

## SUMMARY

### *Capitalisation on strengthening networks, community-based approach and partnership in MRE project: lessons learned from experience in Angola* Handicap International June 2006

Handicap International France has been working in Angola in Mine Risk Education (MRE) since 1995.

The Angolan experience is a rich source of information as the HI team adapted methodology and tools to manage MRE projects in line with the evolution of the context (emergency/transition/development).

HI began to provide technical and institutional support to the national Angolan authority in charge of Mine Action at that time, National Institute for the Removal of Explosive Obstacles UNAROOE, to undertake mine risk education activities and then began strengthening the MRE network organisations.

The external survey carried out in May 2005 by Ruth Bottomley (*Strengthening and promoting Associations and Community Networks for Sustainable MRE*), considering the project activities from the period November 2003 until May 2005, showed that our strategy of intervention based on a community approach, has developed active MRE networks and capacity building within these networks.

Therefore, a comprehensive analysis in order to capitalise on this experience and draw out the benefits and lessons learned has been produced by Gabrielle Savi : *Capitalization on strengthening networks, community-based approach and partnership in MRE project: lessons learned from experience in Angola*

As mentioned in the title of the report, this analysis focuses on three main components of the project:

- The network (chapter IV - V)

The HI Angola strategy in Mine Risk Education is based on MRE networks built on existing structures at community level (e.g. institutions, associations, churches and cultural groups) which are transmitted MRE skills.

This process is reinforced by the transmission of responsibilities and management to the administration which should recognize the existence of MRE networks.

Creating leadership within the structures and the administration, and promoting the link between them are two elements that network sustainability depends on.

The MRE network is structured around key resources to train (the agent, the leader and the referent) who consolidate the network activity and its autonomy.

MRE networks and administration capacity building are a priority.

- The community-based approach (chapter VI)

By promoting the community based approach, the type of participation of the community shifted up to level 7 (according to the GRET<sup>1</sup> scale). MRE networks are now taking local initiatives which show us an evolution in the degree of participation. MRE networks have increased interest in MRE activities and are now more involved.

---

<sup>1</sup> GRET: Research and Technologies Exchanges Group

MRE NGOs adapted and are making use of different participatory tools or animation techniques (e.g. the seasonal calendar and suspected areas mapping) which involve the population in resolving their problems.

The challenge for the MRE NGOs is to adapt MRE projects, using detailed analysis of the context, along with objectives supporting the development.

Therefore, MRE NGOs should develop stronger links with development services and projects wherever possible.

- The partnership (chapter VII) with a local NGO

HI in the Angolan context recently developed an official partnership with a national NGO to ensure an Angolan force for MRE and prevention by strengthening the structure in general, transmitting the leadership of the project and consolidating MRE skills. The objective of HI in terms of partnership is to make its partner autonomous by reinforcing technical, financial and structural performances of the local NGO.

The lessons learned and the recommendations of this capitalisation offer useful guidance and should help field teams to improve MRE projects.

Both surveys have been posted on the Handicap International website: <http://www.handicap-international.org>