

MAG ANGOLA Programme Update

July – December 2009



Newly Constructed Homes and cultivation in 4 De Fevereiro

SUMMARY

Reporting Period: 01 July to 31st December 2009

Activities & Outputs:

- Clearance of 470,187 m² of land and 77 km of road
- Mechanical preparation of 331,617 m² of land
- 548 Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) spot tasks completed by the Rapid Response Team, destroying 1,193 items (9 AT mines, 105 AP mines, 1,033 items of Small Arms and Light Weapons, including ammunition, and 44 other items of Unexploded Ordnance - UXO)
- 384 communities visited by Community Liaison (CL) teams and 411 UXO reports collected
- 172 Mine Risk Education (MRE) sessions conducted, reaching 7,998 beneficiaries

Impact:

- Creating a safer and more secure environment by reducing risk of death or injury and working to improve the daily lives of the people in Moxico affected by Remnants of Conflict.
- Facilitating local reconstruction by clearing land and opening access routes, therefore contributing to livelihood regeneration and infrastructure projects.
- Contributing to economic growth and stability by creating safer environments and improving economic opportunities for communities

Linking Mine Action and Development

To maximize the impact of its clearance and MRE, MAG Angola ensures that community members are involved in the prioritization process and that the clearance work will support the long-term future development plans of the most mine affected communities. In July, MAG completed a task in a community named Luangrico. Before the war the community planned to dig a canal to irrigate the fields and improve cultivation, but most of the villagers were forced to flee as extensive fighting took place in the area. Upon their return the community was unable to access the land beside the planned canal as, after finding some skeletons close by, they suspected landmines were present. MAG deployed a team to clear the land, and once this task was completed they used a Hyundai excavator to dig the canal for the community. This will benefit not only the 877 people who are currently living in the community, but also those from several neighbouring communities who will resettle in the area in the near future.



saves lives builds futures

MAG Angola's mission is to build futures for people affected by the remnants of conflict (ROC) in Angola in general and in Moxico in particular. MAG Angola will remove the physical threat of injury and death and alleviate economic devastation through clearance and destruction of mines UXO and other ROC, land release and Mine Risk Education.

MAG is also currently working on a task with Danish Church Aid, the National Institute for Demining, and the Angolan Armed Forces in an area on the outskirts of Luena, known as Sinai Novo. These four mine action actors are working together at the request of CNIDAH and the Vice Governor of Moxico Province to clear 4.5 million square metres of land on which to construct 2,000 houses. These houses are for the local population and are part of the government's redevelopment plans to build a million houses across the country.

Work is still continuing on the land clearance task in 4 De Fevereiro, on the outskirts of Luena. As this is a large task of more than 1 million square metres the land has been divided into blocks, and once each block has been completed it is handed over to the government, who releases the land to community members. Communities are then able to build new homes and cultivate small plots that will improve the family food supply. In the last six months 325,630 m² has been cleared and this will benefit approximately 2,795 people, most of whom are returnees from the Democratic Republic of Congo and from Zambia. Such is the demand for houses in the area that houses are constructed immediately after MAG has cleared the land. "This is a task with a really high impact" says Massoji Ipanga, MAG's Technical Supervisor. "Everyone can see the outcome of the work and for me it's a pleasure as people were living close to and inside the minefield. Every time the Soba (chief) comes to see us he asks us to clear more land. We need to continue this task to give more space to the population".



Augustinho Chinguelexi, 40, who has returned from the Congo with his family beside the plot on which he is constructing on land cleared by MAG in 4 De Fevereiro © J B Russell 2009

Mine Risk Education with Construction Companies

MAG has extensive experience of delivering Mine Risk Education to diverse groups of people throughout the province of Moxico. In recent months it has become clear that the influx of construction workers working on roads and bridges in the province is resulting in a need for Mine Risk Education, as the workers frequently uncover mines and other Explosive Remnants of Conflict and are unaware of the dangers involved. MAG's Community Liaison teams visited some of the compounds in Luena where the workers are based, in order to raise awareness about the mine problem in the province, and to educate the workers about the most common types of mines and what to do if they find one. CL teams also visited the camps of construction workers based in other parts of the province. This has already led to improved safety in construction sites and improved cooperation. For example, in September, MAG's Rapid Response Team was called to carry out a demolition of an unexploded grenade which was discovered at a bridge construction site as a direct result of this initiative.

Photographer visits MAG Angola's work

MAG also hosted JB Russell, a photo journalist, who had covered the conflict in Angola while the war was still ongoing. JB commented "The last time I was in Luena was in late 2001. At the time, the provincial capital of Moxico province was the main staging area for the Angolan government's final offensive against Jonas Savimbi and his UNITA rebels. After years of conflict, there was no running water, electricity or economic activity in Luena. Buildings and infrastructure were in ruins. MAG's teams were working frantically to open roads and to clear areas for tens of thousands of civilians being displaced by the fighting in order to re-settle them in temporary camps.

During my visit to MAG's Angola programme in Moxico province in July and August of this year, I was quite simply amazed to see the progress that had occurred since the last time I was in Luena. Roads were paved and teeming with motor bikes, cars and activity. There was water and electricity. Roads, bridges and areas that had



MAG Angola's mission is to build futures for people affected by the remnants of conflict (ROC) in Angola in general and in Moxico in particular. MAG Angola will remove the physical threat of injury and death and alleviate economic devastation through clearance and destruction of mines UXO and other ROC, land release and Mine Risk Education.



MAG Deminer working on the 4 De Fevereiro task. The houses in the background have been constructed on recently cleared land. © JB Russell 2009

been heavily mined were now cleared and rebuilding projects were going on everywhere. Yet MAG's teams were no less busy, only the needs had changed. Landmines and the unexploded remnants of war were denying returnees the land they needed to resettle and to begin rebuilding their lives, preventing ever-expanding communities from building homes, schools, medical clinics and from developing agriculture and other economic activities. During my stay in the region I witnessed how each parcel of land that was made safe and returned to the community by MAG immediately resulted in homes being built, land being cultivated and beneficial development of the community. MAG's work was not only removing deadly threats from the ground and saving lives, but permitting the country to build a brighter future and to develop economically and socially after decades of devastating conflict." To

read some of the stories about MAG's work that were documented by J B Russell, please visit the website at: <http://www.maginternational.org/MAG/en/news/angola-village-chief-highlights-the-continuing-need-for-mag/>

Visit from long standing donor, US Department of State, Weapons Removal and Abatement

MAG Angola also hosted a visit from one of our donors, the US Department of State, Weapons Removal and Abatement Office in November. Among the visitors were the outgoing Programme Manager Deborah Netland and her replacement Darren Manning. The WRA has been supporting the MAG Angola programme since 2002 and has visited the programme several times. In her final visit to MAG Angola Deborah noted that she was proud of what MAG and the US government had achieved working together. MAG would like to thank Deborah for her support over the last few years and to wish her well in the future!

MAG would like to formally express its gratitude to the following current donors to the Angola programme:

- Chevron Oil – Angola
- Department for International Development (UK)
- Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- United States Department of State, Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement

For more information on this or any of MAG's programmes, please visit www.maginternational.org, or contact:

Rebecca Letven (Regional Desk Officer)
e-mail: Rebecca.Letven@maginternational.org
MAG, 68 Sackville Street, Manchester,
M1 3NJ, UK
Tel: +44 161 236 4311

Sabrina Brett (Angola Programme Officer)
email: po@magangola.org
MAG Angola Luena Base
Moxico, Angola
Mobile phone: +244 929440301