

VICTIM ASSISTANCE IN ANGOLA REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

Angola is currently experiencing a process of development and national reconciliation, which necessarily passes through the adoption of policies that enable a proper integration of mine victims disabled persons and their families.

In many circumstances, disabled people are forced under very unfavorable conditions, due to the innumerable physical and social barriers imposed in the society, hindering in this way a full participation in social, economic, cultural and political life of the society.

As the country is State Party to the Ottawa Convention, and considering the Guidelines from the Nairobi Action Plan, Angola has been making efforts to improve mine victim assistance in health care, physical rehabilitation and socio-professional reintegration. Therefore, the social political tendency is to promote integration, participation and combat exclusion

The Government has decided to adopt several potential measures for the integration of Disabled persons, by designing public policies to assist mine victims, one of them being launching sports events for victims.

2. CONTEXT

Currently there is a very limited range of data available in respect to mine victims. This needs to be addressed in two ways. Firstly there is a need to accurately track the number of recent victims as a means of monitoring and measuring the impact of the mine action problem in basic terms and the measures put in place to address it. Further there is a need to establish a national database for all victims old and new. This necessity is driven by the fact that orthopedic support and treatment of victims is a life-long commitment, with the norm being for prosthetic limbs requiring replacement on a 3-4 year cycle.

It is estimated that Angola has at least 80.000 mine victims, and the majority are ex-combatants, with labour age, and with a very low education qualifications.

Currently 8 of 9 orthopedic centres are largely operated by external funding. It would appear that a general review of the sector would be warranted once the appropriate database is established. Such review would need to consider the number of victims, the level of state funding required to support the dependency, identifying means of securing or providing access to orthopedic services for those in need over the longer term.

Near-term Outcomes:

- Establish reporting mechanism to capture data on all new mine victims.
- Establish clear lines of responsibility for addressing mine victims.
- Regular IMSMA reporting established for MRE and use of IMSMA data to guide planning.

Far-term Outcomes:

- Establish a victim's database that can support long term care for mine victims.
- Conduct a review of the victim assistance needs of the country and align orthopedic resources against that need.

One of the key challenges of DP resides in the right to equal opportunities, an issue that is still awkward in our society.

The Angolan Government has been engaged in raising awareness of the population, as for the benefits that Disabled Persons can bring about in all spheres of social, economic and political life of the country.

And NGOs can/should provide assistance to the Government in various ways, by formulating and suggesting adequate solutions or even by providing complementary services to the public organs of the Government.

3. OBJECTIVE

- To ensure full right to citizenship of the target group, health, education, job, sport, leisure, safety and social assistance, transport, culture, information, family life, etc.
- Reduce poverty and the vulnerability of families and improve living standards of mine victims;
- To convince civil society that disabled persons are also capable of something and that they might just be useful as anyone else in the community;
- Encourage and support family income initiatives, aiming to ensure the well fare of vulnerable people including mine victims;
- Advocate for the establishment of funds and pensions for vulnerable, disabled people including mine victims;
- Promote a legal framework for the protection of disabled persons including mine victims.

4. WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS

4.1- Weakness

- Lack of specialized and experienced staff to work in the integral rehabilitation of mine victims, aiming to integrate them in social and Professional life;
- Lack of understanding from the society on the challenges Disabled Persons victims of mines face;
- Lack of identification, registration and analysis on mine victims;

- A considerable number of mine victims is currently out of the education system;
- Limited availability of urban equipments and services;
- High number of mine victims end up dying before they reach to the nearest hospital unit;
- Difficulties in the transportation to facilitate the target group in rehabilitation services;
- Lack of sanitary public facilities, equipped and dimensioned for the use of disabled persons;

4.2. Strengths

- Adhesion and ratification to the Ottawa Convention;
- Existence of physical rehabilitation and Professional Centres;
- Existence of a National Standard on the manufacturing of Prosthesis;
- Existence of a multisectoral coordination group;
- Existence of a Physical Rehabilitation National Programme for Disabled Persons sensorial-motive;
- Existence of projects in social reintegration;

5. RESULTS ACHIEVED

- Paralympics Committee exists for 12 years, and many sports events have been held at National level;
- Have conquered a dignifying participation in world events and won several medals in different international sports;
- The Ministry of Education has been establishing and refurbishing multifunctional resourced therapy rooms, computer classes and much more.

- Within the family policies, the Ministry of Family and Promotion of Women has been conducting advocacy activities, to finance disabled persons initiatives (family income initiatives).
- CNIDAH is currently undertaking a survey on the disabled persons victims of mines so as to know the real needs of these group.

6. CONSTRAINTS

- Non approval of the protection Law for Disabled Persons;
- Lack of articulation among the sectors;
- Non implementation of existing laws;
- Presence of communication, information, and transportation barriers;
- Many activities do not reach the media on time, on the existence of programmes dealing Disables Persons;