Living Through Change


Children running through known mined land. Luau, May 2004

A decade of mine action in Angola

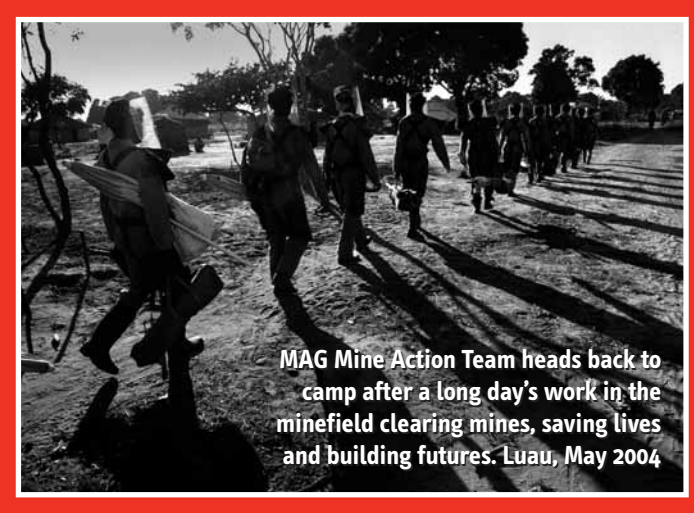
MAG is continuing to expand its operations in Angola to respond to the needs of tens of thousands of displaced people returning from Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. As you read this refugees are coming home to Angola after fleeing the war that lasted 30 years. In other areas MAG teams are continuing to open up access roads after clearance operations have made land safe for agricultural use and development.

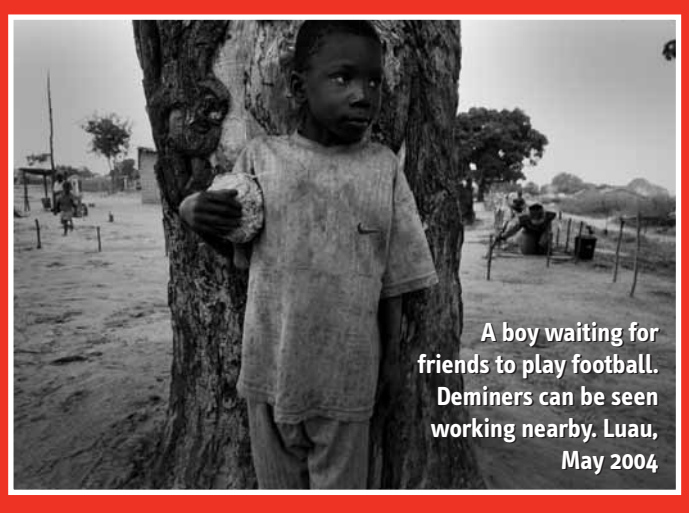
MAG currently deploys three 15-person Mine Action Teams (MATs) in the southern province of Cunene, with a further six MATs working in Moxico Province in the east. A Basic Deminer Course for local staff is being conducted this year which will see MAG establish a further three MATs in Moxico Province. These technical teams are complemented by five local MAG Community Liaison teams, working on data gathering and delivering Mine Risk Education.

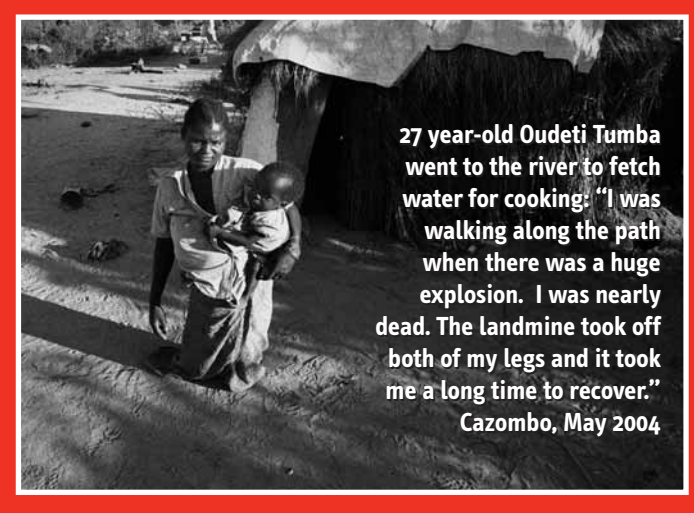
Working closely with other humanitarian organisations such as Médecins Sans Frontières, MAG makes roads safe so they can provide vital health care and vaccinations to vulnerable communities. MAG continues to work closely with the UN refugee agency UNHCR and the provincial government to ensure the work is integrated within the wider humanitarian and development context.

MAG's award winning photo-journalist Sean Sutton has visited the country many times in the last decade and has produced a compelling body of work. To commemorate ten years in Angola Sean's photographs form the exhibition 'Living Through Change' which is now being exhibited in a heritage site in the Angolan capital Luanda. Some of his work can be seen on these pages and the exhibition can be viewed in full on MAG's website.

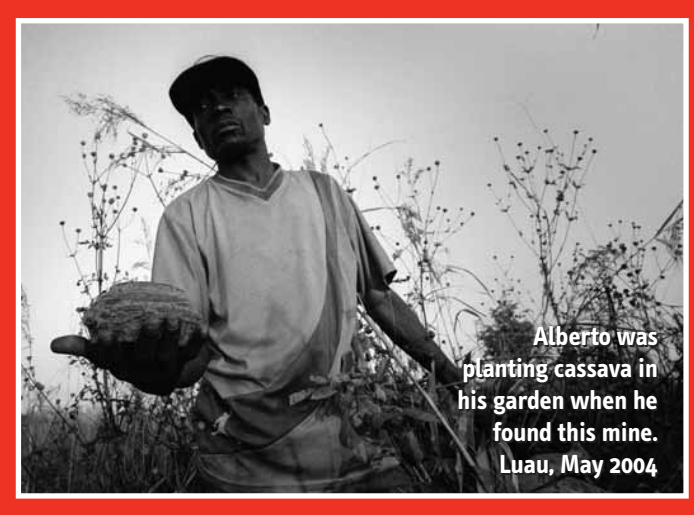
MAG wishes to thank the following donors for making our work and exhibitions such as this possible: Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, Department of International Development (UK), Office For Weapons Removal & Abatement (US), ECHO, AAR Japan, Medico International, Stichting Vluchteling, Europe Aid, Survey Action Centre, Médecins Sans Frontières, Zero Landmine Campaign, Adopt-A-Minefield, Roots of Peace, Manx Landmine Action, Governments of Japan, Australia, Germany, New Zealand, Sweden (SIDA), Norway, Finland, Jersey Overseas Aid, Guernsey Overseas Aid, Freeman Foundation, UNMAS, UNICEF, ALS, UNDP, SPAS.

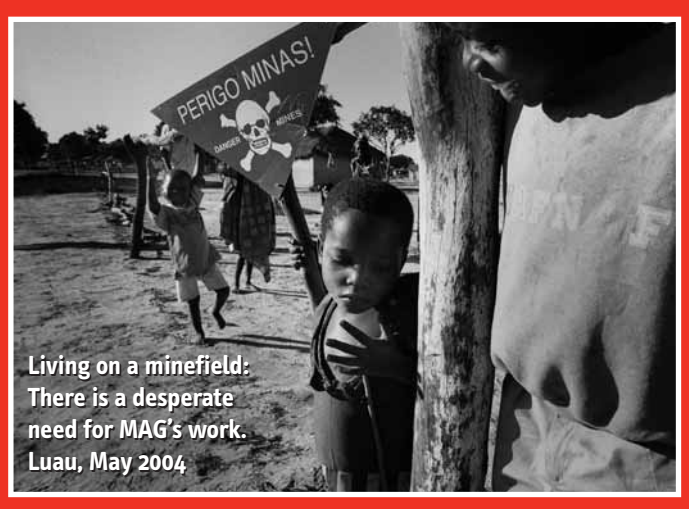

MAG Mine Action Team heads back to camp after a long day's work in the minefield clearing mines, saving lives and building futures. Luau, May 2004


A boy waiting for friends to play football. Deminers can be seen working nearby. Luau, May 2004


27 year-old Oudeti Tumba went to the river to fetch water for cooking: "I was walking along the path when there was a huge explosion. I was nearly dead. The landmine took off both of my legs and it took me a long time to recover." Cazombo, May 2004

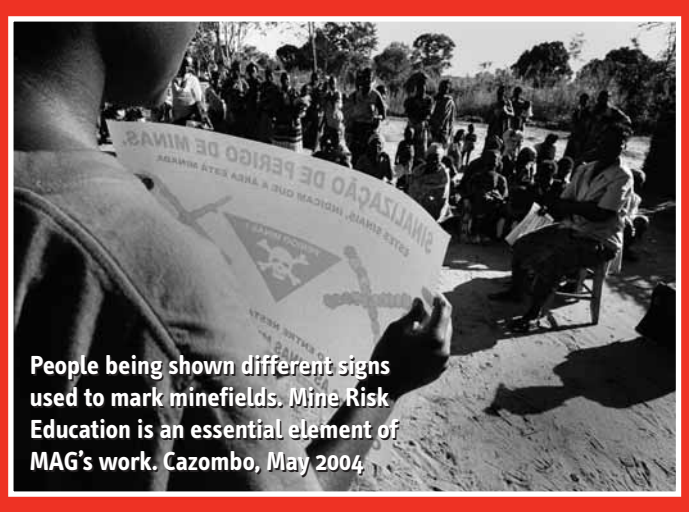

A girl collects water from a well. She is in a suspect minefield. Luau, May 2004

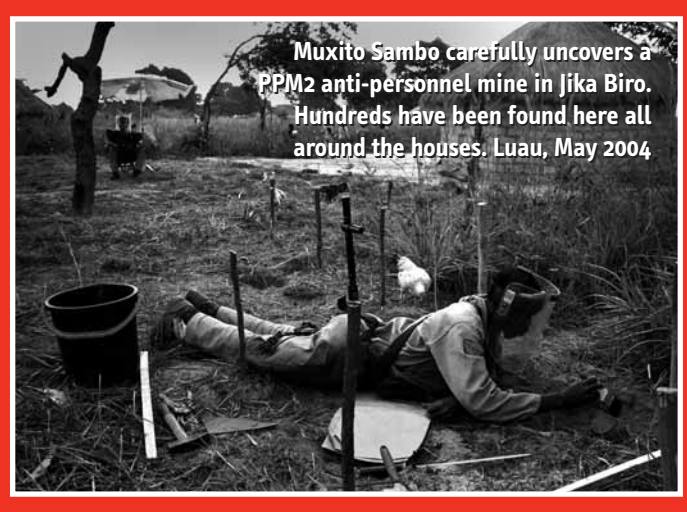

Alberto was planting cassava in his garden when he found this mine. Luau, May 2004



Living on a minefield: There is a desperate need for MAG's work. Luau, May 2004


A mine is taken away to be safely destroyed.


People being shown different signs used to mark minefields. Mine Risk Education is an essential element of MAG's work. Cazombo, May 2004


Muxito Sambo carefully uncovers a PPM2 anti-personnel mine in Jika Biro. Hundreds have been found here all around the houses. Luau, May 2004


The mine is handed to Simao the team leader. Luau, May 2004

MAG at forefront of mine clearance technologies

MAG's staff follows strict safety procedures but mine detection, clearance and disposal is dangerous work and there is always an element of risk. To minimise this risk MAG is always looking to the future and investing in new technologies. Here are some of the innovative developments in mechanical mine technologies:

The Vulcan - In February this year, MAG and UXO Lao invited Dr Sidney Alford's company Alford Technologies to Laos to develop the use of Dr Alford's invention The Vulcan.

The Vulcan is a funnel shaped device placed on to large bombs and uses an explosive charge to inject a stream of burning metal particles into the bomb. The explosive inside ignites and safely bursts the munition case open leaving the surrounding area barely touched by the explosion. Without The Vulcan the 1000lb bombs that MAG has to deal with in Laos would have to be either taken away for detonation or large areas evacuated.


UXO Lao staff with a 1,000 pound Mk 83 GP bomb. The Vulcan is being set up on the bomb before it is safely detonated.

The success of The Vulcan lies in its simplicity to use, its reliability and low-impact explosion. Dr Alford has just been awarded a Queen's Award for Enterprise for The Vulcan. More information on Dr Alford's pioneering works can be found on www.explosives.net


One of MAG's machines clears a suspect minefield in northern Iraq

The Mine Cat 230, funded by the Norwegian Government, making mine clearance safer and more effective

The Armtrac 100 - Earlier this year MAG saw the arrival of its first Armtrac machine, a mine clearance vehicle capable of clearing more than 20cm below the ground and at 45 degree slopes, making it particularly suitable to the hilly terrain of northern Iraq.

The arrival of a second machine soon followed, making a dramatic difference to MAG Iraq's mine clearance capabilities; each machine is able to clear 5000sq/m of land every day. Such is MAG's progress in Iraq, in just one year since the recent war, MAG has cleared an extraordinary one million landmines and unexploded bombs.

The Mine Cat 230 - Along with Cambodia and Angola, Afghanistan is one of the most heavily mined countries in the world. MAG's introduction of the Mine Cat 230 in July 2004, made possible by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will provide much needed mechanical support for humanitarian mine action in the country.

The Mine Cat is a mine clearance vehicle able to clear Anti-Personnel and survive Anti-Tank mines buried up to 500mm in the ground. The vehicle is fitted with rotating chains and hammers which dig into the ground to detonate and disrupt mines and is powerful enough to penetrate even hard ground conditions. To add to its safety, the vehicle is operated by remote control to a distance of up to 1000 metres.

Responding to the need for assistance requested by the Organisation for Mine Clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation (OMAR), MAG introduced the Mine Cat, coupled with specialist training for OMAR staff, to provide the team with a valuable addition to other clearance methods.