

Disabled Ex-Combatants in Angola receive Specialized Assistance

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Within the implementation framework of the Angola Demobilization and Reintegration Program (ADRP), the Government of Angola, through the Institute for the Socio-professional Reintegration of ex-combatants (IRSEM), is currently implementing a wide range of activities to support the provision of specialized physical rehabilitation, prosthetic and socio-economic services to disabled ex-combatants and other persons living with disabilities in the veterans' areas of resettlement.

Support for this effort comes in part from the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP), which, since 2004, has been supporting demobilization and reintegration of an estimated 105,000 ex-UNITA members and 33,000 FAA members in Angola. Additional support, enhancing the program capability to provide services to other vulnerable civilians, comes from the European Commission, in the form of a grant of over 13 million Euros.

The program provides disabled ex-combatants with specialized technical assistance and medical care to facilitate their physical rehabilitation and help them to become active members of society. Through a framework agreement with the National Rehabilitation Program and specific grants to different prosthetic centers in the country, the ADRP is not only expanding their capacity to provide services to ex-combatants, but also enhancing the national capacity to provide these services to all Angolans.



Ex-combatants from FAA

Costa Barros, Jose Cusso, Mariano Chyaca, Antonio Candido, Afonso Kaveliyavua, Domingos Maria and Pedro Abreu, are amongst those benefiting, since July 2006, from a project implemented by World Vision in partnership with IRSEM and AMMIGA, a local NGO.

This project aims to create opportunities for the reinsertion of 240 disabled ex-combatants into the job market. It seeks to provide them with marketable skills and access to micro-enterprise schemes. It also works towards supporting their social acceptance and reintegration by disseminating information and conducting awareness campaigns.

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Ex-combatants from FAA & UNITA

Disabled ex-combatant, Pedro Abreu (first from right, standing) and his colleagues underwent a three month training course in entrepreneurship, including planning and management of funds. Now, with the help of the program, they are trying to find long term employment. It is not an easy process however.

“The employers have to believe that, although we are disabled, we can make a difference and contribute to the development of this country,” explains Domingos Maria, a 51 year old disabled ex-combatant who lost both legs in 1974, when a mine exploded.

“I think that there are many challenges for those who are trying to help us,” adds Jose Cusso.

In an effort to help ex-combatants secure a regular income, the project provides the beneficiaries with moto-taxis (one moto-taxi per group of five) that they can use for income generating activities. However, this approach is not without drawbacks and many ex-combatants foresee potential challenges.

As Kaveliyavua (third from the right, standing) explains, although many ex-combatants are anxiously waiting for their moto-taxis, *“given the status of the roads, and the high cost of maintaining such vehicles, our daily earnings will only be enough to cover such costs.”*

Efforts are underway to respond to such concerns, strengthen the program and improve the assistance available to beneficiaries. As the project slowly moves forward, aspects such as counselling and referral services are gradually being developed to provide ex-combatants with improved information about potential job opportunities and subsidised employment.



Domingos Maria,
Ex-combatant from FAA

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