The team does not want to direct CCF in the activities it chooses to undertake within Angola. However, under present circumstances, the DCOF team recommends that the proposal for extension be withdrawn and that CCF internally examines the present status of the project. CCF representatives should meet with the DCOF team to discuss the field visit and various impressions and observations to establish a future course of action.

Nevertheless, DCOF continues to be an enthusiastic supporter of CCF's unique capacity in understanding and articulating the psychosocial and development needs of children and youth in the context of conflict and political transition. CCF's staff capacities, training methodologies, and approaches are impressive, particularly as seen in the Province Based War Trauma Team program and the under-age soldier reintegration program. And in principle, DCOF would like to continue to support CCF in Angola.

However, linkages between the community interventions and psychosocial development of children and youth need to be strengthened. The program should limit itself to fewer interventions and target populations, and to more clearly demonstrate success in terms of results indicators. It needs to clearly state its methodology of selecting communities, mobilizing community members, and undertaking community revitalization projects as a means of improving the psychosocial well being of children and adolescents.

Through community development work completed by other projects in Angola as well as by CCF, it is known that one of the first things communities affected by war want is to rebuild schools for their children. School attendance provides regularity in the highly destabilized life patterns of community members traumatized by war. Schools also provide opportunities for secondary and tertiary levels of activities that can strengthen community ties and increase the sense of normalcy. Such activities might include literacy training, parent associations, school gardens, sports, clubs, classes on parenting or conflict management, as well as discussion groups of various ages.

CCF should consider limiting its community revitalization work to school rehabilitation, and linking its psychosocial interventions to school-related activities. CCF should also consider limiting the number of project sites, perhaps dedicating a site to different population targets, such as IDPs, permanent communities in urban and peri-urban settings. CCF might want to use a micro-regional approach in which linkages among communities are explored in limited

geographic areas. Thus, the effects of interventions become cumulative in the sense that activities spillover into neighboring communities and activities of one community can leverage activities in nearby communities. For example, meeting with the ministry of education on the assignment of teachers can affect several communities within a micro-region. Rebuilding schools within a micro-region also maximizes resources and builds efficiencies into project management.

FOLLOW UP

In the debriefing with CCF staff, it was decided that CCF would withdraw its proposal for an extension. Due to the six-month delay caused by the return to war in December 1998, early estimates indicate that the project could continue through March 2002 (7 months beyond the current expiration date of August 2001) under a no-cost extension. However, the CCF staff expressed a strong interest in closing down the project at the end of this contract period because it would be easier to end employee contracts, and to reshape the project under a new grant. Nonetheless, CCF would like to revise line item amounts in keeping with their expenditure pattern in the current budget. Further discussions with the contracts office are needed to determine the best next steps for dealing with the funds remaining under the current contract. DCOF expressed a willingness to provide a consultant to CCF in helping the Angola staff in redesigning their new program. It was suggested that the proposal for the future program be submitted by April 2001. In the meantime, DCOF looks forward to opportunities to meet with CCF officials to examine the present program and to discuss options for the future.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Christian Children's Fund. *Okusiakala ondalo yokalye*, Let us light a new fire: Local knowledge in the post-war healing and reintegration of war-affected children in Angola, November 1998.

Whitson, Donald and Elizabeth Adelski. Initiatives for the Angolan children and youth futures project, Christian Children's Fund and the family tracing and placement program, Save the Children Fund/UK, April 1999.

USAID. Modification of grant number HRN-G-00-95-00018-00, Modification number 05, September 14, 1999.

Christian Children's Fund. Quarterly report to USAID Displaced Children and Orphans Fund, August 24, 2000.

Christian Children's Fund and Michael Wessells. Initiatives for Angolan children and youth futures: Mid-point reflections and lessons learned, December 1, 2000.

Christian Children's Fund. Proposal submitted to the USAID Displace Children Orphans Fund for an extension of the initiatives for Angolan children and youth futures project, December 22, 2000.

Christian Children's Fund. CCF-Angola Program 1994-2001 PowerPoint presentation.

Save the Children/UK-Angola. Family tracing and reunification programme preliminary report – first six months, January-June 2000.

Save the Children/UK-Angola. Family tracing and reunification programme preliminary report – second six months, July-December 2000.

Save the Children/UK-Angola and MINARS. Factors contributing to the voluntary separation of children, 1977.

USAID/Angola Strategic Plan, 2001-2005.

APPENDIX B - CONTACTS

US Embassy

Ambassador Joseph G. Sullivan

USAID

Keith Simmons, Mission Director
Alfreda Brewer, General Development Officer
Jeff Ashley, SO1/SO3 Supervisor
James Jackson, Disaster Relief Officer
Carla Queiros, Program Assistant

UNICEF

Anthony Bloomberg, Country Representative
Marjolaine Martin, Child Protection Officer

Christian Children's Fund

Marcia B. Jovanovic, Country Representative
Carlinda Montiero, Program Director

Luena Office

CCF Staff

Community leaders and project representatives in following sites:

- IDP Camp – Enama
- IDP Camp – Kamuzanguissa

- Community of Mandembue A
 - Community of Mandembue B
 - School at Community of Sangondo I
- Vice Governor of Moxico Province

Lubango Office

CCF Staff

Huambo Office

CCF Staff

Community leaders and project representatives in following sites:

- Casseque III
- Kahululu
- Kuando
- Kulimahala
- Caala
- Mangombala
- Coquengo
- ADPP School for Boys

Save the Children/UK

Sheri Lecker, Program Director

Azeredo Suege, Sub-Director

Fatima Zohra Pereira, Manager of Family Tracing Program

Staff at Hoji-Ya-Henda Bairro

Faustino Sandambongo

Ana Francisco

Jacqueline d'Almeida

Sandra Guilherme)

MINARS – National Children's Department (DNI)

Ana Afonso Gourgel

Carla Gamboa

Maria Josefa

Maria de Lourdes

Maria Amaro

Staff at Huambo Office

Paulo Antonio, Administrative Officer

Maria Lucilia

Maria Eugenia Morguier, MINARS

Firmina Chitula, MINARS

Veteran's International

Daniel Tessema, Program Director

Staff at Luena Prosthetics Center

Development Workshop (DW)

Carlos Figuirodo, Huambo Representative

International Office of Migration (IOM)

Luz Tantaruna, Huambo Representative

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

Andy Smith and Staff at Alta Bamba, Huambo